



Cranbrook

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of revised FPCR proposals

by

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for

East Devon District Council

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instructions

1.1.1 Hankinson Duckett Associates has been appointed by East Devon District Council to provide a summary appraisal of the revised proposals submitted with the FPCR Environment & Design Ltd 'Landscape Issue Paper'.

The summary appraisal will use the baseline judgements from the HDA Landscape and Visual Appraisal in order to assess the proposals put forward by FPCR. The proposals in their entirety are referred to as the site, however this report will focus on two land parcels that were part of the original assessment. These are:

- Land to the south of London Road and north of Treasbeare Farm, referred to as the Southern Parcel.
- Land to the east of Cranbrook, between Southbrook Lane (to the west) and Higher Cobden Farm (to the east), referred to as the Eastern Parcel.

1.1.2 The majority of the Eastern Parcel lies within the Cranbrook Expansion Area set out within the Local Plan. The southern parcel represents an alternative area of land considered as part of a wider area of search.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 National landscape guidance uses landscape character as a basis for policy. Natural England has established the current methodology for the character-based approach to landscape assessment (Ref 1). This provides a foundation, with adaptation, for use in project-specific landscape assessment. It describes the application of landscape character assessment at different scales: the national/regional scale, local authority scale and local scale. The third edition of the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (2013, Ref 2) set out landscape assessment methodology, which provides a foundation, with adaptation, for use in project-specific landscape assessment.

1.2.2 The approach to this landscape and visual appraisal is based upon the latest guidance, and upon HDA's extensive practical experience of assessment work. HDA's Methodology for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is set out within Appendix 1 of this report.

2 BASELINE SUMMARY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Cranbrook Landscape and Visual Appraisal Consultation Draft (HDA 2017 – Ref 3) sets out in detail the baseline conditions for landscape character, landscape features and visibility. This section of the report will summarise those findings.

2.2 Landscape baseline

District Scale Character

2.2.1 The Cranbrook Plan Area (the whole site) lies within character area Clyst Lowland Farmlands of the 2015 Devon Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 4). The Clyst Lowland Farmlands character area is large, with key features that occur across the whole area. Elements of change with the potential to adversely affect the character area include:

- adverse effects on the stream corridors;
- new development cutting off views of the wooded hills which form the skyline in many places;
- adverse effects on parkland within the area;
- removal of hedgerows and
- replacement of agricultural land with housing.

The Clyst Lowland Farmlands character area has been judged to have a **Medium** sensitivity to changes within the four potential development parcels.

2.2.2 The Clyst Lowland Farmlands character area has been subdivided within the LCA into the following landscape types:

- 3E Lowland Plains – contains the Cranbrook Plan Area and all potential development parcels. Further development within the Cranbrook Plan Area has the potential to change large areas of Landscape Type 3E Lowland Plains. The character area is rural and in good condition, but is heavily influenced by adjacent development (existing and proposed). Features found within the Plan Area are repeated elsewhere within the character type. Landscape Type 3E Lowland Plains has been judged to have a **Medium** sensitivity to changes within the proposed development parcels.
- 3C Sparsely Settled farmed valley floors - Key features within this character type are unlikely to be affected by changes within Cranbrook Plan Area. The sensitivity of the character type to the proposed development is judged to be **Low**.
- 3B Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes – Key features within this character type are unlikely to be affected by changes within Cranbrook Plan Area. The sensitivity of the character type to the proposed development is judged to be **Low**.

Settlement character and setting

2.2.3 The study area contains four settlements, which may be affected by further development at Cranbrook. These are the rural villages of Rockbeare, Whimble and Broadclyst, in

addition to the existing settlement at Cranbrook. The existing settlement of Cranbrook is located on low-lying land between the railway (to the north) and the London Road (to the south). Cranbrook has been judged to have a **Low** landscape sensitivity to additional development within the Cranbrook Plan Area.

2.2.4 Rockbeare is located on low-lying land to the south of Cranbrook. The proximity of Rockbeare to Cranbrook and the rural setting of the village results in a **High** sensitivity to change within the immediate setting to the village (including the slopes of the surrounding hills). Rockbeare has a **Low** landscape sensitivity to additional development beyond these hills.

2.2.5 Whimple lies to the north-east of Cranbrook. A series of hillocks lies to the west and south-west of the village, which form an important part of the setting to the village. The hill within the eastern parcel forms part of the setting to Whimple. The village has a **High** landscape sensitivity to any potential development on this hill. Whimple has a **Low** landscape sensitivity to development within the remainder of the potential development parcels.

2.2.6 Broadclyst lies to the north-west of Cranbrook, on a low hill within the Clyst Valley. The physical and visual separation between the village and the Plan Area result in a **Low** landscape sensitivity to potential development within the Plan Area.

Site Character and features

Eastern Parcel

2.2.7 The parcel is typical of the character area and contains many of the special qualities and landscape features set out within the county and district LCA. The stream corridors and small medieval fields in the centre and east of the parcel have a **High** sensitivity to potential development. The more regular fields to the south and west of the site have been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to development, due to the presence of sensitive boundary features, which should be retained. The north-eastern field has a strong relationship with the wider landscape, but contains few landscape features and has been assessed as having **Medium** landscape sensitivity to development.

2.2.8 Key landscape features within the parcel include:

- Stream corridors and associated trees and riparian vegetation – **High** sensitivity to change.
- Intact hedgerows in good condition have been judged to have a **Medium** sensitivity to potential development.

- Category A and veteran trees within the stream corridor and along hedgerows – **High** sensitivity. Category B mature trees are also difficult to replace and sensitive to change. There are high numbers of both within the parcel.
- Small-scale historic field pattern to the north of the stream, with irregular field boundaries has a **High** sensitivity to change. The regular fields to the south have less historic value and are less sensitive to change.

Southern parcel

2.2.9 The parcel is located on a local ridgeline, with a high point to the north-east of Treasbeare Farm. The ridge runs north from the high point, before sloping away on all sides. The parcel is bound to the north by London Road, to the south by Exeter Airport and to the west by Skypark. The eastern slopes of the parcel form part of the wider setting to Rockbeare. The settlement and infrastructure to the west of the parcel reduces the rurality of the western part of the parcel, and subsequently the landscape sensitivity is judged to be **Low**, providing that **High** sensitivity features can be retained as part of the development. The land to the east of the local ridge within the parcel is more rural in character and has much stronger links to the wider landscape. The eastern part of the parcel has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to development.

2.2.10 Key landscape features within the parcel include:

- Intact hedgerows in good condition have been judged to have a **Medium** sensitivity to potential development.
- Category A trees and veteran located along hedgerows – **High** sensitivity. Category B mature trees are also difficult to replace and sensitive to change.
- The tree avenue leading to Treasbeare Farm – **High** sensitivity.
- The agricultural fields within the parcel have been judged to have a **Medium / Low** sensitivity to potential development.

2.2.11 Summary table of landscape sensitivity

Landscape Receptors	Sensitivity
Clyst Lowland Farmlands - Character Area	Medium
Pebble Bed Heaths and Farmland - Character Area	Low
3E Lowland Plains - Character Type	Medium
3C Sparsely settled farmed valley floors - Character Type	Low
3B Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes - Character Type	Low
Cranbrook Phase 1	Low
Rockbeare - immediate setting	High
Rockbeare - beyond hills enclosing the village	Low

Whimble - immediate setting	High
Whimble - beyond hillocks to south and east	Low
Broadclyst	Low
Eastern Parcel - Character	
Stream corridor	High
Medieval fields	High
Regular fields to the south	Medium
North-eastern field	Medium
Eastern Parcel - Features	
Stream corridor	High
Hedgerows	Medium
Category A and Veteran trees	High
Mature trees	Medium / High
Agricultural fields	Medium / Low
Southern Parcel - character	
Land to the west of the local ridge	Low
Land to east of local ridge	Medium
Southern Parcel - Features	
High quality mature trees and avenue leading to Treasbeare Farm	High
Hedgerows	Medium
Agricultural fields	Medium / Low

2.3 **Visual baseline**

Local residents

2.3.1 Local residents include existing residents at Cranbrook, residents of adjacent villages Rockbeare, Whimble and Broadclyst and residents of isolated rural properties or farmsteads. Cranbrook is already a large settlement and development is ongoing. The majority of existing views from Cranbrook would already contain views of new housing development. The sensitivity of residents at Cranbrook has therefore been assessed as **Medium**.

2.3.2 Other residents that have been assessed as having a **Medium** sensitivity to the type of development proposed include:

- residents who already experience views of housing or other development from their dwellings. The proposals would be consistent with existing views experience.

- Residents of properties that are distant to the site and have a limited intervisibility with the site. In these cases, the site is unlikely to be the focus to the view and therefore the susceptibility to changes within the view from these properties will be lower.

2.3.3 Rockbeare and Whimble are rural villages within the visual envelope of the site. The sensitivity of these receptors has therefore been assessed as **High**. This is also the case for residents of isolated rural properties or farmsteads with views of the site.

People using the local footpath network

2.3.4 Local footpaths adjacent to Rockbeare, Whimble and Broadclyst have been assessed as having a high value, walkers have a high susceptibility to change and the overall sensitivity of the footpath users will be **High**. Footpath users on distant paths (e.g. on Mosshayne Lane) have a lower susceptibility to the type of change proposed and have been assessed as having a **Medium** overall sensitivity. The track over the hill to the east of Higher Cobden Farm is overgrown and under-used and the experience of the user is of enclosure and ruderal vegetation. People using this path experience a lower value landscape and have therefore been judged to have a **Medium** sensitivity to change.

