

Appendix B – Assessment Methodology – derived principally from standard guidance texts on Landscape Character and Landscape and Visual assessment including:

- Scottish National Heritage (SNH)/Countryside Agency
 - Landscape Character Assessment 2002
 - Landscape Character Assessment Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity
- Landscape institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment
 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Second Edition 2002
 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition 2013

The following tables are general assessment criteria used to inform judgements about landscape and visual effects. The tables and criteria are used as guide only.

Landscape Value

VALUE	TYPICAL CRITERIA	TYPICAL SCALE	TYPICAL EXAMPLES
High	High importance (or quality) and rarity. No or limited potential for substitution	International National	World Heritage Site National Park/ AONB SSSI EH Register of Parks and Gardens Grade I and II* listed buildings and their settings National recreational route or area
Medium/High	High importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	National Regional Local	National Park/AONB AGLV/other local landscape designation Landscape value identified in SPD SINC/Conservation Areas Grade II listed buildings and their setting Local Wildlife sites Regional recreational route/area
Medium	Medium importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Regional Local	Undesignated but value expressed through publications Local buildings of historic interest and their settings Local recreational facilities of landscape value
Medium/Low	Low importance (or quality) or rarity	Local	Site has some value (redeeming feature/benefit to the community)
Low	Low quality, generic contemporary, degraded landscape	Local	Area of little value and identified for improvement

Other factors taken into consideration are judgements of perception including tranquillity, cultural associations and aesthetic attributes.

Importance of View

More valuable / Important	Less Valuable / Important
General Visibility	General Visibility
A combination of landform influences tree and woodland cover contribute to importance of view	A combination of landform influences tree and woodland cover constrains view
Open, clear views	Partial views or glimpses only
Site dominant within view	Site part of wider view, often set within a wider context
Site has clear influence on other sensitive feature or landmark	No features or landmarks of significance
Site visible on skyline	Site not visible on skyline
Population	Population
A public viewpoint	A viewpoint from private property
Many people experience the view e.g. at a recognised tourist view, or multiple residents	Few or single people only affected by the view
People experiencing the view over longer periods of time, for example in their homes	The view is experienced fleetingly on a road
The view relates to a heritage asset or is recognised in planning designations	The view has no associated designations or links with local heritage, or is degraded or blighted in some way
The view is noted in guidebooks, on tourist maps or occurs on nationally important trails	View occurs on a little used footpaths or other rights of way
The view is mentioned in literature, art or has other cultural associations	The view has few cultural associations, is 'generic' (e.g. contemporary commercial/industrial development)
Mitigation	Mitigation
Mitigation potential restricted	Mitigation potentially successful
Key views could be interrupted	No key views affected
Mitigation could harm local character	Mitigation could strengthen local character

Importance of view is based on professional judgement based on typical criteria set out below.

Susceptibility to change of Landscape Receptors

Field Observations summarised below capture key natural, cultural and aesthetic elements contributing to or detracting from the overall landscape sensitivity.

Topography

Flat	Steep	Rolling Lowland	Hills	Broad Valley
Undulating	Vertical	Plateau	Dry Valley	Narrow Valley
Rolling	Plain	Scarp / cliffs	Deep Gorge	

Other:

Landcover and Landscape Elements

BUILDINGS	HERITAGE	FARMING	LANDCOVER	WOODLAND / TREES	HYDROLOGY	ROADS / COMMS
farm buildings	vernacular buildings	walls	designed parkland	deciduous woodland	river	road
masts / poles	country house	fences	scrub	coniferous plantation	stream	track
turbines	field systems	hedges	marsh		reservoir	footpath
pylons	prehistoric ritual	fields	peat bog	mixed woodland	dry valley	lane
industry	hill top fort / enclosure	arable	moor / heath	shelter belt	winterbourne (winter river)	railway
commercial		improved pasture	rough grassland	hedge trees	pond	pylons
settlement	ecclesiastic	rough grazing	water meadows	orchard	lake	communication masts
urban	monuments of war	hedge banks	grassland	clumps	drainage ditch	
folies	coppice		species rich grassland	isolated trees		
	other monuments					
	listed buildings					

