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Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 Published August 2024

Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition (GLVIA3)

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Contents

1 Introduction

This document LITGN-2024-01 published August 2024, provides a compilation of clarifications on the 3rd Edition of the Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3). This includes:

- *Statements of clarification from 2013-2015, previously held on the Landscape Institute website;*
- *Answers provided by the Landscape Institute's GLVIA Panel to questions raised during the Landscape Institute's December 2020 webinar 'GLVIA Misconceptions and Best Practice';*
- *Answers provided by the Landscape Institute's GLVIA Panel to questions raised by members, both via responses to the 2021 survey about GLVIA3 and sent to the Landscape Institute Technical email address.*

This Technical Guidance Note, which supersedes all previous clarification documents, has been produced to help interpret aspects of the guidance provided in GLVIA3, and should be read alongside GLVIA3.

A description of status levels of information and guidance provided by the Landscape Institute can be found here. Any comments and feedback on GLVIA3 should be sent to technical@landscapeinstitute.org.

Context

LVIA is a skill to be learned and mastered. It should always be remembered that the purpose of undertaking LVIA (or LVA) is to express clearly to decision-makers the landscape professional's judgement about changes to the landscape and views. In particular, the purpose is to explain which aspects of landscape and visual change are more important to the decision to be made (and why), and which are not (and why). Achieving this outcome is more fundamental to good LVIA than the detailed mechanics of specific assessment methodologies.

Landscape and visual resources (and changes to them) are not easily measurable. Therefore, those undertaking LVIA have to proceed by a process of description, analysis and reasoning, leading to assessment conclusions.

GLVIA3 is guidance aimed at experienced practitioners to ensure a degree of consistency in what is taken into account in reaching professional judgements and how those judgements are documented. It is not a textbook to teach the inexperienced, a detailed recipe for the perfect assessment, nor intended to describe exactly how assessments should be undertaken and presented. Overly restrictive guidance would prevent improvement and innovation, and variation and debate are to be expected rather than discouraged.

GLVIA3 provides a structured process for assessing effects on landscape and visual resources. The responsibility of the assessor is to tailor it to the place and project under consideration, supported by an explanation of the rationale behind the approach taken.

The GLVIA Advisory Panel's view is that GLVIA3 strikes the right balance between structure and flexibility, and this was reflected in the responses to the GLVIA survey in 2021[1].

[1] Responses to the GLVIA survey were: 26% agreed that GLVIA3 is fit for purpose and provides a useful framework for undertaking LVIA; 47% agreed that GLVIA3 is a useful framework for LVIA but some clarifications are required; and 27% agreed that GLVIA3 requires a re-write.

2 Errata

This section sets out errata relevant to GLVIA3.

	Error	Correction
E1	**Text within Figure 5.10 'Scale of Significance'**	In the upper box attached to 'More significant' the phrase '*Loss of lower-value elements…*' should read: *'Loss of higher-value elements…'.*
E2	**Typo in paragraph 6.34 of GLVIA3**	Paragraph 6.34 of GLVIA3 should read "Visual receptors likely to be less susceptible to change" rather than "*Visual receptors likely to be less sensitive to change*".
E3	**Reference to visual susceptibility in Fig 6.1 "Judge susceptibility of visual receptor to specific change"**	Reference to visual susceptibility in Fig 6.1 GLVIA3 conflicts with the approach in paragraph 6.32. Paragraph 6.32 is correct, and Figure 6.1 should be amended to read "*Judge susceptibility of receptor*". The susceptibility of visual receptors is not dependent on the specific change being proposed.
E4	**Figures 3.5, 5.1 and 6.1 are missing reference to geographical extent.**	In GLVIA3 the narrative text in paragraphs 5.48 and 6.38 refer to geographical extent but geographical extent is missing from Figures 3.5, 5.1 and 6.1. Geographical extent is an unintentional omission from these Figures. However, there is a need for clarification as to how geographical extent is assessed and this is set out in clarifications 3(1), 5(11) and 6(8).
E5	**Definition of susceptibility**	Within GLVIA3, Susceptibility is defined as: 'The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences' (p158). Taken as read, this would mean that the ability (susceptibility) of the receptor would be high if undue negative consequences were not likely. The opposite being that the ability (or susceptibility) would be low if negative consequences were likely. This appears to be an error. The Oxford English Dictionary definition is 'the quality or condition of being susceptible; capability of receiving, being affected by, or undergoing something '. This definition would imply that a higher susceptibility would mean more liable to be harmed by a particular thing, and it is the Panel's view that this is the way in which susceptibility in GLVIA3 should also be interpreted.

3 Notes and clarifications

This section is set out in the same order as GLVIA3 to aid navigation.

