

Appendix 5.1

Draft LVIA Methodology

Prepared for: Dulas

October 2024

3820-01

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to systematically identify and assess the nature and significance of the effects of the Proposed Development upon the landscape and upon views and visual amenity. The purpose of the LVIA is to identify the level and nature of effect arising from the Proposed Development and if necessary, through an iterative design process, to inform changes to the development and evolution of mitigation strategies which minimise effects wherever possible.
- 1.1.2 The methodology for this LVIA is informed by guidance contained within the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment, 3rd Edition, 2013), often referred to as 'the GLVIA'.
- 1.1.3 The LVIA aims to establish the following:
- i) A clear understanding of the development site and its context, in respect of the physical and perceived landscape and of views and visual amenity;
 - ii) An understanding of the Proposed Development in terms of how this would relate to the existing landscape and views;
 - iii) An identification of the likely effects of the Proposed Development upon the landscape and upon views, throughout the life cycle of the development, including cumulative interactions with other developments;
 - iv) Those mitigation measures necessary to reduce or eliminate any potential adverse effect on the landscape or views arising as a result of the Proposed Development; and
 - v) A conclusion as to the residual likely significant effects of the Proposed Development.

-
- 1.1.4 In accordance with the requirements of GLVIA, the LVIA is proportionate to the likely effects of the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.5 Professional judgement is a very important part of the LVIA process at every stage of the assessment. This judgement must be exercised within an assessment framework that transparently sets out the steps in the assessment process which have led to the overall conclusions. This is emphasised in Box 3.1 (page 37) of the GLVIA, which advocates a structured approach that considers the sensitivity of the receptor and magnitude of the effect when determining if an effect is material or not.
- 1.1.6 To ensure the transparency of the assessment and professional judgements made, the LVIA follows a standard approach, namely:
- i) The establishment of the baseline conditions, against which the effects of the Proposed Development will be assessed;
 - ii) The determination of the nature of the receptor likely to be affected, i.e. its sensitivity;
 - iii) The prediction of the nature of the effect likely to occur, i.e. the magnitude of change; and
 - iv) An assessment of whether a likely significant effect would occur upon any receptor, by considering the predicted magnitude of change together with the sensitivity of the receptor, taking into account any proposed mitigation measures.
- 1.1.7 The GLVIA clarifies that the guidance concentrates on:
- [1.20] “...principles while also seeking to steer specific approaches where there is a general consensus on methods and techniques. It is not intended to be prescriptive, in that it does not provide a detailed ‘recipe’ that can be followed in every situation. It is always the primary responsibility of any landscape professional carrying out an assessment to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the particular circumstance”.
- 1.1.8 As set out above, use of professional judgement within a structured assessment framework is a very important element of the assessment of landscape and visual effects. As discussed in the GLVIA:
-



[2.23] *“...Whilst there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters, ...much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgement, for example about what effect the introduction of a new development or land use change may have on visual amenity, or about the significance of change in the character of the landscape and whether it is positive or negative”.*

[2.24] *“...In all cases there is a need for the judgements that are made to be reasonable and based on clear and transparent methods so that the reasoning applied at different stages can be traced and examined by others...”*

[2.26] *“...In carrying out an LVIA the landscape professional must always take an independent stance, and fully and transparently address both the negative and positive effects of a scheme in a way that is accessible and reliable for all parties concerned”.*

- 1.1.9 Landscape and visual matters are separate issues, although closely related and interlinked, are dealt with as such throughout the LVIA. The methodologies for assessing both are outlined separately below.



2.0 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

2.1.1 The landscape assessment considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the components of the landscape as an environmental resource. Landscape receptors which could be affected by a development may include:

- i) Individual constituent elements and features of the landscape (sometimes referred to as landscape fabric).
- ii) Specific aesthetic and perceptual qualities of the landscape.
- iii) The overall character and key characteristics of the landscape as experienced in different areas (e.g. landscape character areas or types).

Sensitivity

2.1.2 The nature of a landscape receptor likely to be affected, i.e. its **sensitivity** is determined by considering two factors, namely:

- i) Susceptibility to change.
- ii) Value.

Susceptibility to Change.

