



# Preliminary Environmental Information Report

## Volume III - Appendices

### Appendix 17B: Landscape and Visual Proposed Methodology

The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended)



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# 17B. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Proposed Methodology

## 17.1 Assessment Methodology

17.1.1 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been based on the following guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition. (2013), Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, referred to as GLVIA3 in this methodology; and
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014), Natural England.

17.1.2 Photography incorporated into the figures accompanying the LVIA has been undertaken in accordance with Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/2019: Visual Representation of Development Proposals (Landscape Institute, 2019) unless stated otherwise.

### Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Analysis

17.1.3 The ZTVs have been generated by analysis of a 3D digital terrain model (DTM) of the surrounding terrain and the Proposed Development using the following parameters:

- contours/terrain model based on OS Terrain 5 DTM dataset;
- eye height of viewer set at 1.8 m; and
- visibility assessed on a 50 m grid throughout the study area.

17.1.4 The output provides a graphical representation of the computer calculated inter-visibility between a viewer (at 1.6 m height) and the top of the landform based on points distributed across the study area.

### Assessment Process

17.1.5 Following assessment of the baseline landscape and visual context of the development the LVIA assesses the:

- sensitivity of receptors, whether the landscape or viewers;
- magnitude of effect, whether adverse or beneficial; and
- significance of the effects based on a comparison of sensitivity of receptor to magnitude of effect.

17.1.6 Effects may be temporary, permanent, short-term or long-term. Landscape and visual effects may be further categorised as being either direct, *i.e.*

originating from the site, or indirect, e.g. off-site visual effect of construction traffic.

## Landscape assessment methodology

17.1.7 In predicting the effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape within the study area GLVIA3 states the following steps should be undertaken in order to identify and describe the landscape effects:

- identify the components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the Proposed Development (landscape receptors); and
- identify the interactions between the landscape receptors and different components of the Proposed Development at its different stages.

## Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

17.1.8 Landscape receptors are described within GLVIA3 (para 5.34) as *“components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the scheme”*. These can include overall character and key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects (such as wildness or tranquillity).

17.1.9 It is the interaction between the different components of the Proposed Development and these landscape receptors which has potential to result in landscape effects (both adverse and beneficial).

17.1.10 The sensitivity of the landscape receptor is a combination of their susceptibility to change of the specific type of development being assessed combined with the value of the landscape.

## Susceptibility to Change

The susceptibility to change is a measure of the ability of a landscape to *“accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies”* (para 5.40, GLVIA3). The assessment of susceptibility must be tailored to the Proposed Development and considered as part of the assessment of the effects.

17.1.11 Table 17B-1 provides criteria level in relation to susceptibility.

**Table 17B-1: Landscape Susceptibility to Change**

Criteria level	Susceptibility to change
High	The receptor has a low capacity to accommodate the Proposed Development without effects upon its overall integrity. The landscape is likely to have a strong pattern/ texture or is a simple but distinctive landscape and/or with high value features and essentially intact.

Medium The receptor has some capacity to accommodate the Proposed Development without effects upon its overall integrity.  
The pattern of the landscape is mostly intact and/or with a degree of complexity and with features mostly in reasonable condition.

Low The receptor is robust; it can accommodate the Proposed Development without effects upon its overall integrity. The landscape is likely to be simple, monotonous and/or degraded with common/ indistinct features and minimal variation in landscape pattern.

## Landscape Value

17.1.12 Establishing the landscape value of the Site and study area is necessary to determine the landscape sensitivity at both a Site and study area scale.

17.1.13 The value of a landscape receptor is a reflection of its importance in terms of any designations that may apply, or its importance in itself as a landscape or landscape resource, which may be due to its ecological, cultural or recreational value. The following factors are generally agreed to influence value (GLVIA p.84, para 5.28):

- landscape quality (condition);
- scenic quality (landscapes that appeal to the senses);
- rarity (presence of rare elements);
- representativeness (landscape contains particular features, character or elements that are particularly important examples);
- conservation interests (presence of features of wildlife, earth science, archaeological, historical or cultural interest);
- recreation value (valued for recreational activity);
- perceptual aspects (valued for perceptual qualities such as wildness or tranquillity); and
- associations (with particular people or events).

