

Appendix 8.1: Landscape and visual effects assessment criteria (GLVIA3)

A8.1 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Overview of landscape sensitivity

- A8.1.1 Although landscape has some intrinsic sensitivity, different landscape receptors have different elements and features that can accommodate a variety of development types.
- A8.1.1 To reliably inform detailed assessment of impacts, landscape sensitivity needs to be determined with reference to the changes arising from a specific type of development. Therefore landscape sensitivity is assessed combining judgements on the value attached to a landscape and the susceptibility to the type of change or nature of the development proposed.

Landscape value

- A8.1.3 Landscape value is the relative value attached to a potentially affected landscape. Landscape value will vary in relation to the different stakeholders and different parts of society that use or experience a landscape. Factors that have been considered in making judgements on landscape value include designations (both national and local), local planning documents, status of features (e.g. TPO's or Conservation Areas) and local community and interests (for example local green spaces, village greens or allotments). Landscape value will vary in response to the specific landscape that is being considered.
- A8.1.4 Table A8.1.1 sets out the criteria that have been considered for determining landscape value.

Landscape susceptibility

- A8.1.5 The second component of landscape sensitivity relates to susceptibility. Landscape susceptibility to change is the ability of a landscape to accommodate change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. In this context, the term landscape receptors can be expanded to cover character areas, particular landscape character type or an individual landscape element or feature. Landscape susceptibility will vary in response to the specific landscape that is being considered and to the nature or type of change that may occur.
- A8.1.6 Table A8.1.2 sets out the criteria that have been considered for determining landscape susceptibility.

Table A8.1.1: Criteria for Landscape value	
Value	Criteria
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated areas at an International or National level (including, but not limited to, World Heritage site, National Parks, AONB's) and also considered an important component of the country's character, experienced by high numbers of tourists; • Landscape condition is good and components are generally regularly maintained to a high standard; • In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence / absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has an elevated level of tranquillity; and / or • Rare or distinctive elements and features are a key component that contribute to the character of the area.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated areas at a Regional or County level (including, but not limited to, green belt, regional scale parks, designated as open space or a Conservation Area in local planning documents) and also considered a distinctive component of the region/county character experienced by a large proportion of its population; • Landscape condition is fair and components are generally relatively well maintained; • In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence / absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has moderate levels of tranquillity; and / or • Rare or distinctive elements and features are a notable component that contribute to the character of the area.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal designations but a landscape of local relevance (including, but not limited to, public or semi-public open spaces, village greens or allotments) and also green infrastructure and open spaces within residential areas likely to be visited and valued by the local community; • Landscape condition is poor and components are generally poorly maintained or damaged; • In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence / absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has limited levels of tranquillity; and / or • Rare or distinctive elements and features are not a notable component that contribute to the character of the area.

Table A8.1.2: Criteria for Landscape Susceptibility	
Susceptibility	Criteria
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale of enclosure – landscapes with a low capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed due to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover and built form; • Nature of land use – landscapes with no or little existing reference or context to the type of proposed development; • Nature of existing elements – landscapes with components that are not easily replaced or substituted (e.g. ancient woodland, mature trees, historic parkland); and / or • Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features or major infrastructure is not present or where these are present but their influence on the landscape is limited.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale of enclosure – landscapes with a medium capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed due to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover and built form; • Nature of land use – landscapes with some existing reference or context to the type of proposed development; • Nature of existing elements – landscapes with components that are easily replaced or substituted; and / or • Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features or major infrastructure is present and the influence of these on the landscape is noticeable.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale of enclosure – landscapes with a high capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed due to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover and built form • Nature of land use – landscapes with extensive existing reference or context to the type of proposed development; • Nature of existing elements – landscapes with components that are easily replaced or substituted, or where there are few/no existing elements present (e.g. cleared brownfield sites); and / or • Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features or major infrastructure is present and the influence of these on the landscape is dominant.

Landscape sensitivity

- A8.1.7 Landscape sensitivity is a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor. Receptors can include specific elements or features or may be judged at a wider scale and include landscape character parcels, types or areas.
- A8.1.8 Having considered in detail the contributing factors to landscape value and the susceptibility of the site and surrounding area to the type of the development proposed, conclusions on landscape sensitivity can be drawn by balancing the judgements on value and susceptibility.
- A8.1.9 As advocated in the GLVIA3, professional judgement is used to balance judgements on value and susceptibility in order to determine sensitivity. Each of these aspects of the analysis will vary subject to the scale and detail of the assessment. Overall judgements on landscape sensitivity are subsequently described as; very high, high, medium, low or negligible.