1. Introduction

A number of questions have been received about the scope of the guidance, the role of policy and who the guidance is for.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
1(1)	**GLVIA3 and how it should be understood**	Chapters 1 and 2 are introductory, setting the context in general terms and are aimed at general readers. Chapter 3 and those which follow provide advice for the landscape professional. Chapter 3 establishes the principles to which later chapters conform. Therefore, if there appears to be a measure of ambiguity between something stated in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, then the professional is encouraged to regard Chapter 3's advice as having primacy.
1(2)	**Link between LVIA and policy**	GLVIA3 purposefully does not refer to specific policy documents or policies because: a) The assessment process and judgements operate independently of policy. Policies will indicate how much weight could, should or may be attached to certain findings of an assessment in decision-making. See also 5(6). b) GLVIA3 applies to all nations of the UK which have different policy contexts. Although GLVIA was written as UK guidance, the concepts and procedures may be useful in informing practice beyond the UK. c) Policy is subject to change, as referenced on page ix of the Preface to GLVIA3.
1(3)	**How should the reference to policy in paragraph 5.40 (landscape susceptibility) be interpreted?**	See 5(6) below.
1(4)	**Conflicts of interest** Is there risk of a conflict of interest if the landscape architect designing a scheme is also writing the LVIA?	This is covered at paragraph 2.26 of GLVIA3 which indicates that it is important that judgements remain impartial. There is benefit to the designer and assessor being the same or within the same team, since GLVIA3 and IEMA guidance advocate an integrated and iterative assessment-design process, whereby the design of the development can evolve in response to assessment findings as they emerge (and not just L&V findings) to avoid or reduce adverse effects. See also 2(5) and 8(1) below.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
1(5)	**Proportionate approach** How can we balance the need for thoroughness with proportionality?	GLVIA3 paragraph 7.5 acknowledges that this can be challenging. Paragraphs 1.17 and 3.16 also address this topic. Ultimately this is a matter of professional judgement responding to the specifics of an individual project.
1(6)	**Level of prescription (mandatory standards vs guidance)**	GLVIA3 is guidance i.e. Landscape Institute members are not mandated to follow it but are strongly encouraged to do so as a matter of good practice, unless there are exceptional reasons for not doing so. N.B. An example of a 'standard' is the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges which is mandatory for highway schemes.
1(7)	**Assessment of allocated sites** Should LVIA be carried out for allocated sites, or should the LPA have carried this out prior to the designation in the local plan?	LVIA may be needed for allocated sites. The fact that an area has a certain planning status does not negate the potential need for assessment – including environmental impact assessment EIA and thus LVIA. See also Clarification 4(1) regarding the role of LVIA in the design process, and 5(6) regarding landscape susceptibility and policy. Also, the following may be of relevance here: 1. Understanding the difference between strategic environmental assessment (SEA) and EIA: SEA is used at the strategic level to ensure environmental considerations are integrated into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes whereas EIA is used to ensure that planning decisions are made with full knowledge of a project's likely significant environmental effects, and that any negative effects are prevented, reduced or offset, while positive effects are enhanced. 2. Understanding the difference between landscape sensitivity assessment (LSA) and landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA). LSA is carried out for the purposes of strategic spatial planning, and LVIA assesses the effects of the specific development proposals. Both are important, at different stages of the process. LVIA should also help local communities understand the likely effects of specific proposals. A clear professional judgement needs to be communicated, evidenced and robustly justified in the LVIA in order for decision-makers to weigh up any harm against the benefits of the development in the planning balance.

2. Definitions, scope and context

Some questions have been asked about the scope of the guidance (including relevance of the guidance to townscape and seascape assessments), the scope of LVIA, and the role of professional judgement.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
2(1)	**Application of GLVIA3 in townscape and visual impact assessment (TVIA)** Specifically, comments have been made about difficulties in applying the GLVIA3 in a townscape context in relation to: • defining valued townscape in the absence of designations; • judging the extent to which views contribute to the landscape or townscape setting enjoyed by residents (ref. bottom of page 113 of GLVIA3); • assessing whether the effects are positive or negative and how to integrate the consideration of the aesthetic quality of the proposed development, i.e. does a 'beautiful' proposal result in beneficial effect?	TVIA should follow the same processes as LVIA (but within a townscape setting) using an appropriate methodology based on GLVIA3 (including assessment of effects on landscape elements in the townscape). When defining value outside designated areas, GLVIA3 states that judgements can be based on suitable criteria that can be used to establish value. See Landscape Institute TIN 05/2017 Townscape Character Assessment and TGN 02/2021 Assessing landscape values outside national designations . Both provide relevant guidance. In judging whether a townscape setting is enjoyed by residents, the starting point should be to assume that views experienced by local communities contribute to the townscape setting enjoyed by residents unless there are clear indications to the contrary. Judgement regarding whether the effect is positive or negative should be as objective as possible, clearly explained and related to the baseline, and should take account of more than just architectural quality. It should reflect how the design responds to the context, and character of the area and the contribution to the townscape and views the development makes, because a development which may be appropriate for one context may not be appropriate elsewhere. Published townscape character assessment guidelines and/or design guidance pertinent to the proposal and its location may also inform the judgement.
2(2)	**Application of GLVIA3 in seascape/coastal and visual impact assessment (SVIA)**	SVIA should follow the same processes as LVIA (but within a seascape setting), so SVIA should be undertaken using an appropriate methodology based on GLVIA3. Specific guidance by statutory agencies and local authorities sits alongside GLVIA3. It is important to note the difference between guidance for identifying landscape (or seascape/ coastal) sensitivity as part of strategic landscape planning (such as that provided by Natural England in relation to landscape sensitivity assessment and by the Marine Management Organisation in relation to seascape sensitivity assessment) and identifying sensitivity for the purposes of