17.1.14 Judgements on landscape value for each receptor will be informed by the following criteria:

- high: nationally designated or iconic, unspoiled landscape with few, if any degrading elements;
- medium: regionally or locally designated landscape or an undesignated landscape with locally important features which may include some degrading elements; and
- low: undesignated landscape with few, if any, distinct features or several degrading elements.

17.1.15 In combining susceptibility to change and value GLVIA3 indicates that combining susceptibility and value can be achieved in a number of ways and needs to include professional judgement. However, it is generally accepted that a combination of high susceptibility and high value is likely to result in the highest sensitivity, whereas a low susceptibility and low value is likely to

resulting in the lowest level of sensitivity. A summary of the likely characteristics of the different levels of sensitivity is described below in Table 17B-2. It should be noted that these are indicative and in practice there is not a clear distinction between criteria levels.

**Table 17B-2: Landscape & Landscape Elements Sensitivity Criteria**

Criteria level	Characteristics
High	<p>Areas of landscape character that are highly valued for their scenic quality (including most statutorily designated landscapes); and/or elements/features that could be described as unique; or are nationally scarce; or mature vegetation with provenance such as ancient woodland or mature parkland trees.</p> <p>Mature landscape features which are characteristic of and contribute to a sense of place and illustrate time-depth in a landscape and if replaceable, could not be replaced other than in the long term.</p>
Medium	<p>Areas that have a positive landscape character but include some areas of alteration/degradation/or erosion of features; and/or perceptual/aesthetic aspects has some vulnerability to unsympathetic development; and/or features/elements that are locally commonplace; unusual locally but in moderate/poor condition; or mature vegetation that is in moderate/poor condition or readily replicated.</p>
Low	<p>Areas that are relatively bland or neutral in character with few/no notable features; and/or a landscape that includes areas of alteration/degradation or erosion of features; and/or landscape elements/features that are common place or make little contribution to local distinctiveness.</p>
Very Low	<p>Damaged or substantially modified landscapes with few characteristic features of value, capable of absorbing major change; and/or landscape elements/features that might be considered to detract from landscape character such as obtrusive man-made artefacts (e.g. power lines, large scale developments, etc.).</p>

## Magnitude of Landscape Effects

17.1.16 The nature of the effect that is likely to occur, *i.e.* its magnitude, is determined by considering four separate factors, namely:

- size/scale;
- geographical extent;
- duration; and
- reversibility.

### Size or Scale

17.1.17 Judgements regarding the size or scale of the changes to the landscape need to be made for each potential effect. GLVIA3 (para 5.59) specifies that these judgements should take into account the following:

- the extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape – in some cases this may be quantified;



- the degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by addition of new ones; and
- whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.

17.1.18 The criteria should be presented in a verbal scale, which '*distinguishes the amount of change without being overly complex*' (GLVIA3 para 5.49).

17.1.19 The size and scale of an effect is determined by considering the amount of change experienced by a receptor, based on the indicative criteria set out in Table 17B-3 below:

**Table 17B-3: Landscape Size/Scale Criteria**

Criteria level	Feature/ element	Aesthetic /perceptual aspect	Key characteristics/ overall character
Large	Total or substantial loss or large scale damage to landscape features resulting in the integrity of the landscape being compromised.	Change wholly or largely alters an aesthetic/ perceptual aspect, such that it becomes difficult/ impossible to appreciate, when considered against the baseline.	Loss of or changes to the critical key characteristics of the landscape, resulting in a change to the overall landscape character.
Medium	Partial loss or medium scale damage to landscape features resulting in a partial change to the element/feature which may in some cases diminish its overall integrity.	Change is such that the development has an influence upon an aesthetic/ perceptual aspect, but said aspect remains appreciable.	Partial loss or small changes to the key characteristics of the landscape but not resulting in an obvious change to the overall character of the area.
Small	Slight loss or small scale damage to landscape features with its integrity remaining unchanged.	Change has little tangible effect upon an aesthetic/ perceptual aspect.	Minor changes to key characteristics which result in no or little change to the overall landscape character.

