

## **Appendix 9A**

### **Landscape Assessment Methodol**

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## 9A1 Assessing the Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors to Change

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This study assigns a degree of sensitivity to landscape features and to each Landscape Character Area identified through baseline studies.

The sensitivity of landscape receptors to change is assigned by combining judgements of the value of the receptor and their susceptibility to the type of change or development being proposed, as outlined in *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA)*, (Third Edition, 2013)<sup>1</sup>.

### 9A1.1 Value

Reviewing existing designated landscapes forms the starting point for assigning value to landscape character areas.

In a policy context, the usual basis for recognising certain important landscapes is via application of local or national landscape designations. A landscape can nonetheless be valued by different communities for many different reasons without any formal designation.

The assessment of landscape value is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape (quality/condition) and about its intactness from visual, functional and biodiversity perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements that make up the character in any one place.

Value may be: **High, Medium or Low**

### 9A1.2 Susceptibility to Change

Susceptibility refers to the degree to which a particular landscape feature or character area is able to accommodate the changes proposed by a development without significant effects to its components or overall character.

Susceptibility is assigned to landscape receptors based on ‘ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) 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’ (GLVIA3).

Susceptibility may be: **High, Medium or Low**

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<sup>1</sup> Landscape Institute and I. E. M. A (2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Environmental Impact Assessment*

## 9A1.3 Sensitivity

Sensitivity is assigned by combining the value and susceptibility assigned to landscape character areas.

The criteria to define each sensitivity rating are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Landscape Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
High	<p>Landscapes which by nature of their character would be unable to accommodate change of the type proposed.</p> <p>High sensitivity landscapes are typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- highly valued landscapes, likely to be covered by international, national or regional designations;</li> <li>- of high quality with distinctive elements and features that make positive contribution to character and sense of place;</li> <li>- containing features recognised through use, perception or historic and cultural associations;</li> <li>- likely to contain features and elements that are rare and consequently irreplaceable.</li> </ul>
Medium	<p>Landscapes which by nature of their character would have the ability, to some extent, to accommodate change of the type proposed.</p> <p>Medium sensitivity landscapes are typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- locally valued landscape, likely to be covered by local designations or recognised through non-statutory local publications.</li> <li>- comprising commonplace elements and features creating generally unremarkable character but with some sense of place;</li> <li>- containing some features recognised through use, perception or historic and cultural associations;</li> <li>- likely to contain some features and elements that could not be replaced.</li> </ul>
Low	<p>Landscapes which by nature of their character would be able to accommodate change of the type proposed.</p> <p>Low sensitivity landscapes are typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- undesignated landscapes of low value and often eroded;</li> <li>- comprised of some features that are discordant, derelict or in decline;</li> </ul>

Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- containing few, if any, features of value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations;</li> <li>- containing few, if any, features and elements that could not be replaced.</li> </ul>

## 9A2 Assessing the Magnitude of Change to Landscape receptors

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This study compares the overall character of the existing landscape with the changes that result from the proposed development. It quantifies the degree of change in terms of size or scale, geographical extent of the change and its duration and reversibility.

The magnitude of change to the current (baseline) landscape environment depends on a combination of factors as outlined within GLVIA3:

### **Size or Scale**

Judgments for the size or scale of change in the landscape take account of 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;
- 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;
- whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.

### **Geographical Extent**

- The area over which the landscape effects will be felt. In general, effects may have an influence at the following scales:
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  - at site level, within the development site itself;
  - at the level of the immediate setting of the site;
  - at the scale of the landscape type or character area within which the proposal lies;
  - on a larger scale, influencing several landscape types or character areas.

The magnitude of the change to existing landscape character and features is assessed in accordance with the criteria set out in Table 2. These criteria can be applied to both positive and negative impacts.

Table 2: Magnitude of Change to the Landscape

Magnitude of Change	Typical Criteria
High (Adverse)	<p>The proposed development will result in dominant deterioration due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- total loss or large-scale damage to existing character;</li> <li>- total loss or large-scale damage to distinctive features and elements;</li> <li>- introduction of conspicuous features and elements that are incongruous.</li> </ul>
Medium (Adverse)	<p>The proposed development will result in noticeable deterioration due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- partial loss or noticeable damage to existing character;</li> <li>- partial loss or noticeable damage to distinctive features and elements;</li> <li>- introduction of noticeable features and elements that are incongruous.</li> </ul>
Low (Adverse)	<p>The proposed development will result in slight deterioration due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- perceptible loss or damage to existing character;</li> <li>- perceptible loss or damage to distinctive features and elements;</li> <li>- introduction of features and elements that are incongruous.</li> </ul>
Negligible (Adverse)	<p>Any deterioration to existing character, features and elements or the introduction of incongruous features and elements is barely noticeable.</p>
No Change	<p>No noticeable loss, damage or alteration to character or features or elements.</p>
Negligible (Beneficial)	<p>Any enhancements to existing character, features and elements or the introduction of characteristic features and elements is barely noticeable.</p>
Low (Beneficial)	<p>The proposed development will result in slight enhancements due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- perceptible restoration of existing character;</li> <li>- perceptible restoration of distinctive features and elements;</li> <li>- removal of features and elements that are incongruous;</li> <li>- introduction of perceptible features and elements that are characteristic of the area.</li> </ul>
Medium (Beneficial)	<p>The proposed development will result in noticeable enhancements due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- partial restoration of existing character;</li> <li>- partial restoration of distinctive features and elements;</li> <li>- removal of features and elements that are incongruous;</li> <li>- introduction of noticeable features and elements that are characteristic of the area.</li> </ul>
High (Beneficial)	<p>The proposed development will result in dominant enhancements due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- large-scale restoration of existing character;</li> <li>- large-scale restoration of distinctive features and elements;</li> <li>- removal of features and elements that are incongruous;</li> <li>- introduction of conspicuous features and elements that are characteristic of the area.</li> </ul>