2.1.3 Susceptibility to change is defined in the GLVIA as follows:

[5.40] *“This means the 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.”*

[5.41] *“The assessment may take place in situations where there are existing landscape sensitivity and capacity studies, which have become increasingly common. They may deal with the general type of development that is proposed, in which case they may provide useful preliminary background information for assessment. But they cannot provide a substitute for the individual assessment of the susceptibility of the receptors in relation to change arising from the specific development proposal”.*



-
- 2.1.4 To understand susceptibility to change, the various characteristics/factors that make up a particular landscape must be identified and consideration given as to how these will be affected by the Proposed Development. Consideration is given to physical and perceptual factors which are considered together to derive an overall susceptibility to change. Factors influencing the susceptibility of a landscape to change resulting from a commercial-scale wind energy development are set out in Table 1. Factors influence the susceptibility of a landscape to change resulting from a commercial-scale solar energy development are set out in Table 2.

Table 1 – Susceptibility to Change Criteria for Commercial-scale Wind Energy (Landscape Character)

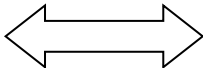
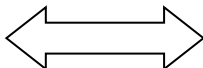
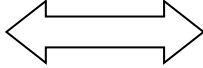
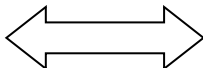
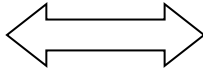
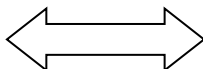
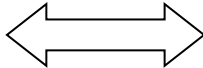
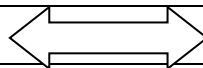
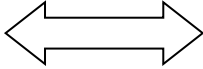
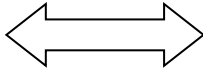
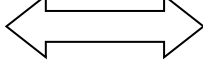
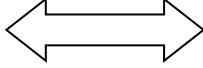
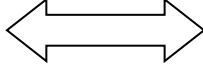
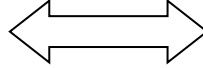
Landscape Characteristic	Typical of lower susceptibility to wind energy development		Typical of higher susceptibility to wind energy development
Scale and Enclosure	Large scale		Small scale
	Open/ exposed		Enclosed/ sheltered
	Featureless		Human scale indicators
	Coarse grain		Fine grain
	Broad/ expansive views		Narrow/ framed views
Landform	Absence of strong topographical variety - featureless, convex or flat/plateau.		Presence of strong topographical variety or distinctive landform features
Landscape Pattern & Complexity	Simple		Complex
	Ordered/ consistent		Confused/ haphazard
	Smooth and flowing		Rugged/ intricate
	Geometric/ linear		Organic/ variable
	Regular pattern		Irregular mosaic
Development & Human Influence	Presence of utility/ infrastructure/ industrial elements		Absence of built features
	Contemporary structures/ modern settlements		Traditional/ historic settlements/ buildings/ structures
	Functional land use with engineered aspects		Natural or naturalistic features and forms
	Concentrated settlement pattern		Dispersed settlement pattern
Skylines	Simple horizon		Distinctive landmark skyline
	Existing man-made focal points		Bare uncluttered horizon
	Moderating features e.g. tiered horizons or low contrast with background		Intensifying features e.g. framed vistas, valley rims, channelled views
Connections with adjacent landscapes	Gradual transitions between area		Sharp contrasts in elevation
	Neighbouring landscapes of low sensitivity		Neighbouring landscapes of high sensitivity
	Limited views into and out of landscape		Extensive intervisibility with adjacent landscape character areas
	Simple large scale backdrops		Intricate/ distinctive backdrops
Remoteness and Tranquillity	Busy and noisy		Sense of peace and isolation
	Human activity and development		Remote and empty
	Prominent Movement		No evident movement
Visual Interruption	Frequent vegetative or built screening features		Few if any vegetative or built screening features



Table 2 – Susceptibility to Change Criteria for Commercial-scale Solar Energy (Landscape Character)

Landscape Characteristic	Typical of lower susceptibility to solar energy development		Typical of higher susceptibility to solar energy development
Pattern, Scale and Enclosure	Large scale		Small scale
	Enclosed/sheltered		Open/exposed
	Featureless		Human scale indicators
	Simple, regular or uniform pattern		Complex or intimate pattern
Landform	Absence of strong topographical variety - featureless, convex or flat. Expansive lowland landscapes.		Presence of strong topographical variety or distinctive landform features, including skylines
Land cover	Large arable fields		Natural or semi-natural land cover (e.g. moorland)
	Previously developed land		Large areas of woodland
	Continuous monoculture or extensive built development		Historic parkland landscapes
Settlement & Human Influence	Presence of utility/ infrastructure/ industrial elements		Absence of built features
	Contemporary structures/ modern settlements		Traditional/ historic settlements/ buildings/ structures
	Functional land use with engineered aspects		Natural or naturalistic features and forms
	Concentrated settlement pattern		Dispersed settlement pattern
Remoteness and Tranquillity	Busy and noisy		Sense of peace and isolation
	Human activity and development		Remote and empty
Visual	Frequent vegetative or built screening features		Few if any vegetative or built screening features
	Little intervisibility with adjacent landscapes		Strong intervisibility with adjacent landscapes
	Enclosed, well contained landscape with few inward or outward views		Open, exposed landscape with far-reaching views available

