



Preliminary Environmental Information Report Volume 2

Appendix 13.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

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13 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

13.1 Introduction

- 13.1.1 This appendix sets out in detail, the proposed approach and methodology for undertaking the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and the design of mitigation. A summary is provided within **Section 13.4 of Chapter 13 Landscape and Visual**.

13.2 Assessment methodology

- 13.2.1 Paragraph 5.10.16 of the National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (EN-1) (Ref 1) states that “*applicant should carry out a landscape and visual impact assessment and report it in the ES, including cumulative effects*”.
- 13.2.2 **Chapter 5 EIA Approach and Methodology** sets out the standard Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) methodology and significance matrix for the assessment of effects. The methodology for the LVIA has been developed on this basis, supported by reference to the best practice guidance set out in **Section 13.2 of Chapter 13 Landscape and Visual**.
- 13.2.3 The methodology for the LVIA was originally set out in the EIA Scoping Report. It has been developed further to set out how potential effects on the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape and its setting has been assessed, responding to consultation with the relevant authorities and the correspondence summarised in **Section 13.3 of Chapter 13 Landscape and Visual**.
- 13.2.4 The approach for assessing the likely landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Scheme has been based on the principles set out in Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) 3 (Ref 2) and other relevant guidance.

13.3 Assessment scenarios

- 13.3.1 The assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Scheme has been undertaken for the following scenarios:
- a. Current baseline (winter and summer) – reflective of the conditions which exist at the time of gathering baseline environmental data and undertaking the LVIA;
 - b. Future baseline (winter and summer) – reflective of the conditions that will be experienced in the future, immediately prior to construction of the Proposed Scheme;
 - c. Construction (winter) – reflective of the conditions that would be experienced during the whole period over which construction of the Proposed Scheme is

planned to take place. The Proposed Scheme is anticipated to be constructed over a four-year period. It is currently expected that construction would commence in 2028 if consent is achieved. However, this would be dependent on various elements including the Development Consent Order (DCO) programme and detailed design;

- d. Year 1 of operation (winter) – reflective of the conditions that would be experienced in the year when the Proposed Scheme becomes operational;
- e. Year 15 of operation (summer) – reflective of the conditions that would be experienced at a point 15 years after the year of opening of the Proposed Scheme; and
- f. Decommissioning – reflective of the timescales presented within **Chapter 2 Description of the Proposed Scheme**.

- 13.3.2 Construction of the Proposed Scheme would span winter and summer seasons. The assessment of Landscape and Visual effects of construction and decommissioning considers the whole period of these activities but assumes a winter scenario as this represents the likely worst case, where existing deciduous vegetation would not be in leaf.
- 13.3.3 The assessment of Landscape and Visual effects in winter in year 1 of operation represents the likely worst case scenario, where existing deciduous vegetation would not be in leaf and proposed planting would be low in height and not established. These effects are reported in **Section 13.8 of Chapter 13 Landscape and Visual**.
- 13.3.4 The residual effects of construction and decommissioning are those which would remain even after tertiary mitigation has been applied and which cannot be further mitigated by design or other measures. These effects are reported in **Section 13.10 of Chapter 13 Landscape and Visual**.
- 13.3.5 The residual effects of operation are those which would persist at year 15 of operation, assuming that proposed planting would have successfully established, and deciduous vegetation would be in leaf. It is assumed that these effects cannot be further mitigated by design or other measures during this period. These effects are reported in **Section 13.10 of Chapter 13 Landscape and Visual**.

13.4 Assessment of landscape effects

- 13.4.1 The assessment of landscape effects addresses the effects of the Proposed Scheme on the landscape as a resource in its own right. Judging landscape effects requires consideration of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of impact.

Landscape designations

- 13.4.2 The LVIA describes the impacts of the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Scheme which may affect the purposes of designation and the resulting effects in narrative terms. These effects are

summarised in **Section 13.8** of **Chapter 13 Landscape and Visual**. Landscape designations have also informed the value attached to the landscape of the Landscape Character Areas (LCA) and Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCA), which form the basis of the assessment of landscape effects. These considerations have been assessed separately to avoid double-counting effects.