## Geographical Extent

**Table 17B-4: Geographical Extent Criteria**

Criteria level	Description
Large	The effects may influence several landscape types/character areas.
Medium	The effects may influence the landscape type/character area within which the development is located.
Small	The effects may influence the immediate setting of the site.
Negligible	The effects may influence the development site only.

## Duration and Reversibility

17.1.20 The duration of an effect and its reversibility are linked but separate consideration of the criteria for defining these are as below in Table 17B-5 and Table 17B-6.

**Table 17B-5: Duration Criteria**

Criteria level	Description
Temporary	Less than 12 months
Short term	0-5 years
Medium term	5-10 years
Long term	10+ years

17.1.21 The reversibility of an effect relates to the prospects and practicality of an effect being able to be reversed and is determined based on the indicative criteria set out in Table 17B-6 below.

**Table 17B-6: Reversibility Criteria**

Criteria level	Description
Reversible	Change can be wholly or largely reversed. For example the removal of a wind farm development following decommissioning.
Partially reversible	Change is partially reversible. For example the restoration of a quarry to something similar to the baseline.
Irreversible	Change cannot realistically be reversed, <i>i.e.</i> it is permanent.

## Magnitude Criteria

17.1.22 The factors above are considered in combination to provide an overall magnitude of change for each receptor, the magnitude of change for landscape receptors may be interpreted as per the indicative scales in Table 17B-7 below.

**Table 17B-7: Landscape Magnitude Criteria (indicative)**

Criteria level	Description
High	Introduction of incongruous development which would result in noticeable change over an extensive area, affecting many key characteristics and the experience of the landscape.
Medium	Introduction of uncharacteristic development which would result in noticeable change over a large area, or more intensive change over a limited area, affecting some key characteristics and the experience of the landscape.
Low	Introduction of development that is not uncharacteristic which would result in a small change over a limited area affecting few characteristics.
Very Low	Little perceptible change to the landscape characteristics.

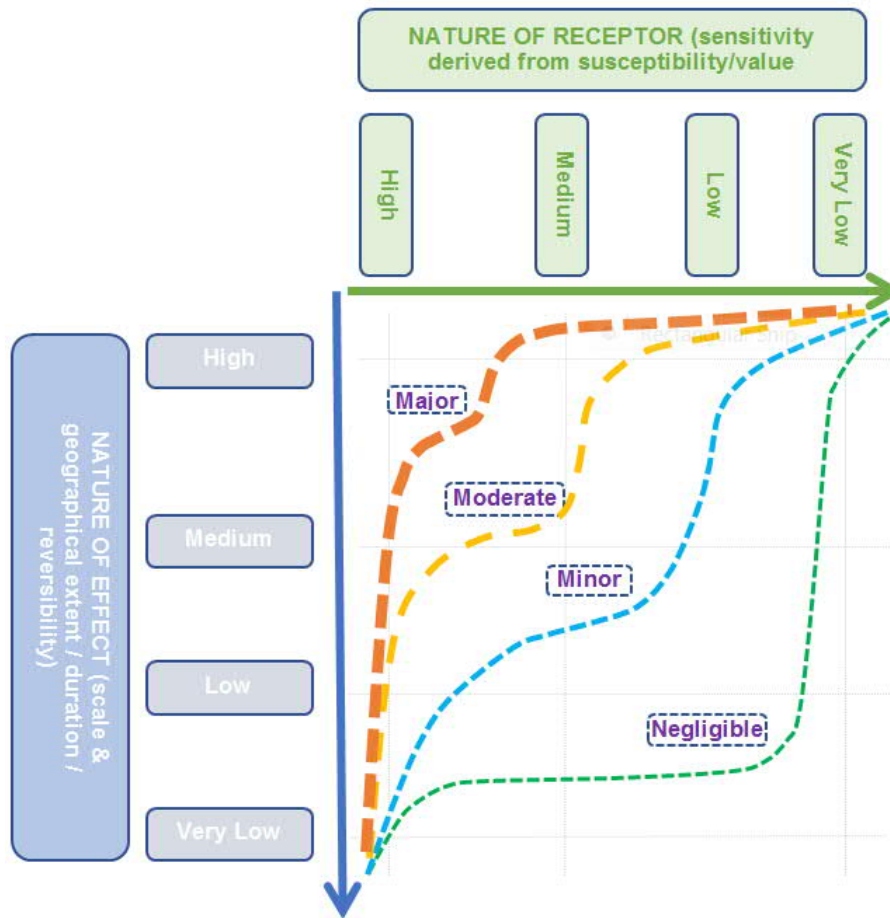
## Assessing the Significance of Landscape Effects

