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**APP/C3105/W/23/3329533**

**LPA REF: 23/01265/OUT**

**LAND SOUTH OF TADMARTON ROAD, BLOXHAM**

# **APPEAL HEARING STATEMENT ON LANDSCAPE AND VIEWS**

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### Appendix A: Sequential Views along Tadmarton Road

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### Appendix C: Ironstone Hills and Valleys Landscape Character Area description from the Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment (1995)

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

- S1 The statement has been prepared by The Environment Partnership (TEP) Ltd on behalf of Gladman Developments Ltd. in respect of the appeal against the refusal of outline planning application (Ref: 23/01265/OUT) for the erection of up to 60 dwellings with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and vehicular access point with all matters reserved except for means of access. TEP was responsible for the production of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal which accompanied the outline planning application and advised Gladman Developments Ltd. regarding landscape and visual effects.
- S2 This statement addresses the first Reason for Refusal (RfR) in so far as it relates to landscape and visual effects: *'The site is located outside the built form of Bloxham and within an area of open countryside. By reason of its location and the proposed scale of development, the proposal would have a poor and incongruous relationship with the existing settlement appearing prominent in the open countryside. Its development would therefore have an adverse effect on the landscape on the approach to Bloxham to the detriment of the character and appearance of the countryside'.*
- S3 This statement therefore considers:
- Whether the proposal would have a poor and incongruous relationship with the existing settlement; and
  - Whether development would therefore have an adverse effect on the landscape approach to Bloxham to the detriment of the character and appearance of the countryside

### **Existing Landscape Character**

- S4 The site is in the Ironstone Hills and Valleys Landscape Character Area which is characterised by a complex topography and ironstone vernacular. The Landscape Character Area is subdivided into several Landscape Types and the site is in the Rolling Arable Landscape with Strong Field Pattern, Copses and Hedgerow Trees Landscape Type. This landscape is characterised by complex topography, dense hedgerows and lines of hedgerow trees.
- S5 The site comprises approximately 4.42ha of agricultural land on the western edge of the village, immediately adjoining the existing built-up area along its eastern boundary.

### **Landscape and Visual Effects**

- S6 The majority of existing landscape features such as trees and hedgerows would be retained and incorporated into the proposed development. The scheme would inevitably result in the loss of some agricultural land. The key characteristics that define the local landscape character beyond the site would be physically unaffected by the proposed development and with regard to experiential aspects, there would be no material change to the landscape character of the area beyond the site with the proposed scheme in place.
- S7 The northern part of the site is proposed to accommodate the residential development which would be designed to reflect the local vernacular architecture and would be in keeping with other residential areas in Bloxham.
- S8 The visual envelope of the proposed development/scheme would be restricted to the immediate environs of the site and contained by existing vegetation along the site boundaries. Where visible, the proposed scheme would be seen in conjunction with adjacent residential development. The proposed scheme would not visually extend the visual envelope of Bloxham as it relates to the wider landscape but rather it would fall within the existing visual envelope associated with the wider environs of Bloxham.

- S9 Cherwell District Council's Landscape Officer has confirmed that they agree with the findings of the LVA in relation to landscape condition and sensitivity and noted that the landscape value of the appeal site has been reduced by the completion of the adjacent Miller Homes development. The Landscape Officer also confirmed that the Landscape Strategy was acceptable in principle.

### **Conclusion**

- S10 The effects of the Proposed Development will be restricted to a localised geographical area and would not result in substantial harm to landscape character beyond the site boundary, nor would there be substantial detrimental effects to visual amenity across a wide area.
- S11 The proposed development would be seen in conjunction with recent residential development along Coleman Close to the immediate east and would not appear prominent in the open countryside.
- S12 For the reasons stated above, there are no substantive reasons on landscape and visual grounds for refusing planning permission for the proposed residential scheme on the appeal site.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement in respect of Landscape and Views has been prepared by Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute at TEP in relation to the appeal against the decision of Cherwell District Council to refuse outline planning permission (LPA Ref 23/01265/OUT) for the erection of up to 60 dwellings with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and vehicular access point with all matters reserved except for means of access.
- 1.2 The application was considered by Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023 and was refused. The Reason for Refusal (RfR) of relevance to landscape and visual matters is:  
*'1. The site is located outside the built form of Bloxham and within an area of open countryside. By reason of its location and the proposed scale of development, the proposal would have a poor and incongruous relationship with the existing settlement appearing prominent in the open countryside. Its development would therefore have an adverse effect on the landscape on the approach to Bloxham to the detriment of the character and appearance of the countryside. In addition, the Council is able to demonstrate a 5.4-year housing land supply, and therefore the housing strategies in the Local Plan are up to date. It is considered that the development of this site would conflict with the adopted policies in the Local Plan to which substantial weight should be attached and result in unsustainable growth. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to Policies PSD1, BSC1, ESD1, ESD13, ESD15, Villages 1 and Villages 2 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 - 2031 Part 1, saved Policies C28, C30 and C33 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996, Policies BL2, BL3 and BL11 of the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan 2015 - 2031 and Government guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework'.*
- 1.3 TEP was appointed by Gladman to advise on landscape and visual matters on its development proposal at Tadmarton Road, Bloxham, to include the production of a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) to accompany the planning application.
- 1.4 This Statement focuses on the landscape matters contained within the above RfR, in particular whether the proposed development would have *'a poor and incongruous relationship with the existing settlement appearing prominent in the open countryside'* and whether it would *'have an adverse effect on the landscape on the approach to Bloxham'*.

## **2.0 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)**

- 2.1 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) published by the Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), and related guidance issued since they were published, comprise the acknowledged professional guidance for carrying out assessments of effects on landscape character and views.
- 2.2 The method for LVA does not differ greatly from that for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment but the Guidelines and supplementary guidance confirm that effects identified in an LVA should not be described with reference to the relative significance of effects (our emphasis).
- 2.3 The LVA explains the method for its production in its Section 2 and in its Appendix B and these remain consistent with guidance and appropriate for the assessment.
- 2.4 Since the production of the LVA the LI have issued a consultation version of a document which captures and summarises clarifications, additions and supplementary guidance relevant to GLVIA3 (*Draft Technical Guidance Note 05/23 Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)*). TEP have reviewed that document and confirm that there are no material changes in guidance relevant to the LVA and the approach taken is consistent with contemporary professional guidance.
- 2.5 References are made to the planning application LVA (CD1.5) when considering anticipated effects of the proposed development on landscape character and on views.



### 3.0 The Site and Environs, Landscape Character and Value

- 3.1 The site and its locale are described in the LVA. The standard method of considering a site, its landscape characteristics and its role in views is to undertake a desk-based study of published information and then to visit the site and make an assessment. This method was used in the LVA.

#### Desk Study

- 3.2 Neither the site nor the surrounding countryside falls within a designated landscape.
- 3.3 The LVA's desk-based study considered the following documents and specific areas:

*Table 1: Landscape Character Types and Areas*

Assessment	Landscape Character Type (LCT)	Landscape Character Area (LCA)
National Level		
National Character Area Profile 107: Cotswolds	N/A	N/A
County Level		
Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)	Upstanding Village Farmlands	Bloxham Character Area
District Level		
Cherwell Landscape Assessment	Ironstone Hills and Valleys	Rolling Arable Landscape with Strong Field Pattern, Copses and Hedgerow Trees (R2b)
		Small-scale Rolling Farmland with Strong Field Pattern (R4b)
		18th Century Enclosed Parkland (R6a)

- 3.4 The findings from the desk study are summarised below.
- 3.5 The site is in National Character Area 107: Cotswolds. The key characteristics of the Cotswolds NCA include:

- A dramatic limestone scarp rising above adjacent lowlands with steep combs.
  - Open and expansive scarp and high wold dipping gently to the southeast, dissected by river valleys.
  - Arable farming, which dominates the high wold and dip slope with permanent pasture on the steep slopes of the scarp and river valleys.
  - Drystone walls define the pattern of fields of the high wold and dip slope. On the deeper soils and river valleys, hedgerows form the main field boundaries.
  - Ancient beech hangers line stretches of the upper slopes of the scarp, while oak-ash woodlands are characteristic of the river valleys. Regular blocks of coniferous and mixed plantations are scattered across the open high wold and dip slope.
  - Rich history from Neolithic barrows, iron-age hill forts and Roman roads and villas to deserted medieval villages, grand country houses, cloth mills and Second World War airfields. The field patterns largely reflect both the medieval open field system, with fossilised areas of ridge and furrow, and later planned enclosures.
  - Locally quarried limestone brings a harmony to the built environment of scattered villages and drystone walls, giving the area a strong sense of unity for which the Cotswolds are renowned.
- 3.6 The National Character Area sets a very general context because it covers an extensive area. Except for the arable land use, the Site and its immediate environs demonstrate few of the key characteristics of the NCA.
- 3.7 The key characteristics of the Upstanding Village Farmlands Landscape Character Type (as identified in the Oxfordshire Landscape and Wildlife Study (OWLS) are::
- *'A steep sided, undulating landform.*
  - *A well-defined geometric pattern of medium-sized fields enclosed by prominent hedgerows.*
  - *A strong settlement pattern of compact, nucleated villages of varying sizes with little dispersal in [the] wider countryside.'*
- 3.8 The topography of the Site has been altered as a result of previous quarrying. The wider landscape is undulating. The Site comprises a medium-sized field, bound only to the north by hedgerows Settlement Character is described in Section 5.0 of this statement, which highlights that land to the south of Tadmarton Road has been gradually developed since the 1950s.

- 3.9 The OWLS breaks down the LCT into Local Character Areas. The Bloxham Character Area is characterised by *'regularly-shaped, small-sized grass fields and larger arable fields. Ridge and furrow pasture is common. Fields are enclosed by a prominent network of intact hawthorn and elm hedges which, in places, are overgrown and gappy. Mature ash, oak and sycamore trees are scattered throughout the area. They are denser where there is more grassland, along roadsides, country lanes and the disused railway line'*.
- 3.10 The overall landscape strategy for the Upstanding Village Farmlands LCT is to *'Conserve and enhance the strong pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and the nucleated settlement pattern and strong vernacular character of the villages'*.
- 3.11 The Cherwell Landscape Assessment is now over 25 years old and does not account for changes in the character and appearance of the landscape in this time. The site is in the Ironstone Hills and Valleys Landscape Character Area which is characterised by a complex topography and ironstone vernacular.
- 3.12 The LCA is subdivided into several Landscape Types (LTs) and the Site is in the (R2b) - Rolling Arable Landscape with Strong Field Pattern, Copses and Hedgerow Trees LT. The key characteristics of LT include:
- *'The topography of this type is as variable as for type 2a, but this landscape is more clearly defined;*
  - *Dense hedges and lines of hedgerow trees provide a good structure, and small copses and coverts punctuate views over rolling arable fields; and*
  - *Many of the hedgerow trees are still in very good condition, although mature.'*
- 3.13 In summary, the appeal site exhibits some of the key characteristics in published landscape guidance, including undulating topography and enclosure by hedgerows.

### Site Assessment: Landscape Character

- 3.14 The Site comprises approximately 4.42ha of arable land to the west of Bloxham. The Proposed Development Area is in the northern part of the site and comprises a single agricultural field, bound by Tadmarton Road to the north, residential dwellings along Coleman Close to the east, an embankment and tree belt to the south and by Park Farm and further agricultural land to the west. The Proposed Attenuation Area is to the south of the embankment and tree belt and comprises further agricultural land. The Site is accessed via an existing agricultural access point from Tadmarton Road to the north.
- 3.15 The wider landscape to the north, south and west is largely agricultural and dominated by arable cropping, interspersed with woodland and nucleated settlements. Fields are generally medium scale and rectilinear.
- 3.16 Topography varies across the site. The northern edge of the Proposed Development Area is at approximately 120m AOD, which then falls to the south of the existing access track to approximately 118m AOD (with the change in level assumed to be associated with the former quarry in this area) before rising again at the southern edge of the site to approximately 120m AOD at the top of the east-west embankment (approximately 2m high). The top of the embankment contains a ditch which is flanked by a dense woodland belt. From the embankment the land slopes down to approximately 113m AOD in the Proposed Attenuation Area.
- 3.17 Vegetation is limited to the site boundaries, much of which is of moderate arboricultural value (BS Category 'B'). A mixed species native hedgerow, approximately 2.5m high, runs along the length of the northern site boundary with occasional Norway maple trees. The Proposed Development Area is bound to the west by a mixed-species tree group including species such as Norway maple, common hawthorn, common ash and pedunculate oak. A similar mixed-species tree belt is along the southern boundary of the Proposed Development Area on the former quarry workings embankment.
- 3.18 The Proposed Attenuation Area comprises arable land, which is bound to the south by a watercourse and broadleaved woodland beyond.