2.1.5 A particular landscape may have different characteristics that are more or less susceptible to change. As such, the overall susceptibility to change is allocated using professional judgement based upon consideration of the various factors outlined above and the relative weight attached to these (which will vary from landscape to landscape). The assessment of susceptibility is expressed using a three point verbal scale of high, medium or low. Where appropriate, intermediate levels such as medium/high or low/medium are used to refine the assessment. The rationale in support of the assessment of susceptibility is set out for each receptor in the assessment, so that it is clear how each judgement has been made.



Value

2.1.6 The value of the landscape receptor is independent of any development proposal. The absence of a formal landscape designation does not necessarily imply that a landscape is of lower value. Value is defined in the GLVIA as:

[5.19] "...the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons...Landscapes or their component parts may be valued at the community, local, national or international levels..."

2.1.7 Factors that can help in identifying valued landscapes include:

- i) Presence/absence of statutory landscape designations.
- ii) Presence/absence of local landscape designations and associated policies.
- iii) Landscape quality/condition.
- iv) Scenic quality.
- v) Rarity of particular elements/features.
- vi) Representativeness.
- vii) Conservation interest.
- viii) Recreation value.
- ix) Perceptual aspects.
- x) Cultural associations.

2.1.8 The assessment of value is expressed on a similar basis to that described for susceptibility of change above. Table 3 indicates how the above factors have been used to determine landscape value.

Table 3 – Landscape Value Criteria

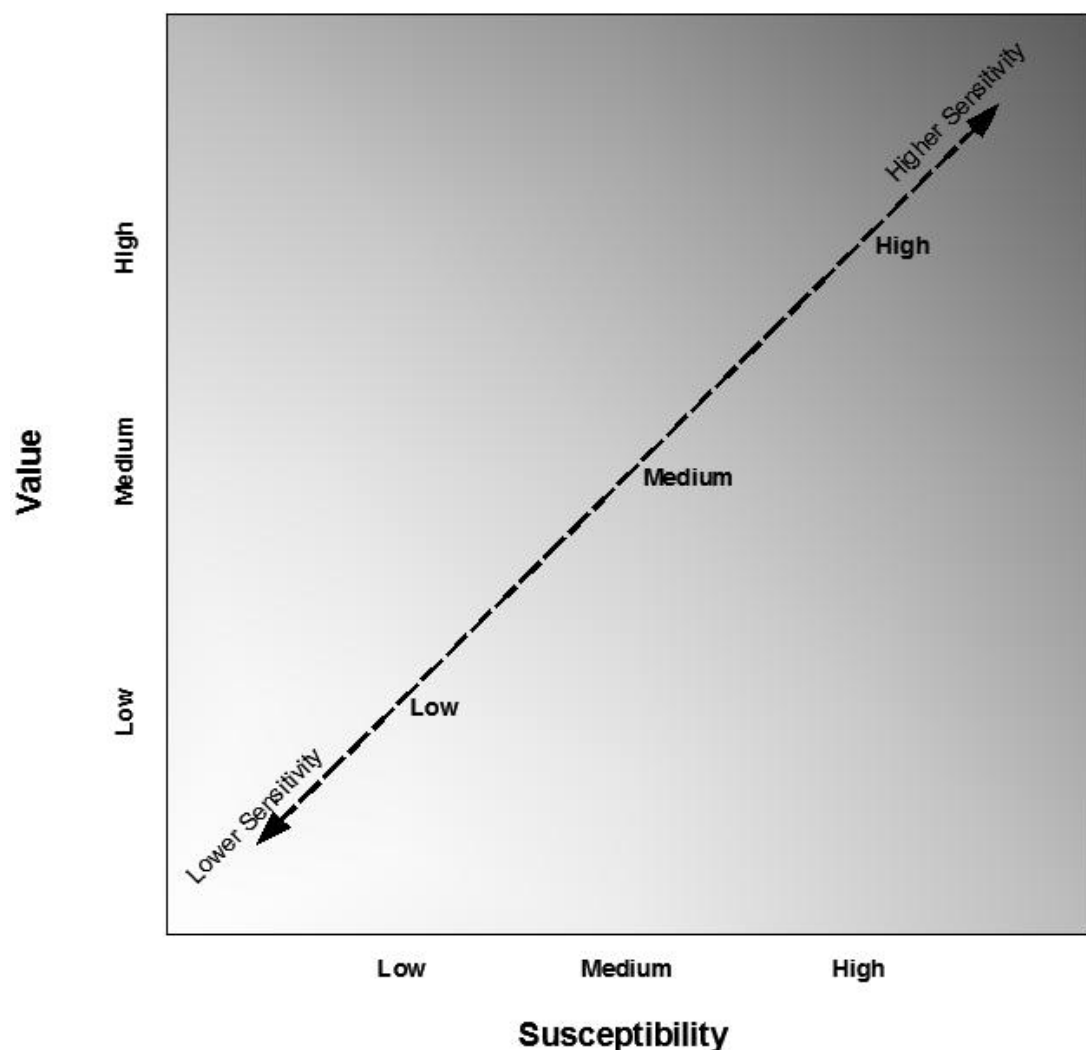
	Criteria tending towards higher or lower value	
	Higher	Lower
Value	Unique, and/or strongly positive landscape character, often with strong associations or (non-landscape) environmental designation. Nationally designated landscape (protected by statute)	Widespread or common landscape character. Negative character. Lack of other environmental qualities. Landscape without formal designation and with limited positive contribution to the locality.