## 9A3 Assessing the Sensitivity of Visual Receptors to Change

This study assigns a degree of sensitivity to visual receptors identified through baseline studies.

The sensitivity of visual receptors to change is assigned by combining judgements of the value of the view and the receptors susceptibility to the type of change or development being proposed.

### 9A3.1 Value

Value is assigned to a view based on indicators such as appearance in guidebooks or tourist maps, or the provision of facilities or interpretation boards. Views may also hold value due to references in literature or art. Views associated with heritage assets or visitor attractions, or recognised through planning designations, also hold higher value.

Beyond recognised or published views, value may be held due to the nature or rarity of a particular type of view. Clear explanations are included where these instances occur.

Value may be: **High, Medium or Low**

### 9A3.2 Susceptibility to Change

Susceptibility is assigned to visual receptors based on ‘the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations and the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations’ (GLVIA3).

Susceptibility may be: **High, Medium or Low**

### 9A3.3 Sensitivity

Sensitivity is assigned by combining the value and susceptibility assigned to visual receptors.

The typical criteria to define each sensitivity rating are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Visual Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
High	<p>Views from within internationally or nationally designated high-quality landscapes (National Parks, AONB, Areas of Great Landscape Value).</p> <p>Views from well used public rights of way often known to and used by people from beyond the local area where the attractive nature of the countryside is the main factor in the enjoyment of the experience, such as National Trails, Long Distance Routes or National Cycle Routes.</p> <p>Views from residential properties.</p>

Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
Medium	<p>Views from non-designated but locally important landscapes, outdoor sports or recreation (where the landscape is not a significant factor in the enjoyment of the sport).</p> <p>Views from locally valued public rights of way often passing through rural landscapes.</p> <p>Views from passenger trains, or people within cars on local roads.</p>
Low	<p>Views from within non-designated but potentially locally valued landscapes.</p> <p>Views from less well used public rights of way which pass through less attractive landscapes or townscape and are not used specifically for enjoyment of the scenery.</p> <p>Views from motorways, main roads, or business premises where the receptors attention is not focused on the surrounding landscape.</p>

## 9A4 Assessing the Magnitude of Change to Visual Receptors

The visual assessment compares the quality of the existing view with that which would result from the construction of the scheme and then verbally quantifies the degree of change.

The magnitude of change to the current (baseline) visual environment depends on a combination of factors:

- The size and scale of change in the view;
- The proximity of the viewpoint to visible elements of the development;
- The extent and composition of the view (e.g. degree of existing screening, partial, glimpsed or unobstructed views, fleeting or constant nature of view);
- The degree of contrast or integration of proposed elements with the existing or remaining features or characteristics of the receiving landscape that may detract from or add to its amenity; and
- The relative direct or oblique angle of the view in relation to the receptor.



Table 4: Visual Magnitude of Change

<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<b>Typical Criteria</b>
High (Adverse)	The proposed development will contrast with, or largely alter, key features or characteristics of the views, resulting in a dominant deterioration of the view. These changes to open and direct views are likely to be irreversible or only partly reversible. New elements will occupy a large proportion of the view.
Medium (Adverse)	The proposed development will be noticeable and will result in deterioration of the view. The change will be medium in scale and contrast with the view.
Low (Adverse)	The proposed development will result in slight, often temporary and reversible deteriorations to the view that are small in scale or do not overtly contrast with the key features or characteristics of the view. Views will be largely unchanged despite perceptible differences.
Negligible (Adverse)	Minimal alteration to the features or characteristics of the existing view such that the development will result in barely discernible deterioration to the existing view.
No Change	No part of the project, or work or activity associated with it, is discernible.
Negligible (Beneficial)	Minimal alteration to the features or characteristics of the existing view such that the development will result in barely discernible enhancement to the existing view.
Low (Beneficial)	The proposed development will result in slight enhancements to the view that are small in scale.  Views will be largely unchanged despite perceptible differences.
Medium (Beneficial)	The proposed development will be noticeable and will result in enhancement of the view. The change will be medium in scale.
High (Beneficial)	The proposed development will contrast with or largely alter key features or characteristics of the views resulting in a dominant enhancement of the view. New elements will occupy a large proportion of the view.