- 3.19 The LVA (CD1.5) explains at paragraphs 4.51 to 4.68 the way in which landscape value is assessed. The LVA concludes that the site is of community value. A landscape of community value is one which is valued by residents and workers within the community, but for which there is no particular indication of a higher value. This is not a valued landscape with reference to paragraph 180a of the NPPF.

## **4.0 Visual Baseline**

- 4.1 The LVA identified 21 visual receptors comprising persons who may have a view of the proposed development and included nine representative viewpoints. The selection of viewpoints is not intended to cover every possible view of the site, but rather they are representative of a range of receptor types at varying distances and orientations. A description of existing views is provided in paragraphs 5.12 to 5.29 of the LVA (CD1.5).
- 4.2 The proposed development area is generally well contained by existing vegetation along its northern, southern and western boundaries. The eastern boundary to the recently constructed dwellings on Coleman Close is more open.
- 4.3 The appeal site is not in the Bloxham Conservation Area nor part of any of the key views identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 4.4 The appeal site forms a small part of a panoramic view from Hobb Hill identified in the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan. The existing view from Hobb Hill is described in paragraph 5.14 of the LVA (CD1.5).
- 4.5 Some Public Rights of Way near the site form part of the Bloxham Circular Walk, these routes are of local value. Areas of publicly accessible open space, including Woodlands Country Park and The Slade LNR are also of local value. Views towards the Site from almost all these locations are partially filtered by existing vegetation on the embankment to the south of the Proposed Development Area and/or existing vegetation along the disused railway line.
- 4.6 Sensitivity to change combines judgments in relation to value and susceptibility. The majority visual receptors are of medium sensitivity (see Table 2).
- 4.7 Effects on views and visual receptors are considered in Chapter 8 of this statement.

Table 2: Visual Receptors, Viewpoints, Value of View, Susceptibility to Change and Sensitivity

Receptor	Viewpoint	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Users of PRow Bloxham Bridleway 136/9/20 (Bloxham Circular Walk)	5	Local	High	<b>Medium</b>
Users of PRow Footpath 136/6/20 (Bloxham Circular Walk)	6	Local	High	<b>Medium</b>
Users of PRow Bloxham Footpath 136/5/10 (Bloxham Circular Walk)	8	Local	High	<b>Medium</b>
Users of PRow Milcombe Footpath 298/2/10	9	Local	High	<b>Medium</b>
Users of Tadmarton Road	1, 2	Community	Low	<b>Low</b>
Users of Coleman Close	3	Community	Low	<b>Low</b>
Users of Bartlett Road	-	Community	Low	<b>Low</b>
Users of Clifton Drive	-	Community	Low	<b>Low</b>
Users of Faulkener Road	-	Community	Low	<b>Low</b>
Users of Stoke Newington Road	-	Community	Low	<b>Low</b>
Users of Bloxham Road	7	Community	Low	<b>Low</b>
Residents of properties along Tadmarton Road, including the dwelling near Park Farm	-	Community	High	<b>Medium</b>
Residents of Coleman Close	-	Community	High	<b>Medium</b>
Residents of properties along Bartlett Road	-	Community	High	<b>Medium</b>
Residents of properties along Clifton Drive	-	Community	High	<b>Medium</b>
Residents of properties along Faulkener Road	-	Community	High	<b>Medium</b>
Residents of properties along Quarry Close	-	Community	High	<b>Medium</b>
Residents of properties along Bloxham Road	-	Community	High	<b>Medium</b>
Visitors to Milky Wheys	-	Community	Low	<b>Medium</b>
Visitors to Woodlands Country Park	4	Local	High	<b>Medium</b>
Visitors to The Slade LNR	-	Local	High	<b>Medium</b>

## **5.0 Settlement Character**

- 5.1 The Design and Access Statement (DAS) (CD1.4) presents analysis of settlement character.
- 5.2 Bloxham is a large village settlement which developed along the A361. The village retains part of its medieval core and street pattern with a number of winding alleys and lanes.
- 5.3 The DAS (CD1.4) at page 19 shows historic mapping of the settlement through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The maps show the gradual development of land on the western side of the village since the 1950s. Land to the south of Tadmarton Road has been gradually developed with housing at Quarry Close and the more recent Woodlands development (Miller Homes) to the east of the site.
- 5.4 The historic core of Bloxham was designated a Conservation Area in 1975. The Conservation Area is approximately 450m to the east of the closest point of the appeal site with modern development between and there is no visibility or apparent relationship between the appeal site and the Conservation Area.
- 5.5 The rest of the settlement comprises undistinguished building forms including modern terraces, semi-detached and detached dwellings.
- 5.6 The appeal site is undeveloped but recent development closest to the site has generous space between buildings and small plot depths. Areas further to the east towards the centre of Bloxham have smaller plot widths, larger plot depths and form a more continuous building line. The streets are noticeably wider in this area with the inclusion of grass verges and larger front gardens. The area is generally fine grain. Large coarse grain areas are created by the larger agricultural buildings to the west of the site and in the agricultural and school buildings to the north of the site.
- 5.7 The site has a strong visual relationship with the recent Woodlands development to the immediate east, with dwellings along Coleman Close clearly visible from within the site and from parts of Tadmarton Road.



## 6.0 The Proposed Development and Landscape Strategy

- 6.1 The Development Framework Plan (CD1.3) submitted with the outline planning application shows indicative built development and open space, as well as structural landscaping and community facilities. The Design and Access Statement (DAS) provides an indication of housing density, the different housing types, street and plot layouts and cross-sections. For the purposes of the LVA assessment it was assumed that buildings would be no greater than 2.5 storeys and this would be approximately 8.5m to ridge.
- 6.2 The principles of the Development Framework were informed by the findings of the LVA as part of an iterative and integrated design process.
- 6.3 A description of the Proposed Development is provided in the DAS (CD:1.4). In summary it consists of the following key elements:
- Residential development of up to 60 residential dwellings on approximately 1.66 hectares (ha) of land;
  - Amenity Greenspace (including play) on approximately 0.43ha;
  - Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace on approximately 0.91ha; and
  - Other land for drainage connection and attenuation on approximately 1.42ha.
- 6.4 The DAS describes the Design Principles adopted for the Proposed Development and the following is particularly relevant to the LVA because it makes the proposal consistent with other nearby development and is in keeping with the site's general character:
- *Development area within existing disturbed ground, overlooking open space and adjacent housing development*
  - *Public open space in northern part of the site to maintain a green entrance to the settlement*
  - *Central green space as a focal point, in keeping with the character of the village and adjacent development*
  - *Tree planting to open space*
  - *Existing tree belts retained providing visual screening to development and as a habitat and wildlife corridor*
  - *Native hedgerow to the western boundary to define the development edge.*

- *Tree belt planting to western boundary of open space to create a landscape buffer to the development and the adjacent farm.*
- 6.5 The majority of site boundary hedgerows and trees will be retained as part of the Proposed Development. The tree constraints plan (in CD1.10 Drawing number D9731.01.001) shows existing vegetation.
- 6.6 Landscape proposals for the Proposed Development are a response to the existing landscape of the site and the opportunities presented for the enhancement of existing and the creation of new landscape and green infrastructure. New planting is proposed on the site's boundaries to strengthen existing boundaries and provide a sensitive transition to the wider countryside.
- 6.7 The assessment of effects described in the LVA takes account of the embedded mitigation and the proposed planting as illustrated in the Development Framework Plan (CD1.3).

## **7.0 Effects on Landscape Character**

- 7.1 The approach to assessing effects on landscape character is consistent with advice in GLVIA3, notably considering effects during construction (short-term); on completion (Year 1); and the enduring effects with established planting (Year 15).
- 7.2 The overall effects are a product of the magnitude of that effect and the sensitivity of the receptor. The greatest overall effects would result from high magnitude effects on receptors of the greatest sensitivity.
- 7.3 The LVA has ascribed sensitivity with reference to published landscape character assessments. This is standard practice other than where a very distinct variance is noted during the baseline assessment.
- 7.4 The findings of the LVA with regard to effects on landscape character are summarised in Table 3 overleaf.
- 7.5 The scheme would bring about an inevitable change to the character of the application site itself, however, the physical change would be confined within the application site boundaries.
- 7.6 Off site, the pattern of the land cover, tree and hedge cover and undulating topography as identified in the various published reports, would all continue and prevail with the scheme in place.
- 7.7 The greatest forecast effect is locally at the site and its immediate environs although after 15 years this is anticipated to be no greater than Minor Adverse. This is a finding consistent with formerly undeveloped land changing to developed land.
- 7.8 The Site is well contained by existing vegetation and built form and any effects on landscape would be limited to a localised geographical area. The Site exhibits few characteristics of the published Landscape Character Assessments, but characteristics such as hedgerow boundaries are retained wherever possible and incorporated into the Proposed Development.
- 7.9 There is an inherent assumption in LVA that existing character without development is preferable (unless the site being considered is clearly of an unattractive character such as a derelict site with an incoherent and confused character).

Table 3: Anticipated Effects on Landscape Character

Receptor	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
Character of the Site and its immediate surroundings	Low	Construction	Moderate Negative	<b>Moderate Adverse</b>
		Year 1	Moderate Negative	<b>Moderate Adverse</b>
		Year 15	Low Negative	<b>Minor Adverse</b>
NCA 107: Cotswolds	Medium	Construction	Localised Low Negative; Negligible Overall	<b>Localised Minor Adverse; Negligible Overall</b>
		Year 1	Localised Low Negative; Negligible Overall	<b>Localised Minor Adverse; Negligible Overall</b>
		Year 15	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
Upstanding Village Farmlands Landscape Type	Medium	Construction	Localised Moderate Negative; Low Negative Overall	<b>Localised Moderate Adverse; Minor Adverse Overall</b>
		Year 1	Localised Moderate Negative; Low Negative Overall	<b>Localised Moderate Adverse; Minor Adverse Overall</b>
		Year 15	Low Negative Overall	<b>Minor Adverse Overall</b>
(R2b) - Rolling Arable Landscape with Strong Field Pattern	Low	Construction	Localised Moderate Negative; Low Negative Overall	<b>Localised Moderate Adverse; Minor Adverse Overall</b>
		Year 1	Localised Moderate Negative; Low Negative Overall	<b>Localised Moderate Adverse; Minor Adverse Overall</b>
		Year 15	Low Negative Overall	<b>Minor Adverse Overall</b>

Receptor	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
(R4b) - Small-scale Rolling Farmland with Strong Field Pattern LT	Low	Construction	Low Negative	<b>Minor Adverse</b>
		Year 1	Low Negative	<b>Minor Adverse</b>
		Year 15	Low Negative	<b>Minor Adverse</b>
(R6a) - 18th Century Enclosed Parkland LT	Medium	Construction	Low Negative	<b>Minor Adverse</b>
		Year 1	Low Negative	<b>Minor Adverse</b>
		Year 15	Low Negative	<b>Minor Adverse</b>

## **8.0 Effects on Views**

- 8.1 The approach to assessing effect on views is set out in the LVA (CD1.5) and is consistent with GLVIA3, notably in how judgements are made and in considering effects on views during construction (short-term); on completion (Year 1); and the enduring effects with established planting (Year 15).
- 8.2 Visibility of the site is contained by topography, existing vegetation and built form. The study area for views adopted in the LVA extends approximately 1km in each direction. In the far extents of the study area the site is barely discernible beyond layers of intervening vegetation and built form.
- 8.3 The findings from the LVA are summarised in Table 4 commencing on Page 18 of this statement.
- 8.4 The greatest forecast effect is locally at the site and its immediate environs although after 15 years this is no greater than Moderate Adverse. As with landscape character, this judgement is consistent with that made for development on almost all undeveloped land. LVA assumes that a view of an undeveloped field is preferable to a view of a pleasant housing development. Clearly it is not at all unusual and is not unacceptable to have a view of houses, particularly where there are other houses already in the view. The great majority of householders have a view of other houses.
- 8.5 Panoramic views from Hobb Hill are identified in the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan. Post-completion there will be views towards the Site from PRoW Footpath 136/6/20) on Hobb Hill. Proposed tree planting within the public open space along the northern site boundary will soften and filter some views in the long-term. Whilst the Proposed Development will extend the existing settlement edge of Bloxham to the west, it will be seen in conjunction with existing built form in Bloxham and be well-related to the existing Woodlands development to the east. The verdant setting of the village will still be appreciable beyond the Proposed Development to the south, north and west. The overall effect at Year 15 will be moderate adverse.
- 8.6 The magnitude of forecast effects and the overall importance of effects forecast diminish rapidly with distance as would be anticipated.