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
		LVIA or SLVIA – more information about assessing sensitivity as part of LVIA is set out at clarifications 5(4) and 5(5) in this document. As stated in GLVIA3, at paragraph 5.41, existing landscape sensitivity studies provide useful background information, but do not provide a substitute for the assessment of the susceptibility of the receptors as part of LVIA. Annexes B and C of the MMO's MMO1204_An_Approach_to_seascape_sensitivity_assessment_for_publication_a.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk) sets out susceptibility and value criteria and indicators that may be relevant to consider when assessing seascape sensitivity as part of a SVIA. These should be suitably tailored to the project.
2(3)	**How to assess a proposed development that is to be submitted for outline planning permission**	Paragraph 4.2 of GLVIA3 covers this topic. It is important to rely for assessment on clearly defined parameters of the outline application for which permission is being sought, (for example the maximum height of development) although it is recognised that an Illustrative masterplan or design illustrations, where these accord with the parameters, can help to provide further detail regarding the potential form of the development. This is in accordance with the 'Rochdale Envelope' approach from the (Planning Inspectorate which proposes that the assessment is based on a cautious 'worst case' approach, the level of information is sufficient to enable the likely significant effects to be assessed, and the need for flexibility should not be abused (ultimately it is the for the decision-maker to determine what degree of flexibility can be permitted in the particular case having regard to the specific facts of an application). For non-EIA development, if parameters are not set, the Landscape and Visual Appraisal should clearly state any assumptions on which the assessment is based. Any limitations of the information available should also be set out within the assessment. The Panel would encourage the assessor to speak to the EIA Project Manager/planning lawyers about the level of detail required for robust assessment of landscape and visual effects.
2(4)	**Role of LVIA in the planning application**	GLVIA3 paragraph 8.9 makes clear that LVIA should not include advocacy for the scheme (including in relation to the design). Conclusions on the planning balance should also not be made within LVIA as such judgements need to take account of the policy balance in relation to all aspects of the project, not just landscape matters. Sometime LVIAs are introduced as 'submitted in support of the application.' This is wrong, instead they should 'accompany' the application. See also 2(5).
2(5)	**How to employ professional judgement**	LI Members operate under the LI's Code of Practice which requires members to exercise impartial and independent professional judgement. GLVIA3 covers this topic in paragraphs 2.24 and 8.9**,** emphasising the need for clear, balanced, reasoned, and transparent explanation to support professional judgements. See also 1(4) above and 8(1) below.

3. Principles and overview of processes

Some questions have been asked about the overall process of LVIA, in particular the role of LVIA in EIA vs non-EIA appraisals and how to assess whether an effect is positive or negative.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
3(1)	**How to carry out non-EIA Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)**	The Local Planning Authority (LPA) can request an LVA as part of pre-app discussions where they wish to be informed about landscape and visual effects. Early consultation with the LPA is recommended to ensure the appraisal contains the information needed to make an informed decision. In carrying out an LVA, the same principles and process as set out in GLVIA3 may be applied to report on effects (identifying the relative importance/ levels of the effects on a scale with reference to sensitivity and magnitude of effect), but it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are or are not significant. Effects should be comparable between LVA and LVIA. For example, a 'moderate effect' should be the same in both assessment contexts.
3(2)	**Baseline reporting: does there need to be a clear split between the baseline and assessment sections?**	The distinction should be clear because they have different purposes (see GLVIA paragraph 3.15), but this distinction need not dictate that the structure and presentation of an assessment must include separate sections. Nevertheless, it is helpful to understand the sensitivities of receptors early on so they can properly inform proposals.
3(3)	**Baseline reporting: in cases where there is a modified baseline (e.g. an active mineral development site) should assessments be based on the modified baseline or pre-construction/ restored landscape baseline?**	In these cases, the baselines and scenarios that are assessed should be based on the most likely future scenarios and timings and agreed with the decision-making body.
3(3)	**Weighting of the components of magnitude of effect: scale of effect, geographical extent, and duration/reversibility**	It has been queried whether all the components of magnitude of effect should be equally weighted or whether scale of effect is the most important. The landscape professional should apply their judgement, explaining in the methodology how components have been combined. For magnitude of effect, it is likely that the size/scale of effect will be the most important factor, with geographical extent and duration/ reversibility considered as 'modifiers'. When taking account of geographic extent and duration, care should be taken to ensure that the resulting magnitude of effect judgement is not understated. The focus should be on what would be affected and where, not restricted to the proportion of a landscape character area or designated area affected. More information about interpreting geographical extent is provided in clarifications 5(11) (landscape) and 6(7) (visual).
3(4)	**How many categories of effect are recommended?**	Paragraph 3.27 of GLVIA3 states that three or four categories of effect are 'ideal'. The GLVIA Panel acknowledges that more categories may be useful in some instances (such as five or six categories). It is the assessor's responsibility to ensure their methodology is clear and the levels of effect are clearly defined.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
3(5)	**Significance: how to assess significance, where to set thresholds and how to achieve consistency**	GLVIA3 provides guidance on assessing significance, in particular paragraphs 3.19 -3.36. The Panel highlight the following key points: Make sure the methodology clearly states the basis on which effects are judged as 'significant', and check that judgements are consistent with this (see GLVIA3 paragraph 3.23). The use of the term 'significant' should convey issues that are material and that should be brought to the attention of the decision-maker (see GLVIA3 paragraph 3.35). Avoid phrases such as 'minor significance'. Identify the level of effect (e.g. 'a minor level of effect' or 'effects would be minor') and set out whether the effect is significant or not. As indicated at GLVIA paragraph 3.33, it is not necessary to establish thresholds for levels of significance, provided that it is made clear whether effects are, or are not, significant. However, typically, effects falling below the middle of the range of overall effect are assessed as not significant. For example, if using a scale of minor/ moderate/ major, then major effects will be significant and minor effects will not be significant. In this example, moderate effects may or may not be significant and justification would be needed in the methodology or receptor assessment as to whether a moderate effect is significant or not. Regarding thresholds of significance and the need for consistency, the threshold of significance should ideally be consistent across projects. There are different points of view on whether significance should be judged before or after mitigation. Some practitioners assess at both stages, to convey the effectiveness of mitigation measures in reducing significant effects to 'not significant'. The Panel emphasises that it is not helpful to do this for measures which are 'designed in' as the effects without mitigation would never arise. GLVIA3 paragraphs 4.21- 4.22 and IEMA guidance echo this point. Statements of significance should be reported post primary (designed-in) mitigation, and this includes considering effects during the growth of mitigation planting as set out at paragraph 4.31 of GLVIA3. Secondary mitigation that has not been designed into the scheme but consists of measures to be taken later (which is relatively rare for landscape and visual mitigation) should not be taken into account when reporting significant effects, although a final statement of residual effects (post-secondary mitigation) may be helpful. It should be noted that judgements of significance are not judgements of acceptability considering the policy context, which is a matter for decision-makers. For example, it may be the case that the LVIA concludes that a proposal would result in 'significant' adverse effects on receptors, but the proposal could still be considered acceptable when judged alongside other factors in the overall planning balance. Conversely, the LVIA could identify 'no significant effects' but the proposal could be found to be unacceptable when judged alongside other factors in the overall planning balance.
3(6)	**Use of matrices**	Diagrams or matrices can be useful as a means of illustrating to the reader how judgements are combined and can support and summarise narrative descriptive text (GLVIA3 paragraph 8.10), but they should not dictate judgements. LVIA is a means of documenting professional judgement, rather than a formulaic process. All judgements need to be supported by clear description.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
3(7)	**Assessing whether an effect is positive or negative (or neutral)**	The EIA Regulations clearly state the need to identify positive/beneficial and negative/adverse effects. The level of effect and whether it will have a positive or negative (or neutral) consequence are independent of each other so that it is possible to report a major and neutral effect (i.e. an important change, but one which is neither better nor worse). Any judgement on the categorisation of the effect (positive, negative, or neutral) should be clearly justified with transparent reference to the factors being taken into account and should be set out in the LVIA methodology. Care should be taken with terminology - some practitioners use the term neutral to essentially mean the same as negligible. Neutral should be used to describe a categorisation of effect (positive, negative, neutral) and negligible to describe a level of effect. If weighing up multiple positive and negative changes, there needs to be clarity on the component impacts.
3(8)	**Assessing frequency of an effect that is not continuously present**	Frequency is one of the factors that can contribute to magnitude of effect as part of duration.