Landscape Assessment Criteria

PATTERNS (2D):	dominant	strong	broken	weak
SCALE:	intimate	small	medium	large
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	colourful	garish
COMPLEXITY:	uniform	simple	diverse	complex
REMOTENESS:	wild	remoteness	vacant	active
UNITY:	unified	interrupted	fragmented	chaotic
FORM (3D):	straight	angular	curved	sinuous
ENCLOSURE:	expansive	open	enclosed	constrained
VISUAL DYNAMIC:	sweeping	spreading	dispersed	channelled

Perception:

SECURITY:	intimate	comfortable	safe	unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	monotonous	bland	interesting	challenging	inspiring
TRANQUILLITY:	inaccessible	remote	vacant	peaceful	busy
PLEASURE:	unpleasant	pleasant	attractive	beautiful	

Summary**Appendix B**

- Main features, attractors, detractors
- Key characteristics/distinctive features and why they are important:
- Rarity/replaceability
- Condition
- Perception

Landscape susceptibility to change takes account of the above considerations and is based on a professional judgement as to how vulnerable the landscape is and how able it is to accommodate change and this is described more fully in the report.

Low, Medium/Low, Medium, Medium/High, High Susceptibility to change based on the criteria recorded above.

Sensitivity is based upon a combination of landscape susceptibility to change and importance/value

Susceptibility to change	Low	Medium/Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Importance/value					
High	M	MH	MH	H	H
Medium-High	ML	M	MH	MH	H
Medium	ML	ML	M	MH	MH
Medium-Low	L	ML	ML	M	MH
Low	L	L	ML	ML	M

Magnitude of Change for Landscape Receptors

Effect on important/key landscape features

High	Total loss or alteration to key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline. Introduction of elements which are totally uncharacteristic with set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Medium-high	Significant loss or alteration to the above, but not complete loss or alteration and/or introduction of prominent features which are generally uncharacteristic.
Medium	Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements / features/ characteristics of the baseline and / or the introduction of prominent features, although not necessarily uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Medium-low	Partial to Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline and/or the introduction of elements which may not be uncharacteristic with set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Low	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline and/or the introduction of elements which may not be uncharacteristic with set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Negligible	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline. And/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape.

Geographical extent of change experienced by receptors

High	The change is at a landscape level, affecting a number of landscape character areas/types
Medium-high	The change affects an entire landscape character area of type
Medium	The effects apply to a substantial part of a receptor
Medium - Low	The effects are limited to a minor part of a landscape receptor
Low	Highly localised effect to a receptor

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Magnitude of change

Effect on important/key landscape features	Negligible/Low	Medium/Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Geographical extent of change experienced by receptors					
High	M	MH	MH	H	H
Medium-High	ML	M	MH	MH	H
Medium	ML	ML	M	MH	MH
Medium-Low	L	ML	ML	M	MH
Low	L	L	ML	ML	M

Negligible/Low, Medium/Low, Medium, Medium/High, High Magnitude of Change

Where the duration of effect is short lived it may be judged that the "Aggregate Magnitude" rating can be reduced.

Significance of Landscape Effects

Sensitivity	Low	Medium/Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Magnitude of Change					
High	Moderate	Moderate/Major	Moderate/Major	Major	Major
Medium-High	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/Major	Moderate/Major	Major
Medium	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/Major	Moderate/Major
Medium-Low	Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/Major
Negligible/Low	Minor	Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate

Definitions of Significance

Major adverse: The proposed development would result in material changes to the landscape of the site, to its landform, scale and pattern which cannot be effectively mitigated. The integrity of the site is compromised and the value substantially undermined.

Moderate adverse: The proposed development would be out of scale with the landscape and/or result in the partial loss of characteristics of the site.

Minor adverse: The proposed development would have some effect on some characteristics of the site but the overall character is sustained and the value of the landscape is not materially harmed or has been mitigated.

Neutral: The proposed development would not materially alter the character of the site and its setting nor detract from the value of that landscape.