- 8.7 Appendix A to this statement shows a series of sequential views along Tadmarton Road and demonstrates that the appeal site is barely discernible from most locations, and where visible is seen in context with the recently completed Miller Homes development to the immediate east of the site. The proposed development is set back from Tadmarton Road beyond an area of public open space and the proposed building line is set back from that already established by Cunningham Drive to the east. The majority of the existing hedgerow along the northern site boundary will be retained with supplementary tree planting in the public open space along the northern site boundary. The proposed development would not have a harmful effect on the approach to the Bloxham along Tadmarton Road and would be well integrated into the surrounding countryside by retained vegetation and proposed woodland planting along the western site boundary.

Table 4: Visual Receptors, Sensitivity and Magnitude of Effect and Overall Effect During Development Phases Assessed

Receptor	Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
Users of PRow Bloxham Bridleway 136/9/20 (Bloxham Circular Walk)	5	Medium	Construction	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 1	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 15	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
Users of PRow Footpath 136/6/20 (Bloxham Circular Walk)	6	Medium	Construction	Medium negative	<b>Moderate adverse</b>
			Year 1	Medium negative	<b>Moderate adverse</b>
			Year 15	Medium negative	<b>Moderate adverse</b>
Users of PRow Bloxham Footpath 136/5/10 (Bloxham Circular Walk)	8	Medium	Construction	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 1	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 15	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
Users of PRow Milcombe Footpath 298/2/10	9	Medium	Construction	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 1	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 15	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
Users of Tadmarton Road	1, 2	Low	Construction	Medium negative	<b>Moderate adverse</b>
			Year 1	Medium negative	<b>Moderate adverse</b>
			Year 15	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
Users of Coleman Close	3	Low	Construction	High negative	<b>Moderate adverse</b>
			Year 1	High negative	<b>Moderate adverse</b>
			Year 15	High negative	<b>Moderate adverse</b>



Receptor	Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
Users of Bartlett Road	-	Low	Construction	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 1	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 15	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
Users of Clifton Drive	-	Low	Construction	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 1	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 15	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
Users of Faulkener Road	-	Low	Construction	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 1	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 15	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
Users of Stoke Newington Road	-	Low	Construction	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 1	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 15	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
Users of Bloxham Road	7	Low	Construction	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 1	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 15	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
Residents of properties along Tadmarton Road	-	Medium	Construction	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 1	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 15	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
Residents of Coleman Close	-	Medium	Construction	High negative	<b>Major adverse</b>
			Year 1	High negative	<b>Major adverse</b>
			Year 15	Medium negative	<b>Moderate adverse</b>

Receptor	Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
Residents of properties along Bartlett Road	-	Medium	Construction	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 1	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 15	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
Residents of properties along Clifton Drive	-	Medium	Construction	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 1	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 15	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
Residents of properties along Faulkener Road	-	Medium	Construction	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 1	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 15	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
Residents of properties along Quarry Close	-	Medium	Construction	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 1	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 15	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
Residents of properties along Bloxham Road	-	Medium	Construction	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 1	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 15	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
Visitors to Milky Wheys	-	Medium	Construction	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 1	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 15	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
Visitors to Woodlands Country Park	4	Medium	Construction	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 1	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>
			Year 15	Low negative	<b>Minor adverse</b>

Receptor	Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
Visitors to The Slade LNR	-	Medium	Construction	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 1	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>
			Year 15	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>

## **9.0 Effects on Settlement Character**

- 9.1 It is acknowledged that the site lies outside of, albeit adjacent to, the built-up limits of Bloxham, and is in the 'open countryside' as defined in the Local Plan.
- 9.2 The proposals will see built form on the appeal site. Because the application is in outline, there will be a high degree of control over the form and appearance of development. The DAS (CD1.4) and the preceding assessment highlight that there are a range of building forms in Bloxham with modern development the most dominant influence close to the appeal site.
- 9.3 The scheme would introduce a high-quality residential built environment which would be in keeping with the local settlement and therefore, not at odds or out of character.
- 9.4 The site has a strong visual relationship with recent residential development along Coleman Close to the immediate east. Development along Coleman Close is also visible when looking across the site from parts of Tadmarton Road.
- 9.5 As highlighted in the DAS (CD 4.1), the design of the site has been formulated around a strong and legible landscape framework. This will provide usable public open space for local residents and an attractive setting for new development on the western edge of Bloxham that maintains a green entrance to the settlement. Areas of proposed built development have been located to provide a natural extension of the recent Woodlands development to the east of the site.
- 9.6 The development will have a modern identity that is inspired by the architecture and urban design of existing development in Bloxham, which can be addressed further at detailed design stage.
- 9.7 The anticipated effect on settlement character of development of the appeal site is the equivalent of that on landscape character and will be moderate adverse initially and in the long term will be minor adverse as the embedded mitigation of planting and open space establishes and matures.

## 10.0 Compliance with Landscape Related Planning Policies

- 10.1 This section assesses the proposal in the context of the relevant landscape related planning policies. The assessment considers the proposals against the policies as drafted. It does not consider the weight to be attributed to the policies.

### National Planning Policy Framework 2023

- 10.2 Paragraph 135b of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are '*...b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.*'
- 10.3 Criterion C of para. 135 states that developments should be '*...c) sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting....*'. The DAS (C1.4) provides an overview of townscape character, considers the site's relationship to areas of existing residential development, and sets out the principles of the landscape strategy.
- 10.4 Paragraph 180 a) sets out the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes. The site is not in a valued landscape. Paragraph 180 b) recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

### Local Planning Policy

- 10.5 Local Plan Policy ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement states that '*Opportunities will be sought to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.*'
- 10.6 It goes on to state: '*Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted if they would:*
- *Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside*
  - *Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography*

- *Be inconsistent with local character*
- *Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquillity*
- *Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features, or*
- *Harm the historic value of the landscape.*

*Development proposals should have regard to the information and advice contained in the Council's Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance, and the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) and be accompanied by a landscape assessment where appropriate'.*

- 10.7 Views of the proposed development would be localised, with the key public views available from Tadmarton Road. This statement has set out how the new homes would be assimilated into the surrounding landscape and townscape, through design and the incorporation of new landscaping. Whilst the proposed development would be visible from a small part of the adjoining countryside, it would be seen within the context of the existing settlement edge at 'Woodlands' and will not appear out of character. The site is well screened from the wider surrounding landscape due to the topography of the site and vegetation structure in the wider landscape.
- 10.8 The proposed development proposes to retain the majority of the boundary vegetation. Whilst there will be some minor alterations to topography along the southern site boundary, the change in topography across the site will still be discernible.
- 10.9 The Proposed Development would respect and be in accordance with the existing settlement character of the western edge of Bloxham be seen within the context of the existing settlement form and will not have a significant effect on local character. At the detailed design stage, the layout, design, and landscaping of the development can be agreed with the Council, to ensure the development reflects the local townscape and landscape character.
- 10.10 The site lies adjacent to Park Farm and the existing settlement edge of Bloxham and cannot be described as having a high level of tranquillity. As such the proposed development will not affect an area of high tranquillity.
- 10.11 As highlighted in paragraphs 8.7 and 9.5, the proposed development respects the setting of Bloxham and will not harm the rural approach to the village.

10.12 The site and surroundings are not covered by any designations for heritage value or interest and development of the site will not harm the historic value of the landscape

10.13 The proposals accord with Policy ESD13.

10.14 Local Plan Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment states that *'New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards'*.

10.15 New development proposals should:

- *Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions*
- *...Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting.*
- *... Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public or, in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette*
- *Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features*
- *...Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure ). Well designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro climate, and air pollution and provide attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality*

*The design of all new development will need to be informed by an analysis of the context, together with an explanation and justification of the principles that have informed the design rationale. This should be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application’.*

- 10.16 The scale and density of the proposed development reflects that of the other nearby recent developments on the edge of Bloxham. The proposed housing will be set within a framework of public open spaces incorporating existing vegetation and proposed tree and woodland planting.
- 10.17 Several of the criteria deal with matters of detailed design, which can be readily achieved and can be agreed with the Council at a later stage, however, the illustrative layout (included on Page 55 of the DAS) and the DAS give further information on how these criteria could be met.
- 10.18 The proposals accord with Policy ESD15.
- 10.19 Local Plan Policy Villages 2: Distributing Growth across the Rural Areas states that in identifying and considering sites, particular regard will be given to the following criteria:
- ...*Whether development would contribute in enhancing the built environment*
  - ...*Whether significant adverse landscape and impacts could be avoided’.*
- 10.20 The site is capable of accommodating a high quality residential area which is well related to the existing settlement form of Bloxham.
- 10.21 As highlighted in Table 4, whilst there will be some moderate adverse landscape effects in the short and medium, these will reduce to minor adverse in the long-term. The site’s character will change from a grassland field to a new housing development, however, the proposed development will not be out of context within the receiving landscape.
- 10.22 Saved Policy C28: Layout, design and external appearance of new development states that ‘*Control will be exercised over all new development, including conversions and extensions, to ensure that the standards of layout, design and external appearance, including the choice of external-finish materials, are sympathetic to the character of the urban or rural context of that development’.*



- 10.23 These matters can be agreed with the Council at the Reserved Matters stage and the proposals accord with Saved Policy C28.
- 10.24 Saved Policy C30: Design of new residential development highlights that *‘design control will be exercised to ensure... that new housing development is compatible with the appearance, character, layout, scale and density of existing dwellings in the vicinity’*.
- 10.25 These matters can be agreed with the Council at the Reserved Matters stage and the proposals accord with Saved Policy C30.
- 10.26 Saved Policy C33: Protection of important gaps of undeveloped land states that *‘The Council will seek to retain any undeveloped gap of land which is important in preserving the character of a loose-knit settlement structure or in maintaining the proper setting for a listed building or in preserving a view or feature of recognised amenity or historical value’*.
- 10.27 ‘Important Gaps’ are not identified on the accompanying Policies Map. The western edge of Bloxham does not have a loose-knit settlement structure and there is no evidence in published literature, the Local Plan or the Neighbourhood Plan that the site forms part of or provides a view of recognised amenity or historical value. The proposals do not harm Policy C33.
- 10.28 Policy BL11 of the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2031 highlights that all development will be encouraged to respect the local character and the historic and natural assets of the area, and the design and materials chosen should preserve or enhance our rural heritage, landscape and sense of place.
- 10.29 Development proposals should:
- *‘Relate in scale, massing and layout to neighbouring properties and the density of new housing development should be consistent and compatible with the existing and prevailing density and reflect the locally distinctive character of the locality in which the new development is proposed and should not usually exceed 30 dwellings per hectare.*
  - *Be in keeping with local distinctiveness and characteristics of the historic form of the village;*
  - *Make a positive contribution to the character of Bloxham and its rural feel;*
  - *Use materials in keeping with the distinctive character of our local brick or ironstone;*

- *Make good use of trees, garden space, hedgerows and green space to soften the street scene; and*
- *Preserve existing areas of open space and take every available opportunity to create new open space to help retain rural character'*

10.30 The site is capable of accommodating a high quality residential area which is well related to the existing settlement form of Bloxham. Such matters can be agreed with the Council at the Reserved Matters stage and the proposals accord with Policy BL11.

## **11.0 Responses Relating to Landscape and Views**

### Cherwell District Council Landscape Officer

- 11.1 The Cherwell District Council Landscape Officer provided a response (CD4.8) to the outline planning application dated 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023.
- 11.2 The Landscape Officer confirmed that they agree with the findings of the LVA in relation to landscape condition and sensitivity and noted that the landscape value of the appeal site has been reduced by the completion of the adjacent Miller Homes development.
- 11.3 They also confirmed that the Landscape Strategy was acceptable in principle.
- 11.4 The Landscape Officer agreed that the viewpoints are generally representative of the visual receptor experience but noted some disagreements on the ascribed sensitivity for receptors at viewpoints 5 and 6 and the corresponding overall effect.
- 11.5 The Landscape Officer refers to Table 6 of the LVA Methodology, but incorrectly states that this table is in relation to sensitivity. Table 6 of the LVA Methodology outlines susceptibility to change criteria. Pages 113 – 114 of GLVIA3 highlight that the visual receptors most likely to be susceptible to change include residents at home and people engaged in outdoor recreation including users of Public Rights of Way. This confirms that the high susceptibility ascribed to users of PRow Bloxham Bridleway 136/9/20 (viewpoint 5) and PRow Bloxham Footpath 136/6/20 (viewpoint 6) is appropriate.
- 11.6 Sensitivity is a combination of susceptibility and value. With reference to Table 7 of the LVA Methodology, views from PRow Bloxham Bridleway 136/9/20 (viewpoint 5) and PRow Bloxham Footpath 136/6/20 (viewpoint 6) are of local value. Both of these routes form part of the Bloxham Circular Walk which is promoted locally and is identified in the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 11.7 Table 8 of the LVA Methodology shows how value and susceptibility criteria are combined into a sensitivity judgement. This confirms that a visual receptor with a high susceptibility change and local value results in a medium sensitivity, as reported in Table 6 of the LVA (CD1.5).