4. The proposed development, design, and mitigation

Some questions have been received about the role of LVIA in the design process and mitigation of effects.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
4(1)	**The role of LVIA in the design process**	GLVIA3 (see paragraph 4.7) and IEMA guidance recommend an iterative design and assessment process. Designing appropriate mitigation into a scheme is an important part of the design process and can reduce adverse landscape and visual effects. Descriptions of the design process should be provided in the application documents and may be referred to in the LVIA. The LVIA should set out how the landscape (or townscape or seascape) and visual context of the development has influenced the design of the development and what design changes have been made to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects and provide landscape and visual enhancements. In considering whether design elements constitute enhancement, clear separation must be maintained between project design aims and LVIA. For instance, the provision of a sports pitch may be an enhancement to local recreation facilities, but still have adverse effects on landscape character.
4(2)	**What is the role of mitigation in landscape 'appraisal'?**	See 3(5) and 4(1) above. For LVA it will be appropriate to consider mitigation of adverse effects identified in the course of the appraisal, without the need to assess the significance of those effects.
4(3)	**Distinguishing between landscape and visual mitigation**	Care should be taken to ensure landscape and visual mitigation is not confused. For example, it does not necessarily follow that screening a development from view would reduce its landscape effects, such as those on landscape character.
4(4)	**Distinguishing between mitigation and enhancement**	Care should also be taken to ensure that the terms 'mitigation' and 'enhancement' are correctly used. Mitigation is focused on measures to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects while enhancement seeks to improve landscape and/or visual amenity beyond its baseline condition (see GLVIA3 paragraphs 3.37 to 3.39).

5. Assessment of landscape effects

Questions raised in relation to chapter 5 of GLVIA3 are set out below.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
5(1)	**Landscape baseline: landscape character**	There have been some questions about how to deal with out of date landscape character assessments in LVIA. GLVIA3 states that existing assessments must be reviewed critically and potentially adapted (paragraphs 5.13 and 5.15) before they are used to inform the baseline for a LVIA. For out of date assessments, this may take the form of identifying changes based on site observations, and/or supplementing with information from more recent assessments at a different level. GLVIA3 also suggests that where landscape character assessments are not available, project-specific character areas can be derived. Guidance on undertaking landscape character assessments is provided here for: England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Note, NatureScot (which hosts the national LCA coverage for Scotland) is developing revised guidance and Natural England is reviewing its current guidance. The Landscape Institute is developing a Landscape character assessment database for the UK and Ireland . It is not necessary to assess effects on every landscape character type or area identified by assessments at different levels for any development – the best scale of assessment for the project should be selected. As noted at paragraphs 5.14 and 5.15 of GLVIA3, where existing assessments are too large or small scale for the nature of the development, supplementary assessment at the appropriate scale may be required and should draw from the assessment(s) available.
5(2)	**Landscape baseline: landscape elements**	There has been a request for clarification about whether individual features and individual characteristics should be treated as landscape receptors, as well as character types and / or areas. Landscape features, elements and characteristics that could be subject to change must be clearly described in their own right and could be treated as receptors if appropriate.
5(3)	**Landscape character baseline: historic landscape character**	As explained in pages 76–77 of GLVIA3, historic landscape characterisation is complementary to landscape character assessment. Landscape professionals should make use of existing historic landscape information. For example, understanding the time depth of landscape elements may be relevant to the susceptibility and value judgements about the landscape. Assessing the effects on the historic environment is a separate specialist topic in EIA, but there are overlaps between the landscape and heritage topics and it is important that specialists discuss overlapping issues and agree how they should be dealt with, including the terminology being used.
5(4)	**How to assess landscape susceptibility**	This is an area that has caused some debate amongst practitioners – especially how much detail of the proposed development should be taken into account in assessing landscape susceptibility. The issue raised by a number of members is that if the exact proposal is assessed as part of susceptibility, it becomes an assessment of magnitude of effect with a potential for overlap and double counting. GLVIA3 refers to the 'type of change arising from the specific proposal' (paragraph 3.26) and encourages practitioners to avoid using 'intrinsic' or 'inherent' sensitivity without reference to a specific *nature* of development (paragraph 5.42). At other