2.3.5 Visitors and residents using the footpaths on high ground to the north (Ashclyst Forest) and to the east and south-east (within the AONB) have been judged to have a **High** sensitivity to change.

Motorists on the local road network

2.3.6 The road network around Cranbrook falls into two distinct categories:

1. Main roads (including the M5, A30 and London Road) are busy, often fast moving and are either enclosed or have an outlook already affected by development. Motorists using these busy main routes have been assessed as having a **Low** visual sensitivity to the type of development proposed.
2. Rural country lanes, often single track and predominantly enclosed to either side by hedgebanks and hedgerows. Motorists travelling on these country lanes have been assessed as having a **Medium** sensitivity to changes within the view.

Train passengers

2.3.7 The train line to the north of Cranbrook is enclosed by tree belts and, in some cases by embankments. Passengers have transient and filtered views of the proposed development parcels, seen within the existing context of Cranbrook. Rail users have been assessed as having a **Low** sensitivity to changes within the view.

Local businesses / commercial

2.3.8 People at work are likely to be focussed on their work, rather than the views surrounding their place of employment. Views out of the Sky Park and adjacent businesses are short range and influenced by the other office buildings / warehouses within the immediate surroundings. People at Exeter Airport are likely to be focussed on the arrival and departure of planes and not on the surrounding landscape. These receptors have been assessed as having a **Low** sensitivity to the type of changes proposed.

Existing visibility of the proposed development parcels

2.3.9 The visual appraisal is based on a grading of degrees of visibility. There is, in any visual appraisal, a continuity of degrees of visibility from not visible to fully open in the view. To indicate the degree of visibility of the site from selected locations, that continuum has been divided into 4 categories, as follows:

- **None:** no view (no part of the site or proposed development is discernible);
 - *Blue in summary table (2.3.13)*
- **Glimpse:** only a minor area of the site or proposed development is discernible and/or the view is transient or at such a distance that it is difficult to perceive in the wider view, or sequence of views;
 - *Green in summary table (2.3.13)*
- **Partial:** the site or proposed development forms a relatively small proportion of a wider view. There are open views of part of the site or proposed development such that it is easily visible as part of the wider view;
 - *Yellow in summary table (2.3.13)*
- **Open:** there are open views of the site or proposed development such that it forms a substantial part (is a dominant element) of the overall view and affects its overall character and visual amenity; or the site or proposed development is the dominant feature of the view, to which other elements become subordinate and where the site/proposed development significantly affects or changes the character of the view.
 - *Red in summary table (2.3.13)*

Visibility of Cranbrook Plan Area

2.3.10 The site (Cranbrook Plan Area) is well contained by landform, and vegetation, with views restricted to properties and roads immediately adjacent to one of the proposed development parcels. Clear views of the site from public rights of way are also limited. The tree belt and bunding lining the A30 screens views of the site from the land to the south of the road. To the north of the Plan Area is a local ridge, which screens many views of the Plan Area from the north. Development within the city of Exeter screens

views of the Plan Area from the west and a north-south ridgeline contains the Plan Area to the east.

2.3.11 There are a number of visual receptor groups located on high ground surrounding the Plan Area, which have long distance panoramic views over the lower lying landscape that includes the Plan Area. These include: the northern edge of Exeter to the west, Killerton House to the north-west, Ashclyst Forest to the north and the high ridgeline within the AONB to the south-east. The existing settlement at Cranbrook is visible in some of these views, however it is a small and distant element within the view and not the main focus of the view. The proposed development parcels are seen as distant glimpses – or are not visible from these viewpoint locations.

2.3.12 There are no existing views, or only distant glimpses of either parcel from:

- The Grange;
- Killerton House;
- Rockbeare Manor; and
- Rewe Lane

Visibility of the Eastern and Southern Parcels

2.3.13 Summary table of visual sensitivity

Visual receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Views of Eastern parcel	Views of Southern parcel
Local residents			
Existing residents of Cranbrook	Medium	Occasional glimpses	Open, partial and occasionally glimpsed views.
Treasbeare Farm and cottages	Medium	No view	Open views from Treasbeare Farm and partial views from Treasbeare cottages.
Farms: Lower, Middle and Higher Cobden and Crockenhayes	High	Open views of this parcel from Lower and Higher Cobden, partial views from Middle Cobden and glimpsed views from Crockenhayes.	No view
Little Cobden	High	There are glimpsed and partial views of the eastern parcel over intervening hedgerows.	No view
Properties on London Road	Medium	No view	There are open, partial and glimpsed views from properties to the immediate north of the boundary.
Properties on Rewe Lane	High	Glimpsed views	No view
Residents at Rockbeare	High	No view	Partial and glimpsed views from residencies on western edge of the village.
Properties on Silver Lane	High	No view	There are partial and glimpsed views from the properties dotted along Silver Lane.

Residents at Whimble and properties on Church Road	High	There are glimpsed views of the eastern side of the hill, from the westernmost properties at Whimble and on Church Road.	No view
Farms to the north including: The Farm, Gatehayes Farm, Crockenhayes Farm, Churchill Farm, Little Churchill Farm and Trow Farm	Medium	There are partial and glimpsed views of the northern edge of the parcel and the high ground to the north-east of the parcel.	No view
Properties on high ground to the east including: Cotley Farm, Stoneygate and Woodside Photograph 29	Medium	There are distant glimpses of the parcel, however it is difficult to perceive.	There are distant glimpses of the parcel, however it is difficult to perceive.
Properties on high ground to the west including: Mosshayne, West Clyst Farm and dwellings within Exeter.	Medium	No view	Occasional glimpses of this parcel from east-facing first floor windows.
Footpath users			
Footpath R1 between Cranbrook and Rockbeare.	High	No view	Open, partial and glimpsed views.
Footpath W9 to the west of Whimble.	High	A small section of the footpath has open views. Hedgerows and orchard trees screen remaining views.	No view
Track over the hill to the east of Higher Cobden Farm	Medium	Occasional glimpses.	No view
Footpaths on high ground to the east and within the common land at Manor Farm (within the AONB).	High	Distant glimpses.	Distant glimpses.
Motorists			
London Road	Low	Transient glimpsed views through the hedgerow.	Occasional open and frequent partial or glimpsed views.
Parsons Lane	Medium	No view	Open views of the eastern slopes from a section of this road, adjacent to Parsons Bridge.
Lane to Whimble through the Cobdens	Medium	Winter glimpses and occasional glimpses in summer through gaps in hedgerows.	No view
Silver Lane	Medium	No view	Partial views through field gates.
Lane on high ground to the north-west of Whimble	Medium	Glimpsed views through field gates.	No view
Train passengers			
Railway line to the north of Cranbrook Photographs W4 and E3	Low	Intermittent partial and glimpsed views of the northern part of the parcel.	No view.
Local businesses / commercial			
Exeter Airport	Low	No view	Partial views from the northern airport buildings. No views from the main airport complex.
Sky Park and other adjacent business / commercial enterprises.	Low	No view	Glimpses of the west facing slopes of this parcel.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Description of the proposals

3.1.1 The proposed development is defined and described by the FPCR Environment & Design Ltd submitted 'Landscape Issue Paper', with associated plans, sections and photomontages. These have been used to make judgements on the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposals.

3.2 Landscape Mitigation

3.2.1 Mitigation proposals are designed to respond to the constraints of the site and mitigate the landscape and visual impacts that arise from the proposed development. The mitigation measures considered fall into two categories: primary and secondary mitigation.

- Primary mitigation - the iterative process of masterplanning, which has been informed by the baseline section of this report.
- Secondary mitigation - additions or changes to the landscape proposals as a direct response to residual effects on receptors and the results and comments obtained through consultation.

3.2.2 For the purposes of this assessment the secondary mitigation refers to the landscape principles plans submitted by FPCR.

4 LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The potential effects of the proposed masterplan are assessed below, at year 0, when the potential effects are at their greatest and at year 10, following the establishment of the mitigation strategy.

4.1.2 The magnitude of change is a judgement on the size or scale of effect and is combined with the landscape or visual sensitivity to give a judgement on the significance of effects resulting in the proposed masterplan being built out. Appendix 4 provides a summary table of Landscape effects.

4.2 Landscape effects at completion (Year 0)

District character

4.2.1 Local topography contains the proposed development parcels, limiting the potential effects on landscape character to the land within and immediately adjacent to the site. The site (Cranbrook Plan Area) is located within Character Type 3E Lowland Plains, within the Clyst Lowland Farmland Character Area, both of which have been judged to have a **Medium** sensitivity to change.

4.2.2 The proposals constitute a large housing led development, located on a greenfield site, which would result in a permanent change in character. The FPCR masterplan has taken into account of some of the key features and characteristics noted within the character assessment, including the stream corridor within the eastern parcel. These characteristics would be largely unaffected by the proposals and some features, including the stream corridor, would see localised improvements. From most directions (excluding the east and south of the southern parcel), the proposals would be seen in conjunction with the existing settlement of Cranbrook and new business development planned to the west, which already affect the character of the local area. The proposals would be largely consistent with the new planned development within the local area. The significance of effect for Character Type 3E Lowland Plains, within the Clyst Lowland Farmland Character Area, has been assessed as **Moderate** adverse in the short term.