Sensitivity

- 2.1.9 Susceptibility to change and value are considered together to determine the sensitivity of the receptor. It should be noted that the relationship between susceptibility to change and value can be complex and is not linear. For example, a highly-valued landscape (such as a National Park) may have a low susceptibility to change, due both to the characteristics of the landscape and the nature of the change proposed. Figure 1 provides a guide as to how susceptibility and value can be combined to assess sensitivity (with the grey shading indicative of the increasing sensitivity of receptors with increasing susceptibility and/or value). However, the final assessment of sensitivity is one of professional judgement based on consideration of the susceptibility and value assessments.

Figure 1 – Indicative Sensitivity Assessment



Magnitude

- 2.1.10 The nature of the effect that is likely to occur, i.e. its **magnitude**, is determined by considering four separate factors, namely:
- i) Size/scale.
 - ii) Geographical extent.
 - iii) Duration.
 - iv) Reversibility.
- 2.1.11 The size and scale of an effect is determined by considering the amount of change experienced by a receptor, including:
- i) The extent of existing landscape elements that would be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the wider character;
 - ii) The degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscapes are altered by the removal, or introduction of new landscape components;
 - iii) Whether change affects the key characteristics of a landscape.
- 2.1.12 The geographical extent of an effect is the area over which effects will be experienced. It is not the same as size / scale, as a small-scale change may be experienced over a wider area, or vice-versa.
- 2.1.13 The duration of an effect simply relates to the length of time for which it would be experienced, as follows:
- i) Long-term: 10+ years: or the change could not reasonably be considered temporary in nature.
 - ii) Medium-term: 3-10 years.
 - iii) Short-term: 0-3 years.
- 2.1.14 The reversibility of an effect relates to the prospects and practicality of an effect being able to be wholly or partially reversed, or whether the change cannot realistically be reversed, i.e. it is permanent.
- 2.1.15 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.
-



- 2.1.16 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017, and the GLVIA both require that the duration and reversibility of change be identified. In relation to the operational effects of a wind farm, these effects would occur for a defined period of time (35 years in the case of the Proposed Development) and would be reversible following decommissioning. However, as the operational period would last for a long period of time, duration and reversibility have no real bearing upon the magnitude of the change that would occur during the operational period. As such, little weight is given to the duration and reversibility of change in relation to the operational period of the Proposed Development.
- 2.1.17 The assessment of the magnitude of change is expressed using a four point verbal scale of large, medium, small or negligible. Where appropriate, intermediate levels such as medium/large or small/medium are used to refine the assessment. Table 4 indicates how the above factors have been used to inform magnitude of change. As the circumstances of each specific receptor will vary, a reasoned narrative is set out in the LVIA in order to justify the particular magnitude of change.