- 11.8 The Landscape Officer's response makes no reference to harm to landscape or settlement character.

Other Representations

- 11.9 TEP has read the other representations received on the application and note that some of these refer to effects on the landscape (landscape character) with few referring to views and the character of the settlement. TEP has not seen any representations which raise specific additional matters on these issues to those which have not been already addressed in this Statement.

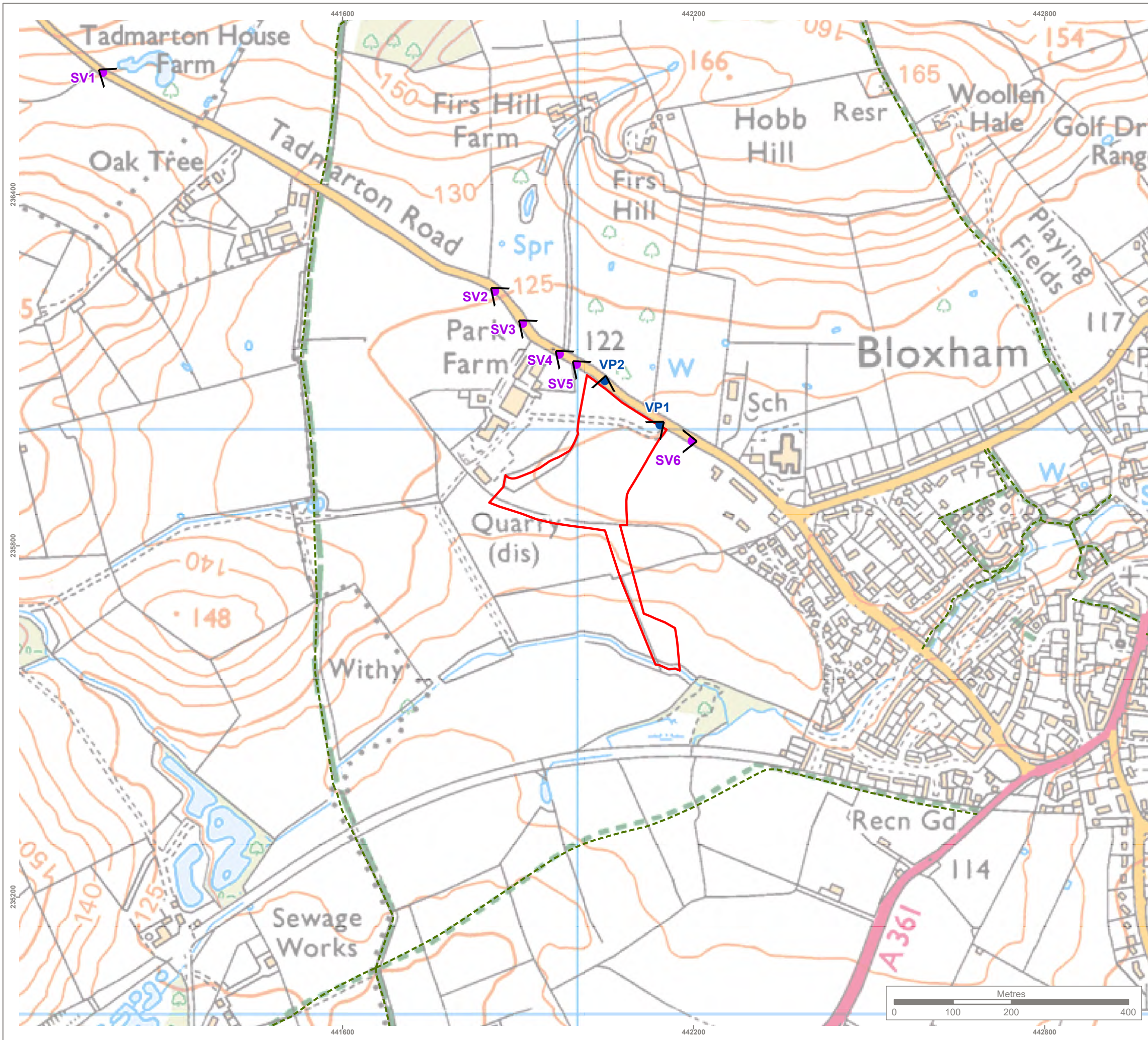
## **12.0 Conclusion**

- 12.1 The planning application was accompanied by an LVA prepared by appropriately qualified and experienced expert professionals consistent with contemporary guidance.
- 12.2 Contrary to the RfR there are no unacceptable landscape impacts. Development would not appear prominent in the open countryside or detract from the rural approach to the village. The Proposed Development would respect and be in accordance with the existing settlement character of the western edge of Bloxham. The proposed development will be well related to and be seen within the context of the existing settlement form and will not have a significant effect on local character. The detailed design including layout, design, and landscaping of the development can be agreed with the Council through discharge of reserved matters to ensure the development reflects the local townscape and landscape character.
- 12.3 Cherwell District Council's Landscape Officer has confirmed that they agree with the findings of the LVA in relation to landscape condition and sensitivity and noted that the landscape value of the appeal site has been reduced by the completion of the adjacent Miller Homes development. The Landscape Officer also confirmed that the Landscape Strategy was acceptable in principle.
- 12.4 The proposed scheme would be seen in conjunction with existing built form within the village. Areas of proposed built development have been located to provide a natural extension of the recent Woodlands development to the east of the site. The proposals would be in keeping with character and consistent with other nearby residential areas in Bloxham.
- 12.5 The Proposed Development Area is in and adjacent to the workings of an old quarry. The quarry bottom levels and the northern and southern embankments, along with existing structural vegetation on the western and southern boundaries provide physical containment against the rolling arable landscape to the west and south. The Proposed Development would be set back from Tadmarton Road, would only be visible from a short stretch of the road and would not harm the rural approach to the village. The development would have a strong physical and visual relationship to the existing settlement edge at 'Woodlands'.

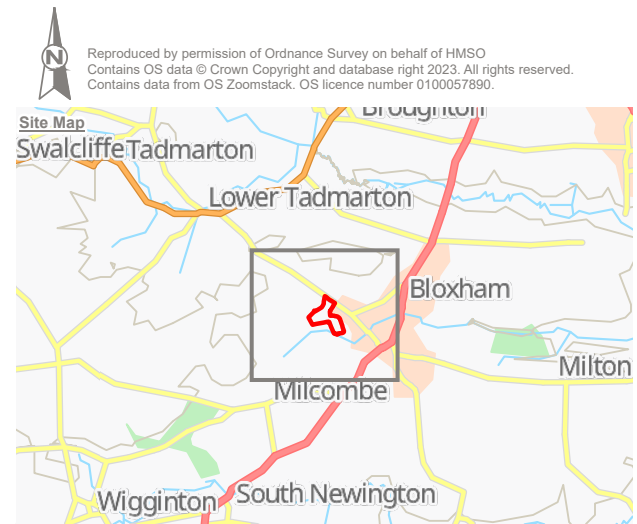
- 12.6 Development of the site would result in the loss of a limited area which is currently countryside. An integral part of the scheme is to provide areas of green infrastructure, the DAS envisages that the majority of these would be managed areas of public open space with grassland areas punctuated with trees and shrubbery although detailed design would be resolved through submission of Reserved Matters. Whilst the overall change to the character of the site would be adverse in character terms, there would be no material harmful effect on the character of the countryside beyond the site.
- 12.7 The LVA has assessed the potential effects on landscape character and concluded that these would be up to moderate adverse in the short and medium, and minor adverse in long-term. This is primarily as a result of proposed planting, helping to further integrate the Site into the wider landscape.
- 12.8 The effects of the Proposed Development will be restricted to a localised geographical area and would not result in substantial harm to landscape character beyond the Site boundary, nor would there be substantial detrimental effects to visual amenity across a wide area.

## **Appendix A: Sequential Views along Tadmarton Road**





- KEY**
- Site boundary
  - Sequential views
  - LVA viewpoints - refer to CD1.5
  - Public Rights of Way (PRoW)



Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date



**THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

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Project  
**Tadmarton Road, Bloxham**

Title  
**Sequential Views along Tadmarton Road**

Drawing Number  
**G9731.007**

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
AR	SP	LF	1:6,500 @ A3	30/10/2023









**Project :** 9731 Tadmarton Road, Bloxham LVA  
**Title:** Photosheets - Type 1  
**Figure Number:** Sequential View 2  
**Drawing Number:** IN9731.002 - Sheet 2 of 6

**Visualisation Type :** Type 1  
**Time and Date:** 24/10/2023 Time: 10:24  
**Camera and Lens Type:** Canon Eos 5D FFS 50mm Prime lens

**FoV and Display Size:** FoV: 90° x 27° (Baseline) 96%  
**Viewing Distance and Projection:** Comfortable arms length. Cylindrical



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**Project :** 9731 Tadmarton Road, Bloxham LVA  
**Title:** Photosheets - Type 1  
**Figure Number:** Sequential View 3  
**Drawing Number:** IN9731.002 - Sheet 3 of 6

**Visualisation Type :** Type 1  
**Time and Date:** 24/10/2023 Time: 10:27  
**Camera and Lens Type:** Canon Eos 5D FFS 50mm Prime lens

**FoV and Display Size:** FoV: 90° x 27° (Baseline) 96%  
**Viewing Distance and Projection:** Comfortable arms length. Cylindrical



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**Project :** 9731 Tadmarton Road, Bloxham LVA  
**Title:** Photosheets - Type 1  
**Figure Number:** Sequential View 4  
**Drawing Number:** IN9731.002 - Sheet 4 of 6

**Visualisation Type :** Type 1  
**Time and Date:** 24/10/2023 Time: 10:30  
**Camera and Lens Type:** Canon Eos 5D FFS 50mm Prime lens

**FoV and Display Size:** FoV: 90° x 27° (Baseline) 96%  
**Viewing Distance and Projection:** Comfortable arms length. Cylindrical



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**Project :** 9731 Tadmarton Road, Bloxham LVA  
**Title:** Photosheets - Type 1  
**Figure Number:** Sequential View 5  
**Drawing Number:** IN9731.002 - Sheet 5 of 6

**Visualisation Type :** Type 1  
**Time and Date:** 24/10/2023 Time: 10:32  
**Camera and Lens Type:** Canon Eos 5D FFS 50mm Prime lens

**FoV and Display Size:** FoV: 90° x 27° (Baseline) 96%  
**Viewing Distance and Projection:** Comfortable arms length. Cylindrical



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**Appendix B: Draft Technical Guidance Note 05/23 Notes and  
Clarifications on aspects of the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape  
and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)**

# Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)

This Technical Guidance Note is a draft version for consultation. Please send any feedback to [GLVIA3@landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:GLVIA3@landscapeinstitute.org) by 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

The final document will be published later in the year.



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# 1 Introduction

**This Technical Guidance Note is a draft version for consultation. Please send any feedback to [GLVIA3@landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:GLVIA3@landscapeinstitute.org) by 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023.**

**The final document will be published later in the year.**

This document provides a compilation of clarifications on the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3). This includes:

- *Statements of clarification from 2013-2015, previously held on the Landscape Institute website;*
- *Answers provided by Landscape Institute's GLVIA Panel to questions raised during the Landscape Institute's December 2020 webinar 'GLVIA Misconceptions and Best Practice';*
- *Answers provided by the Landscape Institute's GLVIA Panel to questions raised by Members via responses to the 2021 survey about GLVIA3, and sent to the Landscape Institute Technical email address.*

This Technical Guidance Note has been produced to help interpret aspects of the guidance provided in GLVIA3, and should be read alongside GLVIA3. A description of status levels of information and guidance provided by the Landscape Institute can be found [here](#).