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
		places in GLVIA3 (e.g. paragraphs 5.40, 5.41 and Figure 3.1) where 'the specific development proposal', 'the proposed development' and/or 'the specific change' is referenced, this is intended to distinguish from 'inherent' sensitivity, rather than meaning that susceptibility should be determined based on a fully detailed proposal. Landscape susceptibility will vary with the *type* or *nature* of change. This relates to the type of development (whether it be housing, a railway, warehouses, afforestation/deforestation, open storage, a wind farm, a grid connection etc.) and the relative size of the development (e.g. whether the proposal is for 4 or 400 houses). If more detail is known about the development this can also feed into and inform the judgement about how susceptible the site and the surrounding landscape are to what is proposed, but care should be taken to avoid double counting with magnitude. Criteria can be used to judge susceptibility e.g. landform, landcover, landscape pattern and scale, enclosure, tranquility/ man-made influence, time depth etc. Relevant criteria will be dependent upon the development type being considered and should be tailored to the project. Existing sensitivity studies may be helpful in identifying appropriate susceptibility criteria. It is helpful to set out indicators of susceptibility against each criterion in the methodology to explain judgements. Some example criteria and indicators of susceptibility are set out in Natural England's An approach to landscape sensitivity, NatureScot's Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance (Methodology) and NRW's Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance for Wales'. The MMO's 'An approach to seascape sensitivity assessment' sets out criteria relevant to seascape and coastal environments.
5(5)	**Susceptibility of non-host landscapes**	Some practitioners consider 'non-host' areas of landscape (i.e. those which a development would be sited outside) to have a different susceptibility than if they were 'host areas'. There are no hard and fast rules for assessing susceptibility of 'host' and 'non-host' areas – it is up to the assessor to devise an appropriate approach and record it clearly. However, the approach used should aim to avoid too much overlap (or double counting) between susceptibility and magnitude of effect judgements.
5(6)	**Landscape susceptibility and policy: does the wording used in paragraph 5.40 of GLVIA3 mean susceptibility is dependent on policy?**	No. The word 'policies' used in paragraph 5.40 of GLVIA3 means landscape policies which set out aims relating to the landscape receptor being considered. For example, policies that seek to conserve and enhance a designated landscape and refer to a management plan; or local plan policies that seek to avoid significant change to landscape character and refer to a landscape character assessment. In such instances, a landscape policy sets out the outcomes to be achieved in relation to those receptors; the documents referred to by the policy provide detail to inform the consideration of susceptibility for those receptors; and the susceptibility should reflect the likelihood that the proposed development may influence the intended policy outcome.
5(7)	**How to assess landscape value**	Paragraph 5.24 of GLVIA3 states "*landscape value of that specific area may be different from that suggested by the formal designation*". This has caused some confusion. Landscape value within nationally designated landscapes should be at the highest level (e.g. expressed as high/ very high/ of national value).

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
		For landscapes outside nationally designated landscapes the LI's recent TGN 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations may be helpful.
5(8)	**Word scale for landscape value**	The word scale used to express landscape value is up to the assessor to determine, as long as definitions are provided, and the process is clearly set out in the methodology.
5(9)	**Combining landscape susceptibility and value to reach a judgement on landscape sensitivity**	It has been suggested that landscape susceptibility and landscape value are incommensurable, and therefore it is not easy to combine them to provide an evaluation of landscape sensitivity. As long as each is clearly defined in the methodology, and a clear scale of ratings provided, it should be possible for both to influence the assessment. It is also worth noting that GLVIA3 (at paragraphs 3.28-3.30) allows for two approaches to combining judgements to come to a judgement of overall effect. One is the 'sequential combination' methodology whereby susceptibility to change and value can be combined into an assessment of sensitivity for each receptor; size/scale, geographical extent and duration and reversibility can be combined into an assessment of magnitude for each effect; and magnitude and sensitivity can then be combined to assess overall significance. The other approach is the 'overall profile' methodology whereby all the judgements against the individual criteria can be arranged in a table to provide an overall profile of each identified effect, taking an overview of the distribution of the judgements for each criterion to make an informed professional assessment of the overall significance of each effect. Judgements on susceptibility and value feed into both approaches.
5(11)	**Magnitude: Interpreting geographic extent for landscape judgements**	GLVIA3 appears to suggest that geographical extent (and therefore magnitude of effect) would be smaller if the change occurs within a landscape type or character area, and larger if a change is felt across several types or character areas – but this advice is hard to apply to individual receptors i.e. should the magnitude of effect on one landscape character area be greater simply because other landscape character areas are also affected? The Panel suggests that geographical extent should reflect the relevance of the location (for example it may more strongly or weakly manifest one of the key characteristics than other areas, or it may have a geographic role in connecting parts of the receptor) and the spread of effects, as a 'modifier' to the scale of effect so that it does not understate the magnitude of effects for extensive receptors such as large character areas or designations. See also 3(3). What the decision-maker wants to know is where the most important (or 'significant' in the case of EIA) effects will arise, and why and to what degree that matters.
5(12)	**Assessing effects on designated landscapes and special landscape qualities**	Landscape designations apply to areas that are deemed special and therefore worthy of protection. The designation confers protection on the landscape and contributes to the assessment of value. The area of landscape that is designated will be considered elsewhere within the LVIA in relation to effects on its features (if relevant) and character. But the designation should also be treated as a landscape receptor, and the assessor should report on how the special qualities (i.e. the components of natural beauty) and/or