Table 4 – Magnitude of Landscape Change Criteria (indicative)

Magnitude	Description
Large	A substantial change in landscape characteristics and/or change over an extensive geographical area
Medium	A moderate change in landscape characteristics and/or which may occur over a large geographical area
Small	A small change in landscape characteristics and/or which may be over a relatively localised geographical
Negligible	A barely perceptible change in landscape characteristics and/or which is focussed on a small geographical area



3.0 VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 3.1.1 A visual assessment is concerned with the potential effects upon the population likely to be affected (i.e. the views experienced by people). As for landscape effects (see Section 2.0), the sensitivity of the receptor affected is identified, as is the magnitude of the change that would occur. These are then considered together to determine the level and significance of effect.
- 3.1.2 A key part of the visual assessment is the assessment of effects from a number of predetermined viewpoints, which reflect views available to different groups of people. The viewpoint itself is not the receptor; rather it is the people that would be experiencing the view. These people will generally have different responses to a change in view depending upon their location, their activity and other factors, including the weather and time of day or year. Viewpoints fall into three categories (as set out in the GLVIA):
- i) Representative viewpoints (which represent the experience of different types of receptors in the vicinity);
 - ii) Specific viewpoints (a particular view, for example a well-known beauty spot);
 - iii) Illustrative viewpoints (which illustrate a particular effect or issue, which may include limited or lack of visibility).
- 3.1.3 Private viewpoints, such as from specific residential properties are not typically included in the LVIA, as the planning system is designed to act in the public interest (rather than the private interest) when making decisions. It is often impractical to visit all affected properties and access to private land may not be granted. Representative or specific viewpoints from nearby publicly accessible locations can often give an impression of what the visual effects from within private land would be. Effects on the residential amenity of people within their properties is a separate consideration which is addressed in the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) set out in Appendix 6-7 of the Environmental Statement (ES).



Sensitivity

3.1.4 The nature of a visual receptor likely to be affected, i.e. its **sensitivity** is determined by considering two factors, namely:

- i) Susceptibility to change.
- ii) Value.

Susceptibility to Change

3.1.5 The GLVIA identifies susceptibility to change in view/visual amenity as:

[6.32] “...*mainly a function of:*

- i) *The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and*
- ii) *The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations”.*

3.1.6 Susceptibility to change is, in part, classified based upon the indicative criteria, provided in the GLVIA, as set out in Table 5.

Table 5 – Typical Visual Susceptibility to Change Criteria (indicative)

Level of Susceptibility to Change	Description
High	Residents at home; People engaged in outdoor recreation, whose attention/interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or particular views, including from 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.
Low	People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or 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.

3.1.7 It is important to note that the examples set out in GLVIA and Table 5 above only address the first bullet point and part of the second bullet point in paragraph 3.1.5 above (which are focussed on the occupation or activity of the people and the extent to which their attention is focussed on the view).



3.1.8 As such, the assessment of susceptibility in Table 5 and GLVIA (pages 113 & 114) needs to be adjusted to reflect the requirements of the final part of the second bullet point, namely the visual amenity that people currently experience. GLVIA identifies clearly that the division between categories of susceptibility to change:

[6.35] “...is not black and white and in reality there will be a gradation in susceptibility to change. Each project needs to consider the nature of the groups of people who will be affected and the extent to which their attention is likely to be focused on views and visual amenity...”

3.1.9 For example, the presence of existing detracting features in any given view may reduce the visual amenity of those experiencing the view. This may therefore reduce their susceptibility to certain types of change and ultimately their sensitivity.

3.1.10 The assessment of susceptibility to change is made on the same basis as for landscape effects (Section 2.0 above). A three-point scale (with intermediate levels where appropriate) is used, supported by a reasoned narrative that explains the judgement made.

Value

3.1.11 In accordance with paragraph 6.37 of the GLVIA when considering the value of a view experienced, this should take account of:

- i) Recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets or through planning designations;
- ii) Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearances in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment and references to them in literature or art.

3.1.12 For this reason, whilst not specifically referenced in the current edition of GLVIA, the number of people likely to be affected can influence the value assigned to a particular view.

3.1.13 The assessment of value is made on the same basis as the assessment of susceptibility to change.



Sensitivity

- 3.1.14 Susceptibility to change and value are considered together as discussed above for landscape sensitivity and illustrated in Figure 1. Again, professional judgement determines the final judgement of sensitivity, due to the non-linear and complex relationship between susceptibility and value. A reasoned narrative is set out in the LVIA in order to justify the particular sensitivity assessed for each receptor, so that it is clear how each judgement has been made.