Any comments and feedback on GLVIA3 can be sent to [technical@landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:technical@landscapeinstitute.org)

## Context

LVIA is a skill to be learned and mastered. It should always be remembered that the purpose of undertaking LVIA (or LVA) is to express clearly to decision makers the landscape professional's judgement about changes to the landscape and views. In particular, the purpose is to explain which aspects of landscape and visual change are more important to the decision to be made – and why, and which are not – and why. Achieving this outcome is more fundamental to good LVIA than the detailed mechanics of specific assessment methodologies.

Landscape and visual resources (and changes to them) are not easily measurable. Therefore, those undertaking LVIA have to proceed by a process of description, analysis and reasoning leading to assessment conclusions.

GLVIA3 is guidance aimed at experienced practitioners to ensure a degree of consistency in what is taken into account in reaching professional judgements and how they are documented. It is not a textbook to teach the inexperienced; a detailed recipe for the perfect assessment, or intended to precisely describe exactly how assessments should be undertaken and presented. Overly restrictive guidance would prevent improvement and innovation, and variation and debate are to be expected rather than discouraged.

GLVIA3 provides a structured process for assessing effects on landscape and visual resources. The responsibility of the assessor is to tailor it to the place and project under consideration, supported by an explanation of the rationale behind the approach taken.

The GLVIA Advisory Panel's view is that GLVIA3 strikes the right balance and this was reflected in the responses to the GLVIA survey in 2021<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Responses to the GLVIA survey were: 26% agreed that GLVIA3 is fit for purpose and provides a useful framework for undertaking LVIA; 47% agreed that GLVIA3 is a useful framework for LVIA but some clarifications are required; and 27% agreed that GLVIA3 requires a re-write.

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## 2 Errata

This section sets out errata relevant to GLVIA3.

	Error	Correction
E1	<b>Text within Figure 5.10 ‘Scale of Significance’</b>	In the upper box attached to ‘More significant’ the phrase <i>‘Loss of lower-value elements...’</i> should read: <i>‘Loss of higher-value elements...’</i>
E2	<b>Typo in para 6.34 of GLVIA3</b>	Paragraph 6.34 of GLVIA3 should read “Visual receptors likely to be less susceptible to change” rather than “ <i>Visual receptors likely to be less sensitive to change</i> ”
E3	<b>Reference to visual susceptibility in Fig 6.1 “Judge susceptibility of visual receptor to specific change”</b>	Reference to visual susceptibility in Fig 6.1 GLVIA3 ) conflicts with the approach in paragraph 6.32. Paragraph 6.32 is correct and Figure 6.1 should be amended to read “ <i>Judge susceptibility of receptor</i> ”. The susceptibility of visual receptors is not dependent on the specific change being proposed.
E4	<b>Diagrams 5.1 and 6.1 are missing reference to geographical extent.</b>	In GLVIA3 the narrative text in paragraphs 5.48 and 6.38 refer to geographical extent but geographical extent is missing from Diagrams 5.1 and 6.1. Geographical extent is an unintentional omission from Diagrams 5.1 and 6.1. However, there is a need for clarification as to how geographical extent is assessed and this is set out in clarifications 3(1), 5(11) and 6(8).

# 3 Notes and clarifications

This section is set out in the same order as GLVIA3 to aid navigation.

## 1. Introduction

A number of questions have been received about the scope of the guidance, the role of policy and who the guidance is for.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
1(1)	<b>GLVIA3 and how it should be understood</b>	Chapters 1 and 2 are introductory, setting the context in general terms and are aimed at general readers. Chapter 3 and those which follow provide advice for the landscape professional. Chapter 3 establishes the principles to which later chapters conform. Therefore if there appears to be a measure of ambiguity between something stated in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, then the professional is encouraged to regard Chapter 3's advice as having primacy.
1(2)	<b>Link between LVIA and policy</b>	GLVIA3 purposefully does not refer to specific policy documents or policies because:  a) The assessment process and judgements operate independently of policy. Policies will indicate how much weight could, should or may be attached to certain findings of an assessment in decision making.  b) GLVIA3 applies to all nations of the UK which have different policy contexts.  c) Policy changes, as referenced on page ix of the Preface to GLVIA3.
1(3)	<b>How should the reference to policy in paragraph 5.40 (landscape susceptibility) be interpreted?</b>	The word 'policy' used in paragraph 5.40 of GLVIA3 means general policy (and strategies) relating to landscape, for example policy objectives in AONB Management Plans that seek to conserve and enhance the AONB, or landscape policies in local plans that seek to preserve landscape character, rather than specific planning policy such as allocation of a site for development. For example, if a site is within an area allocated for development, this should not have a bearing on the susceptibility of the existing landscape to change.
1(4)	<b>Conflicts of interest</b>  Is there risk of a conflict of interest if the landscape architect designing a scheme is also writing the LVIA?	This is covered at Paragraph 2.26 of GLVIA3 which indicates that it is important that judgements remain impartial. There is benefit to the designer and assessor being the same or the same team, since GLVIA3 and IEMA guidance advocate an integrated and iterative assessment-design process, whereby the design of the development can evolve in response to assessment findings as they emerge (and not just L&V findings) to avoid or reduce adverse effects.

1(5)	<p><b>Proportionate approach</b></p> <p>How can we balance the need for thoroughness with proportionality?</p>	<p>GLVIA3 Paragraph <b>7.5</b> acknowledges that this can be challenging. Paragraphs <b>1.17</b> and <b>3.16</b> also address this topic. Ultimately this is a matter for professional judgement responding to the specifics of an individual project.</p>
1(6)	<p><b>Level of prescription (mandatory standards vs guidance)</b></p>	<p>GLVIA3 is guidance i.e. Landscape Institute members are not mandated to follow it, but are strongly encouraged to do so as a matter of good practice, unless there are exceptional reasons for not doing so.</p> <p>N.B. An example of a ‘standard’ is the <a href="#">Design Manual for Roads and Bridges</a>.</p>
1(7)	<p><b>Assessment of allocated sites</b></p> <p>Should LVIA be carried out for allocated sites or should the LPA have carried this out prior to the designation in the local plan?</p>	<p>The fact that an area has a certain planning status does not negate the potential need for assessment – including EIA and thus LVIA.</p> <p>Also, the following may be of relevance here:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding the difference between SEA and EIA: strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is used at the strategic level to ensure environmental considerations are integrated into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes whereas environmental impact assessment (EIA) is used to ensure that planning decisions are made with full knowledge of a project’s likely significant environmental effects, and that any negative effects are prevented, reduced or offset, while positive effects are enhanced.</li> <li>2. Understanding the difference between landscape sensitivity assessment (LSA) and landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA). LSA is carried out for the purposes of strategic spatial planning, and LVIA assesses the effects of the specific development proposals. Both are important, at different stages of the process. LVIA should also help local communities understand the likely effects of specific proposals.</li> </ol> <p>A clear professional judgement is needed to be communicated and robustly justified in the LVIA in order for decision makers to weigh up any harm against the benefits of the development in the planning balance.</p>

## 2. Definitions, scope and context

Some questions have been asked about the scope of the guidance (including relevance of the guidance to townscape and seascape assessments), the scope of LVIA, and the role of professional judgement.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
2(1)	<p><b>Application of GLVIA3 in townscape and visual impact assessment (TVIA)</b></p> <p>Specifically, comments have been made about difficulties in applying the GLVIA3 in a townscape context in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>defining valued townscape in the absence of designations;</li> <li>judging the extent to which views contribute to the landscape or townscape setting enjoyed by residents (ref. bottom of page 113 of GLVIA3);</li> <li>assessing whether the effects are positive or negative and how to integrate the consideration of the aesthetic quality of the proposed development, i.e. does a 'beautiful' proposal result in beneficial effect?</li> </ul>	<p>TVIA should follow the same processes as LVIA (but within a townscape setting) using an appropriate methodology based on GLVIA3 (including assessment of effects on landscape elements in the townscape). When defining value outside designated areas, GLVIA3 states that judgements can be based on suitable criteria that can be used to establish value. LI TIN <a href="#">05/2017</a> on Townscape Character Assessment and <a href="#">TGN 02/2021</a> 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' both provide relevant guidance.</p> <p>In judging whether a townscape setting is enjoyed by residents, the starting point should be to assume that views experienced by local communities contribute to the townscape setting enjoyed by residents unless there are clear indications to the contrary.</p> <p>Judgement regarding whether the effect is positive or negative should be as objective as possible, clearly explained and related to the baseline, and should take account of more than just architectural quality or 'beauty'. It should reflect how the design responds to its context and the contribution to the townscape and views the development makes, because a development which may be appropriate for one context may not be appropriate elsewhere. Design guidance pertinent to the proposal and its location may also inform the judgement.</p>
2(2)	<p><b>Application of GLVIA3 in seascape/coastal and visual impact assessment (SVIA)</b></p>	<p>SVIA should follow the same processes as LVIA (but within a seascape setting), so SVIA should be undertaken using an appropriate methodology based on GLVIA3.</p> <p>Specific guidance by statutory agencies and local authorities sits alongside GLVIA3. It is important to note the difference between guidance for identifying landscape (or seascape/coastal) sensitivity as part of strategic landscape planning (such as that provided by <a href="#">Natural England</a> in relation to landscape and seascape sensitivity assessment) and identifying sensitivity for the purposes of LVIA or SLVIA – more information about assessing sensitivity as part of LVIA is set out at clarifications 5(4) and 5(5) in this document.</p> <p>As stated in GLVIA3, at Paragraph 5.41, existing landscape sensitivity studies provide useful background information, but do not provide a substitute for the assessment of the susceptibility of the receptors as part of LVIA. Appendices B and C of the MMO's 'An approach to seascape sensitivity</p>

		assessment' sets out susceptibility and value criteria and indicators that may be relevant to consider when assessing seascape sensitivity as part of a SVIA, to be suitably tailored to the project.
2(3)	<b>How to assess a proposed development that is to be submitted for outline planning permission</b>	<p>Paragraph <b>4.2</b> of GLVIA3 covers this topic. It is important to only rely for assessment on parameters that are secured as part of the outline application (for instance the maximum height of development), and not take account of factors that are not (such as the design shown on an 'Illustrative Masterplan', or the appearance of buildings depicted in design illustrations).</p> <p>Any limitations of the information available should be set out within the assessment.</p> <p>The Panel would encourage you to speak to your EIA Project Manager/planning lawyers about the level of detail required for robust assessment of landscape and visual effects.</p>
2(4)	<b>Role of LVIA in the planning application</b>	<p>GLVIA3 Paragraph <b>8.9</b>) makes clear that LVIA "should not include advocacy for the scheme (including in relation to the design). Conclusions on the planning balance should also not be made within LVIA as such judgements need to take account of the policy balance in relation to all aspects of the project, not just landscape matters.</p> <p>Sometime LVIA's are introduced as 'submitted in support of the application'. This is wrong, instead they should 'accompany' the application.</p>
2(5)	<b>How to employ professional judgement</b>	<p>LI Members operate under the LI's <a href="#">Code of Conduct</a> which requires members to exercise impartial and independent professional judgement.</p> <p>GLVIA3 covers this topic at Paragraphs <b>2.24</b> and <b>8.9</b>, emphasising the need for clear, balanced, reasoned and transparent explanation to support professional judgements.</p>

### 3. Principles and overview of processes

Some questions have been asked about the overall process of LVIA, in particular the role of LVIA in EIA vs non-EIA appraisals and how to assess whether an effect is positive or negative.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
3(1)	<b>How to carry out non-EIA Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVA)</b>	<p>The Local Planning Authority (LPA) can request an LVA as part of pre-app discussions where they wish to be informed about landscape and visual effects. Early consultation with the LPA is recommended to ensure the appraisal contains the information needed to make an informed decision.</p> <p>In carrying out LVA, the same principles and process as set out in GLVIA3 may be applied but it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are or are not significant. There should still be a statement of the effects identified, which may identify the relative importance/ levels (rather than significance) of the effects.</p> <p>Effects should be comparable between LVA and LVIA. For example, a 'moderate effect' should be the same in both assessment contexts.</p>
3(2)	<b>Baseline reporting: does there need to be a clear split between the baseline and assessment sections?</b>	<p>The distinction should be clear because they have different purposes (see GLVIA Para. 3.15), but this distinction need not dictate that the structure and presentation of an assessment must include separate 'sections'.</p>
3(3)	<b>Weighting of the components of magnitude: scale of effect, geographical extent and duration/reversibility</b>	<p>It has been queried whether all the components of magnitude should be equally weighted or whether scale of effect is the most important. The landscape professional should apply their judgement, explaining in the method how components have been combined. For magnitude it is likely that the size/scale of effect will be the most important factor, with geographical extent and duration considered as 'slight modifiers' where effects are particularly restricted or widespread; or particularly short in duration. Examples where geographical extent and duration might influence magnitude include: if a development will be seen in close view, but only through one gate along an otherwise hedge-screened road; or if a source of impact would only be present for a few weeks or months.</p> <p>More information about interpreting geographical extent is provided in clarifications 5(11) (landscape) and 6(7) (visual).</p>
3(4)	<b>How many categories of effect are recommended?</b>	<p>Paragraph 3.27 of GLVIA3 states that three or four categories of effect are 'ideal'. The GLVIA Panel acknowledges that more categories may be useful in some instances (such as five or six categories). It is the assessor's responsibility to ensure their methodology is clear and the levels of effect are clearly defined.</p> <p>.</p>