17.1.23 The overall significance of landscape effects is a combination of the sensitivity of the landscape receptor and the magnitude of the effects. GLVIA3 (para 5.56) states that *“there is no definitive rule regarding what defines a significant effect, but in making the judgement it is reasonable to say that:*

- *Major loss or irreversible negative effects, over an extensive area, or element and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspect that are key to the character of nationally valued landscape are likely to be of the greatest significance; [and]*
- *Reversible negative effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key characteristics of landscape value are likely to be the least significant and may depending upon the circumstance, be judged as not significant.”*

17.1.24 Diagram 17B-1 below presents a diagram to describe the relationship between sensitivity and magnitude of impacts on the landscape to determine the effect. GLVIA 3 dictates that this is not a prescriptive process and is provided as a guide to how combinations of sensitivity and magnitude are typically combined.

Diagram 17B-1: Classification of Landscape Effects



## Visual Assessment Methodology

17.1.25 “An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity” (GLVIA3, para 6.1).

17.1.26 In predicting the effects of the proposed development on the viewpoints being assessed, GLVIA3 states it is helpful to consider (but not restricted to) the following issues:

- nature of the view (full, partial or glimpsed);
- proportion of the proposed development visible;
- distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development and whether it would be the focus of the view or only a small element;
- whether the view is stationary, transient or sequential; and
- the nature of the changes to the view.

17.1.27 Additionally, the seasonal effects of vegetation are to be considered, in particular the varying degree of screening and filtering of views.

## Assessing the Significance of Effects

17.1.28 The overall significance of visual effects is a combination of the sensitivity of the visual receptor and the magnitude of the visual effects. GLVIA3 clearly states that there is no definitive rule regarding what defines a significant effect, but in making the judgement the following points should be considered (para 6.44):

- effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes of views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant;
- effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant; and
- large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view.

## Sensitivity of Viewpoints

17.1.29 The susceptibility of visual receptors to changes in the view and visual amenity is related to the activity they are engaged in and the extent to which their attention is focussed on the views and visual amenity at that location. As such, those receptors most sensitive to change are likely to include people engaged in outdoor activities where an appreciation of the landscape is the focus, or residents in areas where the landscape setting contributes to the setting of the properties.

Conversely, those considered least sensitive to change include (but are not restricted to) people engaged in outdoor sports or recreation where there is no focus on the surrounding landscape/views, and people at their place of work where the focus is on the work activity.

17.1.30 Table 17B-8 for a full description of the criteria used to assess the susceptibility of viewpoints.

### Value of Views

17.1.31 In making judgements about the value of each view, the assessment should take into account the following:

- recognition of the value to a particular view, e.g. in relation to heritage assets or planning designations;
- indicators of the value attached to views by others, e.g., in guide books, tourist maps, literary references, painting etc.