4.2.3 The majority of the proposed development is well contained by landform and vegetation, minimising the adverse effects on the wider rural landscape. The character of the landscape to the north and west is already affected by the existing settlement of Cranbrook and by existing development at the Sky Park and Airport to the west. The changes brought about as a result of the proposed development would extend the existing development in these areas and would not constitute a large change in character. The exception is the development proposed within the southern parcel, which lies to the east of the local ridge. The addition of this area of development would affect the character of the rural landscape to the south-east of the southern parcel, resulting in a **Moderate** adverse effect on landscape character.

Settlement

4.2.4 The baseline section of this report has identified two key settlements: Rockbeare and Whimble, whose landscape setting may be affected by proposed development. The existing settlement at Cranbrook is also a consideration.

4.2.5 The proposed development would become an extension to Cranbrook, with the settlement pattern elongating along London Road and south towards Treasbeare Farm. The sensitivity of Cranbrook to the proposals has been judged to be **Low** and the significance of effect on the character of the existing settlement has been assessed as **Minor** adverse.

4.2.6 Both Rockbeare and Whimble are rural villages, located to the south and north-east of the site respectively. Both villages have a distinct landscape setting and consequently the sensitivity of both settlements, to the type of change proposed, has been judged as **High**.

4.2.7 The hill within the eastern parcel, forms part of the wider setting to Whimple. This high ground would be retained as existing, which would both maintain the existing setting to Whimple and maintain separation between the settlements. The proposed development to the north-east of the eastern parcel would have some influence on the wider setting to the village at construction. The magnitude of change to the immediate setting of Whimple has been assessed as **Very Low** and the resulting significance of effect as **Minor** adverse at construction.

4.2.8 The immediate setting to Rockbeare is provided by the rising ground to the north and west of the village. The proposed development within the southern parcel would be visually prominent at construction and would be seen as an extension of Cranbrook into the existing rural setting to the west of Rockbeare, from the village and its immediate surroundings. The magnitude of change as a result of the proposals at construction would be **Medium** and the significance of effect would be **Substantial** adverse at construction.

Eastern Parcel (Cobdens)

4.2.9 Approximately 50% of the parcel would be retained as open space or in its existing agricultural land use. A large proportion of the proposed open space follows the lines of existing pylons, which would continue to be detractors within the landscape. The historic fields of medieval origin would for the most part be lost to development. The field boundaries would be retained, however the field pattern would be lost and the character of the fields would change irrevocably. The change in use is reflected in the **High** magnitude of change assessed for the character of the historic fields.

4.2.10 The stream corridor would be retained and protected through the course of the development. The character of the corridor would be retained, however the construction of the proposed housing adjacent to the stream corridor would have short term impacts on the tranquillity and setting to the corridor. The north-eastern field would be retained as existing and would have no direct effects as a result of the development. There would be a **High** magnitude of change in character within the southern fields within the parcel, which would be lost to the development. The vast majority of the high quality mature trees would be retained within the proposals identified on the masterplan, although there would be some hedgerow loss, particularly within the proposed development. Identified primary corridors are proposed for retention. The below table summarises the predicted changes and effects of the proposals on the character of the parcel and key features.

Landscape receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of effect
Eastern Parcel - character			
Stream corridor	High	Low - Stream corridor retained within open space. Indirect effects from adjacent development and construction activities	Moderate adverse
Medieval fields	High	High – The majority of the medieval fields would be developed and the field pattern would be degraded.	Substantial adverse
Regular fields to the south	Medium	High - the majority of the area would change from an agricultural land use and rural character to a housing development	Substantial adverse
North-eastern field	Medium	Very Low - retained as open space	Negligible
Eastern Parcel - features			
Stream corridor	High	Low - Three road crossings implemented. Vast majority of feature retained. Indirect effects from adjacent development	Moderate adverse
Hedgerows	Medium	Medium - Some hedgerow removal within development area. Majority retained	Moderate adverse
Category A and Veteran trees	High	Low - all veteran trees retained. Vast majority of high quality trees retained.	Moderate adverse
Mature trees	Medium / High	Low - vast majority of high quality trees retained.	Minor adverse
Agricultural fields	Medium / Low	Medium - Approximately half the feature would be lost. The remainder would be converted to open space / retained as existing.	Moderate adverse

Southern Parcel (Treasbeare)

4.2.11 Approximately half of the parcel is not proposed for built development within the masterplan. Three of the fields to the east of the local ridge would be developed in part or in full. Housing and business uses are concentrated to the north-west of the parcel. The majority of existing features would be retained and protected through the course of the development, although there would be some hedgerow loss. A number of the agricultural fields would see a change in land use and character. The below table summarises the predicted changes and effects of the proposals on the character of the parcel and key features.

Landscape receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of effect
Southern Parcel – character			
Land to the west of the local ridge	Low	Medium - approximately two thirds would be developed. One field would be converted to sports pitches. The remainder would be retained in its existing agricultural use.	Minor adverse
Land to east of local ridge	Medium	Medium - approximately 1/3 would be developed, with the remainder used as open space / SANG. The development is proposed on the high ground of the ridgeline, which would change the character of this area.	Moderate adverse
Southern Parcel - features			
High quality mature trees and avenue leading to Treasbeare Farm	High	Low - avenue retained. Vast majority of high quality trees retained.	Moderate adverse
Hedgerows	Medium	Medium – some hedgerow loss is proposed. Majority retained	Moderate adverse
Agricultural fields	Medium / Low	Medium - Approximately one third the feature would be lost. 3 fields would be converted to open space / SANG and the remaining 3 would be retained in agricultural use.	Minor adverse

4.3 Residual effects (10 years post completion)

4.3.1 10 years post completion the landscape within the site would have matured, softening the areas of built form and generally screening the site into the wider rural landscape. The landscape scheme to the east of the southern parcel would change the character of the land in the long term, from agricultural use to a treed hill.

District character

4.3.2 As the landscape within the site matures, the new character of Cranbrook would become established and more clearly defined. Areas of open space would see the introduction of new and characteristic landscape features including hedgerows, woodland blocks, parkland or wood pasture and areas of traditional orchard. Green corridors would be maintained across the site and would provide attractive areas for new residents and visitors alike. The proposed SANG would see biodiversity improvements and new walking routes for local people to enjoy, however it would also introduce uncharacteristic new areas of trees and orchard tree planting into the landscape. The magnitude of effect within Character Type 3E Lowland Plains, and the Clyst Lowland Farmland Character Area, would reduce from **Medium** to **Low**, resulting in **Minor** adverse residual effects, which would not be significant. The exception is the development proposed within the southern parcel, to the east of the local ridge. The proposals, including mitigation, would

remain a visible as an atypical feature, which is not harmonious with the existing landscape structure. Within this area the Magnitude of effect would remain **Medium** and the long term significance of effect would remain **Moderate** adverse The long-term effects on the landscape character of neighbouring Character Types and Areas would remain **Negligible**.

Settlement

4.3.3 The proposals would expand the settlement of Cranbrook and intensify the linear nature of the settlement. The new character of the settlement and landscape to the south would be established. The proposed open space and SANG within the southern parcel would create a soft edge and distinctive setting to the town. This would be atypical of the existing landscape character to the south-east, between the southern parcel and Rockbeare. The residual effects on the setting to the current settlement of Cranbrook would remain **Minor** adverse.

4.3.4 The hill within the eastern parcel, Cobdens, forms part of the wider setting to Whimple. This high ground is retained as existing and the residual effects on the setting to Whimple would be **Negligible**.

4.3.5 With regard to Rockbeare the proposed landscape scheme would gradually screen the proposed settlement and some of the existing views of Cranbrook to the west of the village would also be screened. Open space is proposed on the edges of the southern parcel, however this contains large sinuous areas of tree planting, which do not respond to the existing field pattern or reflect the small geometric copses that are typical of the local landscape. As such, the proposed tree planting would appear incongruous in the local landscape and the proposals would have residual adverse effects on the immediate setting to the village. The long-term magnitude of change would remain **Medium** and residual effects would be **Moderate** adverse.

Eastern Parcel (Cobdens)

4.36 The stream corridor within the parcel (Cobdens) would be improved through appropriate new planting, improved management and the introduction of SuDS features with complimentary wetland habitats. The remaining areas of open space would have matured, however the negative influence of the pylons within the main green corridors would remain apparent. The character of the new housing development would have established and street trees and garden planting would have matured, which would add to the character of the street scene within the southern part of the parcel. The residual effects of the proposals would generally have reduced, however the long term effects on the character of the Medieval fields would remain significant. The below table

summarises the predicted changes and effects of the proposals on the character of the parcel and key features.

Landscape receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of effect
Eastern Parcel – character			
Stream corridor	High	Low (beneficial) - Character of corridor would have improved. New complementary wetland features would be provided in the form of SuDS	Moderate beneficial
Medieval fields	High	Medium - The majority of the medieval fields would be developed. Many of the boundary features would be retained, however new woodland would be introduced which would further erode the field pattern.	Substantial adverse
Regular fields to the south	Medium	Medium - Character of new settlement would be defined. New features would have established. Improved character within areas of open space.	Moderate adverse
North-eastern field	Medium	Very Low – retained as existing	Negligible
Eastern Parcel - features			
Stream corridor	High	Very Low (beneficial) - Character of corridor would have improved. New complementary wetland features would be provided in the form of SuDS	Minor beneficial
Hedgerows	Medium	Low - retained hedgerows would be gapped up and subject to improved management. Opportunity to introduce additional hedgerows within north-eastern field	Minor adverse
Category A and Veteran trees	High	Very Low - new tree planting would be introduced within open space to mitigate any lost by the proposed development.	Minor adverse
Mature trees	Medium / High	Very Low - new tree planting would be introduced within open space to mitigate any lost to the proposed development.	Negligible adverse
Agricultural fields	Medium / Low	Medium - the north-eastern field would be retained, however the change in use across the rest of the site would be permanent.	Medium adverse

Southern Parcel (Treasbeare)

4.37 10 years after completion, the character of the new housing development would have established. The proposed landscape design introduces large areas of large, sinuous shaped areas of tree planting, designed to screen a visually prominent development. These proposals do not sit comfortably with the existing open landscape character, with features limited to hedgerows with hedgerow trees and small geometric woodland

copses. The proposals are designed to screen the development rather than to reflect and enhance existing landscape character. The proposed orchard planting is characteristic of the area, however would be insufficient as a screen for the proposed development. The proposed earthworks required to form the proposed SuDS features would continue to disrupt the landform of the slope.