- 13.4.3 The 'Proposed Scheme' falls partly within the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape and its setting. References to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) have been retained in **Chapter 13 Landscape and Visual**, this appendix and associated appendices where these relate to legal definitions, planning policy and the titles of published documents.
- 13.4.4 In accordance with point 5(12) of the Landscape Institute's Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of GLVIA3 (Ref 3), effects on designated landscapes have been treated as a landscape receptor. The LVIA reports on *"how the special qualities (i.e. the components of natural beauty) and/or purposes of designation (if they relate to additional or different factors other than natural beauty) of a designated landscape would be affected."*
- 13.4.5 In the absence of specific guidance for England, the approach has been informed by the NatureScot Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (Ref 4). This promotes a four-stage approach, which is summarised below:
- Step 1: Describe the designation and the aspects of the Proposed Scheme which could affect the Special Qualities of the national designated area.
 - Step 2: Define the study area and special qualities likely to be affected. This has been informed by the landscape character baseline, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping and representative viewpoints identified within the designated area.
 - Step 3: Assess the likely impacts on each of the relevant special qualities and the integrity and setting of the designated area.
 - Step 4: Summarise the effects on the special qualities, integrity and setting of the designated area in a Statement of Significance highlighting any opportunities for further mitigation or enhancement.
- 13.4.6 This methodology advocates a narrative approach, rather than numerical scores or tables. It recognises that the high sensitivity of the designated landscape resource is inherent, irrespective of numbers of receptors. This accords with the approach to assessment of sensitivity in GLVIA3 (Ref 2) where nationally designated landscapes typically have high value and are highly susceptible to changes in landscape. Detailed assessments have been carried out for the National Landscape designation using the pro forma in Annex I of the NatureScot guidance.
- 13.4.7 As noted in the Landscape Institute (LI) technical guidance note (TGN) 01/24 (Ref 3), the geographical extent of the setting of the nationally designated landscapes are not defined in policy or on maps. The setting is not a designation (or a receptor) in its own right and will vary with the nature of the development

proposed. For these reasons, the setting does not have a fixed or definitive boundary. It can be influenced by a range of factors, such as where there is intervisibility, where the character is complementary or where there are cultural and functional connections between the designated area and the wider landscape. Therefore, the assessment refers to which and to what extent the Applicant considers the landscape character areas which form the basis of the assessment contribute to the setting of the designated area.

- 13.4.8 Non-statutory Special Landscape Areas (SLA) were originally designated in the Suffolk County Plan in the 1980s, outlined in the 2001 Structure Plan Policy (Policy ENV 8) and subsequently adopted in Local Plans for the former Suffolk Coastal District. They are not defined within the Adopted Local Plan for East Suffolk. The conclusions of the Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 5) note that “*rather than categorically determining the extent of a type of special landscape character, this piece of evidence values the whole landscape*”. This approach is consistent with Natural England’s An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6). Therefore, this LVIA has not considered the former SLA designations further, but includes an assessment of the value attached to the landscape with reference current best practice

Landscape baseline

- 13.4.9 Landscape is defined by the European Landscape Convention as “*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*” (Ref 7).
- 13.4.10 Natural England’s “An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment” (Ref 6) provides some useful context to the European Landscape Convention. It sets out the following five principles which apply to landscape character assessment:
- a. Landscape is everywhere and all landscape has character;
 - b. Landscape occurs at all scales and the process of Landscape Character Assessment can be undertaken at any scale;
 - c. The process of Landscape Character Assessment should involve an understanding of how the landscape is perceived and experienced by people;
 - d. A Landscape Character Assessment can provide a landscape evidence base to inform a range of decisions and applications; and
 - e. A Landscape Character Assessment can provide an integrating spatial framework - a multitude of variables come together to give us distinctive landscapes.
- 13.4.11 Landscape receptors are defined in GLVIA3 (Ref 2) as “*aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal*”. Landscape receptors have been identified via a review of published landscape character assessments, maps and aerial photography, relevant planning policy and fieldwork surveys. A baseline description has then provided for each of the identified landscape receptors.

