



West Winch Housing Access Road

Environmental Statement Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual

Appendix 4: Methodology

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Document Reference: NCC/3.09.04

Version Number: 001

Date: November 2023



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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The following paragraphs set out the methodology used to determine the findings reached within Appendix 9 (Landscape and Visual Assessment).

2 Landscape and Visual Assessment: Approach and Process

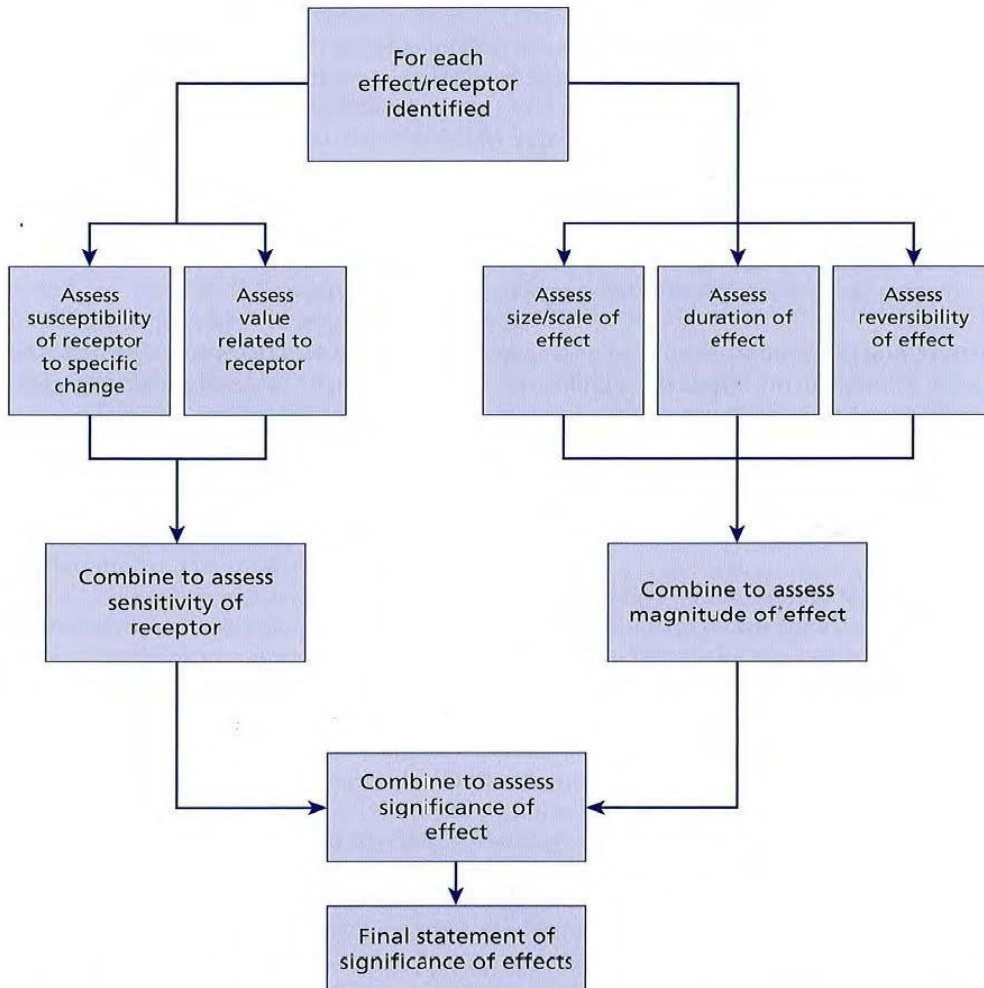
2.1 General Approach

- 2.1.1 This Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) was carried out broadly in accordance with best practice guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition, 2013) (GLVIA3).



Figure 2-1 - The Assessment approach and process is summarised in the flow diagram below from GLVIA3

3 Principles and overview of processes



2.1.2 In the text below there are a number of tables setting out the decision-making framework for assessing sensitivity and magnitude and how these are considered together to reach an assessment of significance.