4.38 Street trees and garden planting would have matured within the proposed development, which would add to the character of the street scene and soften views into the development to the west of the local ridge. Within the open space and potential SANG, to the east of the parcel, recreational access would be improved. The retention of areas of higher ground within public open space would allow locals and visitors to appreciate some long views over the surrounding landscape to the east, which are currently unavailable to the public. These improvements are insufficient to outweigh the harm of the inappropriate landscape design submitted. The residual effects on the overall landscape character of the southern parcel would be **Minor** adverse. The below table summarises the predicted changes and effects of the proposals on the character of the parcel and key features.

Landscape receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of effect
Southern Parcel – character			
Land to the west of the local ridge	Low	Low - Character of new settlement would be defined.	Negligible
Land to east of local ridge	Medium	Medium - The introduction of tree planting would create a new character that is inconsistent with the adjacent landscape.	Moderate adverse
Southern Parcel - features			
High quality mature trees and avenue leading to Treasbeare Farm	High	Low (beneficial) - new tree and woodland planting would be introduced within development and open space to mitigate any lost by the proposed development.	Moderate beneficial
Hedgerows	Medium	Low - retained hedgerows would be gapped up and subject to improved management. Opportunity to create new hedgerows to the east of the proposed development edges.	Minor adverse
Agricultural fields	Medium / Low	Low - the open space has the potential to be retained in its existing use or revert to agricultural use if required	Minor adverse

5 VISUAL APPRAISAL OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section considers the proposed development for the site in order to identify its likely effects on completion and once established after 10 years.

5.1.2 For the purposes of this assessment, some assumptions have been made about the growth rates of the proposed planting. Proposed hedges and scrub have been assumed to have a minimum of 300mm growth per year, which would give a minimum height of 2.5 to 3m over the 10 year period. A select standard tree, with a specified girth of 10-12cm has an average height between 3-3.5m, a slow growing tree would have approximately 300mm of growth per year. After 10 years of growth, we have assumed that the trees would have reached a minimum height of 6-6.5m. The submitted Landscape Issue Paper proposes advanced planting to the east of the southern parcel. HDA have assumed that these trees would have reached a minimum height of 6.9 -7.4m. Actual growth rates will depend on environmental conditions and tree species. It is likely that the proposed trees would have grown higher than have been assumed for this assessment.

5.2 Visual Appraisal at Completion (Year 0)

5.2.1 Views of the proposed development are generally constrained to receptor groups within or immediately adjacent to the proposed development parcels, with limited visibility from the wider rural landscape. It is assumed that visual receptors that have no intervisibility with the proposed development at construction would not experience any adverse effects on their views. This includes:

- Visitors and residents of Rockbears Manor
- Residents of Broadclyst
- Walkers on footpaths around Ashclyst Forest
- Walkers on footpaths adjacent to Broadclyst
- Walkers on the track over the hill to the east of Higher Cobden Farm
- Motorists on the A30
- Motorists on the M5

5.2.2 **Local residents:** The properties that would be most affected by the proposed development at construction are either within or immediately adjacent to the proposed development parcels. These include Higher, Middle, Lower and Little Cobden farms, which are located immediately adjacent to the proposed development within the eastern parcel. The views from these properties would change dramatically from these dwellings, giving rise to **Substantial** adverse predicted visual impacts at construction as the buildings are integrated into the proposed development. Views to the north of the properties would be less affected.

5.2.3 Residents of properties on the western edge of Rockbeare, would have partial and glimpsed views of the proposed development within the southern parcel, which would be seen on the skyline to the west of the village. These residents have been assessed as **High** sensitivity receptors, with a **Medium** magnitude of effect on views, leading to **Substantial** adverse effects on views at construction.

5.2.4 Rural dwellings on Rewe Lane would have partial and glimpsed views of the development within the eastern parcel, to the north. Visual effects on residents have been assessed **Moderate** adverse.

5.2.5 Other properties assessed as having **Moderate** adverse effects at construction include:

- Treasbeare Farm and Cottage;
- Crockenhayes Farm;
- Properties on Silver Lane; and
- Properties on London Road.

These properties would all have some intervisibility with the site, however the baseline views of these properties are already influenced by settlement, busy roads and / the airport and adjacent business land uses. The change to the baseline views would be lower than that experienced by rural properties, where the proposals are a new introduction into an undeveloped landscape.

5.2.6 Residents of Cranbrook were judged to have a low sensitivity to the expansion of Cranbrook as a result of this masterplan. The majority of existing residents would not have views of the proposed development; however a small number of existing dwellings would have open views of the proposals. The overall significance of effect for these residents has been judged as **Minor** adverse at construction.

5.2.7 The majority of remaining properties, including Killerton House listed building, have only distant glimpses of the proposed development or no views of the proposed housing. The predicted visual effects on the residents of these properties at construction has been assessed as **Minor** adverse or **Negligible**.

5.2.8 **People using the local footpath network:** There are no existing public rights of way within any of the proposed development parcels. There is one public footpath between the St Mary with St Andrews Church at Rockbeare and London Road, which would have partial and open views of the proposed housing within the southern parcel, seen in the context of the existing housing at Cranbrook. The change to the view would be noticeable, due to the development skylining on the local ridge and the construction of the large SuDS basins, which would require earthworks to form the basins within the existing slopes. The proposals would introduce development and incongruous new

features into a view that is currently predominantly rural. The predicted significance of effect is **Substantial** adverse (medium magnitude of change) for people travelling north-west on the footpath and **Moderate** adverse (low magnitude of change) for people travelling south-east.

- 5.2.9 From the public footpaths surrounding Whimple, the hill within the eastern site (retained as existing), screens the majority of the proposed development, with only glimpses of proposed houses to the north-west and west, adjacent to the existing settlement of Cranbrook. The magnitude of change has been assessed as **Low** and the significance of effect would be **Moderate** adverse.
- 5.2.10 Footpaths located on high ground to the east and west of the site, have only distant glimpses of the proposals, seen in the context of existing settlement. This includes views from Mosshayne Lane to the west of the site and views from the common land at Manor Farm (within the AONB). The significance of effect on views from remaining local public rights of way have all been assessed as **Minor** adverse or lower, due to the Low or Very Low magnitude of effect predicted from these viewpoints..
- 5.2.11 **Motorists on the local road network:** The highest levels of change would be experienced by motorists travelling west along Parsons Lane. These people will experience open views of the proposed housing within the southern parcel, on the skyline directly in front of them, along with clear views of the newly constructed SuDS basins. The magnitude of change would be High and the resulting significance of effect for these Motorists is predicted to be **Substantial** adverse.
- 5.2.12 London road is a busy road, with open views of existing dwellings to the north and visibility to the south largely restricted by existing hedgerows, with a line of housing to the south of the road, between Parsons Lane and Roackbeare. The proposals would introduce new settlement to the south and east of London Road. The departure in the character of the views from the baseline situation would not be considerable. The magnitude of change would be High and the significance of effect has been assessed as **Moderate** adverse at construction.
- 5.2.13 Motorists using the lane leading from London Road to Whimple have also been assessed as having Medium magnitude of change on views at construction. The road is currently rural in character and the introduction of housing to views would change the perception of the lane, resulting in **Moderate** adverse effects.
- 5.2.14 The remaining roads and lanes have been assessed as having **Minor** adverse and **Negligible** predicted visual effects.

5.2.15 **Train passengers:** There would be intermittent partial and glimpsed views of the proposed development, through gaps in the trees lining the railway line. Hedgerows and trees contain views to the land immediately adjacent to the line. The proposed dwellings would be seen in the context of existing housing at Cranbrook. The magnitude of change has been assessed as **Low** and the resulting significance of effect as **Negligible**.

5.2.16 **Local businesses / commercial:** While there will be views of the proposed development from local commercial and business buildings (including the Sky Park, and Exeter Airport) at completion, the sensitivity of views by these receptor groups has been judged to be **Low**. The magnitude of change from these viewpoint locations has been assessed as **Medium** (Adjacent businesses) or **Low** (remaining commercial buildings and airport), resulting in **Minor** adverse and **Negligible** predicted visual effects.

5.3 **Residual visual effects (Year 10)**

5.3.1 Ten years after completion the proposed mitigation planting would have would have established, further screening views of the site from local visual receptor groups and softening views of the proposed development from adjacent pavements and residencies and from long distance viewpoints. The mature landscape within the proposed development would help to integrate the site into the wider network of hedgerows trees and woodland.