Magnitude

- 3.1.15 The nature of the visual effect that is likely to occur, i.e. its **magnitude**, is determined by considering four separate factors, namely:
- i) Size/scale.
 - ii) Geographical extent.
 - iii) Duration.
 - iv) Reversibility.
- 3.1.16 The size and scale of an effect is determined by considering the following:
- i) The scale of change in view, in respect of the loss of or addition of features, and change in composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the development;
 - ii) The degree of contrast or integration of new features or other changes;
 - iii) The nature of the view, namely the relative amount of time it would be experienced for and whether the views would be full, partial or glimpsed.
- 3.1.17 The geographical extent of an effect will vary from viewpoint to viewpoint and will reflect the following:
- i) The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
 - ii) The distance from the Proposed Development;
 - iii) The extent over which change in view would be visible.
- 3.1.18 The duration of an effect simply relates to the length of time for which it would be experienced, as follows:



-
- i) Long-term: 10+ years; or the change could not reasonably be considered temporary in nature.
 - ii) Medium-term: 3-10 years.
 - iii) Short-term: 0-3 years.
- 3.1.19 The reversibility of an effect relates to the prospects and practicality of an effect being able to be wholly or partially reversed, or whether the change cannot realistically be reversed, i.e. it is permanent.
- 3.1.20 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.
- 3.1.21 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017, and the GLVIA both require that the duration and reversibility of change be identified. In relation to the operational effects of a wind farm, these effects would occur for a defined period of time (35 years in the case of the Proposed Development) and would be reversible following decommissioning. However, as the operational period would last for a long period of time, duration and reversibility have no real bearing upon the magnitude of the change that would occur during the operational period. As such, little weight is given to the duration and reversibility of change in relation to the operational period of the Proposed Development.
-



3.1.22 The assessment of the magnitude of change is expressed using a four-point verbal scale of large, medium, small or negligible. Where appropriate, intermediate levels such as medium/large or small/medium are used to refine the assessment. Table 6 indicates how the above factors have been used to inform magnitude of change. As the circumstances of each specific receptor will vary, a reasoned narrative is set out in the LVIA in order to justify the particular magnitude of change allocated to each receptor.

Table 6 – Magnitude Change Criteria (indicative)

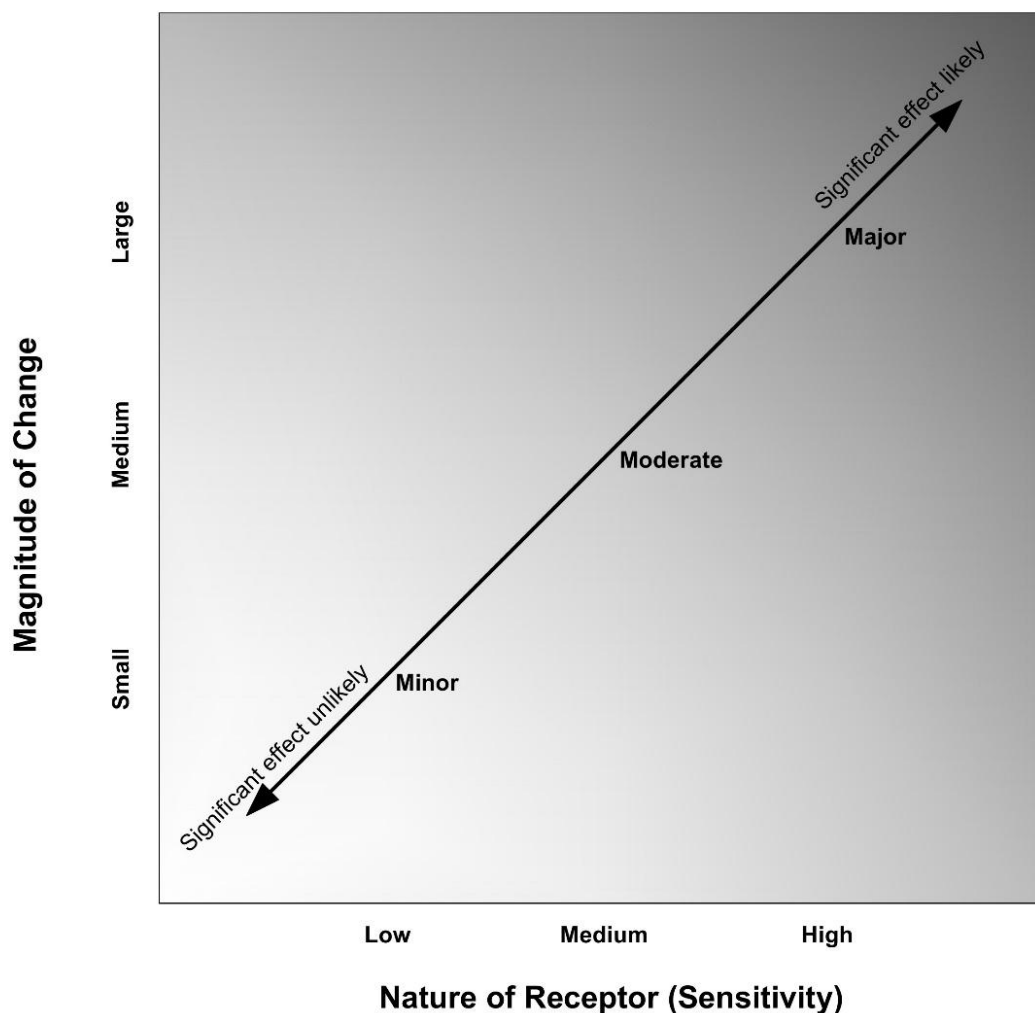
Level of Susceptibility to Change	Description
Large	A change affecting a large proportion of a view, which may be seen across an extensive area or experienced from a long section of a route, and/or a longer-term effect, and/or contrasting with the existing view.
Medium	A change affecting a moderate proportion of a view, which may be seen across a wider area or experienced from a section of a route, and/or a medium-term effect, and/or broadly compatible with the existing view.
Small	A change affecting a smaller proportion of a view, which may be seen from a limited area or experienced from a short section of a route, and/or a shorter-term effect, and/or compatible with the existing view.
Negligible	A change which is barely perceptible in the view, and/or which is only glimpsed from a route.