- 13.4.12 Existing landscape features that could be subject to change have been described in their own right with reference to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and hedgerow surveys, in accordance with point 5(2) of LI TGN 01/24 (Ref 3).
- 13.4.13 Landscape character is defined by GLVIA3 (Ref 2) as *“a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.”* Landscape character assessment is defined within the glossary of GLVIA3 as the *“process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape, and using this information to assist in managing change in the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive.”* (Ref 2).
- 13.4.14 Point 5(1) of LI TGN 01/24 (Ref 3) states that *“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”* and that *“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.”*
- 13.4.15 Published landscape character assessments at the national, regional and local level have been reviewed to identify Landscape Character Types (LCT) and LCAs. Paragraph 5.13 of GLVIA3 (Ref 2) states that *“existing assessments must be reviewed critically as their quality may vary, some may be dated and some may not be suited to the task in hand”* and that *“before deciding to rely on information from an existing assessment a judgement should be made as to the degree to which it will be useful in informing the LVIA process.”*
- 13.4.16 The key characteristics of published LCAs are set out in **Appendix 13.2 Landscape Baseline and Effects**, to provide a clear audit trail back to the original studies. This information has then been critically reviewed to inform the LLCAs defined by the Applicant, as described in more detail below. Natural England’s ‘An approach to Landscape Character Assessment’ (Ref 6) notes the use and purpose of key characteristics, stating:

“Key characteristics are those combinations of elements which help give an area its distinctive sense of place. If these characteristics change, or are lost, there will be significant consequences for the current character of the landscape. Key characteristics are particularly important in the development of planning and management policies. They are important for monitoring change and can provide a useful reference point against which landscape change can be assessed. They can be used as indicators to inform thinking about whether and how the landscape is changing and whether, or not, particular policies – for example – are effective and having the desired effect on landscape character.”
- 13.4.17 A review of the existing landscape baseline has been undertaken and has defined 21 LLCA. These LLCA provide more detail to the landscape baseline around the

proposed Landfall, proposed Converter Station and the proposed Kiln Lane Substation, where residual significant effects are more likely. This has allowed an assessment at scales from national to local, to draw distinctions between localised and wider ranging effects.

Tranquillity

- 13.4.18 Tranquillity is a perceptual aspect of landscape which can also contribute to its value. GLVIA3 (Ref 2) defines tranquillity as “*a state of calm and quietude associated with peace, considered to be a significant asset of landscape*”.
- 13.4.19 LI Technical Information Note 01/17 (Ref 8) explains the difficulties in reaching a firm definition for tranquillity. In paragraph 2.10 it states that it is, “*in effect, an umbrella term used to refer to the effect of a range of environmental factors on our senses and our perception of a place*”. Paragraph 2.11 goes on to state that “*a distinction is made between absolute tranquillity and relative tranquillity. When we refer to tranquillity in the UK, it is therefore almost always relative tranquillity that we are referring to, but in differing degrees*”. It goes on to explain that the commonality is the achievable state of mind rather than the environmental setting.
- 13.4.20 Tranquillity has been assessed with reference to published studies and fieldwork. The relative tranquillity across the study area, as mapped by CPRE: The Countryside Charity, which has published a tranquillity map of England (Ref 9) will be provided as a figure in the ES. These composite maps take account of a range of positive factors, as set out in **Table 13.1**, and negative factors, as set out in **Table 13.2** which influence relative tranquillity. The weight given to these factors in calculating the relative tranquillity of different areas is provided. The map is based on a spectrum of more or less tranquil areas, such that the scores illustrated are relative and do not identify absolute tranquillity.

Table 13.1: CPRE positive factors which influence relative tranquillity

Positive factors	Weight
Openness of the landscape	24%
Perceived naturalness of the landscape	30%
Rivers in the landscape	21%
Areas of low noise	20%
Visibility of the sea	6%
Positive scores as a percentage of the overall scores	44%

Table 13.2: CPRE negative factors which influence relative tranquility

Positive factors	Weight
Presence of other people	60%
Visibility of roads	12%
General signs of overt human impact	10%
Visibility of urban development	8%
Road, train and urban area noise	7%
Night-time light pollution	3%
Aircraft noise	1.5%
Military training noise	Less than 1%
Negative scores as a percentage of the overall scores	56%

- 13.4.21 This information has informed the value attached to the landscape described in **Appendix 13.2 Landscape Baseline and Effects**. It has been supplemented with more detailed notes captured during fieldwork.