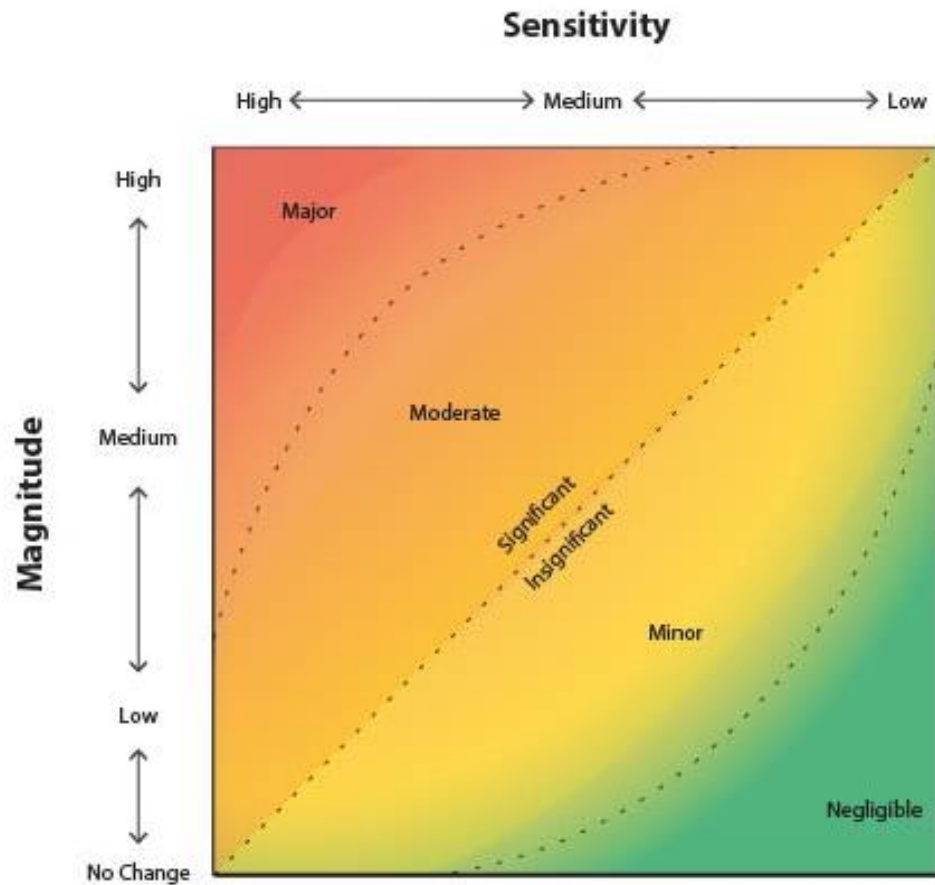
## 9A5 Assessment of Significance

The significance of effect is a result of the combined Magnitude of Change and Sensitivity of the receptor. The reversibility and duration of the effect are taken into consideration when determining the overall significance of effect which is based on professional judgment. Typical definitions for the significance of effect are shown in Table 5 below. Illustration 1 shows the parameters within which significance of effect is determined.

Table 5: Significance of Effect Definitions

Significance of Effect	Definition
Major	<p>These effects are generally, but not exclusively, associated with sites or features of international, national or regional importance that are likely to experience dominant damaging or beneficial changes of medium to high magnitude leading to long term irreversible loss or enhancement. However, a high magnitude of change to a site or feature of local importance may also enter this category. The proposed development will cause substantial degradation or enhancement of the landscape character/landscape features/existing views.</p> <p>These effects are key factors in the decision-making process.</p>
Moderate	<p>These effects are generally, but not exclusively, associated with sites or features of regional or local importance that are likely to experience damaging or beneficial changes of low to high magnitude, often leading to reversible long or medium-term loss or enhancement of resource integrity.</p> <p>The proposed development will cause noticeable degradation or enhancement of the landscape character/elements/existing views.</p> <p>These effects are material factors in the decision-making process. These effects are important in influencing the subsequent design of the project.</p>
Minor	<p>The proposed development will cause degradation or enhancements of low to medium magnitude to landscape character elements/existing views of local importance. These adverse effects may be raised as local factors.</p> <p>They are unlikely to be critical in the decision-making process but are used in optimising the design of the project.</p>
Negligible	<p>The proposed development will cause barely perceptible degradation or enhancement of the landscape character/elements/existing views.</p>
Neutral	<p>Beneficial and adverse effects on the same receptor balance each other out, such that there is no overall beneficial or adverse effect</p>

Illustration 1: Determining Significance of Effect



## 9A6 Approach to Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects are ‘the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together’ (SNH, 2012: 4)