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
		purposes of designation (if they relate to additional or different factors other than natural beauty) of a designated landscape would be affected. Special qualities may also include particular views or types of visual experience and drawing on the visual assessment is likely to be relevant to inform this aspect. For most national landscape designations, the special qualities (i.e. the components of natural beauty) are explicitly documented as such (typically in management plans for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), local plans, or management plans for National Parks, or in reports published by NatureScot for designations in Scotland). For local designations, the valued attributes may not be called 'special qualities' and are more likely to be found within landscape studies which form part of the local plan evidence base or within the local plan. The LVIA should not form conclusions in relation to conformance with policy relating to the designation - this is a judgement for the decision maker, using the evidence contained in the LVIA.
5(13)	**Assessing effects on setting of designated landscapes.**	It should be noted that the setting of protected landscapes is generally created in policy and is not a designation (or a receptor) in its own right (unlike the settings of heritage assets). The extent of the setting of a designated landscape for LVIA purposes is not geographically defined and will vary with the nature of the development proposed. In LVIA, the question would remain whether changes in the setting (i.e. the landscape nearby but outside the designated area) would affect the designated landscape in terms of effects on its special qualities and, if so, to what degree. For example, a major development close to a designated landscape could generate noise, lighting and visual impacts that could erode the tranquility, dark skies, and scenic quality of views.

6. Assessment of visual effects

Questions raised in relation to chapter 6 of GLVIA3 are set out below.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
6(1)	**Should residential receptors be included in an LVIA?**	GLVIA3 is clear that people living in the area of the proposed development have to be considered as receptors (paragraph 6.13) and that views from settlements should be considered (paragraph 6.20). An LVIA should consider views from local communities focusing on the way that a community currently experiences views from public locations such as streets and open spaces and how those will change. Views from houses and individual properties are a matter of private amenity, noting that it is an established planning principle that there is no right to a view. However, it may be helpful for an LVIA to comment on changes to views that will be experienced from groups of properties, or in some cases individual properties, if these changes are likely to be significant. Where required[2], a residential visual amenity assessment (RVAA) should consider effects on private amenity for people in their homes and gardens in more detail (as set out in TGN 02/2019 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) The LVIA and RVAA may refer to and inform each other but are covered by separate guidance.
6(2)	**Assessing susceptibility (visual): is susceptibility influenced by the occupation or activity of the receptor, the development type or both?**	See GLVIA3 paragraph 6.32: Visual susceptibility is not influenced by the development type, which would be assessed as part of magnitude of effect.
6(3)	**Does the 'value' aspect of visual sensitivity relate to the view or the receptor?**	Paragraph 3.24 of GLVIA may cause some confusion by using the word 'receptor' in discussing both landscape and views, however paragraph 6.37 provides clear guidance confirming value relates to the view. Although not included in the criteria in GLVIA3, some practitioners consider the scenic quality of a view to influence its value. Where the scenic quality of a view is not locally recognised or documented (reflecting its value to society) the assessor needs to provide clear explanation for their judgements.
6(4)	**Assigning value to views in residential areas**	LVIA relates to public amenity – the value of the view to the public - and RVAA relates to private amenity - the value of the views to those who live there. These may be different. The criteria for value attached to views contained in GLVIA3 (at