Magnitude of landscape impacts

- A8.1.10 The effect on landscape receptors is assessed in relation to the size or scale of impact, the geographical extent of the change and the duration and the reversibility of the impact. The magnitude of landscape effects has been assessed in accordance with the criteria set out in the Table A8.1.3.

Table A8.1.3: Criteria for determining magnitude of landscape impacts	
Magnitude	Criteria
Very high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The size and scale of change is considered very large due to the extent and proportion of loss of existing landscape elements, the degree of alteration to aesthetic or perceptual aspects through change and to key characteristics which are critical to character; Where the geographical extent would have a very substantial influence on the landscape at a regional scale, i.e. across several landscape character areas/types; and / or Duration of impacts would be considered very long term and where the potential reversal of the impact is not likely and in practical terms would be very difficult to achieve.
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The size and scale of change is considered large due to the extent and proportion of loss of existing landscape elements, the degree of alteration to aesthetic or perceptual aspects through change and to key characteristics which are critical to character;

Environmental Statement ~ Alderholt Meadows

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the geographical extent would substantially influence the landscape at a regional scale, i.e. across several landscape character areas/types; and / or • Duration of impacts would be considered long term and where the potential reversal of the impact is not likely and in practical terms would be very difficult to achieve.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and scale of change is considered moderate due to the extent and proportion of loss of existing landscape elements, the degree of alteration to aesthetic or perceptual aspects through change and to key characteristics which are critical to character; • Where the geographical extent would substantially influence the landscape in the at a local scale, i.e. a single landscape character area/type (or potentially multiple areas/types where a site is located on the boundary between areas); and or • Duration of impacts would be considered mid term and where the potential reversal of the impact is likely and in practical terms would be difficult to achieve.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and scale of change is considered small due to the extent and proportion of loss of existing landscape elements, the degree of alteration to aesthetic or perceptual aspects through change and to key characteristics which are critical to character; • Where the geographical extent would substantially influence the landscape in the immediate setting of the site, i.e. limited to the influence of part of a single landscape character area/type; and or • Duration of impacts would be considered short term and where the potential reversal of the impact is more likely and in practical terms would easily be achieved.
Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and scale of change is considered very small due to the extent and proportion of loss of existing landscape elements, the degree of alteration to aesthetic or perceptual aspects through change and to key characteristics which are critical to character; • Where the geographical extent would substantially influence the landscape of the site only; and or • Duration of impacts would be considered very short term and where the potential reversal of the impact is very likely or committed and in practical terms would very easily be achieved.

A8.1.11 These judgements are then taken forward to an assessment of the significance of landscape effects.

A8.2 ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

A8.2.1 Visual receptors include a particular person or groups of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint or series of viewpoints.

Visual sensitivity

A8.2.2 Sensitivity of visual receptors is determined through balancing judgements on the value attached to a particular view against the receptors susceptibility to change in a view or visual amenity. Given the need to address the specific issues of the proposed development these factors in the context of visual sensitivity are considered as part of the assessment of visual effects.

A8.2.3 The value attached to a view includes recognition of value through formal designations (for example planning designations or heritage assets), indicators of value attached to views by visitors (for example inclusion on maps/guide books, provision of facilities, presence of interpretation).

A8.2.4 The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is judged based on the activity of people experiencing the view at any given time or location and the extent to which their attention would be focused on the view and visual amenity rather than on the activity being undertaken.

A8.2.5 Table A8.2.1 sets out the definitions of sensitivity for different visual receptors.

A8.2.6 It should be noted that as professional judgement is applied to the balance of value and susceptibility of visual receptors, there may be some instances where a typical receptor is defined a different degree of sensitivity to the guidance included in Table A8.2.1.

Magnitude of visual impacts

A8.2.7 The effect on visual receptors is also assessed in relation to the size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the change, the duration of the change and the reversibility of the impact. The magnitude of visual impacts has been assessed in accordance with the criteria set out in the Table A8.2.2.

A8.2.8 These judgements are then taken forward to an assessment of the significance of visual effects.

Table A8.2.1: Criteria for visual sensitivity	
Sensitivity	Definition
Very high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated or protected views or views from publically accessible locations in protected landscapes; and or • Tourists and visitors to heritage assets, or other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience and visit.
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupiers of residential properties; • People who are engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention is likely to be focussed on the landscape; and or • People travelling through the landscape on roads, rail or other transport routes where this involves recognised scenic routes and an awareness of views and visual amenity.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People travelling more generally through the landscape on roads, rail or other transport routes; • People staying in hotels and healthcare institutions; and or • People at work and in educational institutions where visual amenity is an important contributor to the setting and quality of working life.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People at work and in educational institutions where the visual setting is not important to the quality of working life; • People engaged in formal sports where the visual setting may play a role but attention is focused on the activity; and or • Views from publically accessible locations in degraded landscapes.