4.0 LEVEL AND SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT

- 4.1.1 The purpose of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is to determine the likely significant effects of a development proposal. Not all landscape and visual effects arising as a result of a particular proposal will be significant. Furthermore, a significant effect does not necessarily mean that such an effect is unacceptable to decision-makers. This is a matter to be weighed in the planning balance alongside other factors. What is important is that the likely effects of any proposal are transparently assessed and described in order that the relevant determining authority can bring a balanced and well-informed judgement to bear as part of the decision-making process.
- 4.1.2 Page 60 of *The State of Environmental Impact Assessment Practice in the UK* (Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment 2011) identifies a range of different factors that should be considered when evaluating the significance of an effect, including:
- i) Knowledge and experience of significance from previous assessments.
 - ii) Details of the development proposal, such as construction and operational activities, and the nature of the effect associated with such activity.
 - iii) Details about the environmental sensitivity of the area that will be affected.
 - iv) Feedback from scoping and consultation.
 - v) The wider legal and policy context, which offers protection to the environment and community.
- 4.1.3 The level of effect that each receptor would experience can only be defined in relation to each particular development and its specific location. It is for each LVIA to determine how judgements about receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of change should be combined to derive the level of effect and to clearly explain how this assessment has been made, and if the effect that would occur is considered significant.
- 4.1.4 Figure 2 provides a guide as to how sensitivity and magnitude can be combined to identify the level of effect upon a receptor (with the grey shading indicative of the increasing level of effect with increasing sensitivity and/or magnitude). However, the final assessment of the level of effect and whether this is significant for decision makers is one of professional judgement.
-



Figure 2 – Level of Effect Matrix (indicative)



4.1.5

The GLVIA identifies that:

[3.32] *“The Regulations require that a final judgement is made about whether or not each effect is likely to be significant. There are no hard and fast rules about what effects should be deemed ‘significant’ but LVIA’s should always distinguish clearly between what are considered to be significant and non-significant effects...*

[3.33] *It is not essential to establish a series of thresholds for different levels of significance of landscape and visual effects, provided that it is made clear whether or not they are considered significant. The final overall judgement of the likely significance of the predicted landscape and visual effects is however, often summarised in a series of categories of significance reflecting combinations of sensitivity and magnitude. These tend to vary from project to project but they should be appropriate to the nature, size and location of the proposed development and should as far as possible be consistent across the different topic areas of the EIA*".

[5.56] & [6.44] *"There are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and [landscape]¹ context and with the type of proposal"*.

- 4.1.6 The judgement for this particular assessment is that greater than "moderate" effects are more likely to be significant. This is because they would generally result from larger magnitudes of change on higher sensitivity receptors. This does not preclude a "moderate" effect or lower being significant or a greater than "moderate" effect not being significant. This judgment will depend on the specific circumstances being considered.
- 4.1.7 Where magnitude of change is identified as 'negligible', then effects are automatically considered also to be negligible and not significant due to the minimal level of change from baseline (which would often not be perceptible).
- 4.1.8 A significant effect occurring upon a receptor does not necessarily mean that such an effect will be unacceptable to decision-makers. This is a matter to be weighed in the planning balance alongside other factors. What is important is that the likely effects of any proposal are transparently assessed and described in order that the relevant determining authority can bring a balanced and well-informed judgement to bear as part of the decision-making process.