5.3.2 **Local residents:** The proposed woodland and tree planting within the open space and SANG to the east of the southern parcel would have established, softening the views of the proposed development from Rockbeare Village and properties on Silver Lane. Tree planting is proposed at a lower level than the proposed housing and includes smaller orchard trees, so the development may still be visible over the tree line. The character of the view would change from clear views of the development, to a partly wooded hill with occasional views of dwellings on the brow of the hill more especially in winter and atypical changes to the landform as a result of the construction of the SuDS features. The character of the hill would see a permanent change and the residual effects from these properties has been assessed as **Moderate** adverse

5.3.3 . Lower and Middle Cobden farms would have been integrated into the proposed development, with hedgerows and hedgerow trees filtering views to the south along a newly established street scene. The magnitude of change would reduce and the residual effects would be **Moderate** adverse. The additional mitigation planting within proposed open space would filter and soften views from Higher Cobden and Little Cobden, reducing residual visual effects to **Moderate** adverse.

- 5.3.4 The proposed tree planting within the eastern parcel would soften the views of the proposals from dwellings on Rewe Lane. The magnitude of effect would remain Low as the development still represents a visual intrusion into an existing rural landscape. The significance of effect would remain to **Moderate** adverse.
- 5.3.5 The proposed mitigation planting within areas of open space, proposed SANG and within the streets of the development would further screen and soften views of the development. All remaining residents tested within this assessment would have **Minor** adverse residual visual effects or lower.
- 5.3.6 **People using the local footpath network:** The proposed planting within the open space and SANG to the east of the southern parcel would screen the majority of the development, although buildings would remain visible over the orchard planting. The mitigation to the north-east of the southern parcel would soften existing views of Cranbrook, however the introduction of the SuDS features and uncharacteristic tree planting, would remain as visible and incongruous elements within the landscape. The character of the hill would see a permanent change and the residual effects from the public footpath between the St Mary with St Andrews Church at Rockbeare and London Road, has been assessed as **Substantial** adverse.
- 5.3.7 Residual visual effects from remaining local rights of way have been assessed as **Minor** adverse or **Negligible**.
- 5.3.8 **Motorists on the local road network:** 10 years following completion, the new character of London Road would be fixed. The proposals would be softened by mitigation planting. Development within the southern parcel would improve the street scene as London Road would be integrated into the development. The visual effects would reduce to **Minor** adverse.
- 5.3.9 The proposed mitigation planting to the east of the development within the southern parcel would reduce views of both the proposed development and of the existing development at Cranbrook, but would also permanently change the character of the landscape experienced by motorists using Parsons Lane. At 10 years post completion, it is likely that the rooftops of the proposed development would still be visible over the tree –tops of the proposed planting. The magnitude of effect would reduce and the residual effects have been assessed as **Moderate** adverse.
- 5.3.10 The proposed mitigation and street planting proposed within the landscape strategy would further reduce and soften views from the remaining road network, with residual visual effects assessed as **Minor** adverse or lower.

5.3.11 **Train passengers:** Views of the proposed development from the train line would be further softened by additional tree and scrub planting on the northern boundary. The residual significance of effect would remain **Negligible**.

5.3.12 **Local businesses / commercial:** The proposed mitigation and street planting proposed within the landscape strategy would further reduce and soften views from local commercial and business buildings with **Minor** adverse and **Negligible** residual visual effects.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Response to the baseline

6.1.1 The baseline section of this assessment considered the constraints of the site in relation to the site's landscape setting, local designations and the direct effects of the proposed development parcels.

6.1.2 The eastern parcel has variations in sensitivity across the parcel, with the stream corridor and medieval fields identified as the most sensitive landscape features within the parcel. The land to the south of the stream had a low visual sensitivity but a higher landscape sensitivity, whereas the hill to the north-east of the stream has a lower landscape sensitivity, but a high visual sensitivity given its contribution to the setting of Whimple. Development has avoided the visual effects associated with development of the north-eastern field, but has failed to address the landscape sensitivity of the medieval fields within the parcel. Almost all of the proposed open space is located along the line of existing pylons, which does not result in a well thought out and attractive landscape scheme. Additional planting has been proposed under the power lines, which is unlikely to be feasible.

6.1.3 The southern parcel was assessed as having a high visual sensitivity to the east of the local ridge and a lower visual sensitivity to the west of the ridge. The character of the landscape to the east of the local ridge was also assessed as being more sensitive to change than the land to the west of the ridge. The proposals set out within the Landscape Issue Paper do not respond to this sensitivity and relies upon long term, uncharacteristic tree planting, to screen the proposals over a period in excess of 10 years.

6.2 Cranbrook South

6.2.1 The intrinsic sensitivity of the southern parcel is the rural character and visibility of the land to the east of the local ridge. Within the Landscape Principles Plan (Figure 8-9), the proposed development edge, as set out within the Landscape Issue Paper in conjunction

with supporting Figures 1-10, sits on the ridgeline of the southern parcel. The proposed development to the south of Parsons Lane would be visible at construction from all of the viewpoint locations represented in both the sections and photomontages submitted. When viewed from the east, this would visibly extend the settlement edge of Cranbrook into a landscape that is currently wholly rural.

6.2.2 The proposed housing would skyline within these views until the establishment of the mitigation planting, which is likely to take a minimum of 10 years – particularly as the proposed mitigation planting located lower down the slope than the proposed housing. The proposed orchards are unlikely to fulfil a screening function as Orchard trees typically do not grow higher than 10m. There are likely to be residual views of the rooftops of the proposed development over the top of the proposed orchards. The proposed SuDS features are likely to be visible and incongruous at construction, due to their location on steeply sloping hillsides.

6.2.3 The proposals within the Landscape Principles Plan, seek to introduce development into the eastern part of the southern parcel. This part of the site has a strong relationship with the wider landscape, is substantially rural and forms part of the wider setting to Rockbeare. The hill within the southern site is a distinctive feature with its open skyline, which forms part of the open fieldscape typical of the area. The character of the hill would be irrevocably changed by the submitted proposals.

6.2.4 The mitigation planting shown on the Landscape Principles Plan is not representative of the local landscape. It does not reflect the pattern of open fields, with strong hedgerow boundaries. Tree cover within this location is currently limited to hedgerow trees and small geometric blocks of woodland. The Landscape Principles plan proposes large sinuous areas of tree planting, which would be atypical of the area and would erode the existing hedgerow pattern, a key characteristic of the local landscape. In short, the requirement to screen the proposals from a visually sensitive location has led to the production of a landscape scheme that would be incongruous in its own right within the local landscape.

6.3 Cranbrook East

6.3.1 The proposals respect the visual sensitivity of the north-eastern field, through its retention in agricultural use, but do not respond to the landscape sensitivity of the small fields of medieval origin within the parcel. These fields would be lost to development and while many of the boundary features would be retained, the proposed mitigation planting would mean that the distinctive field pattern would be lost, resulting in long-term adverse impacts on landscape character.

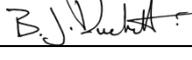
- 6.3.2 The proposed open space is relegated to the floodplain and under existing power lines, which does not follow best practice and would not meet Natural England's SANG criteria. The Landscape Principles Plan shows no footpath connections into the wider landscape.
- 6.3.3 The additional eastern expansion of the proposed housing within the parcel extends the proposed settlement edge of Cranbrook, increasing the linear nature of the settlement pattern. The proposed mitigation shown within the Landscape Principles Plan is more in keeping with the existing landscape character than shown for the southern parcel, and the high level of feature retention is positive, however the connectivity between retained features is poor. The opportunity to use existing features to create stronger north-south green corridors has not been taken up within these proposals. The sinuous woodland edges to the west and south-west of the north-eastern hill are not typical of the local landscape and would form a marked contrast to the open and expansive character of the hill.

REFERENCES

- 1 - Natural England (October 2014), '*An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*'
- 2 - The Landscape Institute with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, (2013), "*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*" (third edition)
- 3 - HDA on behalf of East Devon District Council (October 2017), '*Cranbrook Landscape and Visual Appraisal*'.
- 4 - Devon County Council (2015), '*Devon's Landscape Character Assessment*'.

HDA Document Control and Quality Assurance Record

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APPENDIX 1

HDA LVIA Methodology

HDA LVIA METHODOLOGY

1.1 Guidance

1.1.1 The proposed development is subject to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations (2011, amended 2015), which implement EC Directive 2011/92/EU. The structure of this assessment accords with Schedule 4 of the Regulations (Ref 1).

1.1.2 The methodology used in preparing this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been developed by HDA from guidance given in the following documents:

- The Landscape Institute with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, (2013), "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment" (third edition); (GLVIA)
- Natural England (October 2014), "An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment"; and
- Countryside Agency (now Natural England) and Scottish Natural Heritage (by Carys Swanwick and Land Use Consultants), (April 2002), "Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland".