2.1.3 In all cases these tables are guidelines, not hard and fast rules. Conclusions about the sensitivity of receptors, the magnitude of impacts and the significance of effects are always based on professional judgement.



2.2 Assigning Value and Sensitivity

Landscape Receptors

2.2.1 Landscape effects can be defined as the changes in the fabric, character, and quality of the landscape as a result of a development, through:

- direct effects upon the landscape fabric (specific features and elements that make up the landscape); and
- indirect effects upon the overall patterns of elements and on the perceptual and aesthetic aspects that give rise to landscape character and regional and local distinctiveness; and
- effects upon valued landscapes such as public open space, statutorily designated heritage assets and designated nature conservation sites with public access.

2.2.2 The sensitivity of the landscape receptors has been arrived at by considering the landscape receptor value and the landscape susceptibility of the receptor to the change proposed, generally in accordance with Tables 1 and 2 below.

2.2.3 Reference is normally made to the relevant Landscape Character Assessments.



Table 2-1: Landscape Receptor Value

Value	Recognition	Features	Quality / Condition
High	Typically a landscape or feature of international or national recognition: World Heritage Sites, National Parks, National Scenic Areas, Gardens and Designed Landscapes.	Typically a strong sense of place with landscape / features worthy of conservation; Absence of detracting features to occasional detracting features.	A very high quality landscape / feature; attractive landscape / feature; exceptional / distinctive.
Medium	Regional recognition or undesignated, but locally valued landscape / features: Council landscape designation; Local Landscape Areas, Country Parks, Regional Parks.	Typically a number of distinguishing features worthy of conservation; evidence of some degradation and some detracting elements.	Ordinary to good quality landscape / feature with some potential for substitution; a reasonably attractive landscape / feature; fairly typical and commonplace.
Low	Typically an undesignated landscape / feature.	Few landscape features worthy of conservation, evidence of degradation with many detracting features.	Ordinary landscape / feature with high potential for substitution; quality that is typically commonplace and unremarkable; limited variety or distinctiveness.



Table 2-2: Susceptibility of the Landscape Receptor to Change

Value	Recognition
High	Low ability to accommodate the specific proposed change; undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation (receptor value) and / or achievement of relevant planning policies / strategies.
Medium	Moderate ability to accommodate the specific proposed change; some undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation (receptor value) and / or achievement of relevant planning policies / strategies.
Low	High ability to accommodate the specific proposed change; little or no undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation (receptor value) and / or achievement of relevant planning policies / strategies.

Visual Receptors

2.2.4 Visual effects relate to changes in available views and the effect of those changes on people, including:

- the direct effects of the Proposed Development on the content and character of views (e.g. through intrusion or obstruction and / or the change or loss of existing elements in the view); and
- the overall effect on the change on visual amenity.

2.2.5 The sensitivity of a visual receptor reflects their susceptibility to change and any values which may be associated with the specific view. It varies depending on a number of factors such as the activity of the viewer, their reasons for being there and their expectations and the duration of view.

2.2.6 Certain views are highly valued for either their cultural or historical associations, which can increase the sensitivity of the viewer. However, whilst a valued view may serve to increase the overall visual receptor sensitivity, a low value will not necessarily reduce sensitivity.



2.2.7 The sensitivity of these receptors has been arrived at by considering the susceptibility of the visual receptor to the change proposed and any values associated with the particular view, guided by Tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 2-3: Values Associated with Views

Value	Recognition	Indicators of value
High	Recognised views from nationally or internationally important landscape or heritage resources e.g. National Parks or World Heritage Sites (WHS); important views identified in planning policies or statutory documents.	High value / celebrated view; referred to in national or international guidebooks, tourist guides etc.; literary and art references; presence of interpretive facilities (e.g. visitor centre).
Medium	Recognised views from local or regionally important landscape or heritage resource, such as Local Landscape Areas or Conservation Areas; may be identified in local planning policies or supplementary planning documents.	Moderately valued view; referred to in local or regional guidebooks, tourist maps etc.; local literary and art references; presence of some interpretive facilities (e.g. parking places or sign boards)
Low	Views of no recognised importance; not identified in any planning policies or supplementary planning documents.	Ordinary view; not referred to in guidebooks, tourist maps; no literary or art references; no interpretive facilities.