¹ The word landscape is present in paragraph 5.56 of the 3rd edition of GLVIA only. Otherwise, the sentence quoted from paragraphs 5.56 and 6.44 is identical.



-
- 4.1.9 It should be noted that effects may be either adverse (negative) or beneficial (positive). An effect can be material and adverse, or material and beneficial. If change occurs, with no obvious deterioration or improvement resulting, this can be said to be neutral.

5.0 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

5.1.1 An assessment of cumulative effects is concerned with the additional effects of the Proposed Development in conjunction with other development(s) that do not already form part of the existing baseline.

5.1.2 The GLVIA identifies that cumulative landscape and visual effects are those that:

[7.2] *“...result from additional changes to the landscape or visual amenity caused by the proposed development in conjunction with other development (associated with or separate to it), or actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future”.*

5.1.3 The GLVIA goes on to identify that:

[7.5] *“The challenge is to keep the task reasonable and in proportion to the nature of the project under consideration. Common sense has an important part to play in reaching agreement about the scope of the assessment. Where the competent authority and other stakeholders are uncertain about the preferred approach the landscape professional may have to exercise judgement about what is appropriate and be able to justify the approach taken. It is always important to remember that the emphasis in EIA is on likely significant effects rather than on comprehensive cataloguing of every conceivable effect that might occur...”.*

5.1.4 This proportionate approach to cumulative assessment is also advocated in ‘Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments’ (NatureScot 2021) which states that:

“The assessment should be proportionate to the likely impacts and all CLVIA should accord with the guidelines within GLVIA3. The emphasis should be on the production of relevant and useful information, highlighting why the proposals assessed have been included and why others have been excluded...”.

5.1.5 Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments also states that:

“The cumulative impact of wind farm development on landscape and visual amenity is a product of:



- *the distance between individual windfarms (or turbines);*
- *the distance over which they are visible;*
- *the overall character of the landscape and its sensitivity to windfarms;*
- *the siting and design of the windfarms themselves; and*
- *the way in which the landscape is experienced”.*

5.1.6 The (non-cumulative) LVIA will address the effects of introducing the Proposed Development into a context where other existing development is present. The presence of this other existing development forms part of the assessment baseline. Where there is complete certainty that development which is consented or under construction will be implemented within the near future, then these developments are also considered as part of the future baseline.

5.1.7 The cumulative LVIA is concerned with the effects of the Proposed Development based upon two further cumulative baseline scenarios:

- i) Other development that has planning consent but for which the development timescale is unknown.
- ii) The first scenario, plus other development that is the subject of a formal planning application, at appeal, or in the case of DNS schemes, where formal Pre Application Consultation (PAC) has commenced.

5.1.8 It is not typical to include development that is at the scoping stage as there is generally a lack of information about such development, and as such the implications of these types of development upon the landscape and visual resource are not ‘reasonably foreseeable’. However, where a scheme at this stage is of particular relevance to the assessment, it may be included, but should be given limited weight in the decision making process as the proposals may be subject to significant change prior to submission.

5.1.9 Cumulative effects can include:

- i) An intensification of the effects of one development resulting from an extension to it, or the introduction of another development;
- ii) The ‘filling’ of an area with development over time, such that it may substantially alter the landscape and/or views;



-
- iii) The interaction between different developments, which may lead to a greater total effect than the sum of the effects of each development individually;
 - iv) Temporal effects of simultaneous or successive developments over a period of time;
 - v) Indirect effects of development, such as enabling or disabling other development, which may lead to landscape and visual effects;
 - vi) The effects of a future action that may have consequences for other existing/proposed developments.
- 5.1.10 It should be noted that a cumulative effect may not necessarily be significant or adverse.
- 5.1.11 Cumulative landscape effects may be either:
- i) Physical effects on the landscape fabric, resulting from changes to landscape elements/feature, or the introduction of new elements/features;
 - ii) Effects on aesthetic/perceptual attributes of the landscape;
 - iii) Effects on the overall character of the landscape.
- 5.1.12 Cumulative visual effects may be either:
- i) In combination - where two or more features are seen together at the same time from the same place, in the same arc of view, with their visual effects being combined;
 - ii) In succession - where two or more features are present in views from the same place, but cannot be seen at the together because they are not in the same arc of view. As the arc of view experienced by the observer changes, the features become visible in succession;
 - iii) Sequential - where two or more features are not present in views from the same point on a route and cannot therefore, ever be seen at the same time even if the arc of view experienced by the observer changes. The observer must move to another point on the same route to see the second or more of them, so they will then appear in sequence. These sequential views may occur frequently along the route, or more occasionally.
-

