

## **APPENDIX 5.A – METHODOLOGY**

1.6 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed scheme has been conducted encompassing the “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment” (GLVIA) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2002, and “Landscape Character Assessment. Guidance for England and Scotland” (LCA) published by the former Countryside Agency and Scottish National Heritage 2002. These documents do not provide a prescriptive approach to assessment but identify principles and good practice. The methodology for this assessment is described in the following section and is based on this approach.

1.7 The GLVIA states

*“Landscape impact assessment, in common with any assessment of environmental effects, includes a combination of objective and subjective judgements, and it is therefore important that a structured and consistent approach is used. It is necessary to differentiate between judgements that involve a degree of subjective opinion (as in the assessment of landscape value) from those that are normally more objective and quantifiable”.*

1.8 The GLVIA also states;

*“Landscape and visual assessments are separate, although linked, procedures. The landscape baseline, its analysis and the assessment of landscape effects all contribute to the baseline for visual assessment studies. The assessment of the potential effect on the landscape is carried out as an effect on an environmental resource, i.e. the landscape. Visual effects are assessed as one of the interrelated effects on population”.*

1.9 Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. This may in turn affect the perceived value ascribed to the landscape. The description and analysis of effects on a landscape resource relies on the adoption of certain basic principles about the positive (or beneficial) and negative (or adverse) effects of change in the landscape. Due to the inherently dynamic nature of the landscape, change arising from a development may not necessarily be significant.

- 1.10 Visual effects relate to the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes, and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.

### **Assessment and Design are an iterative process**

- 1.11 An iterative design approach enables the site planning and detailed design for the project to be informed by the ongoing assessment. The amended proposals then feed back into the assessment process, until the preferred design solution is reached. This approach has been adopted with this scheme.

### **Mitigation**

- 1.12 The purpose of mitigation is to avoid, reduce and where possible remedy significant adverse effects on the environment arising from the proposed development.
- 1.13 Mitigation is thus not solely concerned with 'damage limitation' but may also consider measures that could compensate for unavoidable residual effects.
- 1.14 Mitigation measures are generally more effective if they are designed as an integral part of an iterative process of project planning and design. Mitigation is thus used as a design approach that is, where possible, implemented from project inception when alternative designs or site options are being considered.
- 1.15 The GLVIA states that Para 5.1.7

*"Where planting is intended to provide a visual screen for the development, it may also be appropriate to assess residual effects for different periods of time, such as day of opening, year five and year fifteen"*

This assessment includes the likely effects at these time periods

### **Impact Assessment Methodology**

- 1.16 Following the baseline landscape studies, the assessment stage includes the systematic identification of potential impacts, prediction of their magnitude and assessment of their significance.
- 1.17 In the context of landscape and visual assessment, the following terms are used:

### **Landscape character**

- 1.18 This is defined by the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how people perceive this. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.

### **Sensitivity of the Landscape Resource**

- 1.19 The degree to which a particular landscape type or area can accommodate change arising from a particular development, without detrimental effects on its character, will vary with :-

- existing land use;
- the pattern and scale of the landscape
- visual enclosure / openness of views, and distribution of visual receptors;
- the scope for mitigation, which would be in character with the existing landscape;

Variations of these characteristics within the local landscape and within the site need to be identified.

### **Scale or magnitude of landscape effects**

- 1.20 There is no standard methodology for the quantification of the magnitude of effects. However, it is generally based on the scale or degree of change to the landscape resource, the nature of the effect and its duration.

### **Sensitivity of visual receptors**

- 1.21 The sensitivity of visual receptors and views will be dependent on:

- the location and context of the viewpoints;
- the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor;

- 1.22 The most sensitive receptors may include:-

- users of outdoor recreational facilities including public rights of way, whose attention or interest may be focused on the landscape;
- communities where the development results in changes in the landscape setting or valued views enjoyed by the community;

- occupiers of residential properties with views affected by the development.

1.23 The least sensitive receptors are likely to be people at their place of work, or engaged in similar activities, whose attention may be focused on their work or activity and who therefore may be potentially less susceptible to changes in the view.

**Scale or magnitude of visual effects**

1.24 In the evaluation of the effects on views and the visual amenity of the identified receptors, the magnitude or scale of visual change is described by reference to :-

- the scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;
- the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture;
- the duration and nature of the effect, whether temporary or permanent, intermittent or continuous, etc;
- the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
- the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development;
- the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.

1.25 In relation to landscape character and visual resources, the context of both the site and the receptors plays an important role in determining sensitivity.

**Landscape Impact**

1.26 For this assessment the following criteria applies :-

**Landscape sensitivity**

<b>High</b>	Landscape areas with particularly distinctive or positive characters or with valued landscape features. The areas may be sensitive to relatively small changes.
<b>Medium</b>	Landscape areas with reasonably positive character, but with evidence of alteration or degradation of the character or features. Potentially tolerant of some change.

**Low** Landscape areas with a weak character or relatively few features of value, potentially tolerant of significant change.

**Magnitude of Landscape Effect**

**High adverse** Total loss of, or major alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area.

**Medium adverse** Potential loss of or alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area.

**Low adverse** Minor loss of, or alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area.

**No change** Very minor loss or change to the landscape characteristics or features of the area, compensated by landscape improvements or enhancements.

**Low beneficial** Minor improvements to the key characteristics or features that outweigh any adverse landscape effects of the proposal. Removal of minor incongruous features.

**Medium beneficial** Notable improvements to the key landscape characteristics or features, or improvements resulting from removal of inappropriate land uses or features.

**High beneficial** Major landscape implements, through the creation of a new landscape structure, or the removal of large-scale inappropriate features.

1.27 Overall landscape impact is determined by combining the sensitivity of the landscape resource with the magnitude of landscape change. Professional judgement is used to determine the overall significance of impact based on these two elements.

1.28 Overall significance is classified by Substantial, Moderate, Slight or Negligible and the effects can be adverse or beneficial.

## **Visual Impact**

1.29 For this assessment the following criteria applies:

### **Visual Sensitivity**

#### **High**

Occupiers of residential properties with views affected by the development. Users of outdoor recreational facilities including rights of way where interest may be focused on the landscape.

#### **Medium**

Users of outdoor recreational facilities where the view is less important to the activities (e.g. sports pitches). People at places of work.

#### **Low**

People travelling through the area in cars or on trains, or people at places of work with limited views potentially affected by the development (e.g. Industrial sites).

### **Magnitude of Visual Effect**

#### **High Adverse**

Where the scheme would cause a significant deterioration in the view.

#### **Medium Adverse**

Where the scheme would cause a noticeable deterioration in the view.

#### **Low Adverse**

Where the scheme would cause a minor deterioration in the view.

#### **No Change**

Where the scheme overall would not form a noticeable deterioration or improvement in the view.

#### **Low Beneficial**

Where the scheme would cause a minor improvement in the view.

#### **Medium Beneficial**

Where the scheme would cause a noticeable improvement in the view.

#### **High Beneficial**

Where the scheme would cause a significant improvement in the view.

- 1.30 Overall visual impact is determined by combining the sensitivity of the receptor with the magnitude of visual change. Professional judgement is used to determine the overall significance of impact based on these two elements.
- 1.31 Overall significance is classified as Substantial, Moderate, Slight or Negligible, and the effects can be adverse or beneficial.