Table 2-4: Susceptibility of the Visual Receptor to Change

Value	Recognition
High	Residents at home; visitors to major landscape or heritage resources and other attractions; users of long distance recreational trails such as national trails and mountain access routes; visitors to landscape and heritage resources and other attractions where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to appreciation / experience / enjoyment.



Value	Recognition
Medium	Users of roads; users of public open space and local public rights of way; visitors to landscape and heritage resources and other attractions where views of the surroundings are a contributor to appreciation / experience / enjoyment.
Low	People at their place of work; shoppers; people engaged in recreational activities where the view of the surroundings is secondary to the enjoyment of the activity.

2.3 Assessing Magnitude of Change

2.3.1 The magnitude of landscape and visual change depends upon a combination of factors including the size, scale and nature of change in relation to the context; the geographical extent of the area influenced; and its duration and reversibility, as summarised in Table 5 below.

Table 2-5: Magnitude of Landscape and Visual Change

Value	Size, Scale and Nature	Extent	Duration and Reversibility
High	Occupies much of the view or obstructs a significant portion. Forms a large or very noticeable or discordant element. Considerable change to key features or many existing elements of the landscape. Introduces elements considered totally uncharacteristic to the existing landscape. Very noticeable.	Ranging from notable change over extensive area to intensive change over a more limited area.	Long term; permanent / non-reversible or partially reversible.
Medium	Occupies a noticeable portion of the view or obstructs a noticeable portion. Forms a noticeable discordant element. Some considerable change to existing landscape elements and /or landscape character; discernibly changes the surroundings of a receptor, such that its baseline is partly altered. Readily noticeable.	Moderate changes in a localised area.	Medium term; semi-permanent or partially reversible.



Value	Size, Scale and Nature	Extent	Duration and Reversibility
Low	Occupies a small portion of the view; small change to existing landscape elements and / or landscape character; slight, but detectable impacts that do not alter the baseline of the receptor materially. Not readily noticeable.	Minor changes in a localised area.	Short term / temporary; partially reversible or reversible.
Negligible	Occupies a very small portion of the view; Negligible change to existing landscape elements and /or landscape character; Barely detectable impacts that do not alter the baseline of the receptor materially. Barely noticeable	Negligible changes in a localised area	Very short term / temporary; reversible.

2.4 Level of Effect and Significance Criteria

2.4.1 The level of landscape and visual effect and whether it is significant or not is assessed based on the sensitivity of the affected receptor, and the magnitude of change caused by the Proposed Development, as set out for each above. The combined sensitivity and magnitude used to determine the level of effect and whether significant or not is summarised in Table 6 below. Note that effects can be either beneficial or adverse and, in some cases, neutral (neither beneficial nor adverse).

Table 2-6: Level of Landscape and Visual Effect

Magnitude	High Sensitivity	Medium Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity
High	Major	Major to Moderate	Moderate to Minor
Medium	Major to Moderate	Moderate	Minor
Low	Moderate to Minor	Minor	Minor/negligible



Magnitude	High Sensitivity	Medium Sensitivity	Low Sensitivity
Negligible	Minor	Minor/negligible	Negligible
No Change	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

Rationale:

- The cells that are labelled either major or major to moderate are always considered to be significant.
- The cells that are labelled moderate may be significant, or not significant, depending on the project being assessed and factors relating to the context and the specific landscape or visual receptor in question. Where the assessment of receptors falls into these categories, it is assumed that they are not significant unless otherwise indicated, at which point reasoning will be provided to support these findings.
- All additional areas denote effects that are considered to be not significant.

2.4.2 It should be noted that this matrix is intended as a framework only and that the level of effect will vary depending on the circumstances, the type and scale of development proposed, the baseline context and other factors.

2.4.3 The gradations of magnitude of change and level of effect used in the Assessment represent a continuum; the assessor uses professional judgement when gauging the level of effect and determining whether it is significant or not.