1.1.3 The assessment of likely impacts is considered in two separate but inter-linked parts defined within GLVIA (para 2.21 – Ref 2) as follows:

'Assessment of landscape effects: assessing effects on landscape as a resource in its own right;

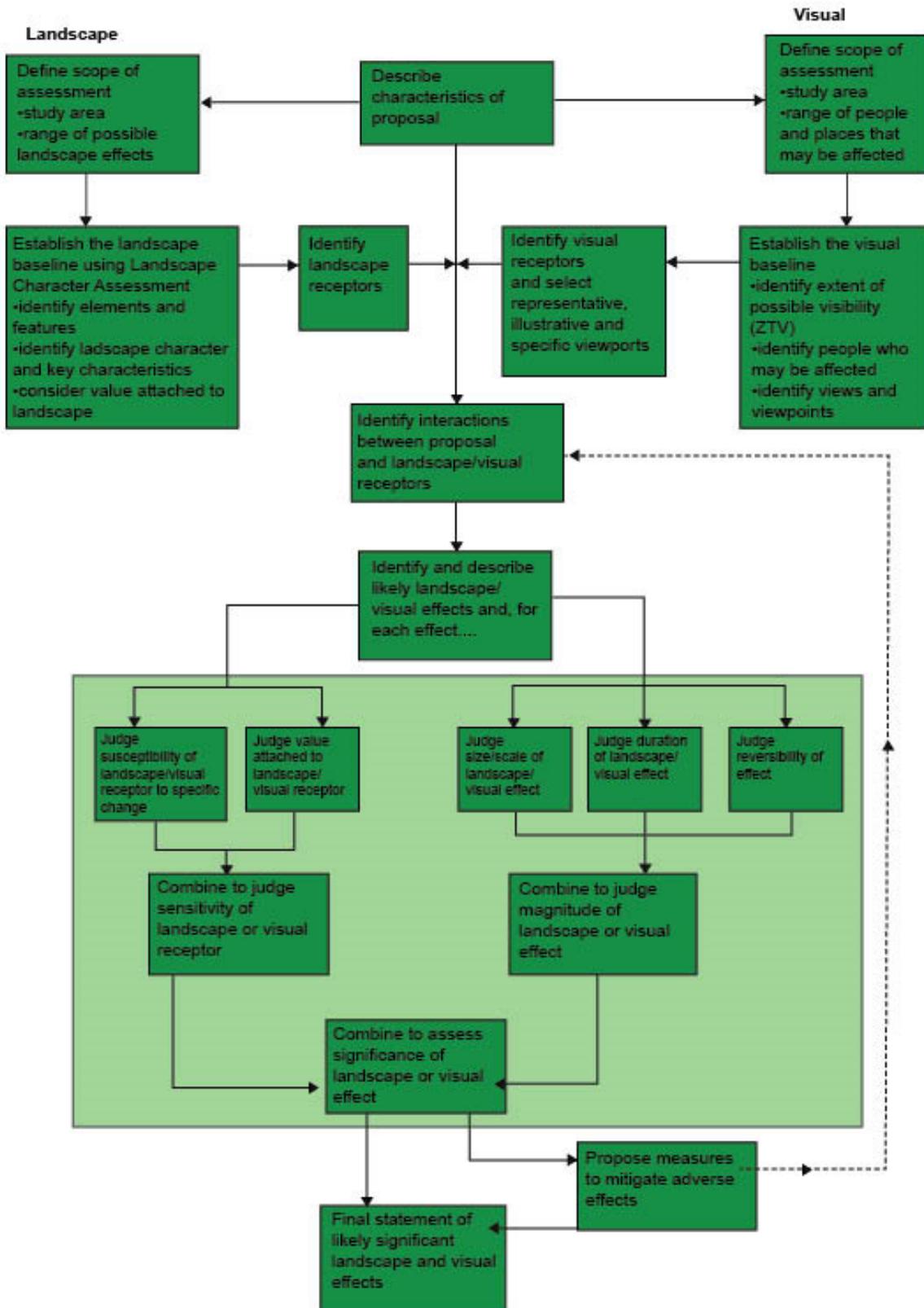
'Assessment of visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.'

1.2 Process

1.2.1 The iterative process undertaken through the course of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is illustrated in Figure 1.

1.2.2 The level of detail included within a report will be proportionate to the anticipated extent of potential impacts caused by the proposed development and is also likely to vary between a full LVIA chapter and a more concise Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA). Within an EIA compliant LVIA, the assessment section of the report (shown as a pale green box in Figure 1), would provide details of the relative judgement on sensitivity, magnitude of change and would provide an assessment on the significance of effects of the development on various features, character areas and views. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of a small development is likely to cover the key effects but not include any detailed references to judgements on significance.

Figure 1: Steps in assessing landscape and visual effects.



Referenced from figures 5.1 and 6.1 in GLVIA (Ref.2)

1.3 Desk study

1.3.1 A desk-study is undertaken to establish the physical components of the local landscape and to identify the boundaries of the study area. The following data sources were consulted:

- Ordnance Survey (OS) maps – to identify local features relating to topography, field pattern/shape/size, drainage pattern, woodland cover, existing settlement pattern, rights of way network, transport corridors and any important extant historic features.
- Vertical aerial photography – used to supplement the OS information.

1.3.2 This data informs the field survey by providing a basis for mapping landscape features and to indicate the likely visibility of the proposed development.

1.3.3 Topographical analysis is used to identify the extent of potential visibility of the site and the proposed development. The zone of theoretical visibility is identified through mapping, together with potential visual receptors (VRs), for verification by field survey. The VRs include locations with public access within the visual envelope; public rights of way, public open space, key vantage points, roads, etc. together with residential properties and workplaces.

1.3.4 Natural England's National Character Area Profiles, together with local landscape character assessment, provide the landscape character context.

1.3.5 The current landscape planning context for the site is provided by the development plan documents.

1.4 Field survey

1.4.1 A field surveys of the site were carried out in January and February 2017, which involved walking the site and travelling extensively through the local area, the extent of the study area being identified in the desk-study, to verify any variations in landscape character and the locations of visual receptors. The field survey also serves to understand the immediate setting of the proposed development, including the local topography, existing land uses and vegetation structure, position and condition of trees, hedgerows and stream courses.

1.4.2 The site visits were undertaken from publically accessible viewpoints around the site such as roads and public rights of way. Intervisibility analysis (projective mapping) was used to verify the zone of theoretical visibility and to evaluate the extent and nature of views from nearby properties (properties were not visited as part of the study). A working photographic record of the visit was also made.

1.5 Establishing the baseline

1.5.1 In order to form a comprehensive assessment of the effects of a proposed development, the existing situation, or baseline condition, must be established. The proposed changes resulting from the proposed development can then be identified and described. As described in section 1.1.3, the assessment considers the landscape and visual effects of the proposals.

1.5.2 GLVIA describes the landscape and visual baseline as follows:

- *‘For the landscape baseline the aim is to provide an understanding of the landscape in the area that may be affected – its constituent elements, its character and the way this varies spatially, its geographic extent, its history, its condition, the way the landscape is experienced and the value attached to it.*
- *‘For the visual baseline the aim is to establish the area in which the development may be visible, the different groups of people who may experience the views of the development, the places where they will be affected and the nature of the views and visual amenity at those points.’ (page 32, para 3.15 – Ref 2)*

1.6 Landscape baseline

1.6.1 For the purposes of assessment, the landscape resource is considered in two ways:

1. Local landscape character variation across the site and Study Area is described and evaluated; and
2. Existing landscape features in and immediately adjacent to the site are identified, quantified and their condition assessed.

1.6.2 The objective of the landscape baseline is first to schedule, describe, and where possible, quantify the landscape resource that potentially could be affected by the proposed development. A judgement is then made as to the Landscape Value of the Study Area.

1.6.3 Landscape value consists of:

- *‘The value of the Landscape Character Types or Areas that may be affected, based on review of any designations at both national and local levels, and, where there are no designations, judgements based on criteria that can be used to establish landscape value*
- *‘The value of individual contributors to landscape character, especially the key characteristics, which may include individual elements of the landscape, particular landscape features, notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities and combinations of these contributors.’ (GLVIA page 89, para 5.44 – Ref 2)*

1.6.4 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF (Ref 3) gives weight to *‘protecting and enhancing valued landscapes’*, however no definition of landscape value is given. In a judgement by Mr Justice Ouseley in the case of *Stroud District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* (February 2015 - Ref 4), Mr Justice Ouseley supported the inspector’s finding that for a landscape to be valued it would need to *‘show some demonstrable physical attribute, rather than just popularity’*. The assessment of value

should therefore first assess the intrinsic value of the physical attributes demonstrated by the site and then consider the popularity of the landscape as a community asset.

Landscape character

1.6.5 Landscape character areas (areas/types) are identified on plans and published descriptions and trends are summarised in the main text. Where published documents create a hierarchy of landscape areas, this is stated and the scale most appropriate to the assessment is explained. The landscape characteristics within the site are compared to the character of the wider area.

1.6.6 The assessment focuses on the landscape within which the site/proposed development is located. The character of a neighbouring character unit may be strongly influenced by the adjacent area, within which the site is located. This relationship may be dependent on the scale of assessment (size of landscape units), as well as landscape characteristics that affect intervisibility, e.g. topography, vegetation cover.

1.6.7 The degree to which the landscape character area can accommodate change arising from a particular development without detrimental effects on its character, i.e. susceptibility (Ref 2), varies with landscape value. Indicators of landscape value include:

- **Landscape quality (condition):** '*A measure of the physical state of the landscape*'. This includes land use, the intactness of the landscape and the quality and condition of the features within the landscape and the influence of incongruous features or elements;
- **Scenic quality:** The effect that a landscape is likely to have on the senses. For example visual enclosure/openness or the pattern and scale of the landscape, whether there is a distinctive sense of place, striking landform or visual interest in the landscape;
- **Rarity:** '*the presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type*';
- **Representativeness:** whether the landscape or features within it are exemplary for the local area or whether the landscape being considered covers a high proportion of a particular character area;
- **Conservation interests:** recognition of importance through designation, or local consensus. Includes features of wildlife, archaeological, historic and cultural interest;
- **Recreation value:** '*evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important*';
- **Perceptual aspects:** including tranquillity and appropriateness of substitution of the characteristics affected;
- **Associations:** '*with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area*'.

The above list is based on Box 5.1 of GLVIA (Ref 2).