3(5)	<b>Significance: how to assess significance, where to set thresholds and how to achieve consistency</b>	<p>GLVIA3 provides guidance on assessing significance, in particular Paragraphs <b>3.19 -3.36</b>. The Panel highlight the following key points:</p> <p>Make sure the methodology clearly states the basis on which effects are judged as ‘significant’, and check that judgements are consistent with this (see GLVIA3 Para. <b>3.23</b>) The use of the term ‘significant’ should convey issues that are material and that should be brought to the attention of the decision-maker (see GLVIA3 Para. <b>3.35</b>)</p> <p>Avoid phrases such as ‘minor significance’. Identify the level of effect (e.g. ‘a minor level of effect’ or ‘effects would be minor’) and set out whether the effect is significant or not.</p> <p>As indicated at GLVIA Para. <b>33</b>, it is not necessary to establish thresholds for levels of significance, provided that it is made clear whether effects are, or are not significant. However, typically, effects falling below the middle of the range of overall effect are assessed as not significant. For example, if using a scale of minor/ moderate/ major, then major effects will be significant and minor effects will not be significant. In this example, moderate effects are likely to be on the borderline and may or may not be significant and justification would need to be provided in making the judgement as to whether a moderate effect is significant or not. Regarding thresholds of significance and the need for consistency, the threshold of significance should ideally be consistent across projects. There are different points of view on whether significance should be judged before or after mitigation. Some practitioners assess at both stages, to convey the effectiveness of mitigation measures in reducing significant effects to ‘not significant’. The Panel emphasises that it is not helpful to do this for measures which are ‘designed in’ as the effects without mitigation would never arise. GLVIA3 Paras. <b>4.21- 4.22</b> and IEMA guidance echo this point. Statements of significance should be reported post primary (designed-in) mitigation, and pre secondary mitigation measures which are not designed into the scheme.</p> <p>It should be noted that judgements of significance are not judgements of acceptability considering the policy context, which is a matter for decision-makers. For example, it may be the case that the LVIA concludes that a proposal would result in ‘significant’ adverse effects on a receptor but the proposal could still be consistent with policy e.g. where the proposal is for a well-designed housing development on an allocated site and those effects would arise for any such development. Conversely, the LVIA could identify ‘no significant effects’ but the proposal could still be contrary to policy.</p>
3(6)	<b>Use of matrices</b>	<p>Diagrams or matrices can be useful as a means of illustrating to the reader how judgements are combined , but should not dictate judgements. LVIA is a means of documenting professional judgement, rather than a formulaic process. All judgements need to be supported by clear description.</p>

3(7)	<b>Assessing whether an effect is positive or negative (or neutral)</b>	<p>The EIA Regulations clearly state the need to identify positive/beneficial and negative/adverse effects.</p> <p>The level of effect and whether it will have a positive or negative (or neutral) consequence are independent of each other so that it is possible to report a major and neutral effect (i.e. an important change, but one which is neither better nor worse). Any judgement on the direction of the effect (positive, negative or neutral) should be clearly justified with transparent reference to the factors being taken into account.</p> <p>Care should be taken with terminology - some practitioners use the term neutral to essentially mean the same as negligible. Neutral should be used to describe a direction of effect and negligible to describe a level of effect.</p>
3(8)	<b>Assessing frequency</b>	<p>Frequency is one of the factors that can contribute to magnitude as part of duration.</p>

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## 4. The proposed development, design and mitigation

Some questions have been received about the role of LVIA in the design process and mitigation of effects.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
4(1)	<b>The role of LVIA in the design process</b>	<p>GLVIA3 (see Para. <b>4.7</b>) and IEMA guidance recommend an iterative design and assessment process.</p> <p>While changing the design of a proposal can reduce adverse landscape and visual effects through appropriate mitigation, LVIA is not intended to reflect every improvement in design. Design will primarily be considered outside the LVIA, against design-related policies as part of the decision making process. The LVIA should set out how the landscape (or townscape or seascape) and visual context of the development has influenced the design of the development and what design changes have been made to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects and provide landscape and visual enhancements.</p> <p>In considering whether design elements constitute enhancement, clear separation must be maintained between project design aims and LVIA. For instance the provision of a sports pitch may be an enhancement to local recreation facilities, but still have adverse effects on landscape character.</p>
4(2)	<b>What is the role of mitigation in landscape 'appraisal'?</b>	<p>See 3(5) and 4(1) above. For LVA it will be appropriate to consider mitigation of adverse effects identified in the course of the appraisal, without the need to assess the significance of those effects.</p>

## 5. Assessment of landscape effects

Questions raised in relation to chapter 5 of GLVIA3 are set out below.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
5(1)	<b>Landscape baseline: landscape character</b>	<p>There have been some questions about how to deal with out of date landscape character assessments in LVIA. GLVIA3 states that existing assessments must be reviewed critically and potentially adapted (paragraphs 5.13 and 5.15) before they are used to inform the baseline for a LVIA. For out of date assessments this may take the form of identifying changes based on site observations, and/or supplementing with information from more recent assessments at a different level. GLVIA3 also suggests that where Landscape Character Assessments are not available project-specific character areas can be derived. Guidance on undertaking landscape character assessment is provided at <a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a> for England, in the <a href="#">Northern Ireland Official Publications Archive</a> for Northern Ireland. Natural Resources Wales has produced <a href="#">LANDMAP</a> as a baseline resource for Wales. <a href="#">NatureScot</a> hosts the national coverage for Scotland, and is developing new guidance; meanwhile the <a href="#">2002 guidance</a> is still in use there.</p> <p>It is not necessary to assess effects on every landscape character type or area identified by assessments at different levels for any development – the best scale of assessment for the project should be selected.</p>
5(2)	<b>Landscape baseline: landscape elements</b>	<p>There has been a request for clarification about whether individual features and individual characteristics should be treated as landscape receptors (and significance ascribed), as well as character types and / or areas.</p> <p>Changes to individual landscape features and characteristics should be reported (including loss of trees), assessing how this will affect landscape character.</p> <p>Landscape elements and features on a site should also be considered as landscape resources in their own right and effects on them reported.</p>
5(3)	<b>Landscape character baseline: historic landscape character</b>	<p>As explained in pages 76–77 of GLVIA3, historic landscape characterisation is complementary to Landscape Character Assessment. Landscape professionals should make use of existing historic landscape information. For example, understanding the time depth of landscape elements may be relevant to the susceptibility and value judgements about the landscape. Assessing the effects on the historic environment is a separate specialist topic in EIA, but there are overlaps between the landscape and heritage topics and it is important that specialists discuss overlapping issues and agree how they should be dealt with, including the terminology being used.</p>
5(4)	<b>How to assess landscape susceptibility</b>	<p>This is an area that has caused some debate amongst practitioners – especially how much detail of the proposed development should be taken into account in assessing landscape susceptibility. The issue raised by a number of members is that if the exact proposal is assessed</p>

		<p>as part of susceptibility it becomes an assessment of magnitude of change with a potential for overlap and double counting.</p> <p>GLVIA3 refers to the 'type of change arising from the specific proposal' (paragraph 3.26) and encourages practitioners to avoid using 'intrinsic' or 'inherent' sensitivity without reference to a specific <i>type</i> of development.</p> <p>Landscape susceptibility will vary with the <i>type</i> or <i>nature</i> of change. This relates to the type of development (whether it be housing, a railway, warehouses, afforestation/deforestation, open storage, a wind farm, a grid connection etc.) and the scale of the change (e.g. whether the proposal is for 4 or 400 houses). If more detail is known about the development this can also feed into and inform the judgement about how susceptible the site and the surrounding landscape is to what is proposed, but care should be taken to avoid double counting with magnitude .</p> <p>Criteria can be used to judge susceptibility e.g. landform, landcover, landscape pattern and scale, enclosure, tranquillity/ man-made influence, time depth etc. Relevant criteria will be dependent upon the development type being considered and should be tailored to the project.</p> <p>Existing sensitivity studies may be helpful in identifying appropriate susceptibility criteria. It is helpful to set out indicators of susceptibility against each criterion in the method to explain judgements. Some example criteria and indicators of susceptibility are set out in <a href="#">Natural England's 'Approach to landscape sensitivity'</a>, <a href="#">NatureScot's 'Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – Guidance for Scotland'</a> and NRW's 'Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment for on-shore wind and solar photo-voltaic developments: an assessment approach for Wales' (currently in draft and focused on wind energy and solar PV developments). The MMO's 'An approach to seascape sensitivity assessment' sets out criteria relevant to seascape and coastal environments.</p>
5(5)	<b>Susceptibility of non-host landscapes</b>	<p>Some practitioners consider 'non-host' areas of landscape to have a different susceptibility than if they were 'host areas'. There are no hard and fast rules for assessing susceptibility of 'host' and 'non-host' areas – it is up to the assessor to devise an appropriate approach and record it clearly. However, the approach used should aim to avoid too much overlap (or double counting) between susceptibility and magnitude judgements.</p>
5(6)	<b>Landscape susceptibility and policy: does the wording used in paragraph 5.40 of GLVIA3 mean susceptibility is dependent on policy?</b>	<p>The word 'policy' used in paragraph 5.40 of GLVIA3 means general policy (and strategies) relating to landscape, for example policy objectives seek to conserve and enhance an AONB, or local plan policy that seeks to preserve landscape character, rather than specific planning policy such as allocation of a site for development. For example if a site is within an area allocated for development, this should not have a bearing on the susceptibility of the existing landscape to change.</p>

5(7)	<b>How to assess landscape value</b>	<p>Paragraph 5.24 of GLVIA3 states “<i>landscape value of that specific area maybe different from that suggested by the formal designation</i>”. This has caused some confusion. Landscape value within nationally designated landscapes should be at the highest level (e.g. expressed as high/ very high/ of national value).</p> <p>For landscapes outside nationally designated landscapes the LI’s recent <a href="#">TGN 02/21 on Assessing landscape value outside national designations</a> may also be helpful.</p>
5(8)	<b>Word scale for landscape value</b>	<p>The word scale used to express landscape value is up to the assessor to determine, as long as definitions are provided and the process is clear to follow.</p>
5(9)	<b>Combining landscape susceptibility and value to reach a judgement on landscape sensitivity</b>	<p>It has been suggested that landscape susceptibility and landscape value are incommensurable, and therefore it is not easy to combine them to provide an evaluation of landscape sensitivity. As long as each is clearly defined in the method and a clear scale of ratings provided it should be possible for both to influence the assessment.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that GLVIA3 allows for two approaches to combining judgements to come to a judgement of overall effect. One is the ‘sequential combination’ method whereby susceptibility to change and value can be combined into an assessment of sensitivity for each receptor; size/scale, geographical extent and duration and reversibility can be combined into an assessment of magnitude for each effect; and magnitude and sensitivity can then be combined to assess overall significance. The other approach is the ‘overall profile’ method whereby all the judgements against the individual criteria can be arranged in a table to provide an overall profile of each identified effect, taking an overview of the distribution of the judgements for each criterion to make an informed professional assessment of the overall significance of each effect. Judgements on susceptibility and value feed into both approaches.</p>
5(11)	<b>Magnitude: Interpreting geographic extent for landscape judgements</b>	<p>GLVIA3 appears to suggest that geographical extent (and therefore magnitude) would be smaller if the change occurs within a landscape type or character area, and larger if a change is felt across several types or character areas – but this advice is hard to apply to individual receptors i.e. should the magnitude of effect on one LCA be greater simply because other LCAs are also affected?</p> <p>The Panel suggests that geographical extent should reflect the importance of the location and spread of effects, as a ‘slight modifier’ to the scale of effect so that it does not understate the magnitude of effects for extensive receptors such as large character areas or designations.</p> <p>What the decision maker wants to know is where the most important (or ‘significant’ in the case of EIA) effects will arise, and why and to what degree that matters.</p>