Table A8.2.2: Criteria for determining magnitude of visual impacts	
Magnitude	Criteria
Very high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and scale of change is considered very substantial due to the extent of loss, addition or alteration of features, the changes to the composition of the view including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposal, the degree of contrast and the nature of the experience; • The geographical extent in relation to the angle, distance and proportion of visibility is considered as very extensive; • Duration of impacts would be considered long term and where the potential reversal of the impact is not likely and in practical terms

	<p>would not be achievable; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alteration in very close proximity.
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and scale of change is considered substantial due to the extent of loss, addition or alteration of features, the changes to the composition of the view including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposal, the degree of contrast and the nature of the experience; • The geographical extent in relation to the angle, distance and proportion of visibility is considered as extensive; • Duration of impacts would be considered long term and where the potential reversal of the impact is not likely and in practical terms would be very difficult to achieve; and or • Alteration in close proximity.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and scale of change is considered fair due to the extent of loss or addition of features, the changes to the composition of the view including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposal, the degree of contrast and the nature of the experience; • The geographical extent in relation to the angle, distance and proportion of visibility is considered as small or intermediate; and • Duration of impacts would be considered medium term and where the potential reversal of the impact is likely and in practical terms would be difficult to achieve.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and scale of change is considered small due to the extent of loss or addition of features, the changes to the composition of the view including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposal, the degree of contrast and the nature of the experience; • The geographical extent in relation to the angle, distance and proportion of visibility is considered as limited; and or • Duration of impacts would be considered short term and where the potential reversal of the impact is very likely and in practical terms would easily be achieved.
Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and scale of change is considered very small due to the extent of loss or addition of features, the changes to the composition of the view including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposal, the degree of contrast and the nature of the experience; • The geographical extent in relation to the angle, distance and proportion of visibility is considered as very limited; and or • Duration of impacts would be considered very short term and where the potential reversal of the impact is very likely or committed and in practical terms would very easily be achieved.

A8.3 DEFINING SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS

- A8.3.1 For both landscape and visual effects the final conclusions on effects are based on the combination of sensitivity of receptor and magnitude of change (or impact). The rationale for the overall judgement on significance is based on the sequential combination of each of the criteria individually leading to the balance and justification of these.
- A8.3.2 Detailed assessment is a means of drawing together, in a systematic way, an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of a proposed development; however not all landscape and visual effects arising will be significant.
- A8.3.3 Determination of the significance of an effect requires the application of professional judgement to weigh the findings of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the predicted impacts. The criteria for determining the significance of effects for landscape and visual impacts are set out in the Tables A8.3.1 and A8.3.2 below. These criteria are based on guidance provided by the Landscape Institute.

Table A8.3.1: Criteria for determining significance of landscape effects	
Significance of Effect	Description The proposed development would:
Major Adverse (Negative) Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be at considerable variance with the character of the landscape. • Degrade or diminish the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements. • Damage the sense of place.
Moderate Adverse (Negative) Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict with the character of the landscape. • Have an adverse impact on characteristic features or elements. Diminish the sense of place.
Minor Adverse (Negative) Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not quite fit the character of the landscape. • Be at variance with characteristic features and elements. Detract from a sense of place.
Neutral/Negligible Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the character of the landscape. • Blend in with characteristic features and elements. Enable the sense of place to be retained.
Minor Beneficial (Positive) Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complement the character of the landscape. • Maintain or enhance characteristic features and elements. Enable some sense of place to be restored.
Moderate Beneficial (Positive) Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the character of the landscape. • Enable the restoration of characteristic features and elements partially lost or diminished as a result of changes from inappropriate management or development. • Enable the sense of place to be restored.
Major Beneficial (Positive) Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the character of the landscape. • Enable the restoration of characteristic features and elements lost as a result of changes from inappropriate management or development. • Enable the sense of place to be enhanced.

Table A8.3.2: Criteria for determining significance of visual effects	
Significance of Effect	Description
Major Adverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed development project would cause major deterioration to a view from a highly sensitive receptor, and would constitute a major discordant element in the view.
Moderate Adverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed development 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed development would cause limited deterioration to a view from a receptor of medium sensitivity, or cause greater deterioration to a view from a receptor of low sensitivity.
Negligible / Neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No perceptible change in the view.
Nil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There would be no view of the proposed development in the view.
Minor Beneficial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed development would cause limited improvement to a view from a receptor of medium sensitivity, or would cause greater improvement to a view from a receptor of low sensitivity.
Moderate Beneficial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed development would cause obvious improvement to a view from a moderately sensitive receptor, or perceptible improvement to a view from a more sensitive receptor.
Major Beneficial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed development would lead to a major improvement in a view from a highly sensitive receptor.