Based on the nature of the view it may be judged that these effects are positive or negative effects.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

More sensitive receptors	Less sensitive receptors
Focus or attention drawing to particular view during outdoor recreation (e.g. walking along footpath)	People engaged in outdoor sport/activities in which the focus is not on the surrounding landscape (football, other organised sport)
Visitors to landscape or heritage assets, where the view is likely to contribute to the visitor experience	Visitors to countryside where landscape is less likely to be an important contributor to visitor experience (i.e. the focus is indoors)
Communities where views contribute to the setting enjoyed by residents (e.g. a Cotswold village)	Communities in more urban areas where landscape is not a reason why people may have chosen to live in an area
Occupiers of residential properties affected by the views	Where receptors are predominantly non-resident
Occupiers of work places where views contribute to the quality of working life e.g. landscaped business park, offices with heritage value	People at their place of work where activity is focused on work and not surroundings
Travellers on scenic road or railway routes where travelling through the landscape is part of the experience	Transient receptors in vehicles that are not likely to notice views.

Judgements Low, Medium/Low, Medium, Medium/High, High Sensitivity

Aggregate Sensitivity is based upon a combination of Sensitivity of receptors and importance of views

Sensitivity	Low	Medium/ Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Importance of View					
High	M	MH	MH	H	H
Medium-High	ML	M	MH	MH	H
Medium	ML	ML	M	MH	MH
Medium-Low	L	ML	ML	M	MH
Low	L	L	ML	ML	M

Magnitude of Change for Visual Receptors

Magnitude of change experienced by receptors

High	The proposals become the dominant feature in the view and they significantly affect / change its character
Medium-high	The proposals form a significant part of the scene and affects the character of the view
Medium	The proposals form a visible and identifiable new element in the scene readily noticed by observers
Medium-low	The proposals form a visible and identifiable new element in the scene noticeable by receptors from some views
Low	The proposals only constitute a minor part of the view, possibly missed by a casual observer and not affecting the overall character of the view
Negligible/Low	Very small or no parts of the development are discernible, with very little or no effect on the scene

Extent of the area which receptors are affected

High	The change is at a landscape level, affecting receptors over a wide area of the landscape and/or from a large distance from the site e.g. experienced over the length of a long distance footpath
Medium	The change affects groups of receptors within that are within a discrete area(s), probably identifiable by description or by recognised/defined boundaries.
Low	The change is specific to a single viewpoint / receptor or only experienced within close proximity of the development site.

Medium – High or Medium – Low rating may be given where appropriate

Aggregate Magnitude is based upon a combination of the magnitude and extent of the change experience by receptors

Magnitude	Negligible/Low	Medium/ Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Extent of Change					
High	M	MH	MH	H	H
Medium-High	ML	M	MH	MH	H
Medium	ML	ML	M	MH	MH
Medium-Low	L	ML	ML	M	MH
Low	L	L	ML	ML	M

Negligible/Low, Medium/Low, Medium, Medium/High, High Magnitude of Change

Where the duration of effect is short lived it may be judged that the “Aggregate Magnitude” rating can be reduced.

Significance of Visual Effects

Aggregate Sensitivity	Low	Medium/ Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Aggregated Magnitude of Change					
High	Moderate	Moderate/ Major	Moderate/ Major	Major	Major
Medium-High	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/ Major	Moderate/ Major	Major
Medium	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/ Major	Moderate/ Major
Medium-Low	Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/ Major
Negligible/Low	Minor	Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate

Definitions of Significance.

Major adverse: The viewpoint is very sensitive and there will be a substantive change in the view; the proposed development will dominate the view, to the detriment of existing valued views.

Moderate/Major adverse: The viewpoint is sensitive and the proposals would result in a material change in the view both of the site and its setting; the development will be highly visible and detract from existing valued views.

Moderate adverse: The viewpoint may be more or less sensitive and the degree of harm to the view will depend on the scale of change. The proposal would cause obvious deterioration to a view from a moderately sensitive receptor, or perceptible damage to a view from a more sensitive receptor.

Minor adverse: The viewpoint is usually less sensitive and the proposals have a more localised effect on the view, effecting only elements of the view.

No significant impact: The viewpoint is usually much less sensitive and the change in view is slight, with the view towards the site remaining little changed.

Based on the nature of the view it may be judged that these effects are positive or negative effects