5(12)	<b>Assessing effects on designated landscapes and special landscape qualities</b>	<p>Landscape designations apply to areas that are deemed special and therefore worthy of protection. The designation confers protection on the landscape and contributes to the assessment of value.</p> <p>The area of landscape that is designated is likely to have already been assessed in terms of effects on its features (if relevant) and character. In addition to this, the assessor should report on how the special qualities (i.e. the components of natural beauty) of a designated landscape would be affected. Special qualities may also include particular views or types of visual experience and drawing on the visual assessment is likely to be relevant to inform this aspect.</p> <p>For most national landscape designations, the special qualities are explicitly documented as such (typically in management plans for AONBs, local plans or management plans for National Parks, or in reports published by NatureScot for designations in Scotland). For local designations, the valued attributes may not be called 'special qualities' and are more likely to be found within landscape studies which form part of the local plan evidence base or within the local plan.</p> <p>The policy tests and proposal's effects on the integrity of the designation are judgements for the decision maker, using the evidence contained in the LVIA.</p>
5(13)	Assessing effects on setting of designated landscapes.	<p>It should be noted that the setting of protected landscapes is generally created in policy and is not a designation (or a receptor) in its own right. In LVIA, the question would remain whether changes in the setting (i.e. the landscape nearby but outwith the designated area) would affect the designated landscape in terms of effects on its special qualities (and, if so, to what degree). For example a major development close to a designated landscape could generate noise, lighting and visual impacts that could erode the tranquillity, dark skies, and scenic quality of views.</p>

## 6. Assessment of visual effects

Questions raised in relation to chapter 6 of GLVIA3 are set out below.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
6(1)	<b>Should residential receptors be included in an LVIA?</b>	<p>GLVIA3 is clear that people living in the area of the proposed development have to be considered as receptors (Para 6.13) and that views from settlements should be considered (para 6.20).</p> <p>A LVIA should consider views from local communities focusing on the way that a community currently experiences views from public locations such as streets and open spaces and how those will change.</p> <p>Views from houses and individual properties are a matter of private amenity. However, it is helpful for a LVIA to comment on changes to views that will be experienced from groups of properties, or in some cases individual properties, if these changes are likely to be significant.</p> <p>Where required<sup>2</sup>, a residential visual amenity assessment (RVAA) should consider effects on private amenity for people in their homes and gardens in more detail (as set out in <a href="#">Technical Guidance Note 2/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment</a>).</p> <p>The LVIA and RVAA may refer to and inform each other, but are covered by separate guidance.</p>
6(2)	<b>Assessing susceptibility (visual): is susceptibility influenced by the occupation or activity of the receptor, the development type or both?</b>	<p>See GLVIA3 paragraph <b>6.32</b>: Visual susceptibility is not influenced by the development type, which would be assessed as part of magnitude.</p>
6(3)	<b>Does the ‘value’ aspect of visual susceptibility relate to the view or the receptor</b>	<p>Paragraph 3.24 of GLVIA may cause some confusion by using the word ‘receptor’ in discussing both landscape and views, however para. <b>6.37</b> provides clear guidance confirming value relates to the view.</p> <p>Although not included in the criteria in GLVIA3, some practitioners consider the scenic quality of a view to influence its value. Where the scenic quality of a view is not locally recognised or documented (reflecting its value to society) the assessor needs to provide clear explanation for their judgements.</p>

<sup>2</sup> RVAA may be required by the determining / competent authority, for example in situations where it is possible that the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property or properties is so great that the proposed development is against the public interest, as explained in Technical Guidance Note 2/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment.



6(4)	<b>Assigning value to views in residential areas</b>	LVIA relates to public amenity – the value of the view to the public - and Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) relates to private amenity - the value of the views to those who live there. These may be different. The criteria for value attached to views contained in GLVIA3 (at paragraph 6.37) focuses on recognition through designation, appearances in guidebooks/ literature or provision of facilities for their enjoyment by the public. In residential areas there may be indications that a specific view is valued, for example as identified in a Conservation Area appraisal or Local/ Neighbourhood Plan, or a bench placed in a particular location within a settlement to provide an attractive view or composition of features. . In all cases the criteria for assessing value should be clearly set out and the assessment should provide evidence for the judgements made.
6(5)	<b>Word scale for view value</b>	The word scale used to express view value is up to the assessor to determine, as long as definitions are provided and the process is clear to follow.
6(6)	<b>Agreeing viewpoints</b>	<p>It is recommended (GLVIA3 Para 6.18) to agree viewpoints to be considered in the assessment with the appropriate authority.</p> <p>If this is not possible, then EIA Regulations require us to set out any limitations on or difficulties encountered in carrying out our assessment. It is recommended that the assessor demonstrates that efforts have been made to agree viewpoints for both LVIA's and LVAs.</p> <p>Regarding seasonal constraints, it is within the competence of a landscape professional to be able to describe how the landscape and views would vary with the seasons, and to take account of these changes in their assessment.</p>
6(7)	<b>Assessing viewpoints or visual receptors?</b>	The focus of the visual assessment should be the visual receptors (i.e. the people as set out within Para 6.31. of GLVIA3). The purpose of viewpoints is covered at Para 6.19 (i.e. for illustration of the visual effects). No precise approach to visual assessment is set out in GLVIA3 – it is up to the assessor to select the most appropriate approach and ensure that issues that are important to the planning decision are assessed and reported.
6(8)	<b>How to assess geographic extent for visual receptors</b>	<p>Practitioners are interpreting geographic extent in relation to visual effects in different ways. For example, the Panel has seen examples where it has been interpreted as the extent of the visual receptor affected (e.g. walkers on the footpaths affected for larger or shorter lengths, or larger or smaller parts of community), as well as being interpreted as the angle of the view affected from a single point receptor.</p> <p>The Panel suggests that the former is preferred (the angle of view affected should be assessed as part of scale). Geographical extent should reflect the importance of the location and spread of effects, as a 'slight modifier' to the scale of effect so that it does not understate the magnitude of effects for extensive receptors such as long-distance footpaths. For example, in a case where a development will be seen in a close view, but only through one gate along an otherwise hedge-screened road or footpath this small geographic extent of effect on</p>

		the receptor may modify the magnitude judgement for the receptor down a little. However, where only a small extent of a receptor may be affected, but views from that part of the receptor are particularly important the scale of effect may not be modified. What the decision maker wants to know is where the most important (or 'significant' in the case of EIA) effects will arise, and why and to what degree that matters..
6(9)	<b>How do we allow for the number of people that will experience a view in the assessment?</b>	GLVIA3 para. 6.3 suggests that <i>"it can also be useful to establish the approximate or relative number of different groups of people who will be affected by the changes in views or visual amenity"</i> as part of the baseline, but does not refer to how this information should be incorporated into the assessment. This is therefore for the assessor to determine as part of developing the assessment methodology. One approach would be to note (where relevant) a broad indication of the number of people affected (or busyness of routes) alongside the effect i.e. whether an identified effect affects a relatively small or relatively large number of people.

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## 7. Assessing cumulative landscape and visual effects

Clarifications in relation to cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment are below.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
7(1)	<b>Cumulative assessment</b>	<p>The Panel is aware that cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment can be complex and suggests that practitioners become familiar with the difference between intra-project and inter-project effects (as set out in GLVIA3 Paras <b>7.7.</b> and <b>7.8</b>), and the difference between additional effects and combined effects (as set out in Para <b>7.18</b> of GLVIA3).</p> <p>The task should be in proportion to the nature of the project under consideration (Para <b>7.5</b> GLVIA3) and the scope should be agreed in discussion with the competent authority and consultation bodies (Para 7.4).</p> <p>See also IEMA (2020) '<a href="#">Demystifying Cumulative Effects</a>', Impact Assessment Outlook Journal Volume 7.</p>
7(2)	<b>What other projects to consider: comparison between the EIA Regulations, GLVIA3 and PINs Advice Note 17 requirements?</b>	<p>The EIA regulations (2017) require consideration of “<i>the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development</i>”.</p> <p>It should be noted that this does not mandate that existing and consented development must be explicitly considered in a section of an LVIA identified as a ‘cumulative assessment’ – merely that impacts must be considered in the context of existing and expected future developments.</p> <p>GLVIA3 refers to cumulative assessment of the proposal with “<i>past, present and future proposals</i>”, typically excluding pre-planning or scoping stage proposals unless the competent authority or consultation bodies consider this to be necessary.</p> <p><a href="#">PINs Advice Note 17</a> refers to three ‘tiers’ where Tier 1 includes permitted or submitted planning applications, Tier 2 refers to projects where a scoping report has been submitted and Tier 3 projects relate to sites where a scoping report has not been submitted but may be identified in a plan or programme.</p> <p>Nature Scot guidance introduced the concept of distinguishing between predicted cumulative impacts in different ‘scenarios’ e.g. assessing a proposal in combination with existing and consented developments, or proposal in combination with existing, consented and planning application stage developments.</p> <p>The cumulative LVIA should focus on the assessment of the project under consideration in the context of other submitted planning applications (potentially considering different combinations or scenarios where relevant<sup>3</sup>) with scoping stage schemes only considered where they are likely to be submitted before or at a similar</p>

		<p>time to the project under consideration, and interact with the project in a potentially significant way.</p> <p>The approach taken to consented developments may vary on a case-by-case basis. Where it is likely that a consented development will be constructed before the project under consideration, it may be appropriate to include it as part of the future baseline in the main assessment so that the effects of the proposed development are reported against that baseline. Where there is some uncertainty as to whether the consented development will proceed or the project being considered is likely to be constructed before the consented development, then consideration of the consented development within the cumulative assessment is more likely to assist in the reporting of likely effects. The developments to be included in the cumulative assessment should be decided on a case by case basis in consultation with competent authority.</p>
7(3)	<b>Additional or combined effects?</b>	<p><b>Additional cumulative effects</b> are defined in GLVIA3 as the additional effect of the project in conjunction with other developments of the same type. This is typically assessed as the effect arising from the proposed development when considered against a baseline containing the other developments in the scenario being considered (i.e. what the effect of adding the project under consideration would be if Development X was already built).</p> <p>An additional cumulative effect may be the same as the effect of the development being assessed as recorded in the LVIA, or it may be different. An example of where the additional cumulative effect may be different is when the development being assessed would be seen behind another cumulative development. In this situation the effect of the proposed development may be less than the effect of the proposed development alone.</p> <p><b>Combined (also referred to a ‘total’) cumulative effects</b> are defined in GLVIA3 as all the past, present and future proposals together with the new project. Typically a ‘combined’ cumulative assessment would consider the addition of all unbuilt schemes, including the proposed development, to the existing baseline (rather than the combined effect of all past, present and future schemes against a ‘bare landscape’).</p> <p>Both ‘additional’ and ‘combined’ cumulative effects may be relevant to consider, acknowledging that the assessor will not have assessed the other schemes and cannot therefore make a fully informed judgement on combined effects (as pointed out in paragraph 7.18 GLVIA3). Typically a ‘combined’ cumulative assessment is only relevant where a decision maker is likely to need to consider proposed developments together – for instance a conjoined appeal, or applications likely to be decided at the same planning committee session. In other situations, the ‘additional’ cumulative effects assessment will provide the information needed to understand the effects if another application has been recently consented.</p> <p>TGN 02/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment guidance provides guidance at para. 4.25 as to how cumulative effects should be considered within RVAA, setting out where it may be appropriate to</p>

		consider whether the 'combined' presence of developments would breach the residential visual amenity threshold
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## 8. Presenting information on landscape and visual effects

A few queries have been raised about presentation of information in an LVIA.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
8(1)	<b>Impartiality</b>	<p>The issue of impartiality is very important in LVIA;</p> <p>we also operate under the LI's <a href="#">Code of Conduct</a> which requires assessors to exercise impartial and independent professional judgement. Care should be taken that the reporting within an LVIA reflects this duty.</p>
8(2)	<b>How should night-time effects be assessed and presented as part of LVIA?</b>	<p>GLVIA3 mentions lighting in Para <b>6.12</b>.</p> <p>Types of light pollution (obtrusive light) which can include sky glow, glare, light spill and light intrusion are explained in the Institute of Lighting Professionals' <a href="#">Guidance Note 01/21 'The Reduction of Obtrusive Light'</a>.</p> <p>A night time assessment should not be a routine requirement and will only be required where lighting will have a potential significant influence on landscape character and/ or visual amenity, as a result of the combination of the sensitivity of the receiving night time environment and the nature of the proposed lighting.</p> <p>Any night time assessment will require the recording of night time conditions for landscape and visual receptors (which may be undertaken by the lighting designer as part of a Lighting Assessment baseline). Resources such as the CPRE's and NRW's dark skies mapping and information about dark sky reserves will also be useful to feed into the baseline reporting.</p> <p>Understanding of the baseline will enable the assessor to input to the lighting design (for example focusing light only where it is needed, or reducing the effect of lighting on specific landscape or visual receptors). Useful guidance is provided in the ILP Guidance Note 01/21 'The Reduction of Obtrusive Light', CIE 150: 2017 Guide on the Limitation of the Effects of Obtrusive Light from Outdoor Lighting Installations and CIE 126: 1997 Guidelines for Minimizing Sky Glow.</p> <p>The assessment of the effects of lighting may draw on quantitative information from the lighting design –in the form of mapped illuminance values or as experience from viewpoints. The LVIA assessor will use this information to understand and articulate the effect of lighting on landscape character and visual amenity of people. Terminology used should be consistent with the ILP Guidance Note 01/21 'The Reduction of Obtrusive Light'.</p> <p>NatureScot has provided guidance on assessing the effects of turbine lighting in Annex 1 of their <a href="#">'General pre-application and scoping advice for onshore wind farms'</a>.</p> <p>There has also been a request from members for guidance on night-time photography and visualisations. This would be separate guidance linked to TGN 06/19 on 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals'.</p>

## 9. Questions on other related topics

This section addresses questions raised by Members which are on topics related to LVIA but do not fit into the tables above.