Night time baseline

- 13.4.22 The night time baseline is described with reference to England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies map (Ref 9) published by CPRE: The Countryside Charity; the applicable section will be reproduced as a figure as part of the ES. These maps are based on data gathered by a weather satellite. The data is split into nine categories (see **Table 13.3**) to distinguish between different light levels and the maps are divided into pixels, 400 metres (m) x 400m, to show the amount of light shining up into the night sky from that area measured in nanowatts.

Table 13.3: England's light pollution and dark skies map - categories brightness

Categories	Brightness values in nanowatts/cm ² /steradian (nw/cm ² /sr)
Colour band 1 (darkest)	Less than 0.25
Colour band 2	0.25 – 0.5
Colour band 3	0.5 - 1
Colour band 4	1 - 2
Colour band 5	2 - 4
Colour band 6	4 - 8
Colour band 7	8 - 16
Colour band 8	16 - 32
Colour band 9	More than 32

- 13.4.23 Reference has also been made to the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note 1 for the reduction of obtrusive light (Ref 11). This guidance defines three types of light pollution:
- skyglow;
 - glare; and
 - light intrusion.
- 13.4.24 Table 2 of the guidance, reproduced in **Table 13.4**, establishes criteria for environmental zones. A measured lighting survey is not considered proportionate to the likely effects and therefore these criteria have been applied to each LCA to help describe the relative darkness of different areas in the baseline.

Table 13.4: Criteria for environmental zones

Zone	Surrounding	Lighting environment	Examples
E0	Protected	Dark (SQM 20.5+)	Astronomical Observable dark skies, UNESCO starlight reserves, IDA dark sky places
E1	Natural	Dark (SQM 20 to 20.5)	Relatively uninhabited rural areas, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, IDA buffer zones, among others.
E2	Rural	Low district brightness (SQM ~15 to 20)	Sparsely inhabited rural areas, village or relatively dark outer suburban locations
E3	Suburban	Medium district brightness	Well inhabited rural and urban settlements, small town centres of suburban locations
E4	Urban	High district brightness	Town/City centres with high levels of night time activity

- 13.4.25 This advice is consistent with the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Coast and Heaths National Landscape lighting design guide (Ref 12).

Sensitivity of landscape receptors

- 13.4.26 Paragraph 5.39 of GLVIA3 (Ref 2) states that “*landscape receptors need to be assessed firstly in terms of their sensitivity, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape*”.
- 13.4.27 Paragraph 5.39 of GLVIA3 (Ref 2) states that “*landscape receptors need to be assessed firstly in terms of their sensitivity, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape*”.
- 13.4.28 Judging landscape sensitivity is thus a two-part process of:

- d. Value attached to the landscape – relates to the existing landscape and this has been determined at the baseline stage in line with paragraph 5.19 of GLVIA3 (Ref 2), which states that “as part of the baseline description the value of the potentially affected landscape should be established”; and
- a. Susceptibility to change – which has been considered in relation to the Proposed Scheme.

Value attached to the landscape

- 13.4.29 LI TGN 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations (Ref 13) defines landscape value as “the relative value or importance attached to different landscapes by society on account of their landscape qualities”.
- 13.4.30 For assessing landscape value outside national designations, TGN 02/21 (Ref 13) is now the primary source of guidance. The approach to assessing the value attached to the landscape has followed a three-stage process:
- a. Stage 1: identify if the landscape is covered by any landscape designations;
 - b. Stage 2: consider each of the factors listed in **Table 13.5**, which have been developed with reference to Table 1 of TGN 02/21 (Ref 13) and are pertinent and most important to understanding its value; and
 - c. Stage 3: make an assessment the value attached to the landscape and assign value based on a five-point scale, clearly articulating the reasons for these judgements.
- 13.4.31 An overall conclusion is drawn on the value attached to the landscape for each landscape receptor considering the overall weight of evidence.