[2] RVAA may be required by the determining / competent authority, for example in situations where it is possible that the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property or properties is so great that the proposed development is against the public interest, as explained in Technical Guidance Note 2/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
		paragraph 6.37) focuses on recognition through designation, appearances in guidebooks/ literature or provision of facilities for their enjoyment by the public. In residential areas there may be indications that a specific view is valued, for example as identified in a Conservation Area appraisal or Local/ Neighbourhood Plan, or a bench placed in a particular location within a settlement to provide an attractive view or composition of features. In all cases, the criteria for assessing value should be clearly set out and the assessment should provide evidence for the judgements made.
6(5)	**Word scale for view value**	The word scale used to express view value is up to the assessor to determine, as long as definitions are provided, and the process is clear to follow.
6(6)	**Agreeing viewpoints**	It is recommended (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.18) to agree viewpoints to be considered in the assessment with the appropriate authority. If this is not possible, then EIA Regulations require the assessor to set out any limitations on or difficulties encountered in carrying out the assessment. It is recommended that the assessor demonstrates that efforts have been made to agree viewpoints for both LVIAs and LVAs. Regarding seasonal constraints, it is within the competence of a landscape professional to be able to describe how the landscape and views would vary with the seasons, and to take account of these changes in their assessment.
6(7)	**Assessing viewpoints or visual receptors?**	The focus of the visual assessment should be the visual receptors (i.e. the people as set out within paragraph 6.31. of GLVIA3). The purpose of viewpoints is covered at paragraph 6.19 (i.e. for illustration of the visual effects). No precise approach to visual assessment is set out in GLVIA3 – it is up to the assessor to select the most appropriate approach and ensure that issues that are important to the planning decision are assessed and reported.
6(8)	**How to assess geographic extent for visual receptors**	Practitioners are interpreting geographic extent in relation to visual effects in different ways. For example, the Panel has seen examples where it has been interpreted as the extent of the visual receptor affected (e.g. walkers on the footpaths affected for larger or shorter lengths, or larger or smaller parts of a community), as well as being interpreted as the angle of the view affected from a single point receptor. The Panel suggests that the former is preferred (the angle of view affected should be assessed as part of scale). Geographical extent should reflect the relevance of the location and spread of effects, as a 'modifier' to the scale of effect so that it does not understate the magnitude of effects for extensive receptors such as people using long-distance footpaths. For example, in considering views from a long distance footpath it may be relevant to consider both the frequency of use of particular parts of the route and the degree to which visibility arises from those parts of the route. Open views of a development from long stretches of a more frequently used section would be expected to contribute to a greater extent (and magnitude) of effect than a glimpsed view from an overgrown section with little sign of recent use. What the decision-maker wants to know is where the most important (or 'significant' in the case of EIA) effects will arise, and why and to what degree that matters.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
6(9)	**How do we allow for the number of people that will experience a view in the assessment?**	GLVIA3 paragraph 6.3 suggests that "*it can also be useful to establish the approximate or relative number of different groups of people who will be affected by the changes in views or visual amenity*" as part of the baseline but does not refer to how this information should be incorporated into the assessment. This is therefore for the assessor to determine as part of developing the assessment methodology. One approach would be to note (where relevant) a broad indication of the number of people affected (or busyness of routes) alongside the effect i.e. whether an identified effect affects a relatively small or relatively large number of people.

7. Assessing cumulative landscape and visual effects

Clarifications in relation to cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment are below.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
7(1)	**Cumulative assessment**	The Panel is aware that cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment can be complex and suggests that practitioners become familiar with the difference between intra-project and inter-project effects (as set out in GLVIA3 paragraphs 7.7 and 7.8), and the difference between additional effects and combined effects (as set out in paragraph 7.18 of GLVIA3). The task should be in proportion to the nature of the project under consideration (paragraph 7.5 GLVIA3) and the scope should be agreed on in discussion with the competent authority and consultation bodies (paragraph 7.4). See also IEMA (2020) 'Demystifying Cumulative Effects', Impact Assessment Outlook Journal Volume 7.
7(2)	**What other projects to consider: comparison between the EIA Regulations, GLVIA3 and PINs Advice Note 17 requirements**	The EIA regulations (2017) require consideration of "*the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development*". It should be noted that this does not mandate that existing and consented development must be explicitly considered in a section of an LVIA identified as a 'cumulative assessment' – merely that impacts must be considered in the context of existing and expected future developments. GLVIA3 (Chapter 7) refers to cumulative assessment of the proposal with past, present and future proposals, typically excluding pre-planning or scoping stage proposals unless the competent authority or consultation bodies consider this to be necessary. Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects Advice Note Seventeen: cummulative effects assessment relevant to nationally significant infrastructure projects refers to three 'tiers' of development certainty where Tier 1 includes permitted or submitted planning applications, Tier 2 refers to projects where a scoping report has been submitted and Tier 3 relates to sites where a scoping report has not been submitted but may be identified in a plan or programme. Nature Scot guidance introduced the concept of distinguishing between predicted cumulative impacts in different 'scenarios' e.g. assessing a proposal in combination with existing and consented developments, or a proposal in combination with existing, consented and planning application stage developments. The cumulative LVIA should focus on the assessment of the project under consideration in the context of other submitted planning applications (potentially considering different combinations or scenarios where relevant) with scoping stage schemes only considered where they are likely to be submitted before or at a similar time to the project under consideration, and interact with the project in a potentially significant way, provided that the scoping project(s) is/are well defined and sufficient information is available for the effects to be reasonably understood. The approach taken to consented developments may vary on a case-by-case basis. Where it is likely that a consented development will be constructed before the project under consideration, it may be appropriate to include it in the main assessment so that the effects of the proposed development are reported against that baseline. Where there is some uncertainty as to whether the consented development will proceed or the project being considered is likely to be constructed

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
		before the consented development, then consideration of the consented development within the cumulative assessment is more likely to assist in the reporting of likely effects. The developments to be included in the cumulative assessment should be decided on a case by case basis in consultation with competent authority.
7(3)	**Additional or combined effects?**	**Additional cumulative effects** are defined in GLVIA3, at paragraph 7.10, as the additional effects of the project in conjunction with other developments of the same type. This is typically assessed as the effect arising from the proposed development when considered against a baseline containing the other developments in the scenario being considered (i.e. what the effect of adding the project under consideration would be if Development X were already built). An additional cumulative effect may be the same as the effect of the development being assessed as recorded in the LVIA, or it may be different. An example of where the additional cumulative effect may be different is when the development being assessed would be seen behind another cumulative development. In this situation the effect of the proposed development may be less than the effect of the proposed development alone. **Combined (also referred to as 'total') cumulative effects** are defined in paragraph 7.18 of GLVIA3 as the combined effects of all the past, present and future proposals together with the new project. Typically, a 'combined' cumulative assessment would consider the addition of all unbuilt schemes, including the proposed development, to the existing baseline (rather than the combined effect of all past, present, and future schemes against a 'bare landscape'). Both 'additional' and 'combined' cumulative effects may be relevant to consider, acknowledging that the assessor will not have assessed the other schemes and cannot therefore make a fully informed judgement on combined effects (as pointed out in paragraph 7.18 GLVIA3). Typically, a 'combined' cumulative assessment is only relevant where a decision-maker is likely to need to consider proposed developments together – for instance a conjoined appeal, or applications likely to be decided at the same planning committee session. In other situations, the 'additional' cumulative effects assessment will provide the information needed to understand the effects if another application has been recently consented. TGN 02/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) guidance provides guidance at paragraph 4.25 as to how cumulative effects should be considered within RVAA. . See also 7(1) and the IEMA (2020) guidance referred to 'Demystifying Cumulative Effects', Impact Assessment Outlook Journal Volume 7.