17.1.32 Table 17B-9 below shows a full description of the criteria used to assess the value of the view.

**Table 17B-8: Visual Susceptibility to Change Criteria**

Criteria level	Susceptibility to change
High	Residents at home; People engaged in outdoor recreation, whose attention/interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or particular views, including strategic/ popular public rights of way; Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience; Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents; Travellers on scenic routes.
Medium	Travellers on road, rail, or other transport routes; Users of local, and less used Public Rights of Way or where the attention is not focused on the landscape; Schools and other institutional buildings and their outdoor areas, play areas.
Low	Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes not focused on the landscape/particular views e.g. on motorways and “A” road or commuter routes; People engaged in outdoor sport/recreation which does not involve/depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape; People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work/activity and not their surroundings.

**Table 17B-9: Value of View Criteria**

Criteria level	Description
High	A recognised high quality view, well- frequented and/or promoted as a beauty spot/visitor destination. A view with cultural associations (recognised in art, literature or other media). A view which relates to the experience of other features, for example heritage assets.
Medium	The view, whilst it may be valued locally, is not widely recognised for its quality or has low visitor numbers. The view has no strong cultural associations.
Low	A view with no recognised quality and/or is unlikely to be visited specifically to experience the views available.

17.1.33 In combining susceptibility to change and value it is generally accepted that a combination of high susceptible and high value is likely to result in the highest sensitivity, whereas a low susceptibility and low value is likely to resulting in the lowest level of sensitivity. A summary of the likely characteristics of the different levels of sensitivity is described below in

17.1.34 Table 17B-10. It should be noted that these are indicative and in practice there is not a clear distinction between criteria levels.

**Table 17B-10: Visual Sensitivity Criteria**

Criteria level	Description
High	A view that is well balanced, containing attractive features and notable for its scenic quality; and/or A view which is an important part of the receptor’s reason for being there; and/or

	A view which is experienced by large numbers of people and/or is recognised for its qualities.
Medium	An otherwise attractive view that includes some unattractive or discordant features, or visual detractors; and/or A view which plays a small part in the receptors being there; and/or A view that is recognised locally.
Low	A view that is unattractive, discordant and/or contains many visual detractors; and/or A view which is unlikely to be part of the receptor experience.

## Magnitude of Visual Effects

17.1.35 The guidance provided in GLVIA3 (para 6.38) requires that each of the following variables need to be evaluated for each of the visual effects identified:

- size or scale of the change of view, including loss of or additional views, degree of contrast in terms of form, mass, scale, colour and texture etc;
- geographic extent in terms of angle of view, distance etc; and
- duration and reversibility in term of longevity of effects and whether reversible.

17.1.36 The size and scale of an effect is determined by considering the amount of change experienced by a receptor, based upon the indicative criteria set out in Table 17B-11 below.

**Table 17B-11: Visual Size/ Scale Criteria**

Criteria level	Description
Large	The Proposed Development may result in extensive changes to the existing view (including the loss of existing characteristic features and/ or introduction of new discordant landscape features); and/ or A change to an extensive proportion of the view; and/ or Views where the Proposed Development would become the dominant landscape feature or contract heavily with the current scene.
Medium	Changes will result in changes to the view but not fundamentally change its characteristics; and/ or Changes that would be immediately visible but not be the key features of the view.
Small	Changes which would not result in a change to the composition of the view; and/ or Changes that would only affect a small portion of the view or introduce new features that could be screened.

17.1.37 The geographical extent of an effect is determined by the indicative criteria set out in Table 17B-12 below. It should be noted that whether a view is at short, medium or long- range will vary depending upon the type of development proposed.



**Table 17B-12: Geographical Extent Criteria**

Criteria level	Description
Large	Changes where the proposed development is located: in the main focus of the view; and/ or at close range; and/ or over a large area.
Medium	Changes where the proposed development is located: obliquely to the main focus of the view; and/ or at medium range; and/ or over a narrow area.
Small	Changes where the proposed development is located: on the periphery of the main focus of the view; and/ or at long range; and/ or over a small area.

### Duration and Reversibility

The duration of an effect and its reversibility are linked but separate consideration of the criteria for defining these are as below in Table 17B-13 and Table 17B-14.