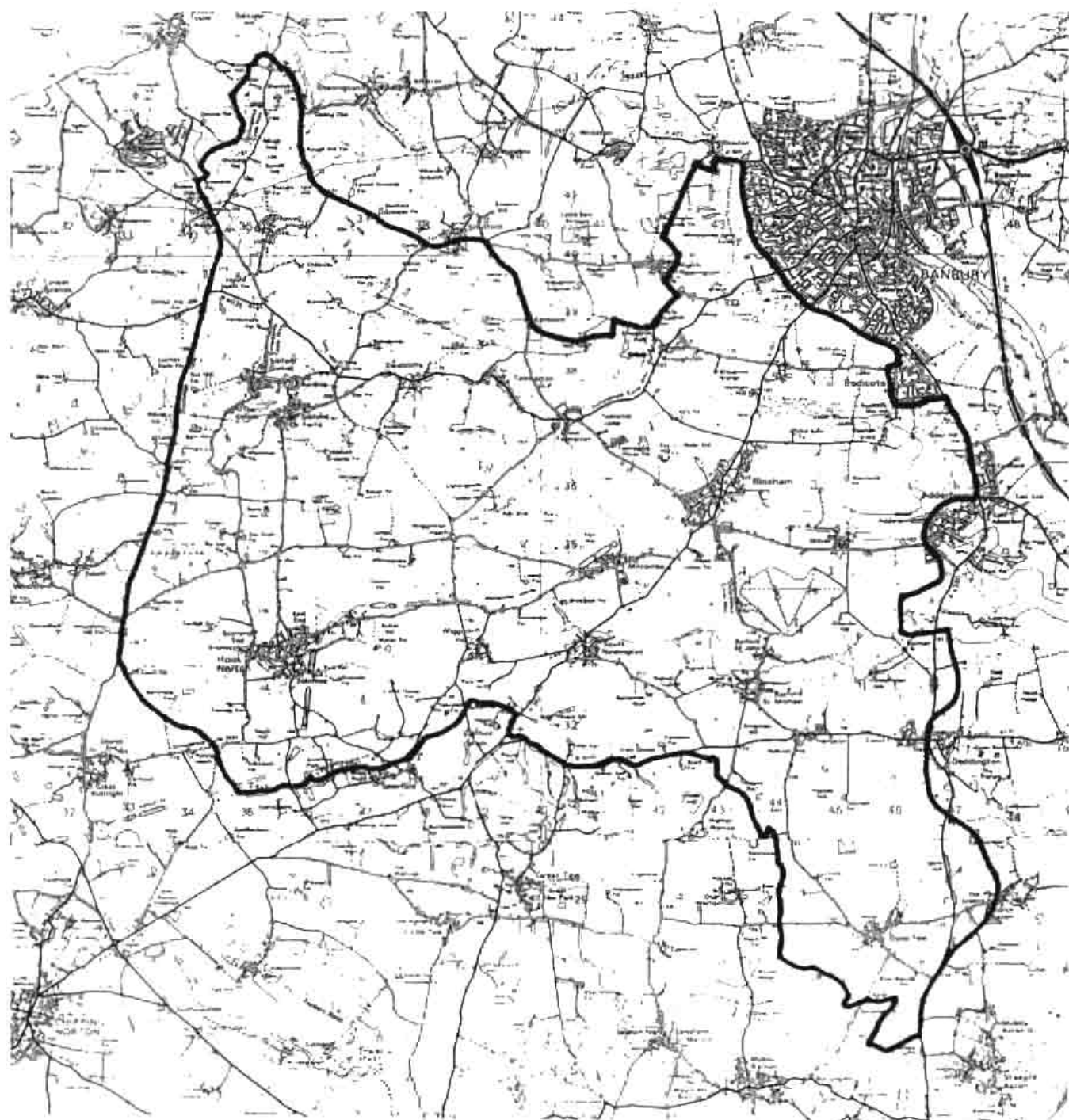
	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
9(1)	<b>Is an assessment of ‘capacity’ of the landscape required as part of LVIA?</b>	<p>No. Capacity or sensitivity studies are undertaken at the strategic landscape planning level rather than the individual project proposal level (noting that there has been a general move away from capacity studies and towards sensitivity studies).</p> <p>GLVIA3 acknowledges that where there are existing landscape sensitivity and capacity studies ‘they may provide useful preliminary background information for the assessment.’ (Para 5.41).</p> <p>Caution should also be exercised in using capacity studies (and some sensitivity studies) as they may consider aspects of potential effects arising from development (e.g. upon nearby visual receptors) which are not relevant to landscape sensitivity.</p>
9(2)	<b>Climate change: The most recent EIA regulations update requires specific consideration of climate change. How should climate change be considered as part of an LVIA?</b>	<p>Climate change considerations are becoming a specialist area of EIA, to which the landscape assessor contributes with specific information about likely landscape change. IEMA has a number of resources including <a href="#">Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation</a> (2020) and <a href="#">Guidance on Assessing GHG Emissions</a> (2022).</p> <p>Within the LVIA landscape change expected to result from climate change may be relevant to report in the future baseline i.e. considering what the baseline may be like in the future in the absence of the proposal.</p>
9(3)	<b>How does GLVIA3 relate to the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) and which should be used when?</b>	<p>The <a href="#">Design Manual for Roads and Bridges</a> (DMRB) is a standard (not just guidance) relating to the design, assessment and operation of motorway and all-purpose trunk roads in the United Kingdom. <b>Part LA 107 Landscape and visual effects</b> contains the requirements for assessing and reporting the landscape and visual effects of highway projects. GLVIA3 should be used for all other project types.</p>
9(4)	<b>How does LVIA relate to green belt and ‘openness’ issues?</b>	<p>As stated in GLVIA3 para 5.4, ‘openness’ may be one of the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and may therefore be documented and assessed as part of the LVIA. However, Green Belt is a planning policy designation and compliance with policy should be addressed separately to the LVIA.</p>
9(5)	<b>Soils as a receptor in LVIA?</b>	<p>It has been queried whether soils should be treated as a landscape receptor in LVIA. This goes beyond LVIA and to the heart of EIA more widely. The Panel is liaising with IEMA about future changes in EIA and this topic will fit into those discussions (see <a href="#">EIA Guidance on Land and Soils</a>, and this related <a href="#">article</a> from IEMA’s website).</p>

**Appendix C: Ironstone Hills and Valleys Landscape Character  
Area description from the Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment  
(1995)**



Figure 10

## IRONSTONE HILLS AND VALLEYS



SCALE 1:100,000

- 3.37 Rolling hills with rich soils are considerable agricultural assets and much of this area is in arable cultivation, the main crops being winter cereals with potatoes and sugar beet. In some areas, medium and large arable fields are still surrounded by hedges and the boundaries marked by hedgerow trees. However, much of the higher land and gentler slopes now have a fairly open arable landscape, with local areas where clearance has been so extreme that even post and wire fences have not been retained to demarcate field boundaries.
- 3.38 However, the area is riddled with steep sided valleys and narrow valley floors with a pattern of smaller fields and mixed farming, predominantly permanent pasture. Many hedgerows are unmanaged and growing out, and road verges sometimes include narrow stands of trees, which gives a well-treed impression, although the area lacks larger woodlands. Streams in valley bottoms are locally marked with old willows with some pollarding, and with wet pasture.

#### **Variations in landscape character**

- 3.39 Many of the steeper slopes have resisted mechanised arable farming. Here, a pastoral scene of small grazing fields divided by hedgerows prevails on the steepest slopes dominating the scene, the landscape being made up from a **strongly undulating complex of farmed hills and valleys (R4a)**. Wherever the landform levels out slightly, the small fields can be ploughed and crops of winter cereals grown. The resulting landscape is an intricate blend of mixed farming, with small variations in scale and local land use being closely related to topography, a tightly knit **small scale rolling farmland with strong field pattern (R4b)**.
- 3.40 Lanes and minor roads run straight along ridges wherever possible, dipping sharply down the valley sides to connect with villages. Hedgerows are mostly dense, well grown barriers, although where arable farming prevails they are closely trimmed. The practice of hedge laying is still continued locally as a means of maintaining a stockproof boundary. Many of the hedges contain mature hedgerow trees, the dominant species being oak and ash, with beech on the limestone outcrops. However, the hedges have an extremely high elm component, and where young trees are regenerating naturally, this is the dominant species.
- 3.41 Wherever the landform opens out sufficiently, intensive use is made of the rich, fertile soils. In these **rolling arable landscapes with weak field pattern (R2a)** fields are large, hedgerows are often weak and gappy, reinforced with fences, and in some places field boundaries have completely disappeared. In one extremely open landscape at Wigginton Heath, new hedges have been planted, bringing some division back into an otherwise 'green desert'. Banks which would have been topped with hedges still remain along roadsides.

- 3.42 In the highest and most exposed areas, where hill tops stand up above the already elevated land, there is **undulating elevated pasture with remnant heath (R2c)** where patches of gorse, bracken and scrubby heath vegetation break up the poor grasslands. These patches contribute considerably to the character of the area, serving as a reminder of its essentially upland heath nature.

### **Special features**

- 3.43 Some of the district's oldest features, the distinctive line of Iron Age hill forts, which top the hills to the west of Banbury, are found in this character area. They include Tadmarton and Ilbury Camps and Madmarston Hill, where the earthworks are still highly visible, although a further three hill fort sites are known. The bivallate hillfort at Tadmarton is the most impressive, although it is now bisected by a road and absorbed into a golf course.
- 3.44 Broughton Castle is also of interest. Built in the early fourteenth century as a fortified manor house, it remains one of the finest and most complete medieval houses in the country. The eighteenth century park by John Davenport includes landscaped grounds with a moat, while the late nineteenth century gardens were laid out by Gertrude Jekyll. The later picturesque parkland at Swerford, which lies partly within Cherwell and partly within West Oxfordshire, was influenced by Loudon.
- 3.45 Sunken lanes are a particular feature of this area, with steep banks rising up on either side of the roads as they dip down the valley sides. Occasionally, these banks are reinforced by drystone walling, many of which are overgrown by hedgerow plants.

## **INCISED IRONSTONE PLATEAU**

- 3.46 The Incised Ironstone Plateau is situated to the north of the Ironstone Hills and Valleys. Both areas have a number of common characteristics, but the plateau landform is substantially different. It is a far less complex, unfaulted, complete unit, divided by streams which create a simple landscape of ridges and valleys which extends around the north-west of Banbury.

### **Landform and landcover**

- 3.47 This area is geologically similar to the Ironstone Hills and Valleys with a layer of Marlstone Rock Bed overlying the Middle and Lower Lias clays. However, the area has a more straightforward topography, consisting of relatively high land forming a level or gently rolling plateau. West of Hornton and at Shenlow Hill the land rises to 200m, with gentle slopes falling eastwards towards Banbury. Tributaries of the Sor Brook have cut down through the plateau creating a series of roughly parallel valleys.