Landscape features

- 1.6.8 Key landscape features that define site character are identified on plans, together with the tables, which provide information relating to their type, condition, value, and quantification (area/length/number). The potential for impact on each landscape feature is assessed using a combination of their relationship to the site/ proposed development (e.g. within, on or adjacent to site boundary and for those outside the site, the distance from the boundary) and sensitivity.
- 1.6.9 The landscape value of site landscape features is evaluated using factors in the following checklist:
- Type of landscape feature (e.g. natural or man-made);
 - Size/extent (e.g. covers a large or small area; individual or part of a group);
 - Condition or quality of landscape feature (intact);
 - Maturity (is feature well established or recent);
 - Contribution feature makes to landscape character (e.g. distinct and recognisable pattern or limited influence);
 - Rarity (rare or widespread in local and/or regional/national context);
 - Recognised importance (e.g. designation either nationally or locally);
 - Ease with which the feature may be substituted or recreated.
- 1.6.10 The susceptibility of landscape features is closely allied to the ease with which that feature may be substituted or recreated.
- 1.6.11 The assessment of landscape features is an integral part of the initial design process and often influences the location of development. The landscape value of features is a contributory factor for the assessment of landscape character, as the assessment of the quality and condition of a landscape is intrinsically linked to its component features.

Landscape sensitivity

- 1.6.12 Landscape sensitivity is defined as:
- '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'* (Page 158 – Ref 2)
- 1.6.13 The susceptibility of the landscape to change is *'the ability of the landscape receptor 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'* (Page 89, para 5.40 - Ref 2)
- 1.6.14 The way that landscape responds to or is affected by proposed development is determined in part by the nature of that development. The sensitivity of the landscape will vary depending on the type, form, appearance, extent or scale, duration (temporary or permanent) and phasing of proposed development. Landscape effects are also dependent

upon the *'degree to which the proposals fit with existing character'* (Page 88, para 5.37 – Ref 2), or indeed the potential to design-out potential adverse effects. Outline information about the proposed development such as type and scale helps inform preliminary judgement about the relative susceptibility of the landscape. However, the final judgement on susceptibility may change from the preliminary assessment as the scheme's detail design evolves in parallel with EIA (an iterative process).

1.7 Criteria for evaluation of sensitivity of landscape resource

1.7.1 The evaluation of overall landscape sensitivity to change is considered to be a product of susceptibility to change and the value of the receptor. The evaluation is an expression of comparative sensitivity based on a five-point scale: Very Low, Low, Medium, High and Very High as follows:

Very High:

- An exemplary part of a nationally recognised landscape, e.g. National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage Sites of international importance (if landscape reason for designation);
- Strong landscape structure, characteristic patterns and balanced combination of landform and land-cover;
- Appropriate management with distinctive features worthy of conservation;
- Sense of place (usually tranquil);
- No (or occasional) detracting features;
- Landscape not substitutable.

High:

- Part of a nationally or locally recognised landscape of particularly distinctive character, e.g. on the edge of a nationally designated landscape; part of the setting to an AONB; or a local policy designation;
- Recognisable landscape structure, characteristic patterns and combinations of landform and land-cover are still evident;
- Appropriate management, but potential scope for improvement;
- Some features worthy of conservation;
- Sense of place;
- No or occasional detracting features;
- Very limited substitutability and susceptible to relatively small changes.

Medium:

- Locally recognised, but undesignated, landscape of moderately valued characteristics;
- Distinguishable landscape structure, with some characteristic patterns of landform and land-cover;
- Scope to improve management (e.g. of hedgerows);
- Occasional detracting features;

- Landscape resource reasonably tolerant to change.

Low:

- Ordinary undesignated countryside;
- Weak landscape structure, without characteristic patterns of landform or land-cover;
- Limited management which is beginning to show signs of degradation;
- Abundance of detracting features;
- A relatively unimportant landscape, the nature of which is potentially tolerant to substantial change.

Very Low:

- Degraded to damaged/polluted or derelict landscape structure;
- Single land use dominates;
- Lack of or poor management/maintenance/intervention which has resulted in degradation;
- Presence of disturbed or derelict land requiring treatment;
- Extensive or dominant detracting features.

1.8 Visual baseline methodology

1.8.1 The visual baseline serves to establish the type of Visual Receptor (VR), the extent and character of existing views, the contribution that the site makes to each view/local visual amenity and the susceptibility to change in views (GLVIA para 6.33). This in part correlates with the degree to which the site is visible from a VR (GLVIA para 6.27).

1.8.2 All VR's (Key View Points), were visited as part of the field survey and the extent, character and appearance of their views noted. Where appropriate, the existence of temporary structures or features in the landscape that vary with the seasons and that may therefore affect visibility, such as deciduous vegetation, were noted in order to evaluate the worst case situation in the assessment. The initial appraisal is based on a grading of degrees of visibility, from not visible to fully open in close views. To indicate the degree of visibility of the site from any location, that continuum has been divided into four categories:

- **None:** no view (no part of the site or proposed development is discernible);
- **Glimpse:** only a minor area of the site or proposed development is discernible and/or the view is transient or at such a distance that it is difficult to perceive in the wider view, or sequence of views;
- **Partial:** the site or proposed development forms a relatively small proportion of a wider view. There are open views of part of the site or proposed development such that it is easily visible as part of the wider view;
- **Open:** there are open views of the site or proposed development such that it forms a substantial part (is a dominant element) of the overall view and affects its overall character and visual amenity; or the site or proposed development is the dominant feature of the view, to which other elements become subordinate and where the

site/proposed development significantly affects or changes the character of the view.

1.8.3 The type of activity that a person – or visual receptor (VR) is engaged in affects susceptibility, as does the extent of the view of the site and the extent to which that view can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character and extent. The expectation of the viewer (e.g. whether or not the type of development is consistent with the content of the baseline view) is a further consideration.

1.8.4 The value attached to views should also be considered i.e. whether the visual receptor/s being assessed are within a designated landscape, the site forms the setting to a heritage asset or there are particular tourism activities associated with the viewpoint location. The combined sensitivity of views/visual amenity within the zone of visual influence of the site/proposed development, is evaluated using factors in the following checklist:

- *‘the type and relative number of people (visual receptors) likely to be affected, making clear the activities they are likely to be involved in;*
- *the location, nature and characteristics of the chosen representative, specific and illustrative viewpoints, with details of the visual receptors likely to be affected by each;*
- *the nature, composition and characteristics of the existing views experienced at these viewpoints, including the direction of view;*
- *the visual characteristics of the existing views, for example the nature and extent of the skyline, aspects of visual scale and proportion, especially with respect to any particular horizontal or vertical emphasis and any key foci;*
- *elements, such as landform, buildings or vegetation, which may interrupt, filter or otherwise influence the views.’*

(Page 111, para 6.24 – Ref 2)

1.9 **Criteria for evaluation of visual sensitivity**

1.9.1 The evaluation of sensitivity, in relation to visual receptors is considered to be a product of susceptibility to change and the value attributed to the view by the visual receptor. It is represented as an expression of comparative sensitivity, based on a five-point scale: Very Low, Low, Medium, High and Very High as follows:

Very High:

- An open view, where the site forms a dominant part of the view, seen from a viewpoint that has a high value (nationally significant), by visual receptors that would be highly susceptible to a change in the view (e.g. walkers/cyclists on rural public rights of way), whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape. For example a walker on a national trail within an AONB, where the site forms the foreground to the view and is a characteristic part of a scenic and rural landscape.

High:

- A distant open or partial view of the site from a viewpoint that has a high value (nationally significant), seen by visual receptors that would be highly susceptible to a change in the view, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the

landscape; for example a walker on a national trail within an AONB, where the site forms a distant part of a wider view and is seen in the context of a foreground which is characteristic and forms part of a scenic and rural landscape;

- An open view of the site from a viewpoint that **either** has a medium scenic value (i.e. is locally appreciated), seen by visual receptors that would be highly susceptible to a change in the view **or** that the viewpoint has a high value (nationally significant) but the visual receptors experiencing the view have a medium susceptibility to change (i.e. a scenic road route, where the view is transient but is still a focus).

Medium:

- An open view of the site from a viewpoint that **either** has a low scenic value (i.e. has a number of visual detractors / a degraded landscape character), seen by visual receptors that would have a medium susceptibility to a change in the view **or** that the viewpoint has a medium scenic value (i.e. is locally appreciated) and the visual receptors experiencing the view have a low susceptibility to change (i.e. a major road or an office, where the view is not the focus of people's attention);
- A partial view of the site from a viewpoint with medium value, seen by visual receptors with a medium susceptibility to change;
- A glimpse of the site from a viewpoint that has a high scenic value (nationally significant), seen by a high number of visual receptors and / or visual receptors that would be highly susceptible to a change in the view and whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape.

Low:

- A partial view of the site from a viewpoint that has **either:**
 - a low scenic value, seen by visual receptors that would have a medium susceptibility to a change in the view;
 - a medium scenic value and the visual receptors experiencing the view have a low susceptibility to change; **or**
 - that the viewpoint has a low scenic value and the visual receptors experiencing the view have a low susceptibility to change;
- A glimpse of the site from a viewpoint with medium value, seen by visual receptors with a medium susceptibility to change;
- No view of the site, but that the viewpoint has a high scenic value and would be seen by a high number of visual receptors and/or visual receptors that would be highly susceptible to a change in the view, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape.