**Table 17B-13: Duration Criteria**

Criteria level	Description
Temporary	Less than 12 months
Short-term	1-5 years
Medium-term	5-10 years
Long-term	10+ years

The reversibility of an effect relates to the prospects and practicality of an effect being able to be reversed and is determined based on the indicative criteria set out in

Table 17B-14 below.

**Table 17B-14: Reversibility Criteria**

Criteria level	Description
Reversible	Change can be wholly or largely reversed. For example the removal of a wind farm development following decommissioning.
Partially reversible	Change is partially reversible. For example the restoration of a quarry to something similar to the baseline.
Irreversible	Change cannot realistically be reversed, <i>i.e.</i> it is permanent.

17.1.38 These four factors are then considered together to derive an overall magnitude of change for each receptor, which is determined by use of professional judgement, based on the indicative criteria set out in Table 17B-15 below.

**Table 17B-15: Visual Magnitude Criteria (indicative)**

Criteria level	Description
High	The development, or a part of it, would become the dominant and contrasting feature or focal point in the view. Little or no scope for adequate mitigation.
Medium	The development, or a part of it, would form a prominent feature or element of the view which is readily apparent to the receptor in the view. Partial mitigation is possible.
Low	The development, or a part of it, would be noticeable but not alter the overall balance of features and elements that comprise the existing view. Partial or full mitigation is possible.
Very Low	Only a very small part of the development would be discernible, or it is at such a distance that it would form a barely noticeable feature or element of the view and/or occupy a negligible proportion of the view. Full mitigation is possible.

## Beneficial or Adverse Change

17.1.39 The magnitude also needs to be assessed as to whether it is a *beneficial* or *adverse* change. These are defined as follows:

- For beneficial change the Proposed Development, or part of it, would appear in keeping with existing landscape character and would make a positive visual and/or physical contribution to key characteristics. Removal of uncharacteristic features would also be a beneficial change; and
- For adverse change the Proposed Development, or part of it, would be perceived as an alien or intrusive component in the context of existing landscape character and would have a negative visual and/ or physical effect.

## Assessing the Significance of Visual Effects

17.1.40 The overall significance of visual effects is a combination of the sensitivity of the visual receptor and the magnitude of the effects. GLVIA3 (para 6.42) states that “*the significance of visual effects is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its specific location.*”

17.1.41 In paragraph 6.44 it also states that in making judgements about the significance of visual effects the following points should be noted:

- effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in the views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant;

- effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant; and
- large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant features or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view.

17.1.42 The relationship between the sensitivity of receptors and the magnitude of impacts allows the effects to be classified. Diagram 17B-2 below provides a diagram used to describe this relationship, and so allow a relative level of significance of any predicted effects on visual receptors to be categorised.