8. Presenting information on landscape and visual effects

A few queries have been raised about the presentation of information in an LVIA.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
8(1)	**Impartiality**	The issue of impartiality is very important in LVIA; LI members also operate under the LI's Code of Practice which requires assessors to exercise impartial and independent professional judgement. Care should be taken that the reporting within an LVIA reflects this duty. See also 1(4) and 2(5) above.
8(2)	**How should night-time effects be assessed and presented as part of LVIA?**	GLVIA3 mentions lighting in paragraph 6.12. Types of light pollution (obtrusive light) which can include sky glow, glare, light spill and light intrusion are explained in the Institute of Lighting Professionals' Guidance Note 01/21 'The Reduction of Obtrusive Light'. A night-time assessment should not be a routine requirement and will only be required where lighting will have a potential significant influence on landscape character and/ or visual amenity, as a result of the combination of the sensitivity of the receiving night-time environment and the nature of the proposed lighting. It should be noted that the perception of landscape character and special qualities at night may be different from the day, and assessment should focus on the characteristics and qualities which are readily perceived at night and thus are more susceptible to effects from lighting. Likewise, sensitivity of visual receptors may be different at night than during the day. Any night-time assessment will require the recording of night-time conditions for landscape and visual receptors (which may be informed by a lighting engineer's lighting assessment report baseline). Resources such as CPRE's England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies map and NRW's Wales Dark Skies map and information about dark sky reserves will also be useful to feed into the baseline reporting. Understanding of the baseline will enable the assessor to input to the lighting design (for example focusing light only where it is needed or reducing the effect of lighting on specific landscape or visual receptors). Useful guidance is provided in the ILP Guidance Note 01/21 for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light, CIE 150: 2017 Guide on the Limitation of the Effects of Obtrusive Light from Outdoor Lighting Installations and CIE 126: 1997 Guidelines for Minimizing Sky Glow. The assessment of the effects of lighting may draw on quantitative information from the lighting design –in the form of mapped illuminance values or as experience from viewpoints. The LVIA assessor will use this information to understand and articulate the effect of lighting. Terminology used should be consistent with the ILP Guidance Note 01/21 'The Reduction of Obtrusive Light'. NatureScot has provided guidance on assessing the effects of turbine lighting in Annex 1 of their 'General pre-application and scoping advice for onshore wind farms'. There has also been a request from members for guidance on night-time photography and visualisations. This would be separate guidance linked to TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals.

9. Questions on other related topics

This section addresses questions raised by Members which are on topics related to LVIA but do not fit into the tables above.

	Issue/ question	Advice/ clarification
9(1)	**Is an assessment of 'capacity' of the landscape required as part of LVIA?**	No. Capacity or sensitivity studies are undertaken at the strategic landscape planning level rather than the individual project proposal level (noting that there has been a general move away from capacity studies and towards sensitivity studies). GLVIA3 acknowledges that where there are existing landscape sensitivity and capacity studies 'they may provide useful preliminary background information for the assessment.' (paragraph 5.41). Caution should also be exercised in using capacity studies (and some sensitivity studies) as they may consider aspects of potential effects arising from development (e.g. upon nearby visual receptors) which are not relevant to landscape sensitivity.
9(2)	**Climate change: The most recent EIA regulations update requires specific consideration of climate change. How should climate change be considered as part of an LVIA?**	Climate change considerations are becoming a specialist area of EIA, to which the landscape assessor contributes with specific information about likely landscape change. IEMA has a number of resources including Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation (2020) and Guidance on Assessing GHG Emissions (2022). Within the LVIA, predicted changes to the landscape expected to result from climate change may be reported as part of the description of the future baseline.
9(3)	**How does GLVIA3 relate to the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) and which should be used when?**	The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) is a standard (not just guidance) relating to the design, assessment and operation of motorway and all-purpose trunk roads in the United Kingdom. **Part LA 107 Landscape and visual effects** contains the requirements for assessing and reporting the landscape and visual effects of highway projects. GLVIA3 should be used for all other project types.
9(4)	**How does LVIA relate to green belt and 'openness' issues?**	As stated in GLVIA3 paragraph 5.4, 'openness' may be one of the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape. Where this is the case, it would be documented and assessed as part of the LVIA. Green Belt is a planning policy designation and compliance with policy should be addressed separately to the LVIA.
9(5)	**Should soils be treated as a landscape receptor in LVIA?**	This currently goes beyond LVIA and to the heart of EIA more widely. Soil is dealt with as a separate topic in EIA, not part of LVIA. The Panel is liaising with IEMA about future changes in EIA and this topic will fit into those discussions (see EIA Guidance on Land and Soils, and this related article from IEMA's website).