Very Low:

- A glimpse of the site from a viewpoint that has **either:**
 - a low scenic value, seen by visual receptors that would have a medium susceptibility to a change in the view;
 - a medium scenic value and the visual receptors experiencing the view have a low susceptibility to change; **or**
 - that the viewpoint has a low scenic value and the visual receptors experiencing the view have a low susceptibility to change;
- No view from a viewpoint with medium value (or lower), seen by visual receptors with a medium susceptibility to change (or lower).

1.12 Summary of landscape/visual baseline

1.12.1 The baseline survey identifies the landscape resource (landscape features and character) and visual receptors (VRs) likely to be affected by the proposed development, and then evaluates the susceptibility, value and combined sensitivity of each to the likely effects of the proposed development.

2 Mitigation

2.1 Mitigation is defined in the Guidelines as:

'Measures proposed to prevent/avoid, reduce and where possible remedy (or compensate for) any significant adverse landscape and visual effects...' (p57, para 4.21 - Ref 2).

2.2 Mitigation proposals are designed to respond to the constraints of the site and mitigate the landscape and visual impacts that arise from the proposed development. The mitigation measures considered fall into two categories: primary and secondary mitigation.

- Primary mitigation – the iterative process of masterplanning
- Secondary mitigation – additions or changes to the landscape proposals as a direct response to the results and comments obtained through public consultation.

3 Assessment of landscape effects

3.1 The landscape impact assessment addresses both direct and indirect impacts of the proposed development. Firstly, the direct effects of the development on the site itself are categorised, through an assessment of the magnitude of change. The magnitude of change is a judgement on the size/scale of effect, including the consistency of the proposed development with the baseline assessment, the extent of the area influenced and the duration and reversibility of the proposed effects. The focus is on the loss or change to identified landscape features within or adjacent to the site, together with the creation of new landscape elements.

3.2 Landscape character: The effects on local landscape character that would result from the proposed development are assessed. The effect on site landscape character directly correlates with the impact on landscape features (extent and duration). The effect on landscape character in the environs of the site is dependent on a range of factors (sensitivity) and overlaps with the visual assessment because the extent to which the proposed development would be visible from the surrounding countryside may influence neighbouring character areas. Effects on landscape character will also be directly influenced by the type of development proposed and whether it is consistent with existing land-use patterns.

3.3 Changes to landscape features and character may be adverse, beneficial or neutral. The erosion of a feature/character equates to an adverse impact, whilst strengthening of

features/characteristics is regarded as beneficial. The substitution of a landscape feature/character area with another that is different but locally appropriate may be assessed as a neutral impact.

3.4 For the purposes of this assessment, 'magnitude of change' on each landscape feature and landscape character area is classified using the categories listed below (Whilst potential effects may be adverse or beneficial, for simplicity, the following definitions use examples of adverse impact, bearing in mind that significant effects on landscape features, in the context of LVIA, usually equate with total or partial loss. Where effects are deemed to be beneficial this will be clearly stated in the assessment text):

High:

- Notable change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area;
- The proposals are the dominant feature and there is substantial damage (or major improvement) to key characteristics, features and elements that contribute to landscape, and/or the effects are long term and irreversible;
- Effect on a landscape feature of designated importance that cannot be replaced; total loss of features that would be difficult to replace;
- Loss of existing landscape character and its replacement with characteristics that are atypical of the character area;
- The proposed development is inconsistent with existing land-use patterns.

Medium:

- Moderate changes in localised area;
- The proposals form a visible and immediately apparent new feature that results in partial damage to (or addition of) key characteristics, elements and features that contribute to landscape, and/or the effects are medium to long term and largely irreversible;
- Total loss of feature that may be recreated over time; loss of small proportion of a feature that would be difficult to replace (e.g. mature woodland or historic species rich hedgerow);
- A considerable change to landscape character (proposed landscape character appropriate to character area but different from adjoining areas).

Low:

- Small change in any components;
- Some measurable change where the proposal constitutes a minor feature in the landscape and results in loss (or addition) of one (or maybe more) key characteristics, and/or the effects are short to medium term or could be irreversible;
- Total loss over sizeable area of a feature that can be recreated relatively easily (e.g. arable farmland); partial loss of feature that may be recreated over time, (e.g. young plantation/hedgerow); very minor loss of feature that would be difficult to recreate (e.g. woodland);
- A noticeable change to landscape character (proposed landscape character similar to existing landscape character of the area).

Very Low:

- Virtually imperceptible change of a temporary nature;
- The proposals result in very minor loss (or benefit) to the characteristics, features and elements that contribute to character, and/or effects are likely to be short term or could be reversible;
- Partial loss of feature that can be recreated relatively easily or which would regain its characteristics over time; minor or temporary effect on feature that can accommodate limited removal without noticeable change (e.g. gappy hedgerow);
- A barely perceptible change to landscape character.

3.5 The degree of significance of the landscape effect of the development is a product of sensitivity and magnitude of change.

4 Assessment of visual effects

4.1 The degree of significance of visual effects are assessed at two levels:

- i. The significance of the effect on each individual VR;
- ii. The overall significance of the visual effects in the context of the zone of visual influence and the range of VRs as a whole.

4.2 In accord with the visual baseline, the degree of visibility of the proposed development from each VR is assessed based on the same four categories: No view; Glimpse; Partial view, Open view. The view as it would be both during construction and operation of the proposed development is described. A direct comparison of the descriptions of the view following development (or during construction) with that of the existing situation, together with degree of visibility, indicates the extent of the change to the view. The relationship between visual intrusion and extent of change to the view is dependent upon the character of the development in the context of the view and whether they are consistent or contrasting.

4.3 The scale or magnitude of visual change has been made with reference to the following:

- *'The scale of the 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; and*
- *The nature of the view of the proposed development, in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses.'*

(Page 115, para 6.39 – Ref 2)

4.4 The geographical extent of a visual effect will vary with different viewpoints and is likely to reflect:

- *'The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;*

- *The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development; and*
- *The extent of the area over which changes would be visible.'*

(Page 115, para 6.40 – Ref 2)

4.5 The magnitude of change can be classified as follows:

High:

- Total loss of, or major alteration to, key elements of the baseline view, and/or introduction of elements considered to be uncharacteristic of the baseline view. The development would occupy most of the view (open or panoramic view) resulting in significant change in the existing view.
- The proposals would cause a significant deterioration/improvement in the view. (If adverse, the proposals would be a dominant and incongruous feature in the view).

Medium:

- Partial loss of, or alteration to, (one or more) key elements of the baseline view, and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic to the baseline view.
- The development may affect a partial view of most of it, or viewers would have a clear view of only a small part of the development. Also refers to distant views in which the site forms a significant proportion of the wider view resulting in a noticeable change in the existing view;
- The proposals would cause a noticeable deterioration/improvement in the view. (If adverse, the proposals would form a visible and recognisable incongruous new element readily noticed by a casual observer. If beneficial, the proposals would form a recognisable improvement that could be noticed by a casual observer.)

Low:

- Minor loss of, or alteration to, one or more key elements of the baseline view, and/or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic of the baseline view. Poor or difficult view of the development resulting in a perceptible change in the existing views; and
- The proposals would cause a minor deterioration/improvement in the view. If adverse, the proposals would be a small incongruous element in the view that could be missed by a casual observer. If beneficial, the proposals would form a small improvement to the view that could be missed by a casual observer.

Very Low:

- Very minor loss of, or alteration to, one or more key elements of the baseline view, and/or introduction of elements that are not characteristic of the baseline view.
- Poor or difficult view of the development resulting in barely perceptible change of a temporary nature. Approximating to the 'no change' situation, where the proposals overall would not form a noticeable deterioration or improvement in the view.

5 Landscape and Visual Significance

5.1 The methodology is first to identify the sensitivity of the landscape features, local landscape character or the viewer and then the scale of change. From these the significance of the effects arising from the proposed development are assessed. At its

simplest; sensitivity x scale of change = significance of effects, but modified by professional judgement.

5.2 Significance matrix for landscape and visual effects

		<i>Sensitivity of receptor</i>				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
<i>Magnitude of change</i>	High	Major	Substantial	Substantial or Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Substantial	Substantial or Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
	Very Low	Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Major effect: an effect of international/national importance and is important to the decision-making process;

Substantial effect: an effect of regional/district significance and could be a key decision-making issue; prominent changes to a sensitive view or substantial change or widespread loss of characteristic features in a sensitive landscape with little capacity for change;

Moderate effect: an effect of local significance and not likely to be a key decision-making issue; noticeable change to view in an average, ordinary landscape with some capacity to accommodate development; in combination the cumulative impacts of VR's with a moderate significance could be more significant (district significance) and a key decision-making issue.

Minor effect: an effect of very local significance and unlikely to be of importance to the decision-making process; small scale or temporary changes to view or to a low sensitivity landscape with capacity to accommodate development;

Negligible effect: not significant to the decision-making process.

5.3 Effects are judged to be 'Significant' if they are assessed as being Substantial effects or higher. The professional judgement of experienced landscape assessors is used throughout the assessment, particularly in those cases where the outcome lies between two levels of assessment, such as Substantial/Moderate and Moderate/Minor. This may result in levels of significance that are greater or lesser than the application of the landscape and visual impact significance matrices, which are not a rigid formula.

REFERENCES

- Ref 1 - Town and Country Planning; 2011; Statutory Instrument No 1824 - Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 Department for Communities and Local Government; 2012; National Planning Policy Framework
- Ref 2 - Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment; 2013; Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (third edition)
- Ref 3 - Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2012), '*National Planning Policy Framework*'
- Ref 4 - Judgement by Mr Justice Ouseley in the case of '*Stroud District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government*' (February 2015)