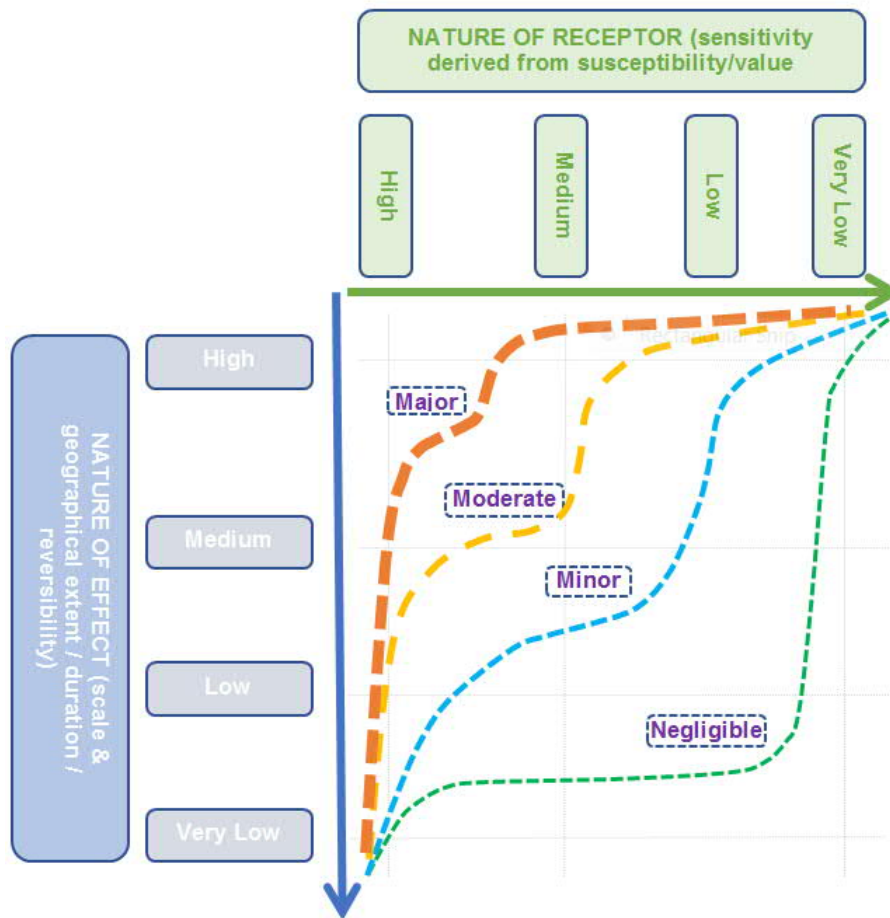
17.1.43 The matrix is indicative of a continuum of effects which are assessed by professional judgement and justification, further clarification of the type of effects which are likely within each category can be found in Table 17B-16 below.

### Levels of Effect

17.1.44 The objective of the assessment process is to identify and evaluate potential notable effects arising from the Proposed Development. The assessment identifies the residual effects likely to arise from the design taking into account mitigation measures and change over time. The level of effect is assessed by considering the sensitivity of the receptor and the predicted magnitude of effect in relation to the baseline conditions.

17.1.45 In order to provide a level of consistency and transparency to the assessment, and allow comparisons to be made between the various landscape and visual receptors subject to assessment, the assessment of beneficial and adverse effects is based on pre-defined criteria as outlined in Table 17B-16. When assessing the degree of individual effects, these may fall across several different categories and professional judgement is therefore used to determine which level best fits the overall effect on a landscape or visual receptor.

**Diagram 17B-2: Classification of Visual Effects**



**Table 17B-16: Categories of Landscape and Visual Levels of Effect**

Level of effect	Description of landscape effect	Description of visual effect
Major	Considerable change over an extensive area of a highly sensitive landscape, fundamentally affecting the key characteristics and the overall impression of its character.	The development would become a prominent feature and would result in a very noticeable change to an existing highly sensitive and well composed view.
Moderate	Small or noticeable change to a highly sensitive landscape or more intensive change to a landscape of medium or low sensitivity, affecting some key characteristics and the overall impression of its character.	The development would introduce some enhancing or detracting features to an existing highly sensitive and well composed view, or would be prominent within a less well composed and less sensitive view, resulting in a noticeable improvement or deterioration of the existing view.
Minor	Small change to a limited area of landscape of high or medium sensitivity or a more widespread area of a less sensitive landscape, affecting few characteristics without altering the overall impression of its character.	Where the proposed development would form a perceptible but not enhancing or detracting feature within a view of high or medium sensitivity or would be a more prominent feature within a poorly composed view of low sensitivity, resulting in a small improvement or deterioration of the existing view.
Negligible	No discernible improvement or deterioration to the existing landscape character.	No discernible improvement or deterioration in the existing view.
No Effect	The development would not affect the landscape receptor.	The development would not affect the view.

## 17.2 References

Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* 3rd Edition. Abingdon: Routledge.

Landscape Institute (2019) *Technical Guidance Note (TGN): Visual Representation of Development Proposals* [Online]. Available at: [https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2019/09/LI\\_TGN-06-19\\_Visual\\_Representation.pdf](https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2019/09/LI_TGN-06-19_Visual_Representation.pdf)

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