Table 13.5: Establishing the value attached to the landscape

Stage 1 – Landscape designations	Stage 2 – Value factors	Stage 3 - Criteria	Typical description
Landscape with statutory status or national policy protection: National Park, National Landscape, or World Heritage Site.	Natural heritage - Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape.	Very high	A designated landscape with statutory status (National Park or National Landscapes). Valued landscape in the context of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ref 14) paragraph 187 (a)
	Cultural heritage - Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape.	High	A locally designated landscape supported by detailed evidence base or with other strong indicators of value, which may include other relevant designations such as ancient woodland or conservation areas, with identified quality in the
	Landscape condition - Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual		

Stage 1 – Landscape designations	Stage 2 – Value factors	Stage 3 - Criteria	Typical description
Local landscape designation, such as Special Landscape Area or Area of Great Landscape Value, supported by policy and a detailed evidence base.	elements and overall landscape structure.		development plan or evidence base. May be considered valued landscape in the context of NPPF (Ref 14) paragraph 180(a) with strong supporting evidence.
	Associations - Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts.	Medium	Unlikely to be a designated for landscape quality but may exhibit some indicators of value which are identified in the development plan or evidence base and are important at the community level.
	Distinctiveness - Landscape that has a strong sense of identity.		
	Recreational - Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important.	Low	Not designated for landscape quality and likely to exhibit few indicators of value which are identified in the development plan or evidence base.
No relevant designations.	Perceptual (Scenic) - Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense.	Very low	A landscape dominated by industry or infrastructure or which is damaged or degraded landscape, not designated for landscape quality and not likely to exhibit indicators of value which are identified in the development plan or evidence base.
	Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity) - Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies		
	Functional - Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.		

Valued landscape

- 13.4.32 The principle of 'valued landscape' in England is supported by the NPPF (Ref 14) (Chapter 15). Paragraph 187 requires that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, inter alia, (a) *"protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)"*. Paragraph 5.10.12 of NPS EN-1 (Ref 1) acknowledges that *"outside nationally designated areas, there are local landscapes that may be highly valued locally."* It stresses that particular attention should be paid to policies in local development documents on landscape or waterscape character assessment but that *"locally valued landscapes should not be used in themselves to refuse consent, as this may unduly restrict acceptable development."*

- 13.4.33 According to paragraph A4.2.11 of TGN 02/21 (Ref 13), a ‘valued landscape’ is an area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes. There is therefore a high bar for an area to be considered valued landscape in the context of the NPPF (Ref 14).
- 13.4.34 Paragraph A4.2.5 of TGN 02/21 (Ref 13) states that, “*where a landscape has a statutory status, such as a National Park or AONB, it is self-evident that it is a valued landscape*”.
- 13.4.35 The LVIA has applied a different approach to determine whether landscapes outside of nationally designated landscapes can be considered valued landscape in the context of the NPPF (Ref 14). Paragraph A4.2.6 of TGN 02/21 (Ref 13) states that the interpretation of ‘identified quality in the development plan’ is not clear and that there are two fundamentally different interpretations that have been adopted by inspectors, which are considered below in more detail:
- a. It means non-statutory, locally designated landscapes; and
 - b. It means any landscape where there is evidence to justify the identification of a ‘valued landscape’. Local designation alone may not be sufficient evidence.
- 13.4.36 As noted in NPS EN-1 (Ref 1), for a landscape without statutory status to be considered valued landscape in the context of the NPPF (Ref 14) it must be supported by strong evidence. The LVIA has therefore considered each of the criteria set out in **Table 13.5**, references in Local Plan policy and evidence base, including whether there are existing local landscape designations, in forming an overall judgement on value. Landscapes with high value may also be considered valued landscapes in the context of the NPPF (Ref 14).

Susceptibility of landscape receptors to change

- 13.4.37 GLVIA3 (Ref 2) paragraph 5.40 defines the susceptibility to change of landscape receptors as:
- “the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be overall character or condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or features, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the Proposed Development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies”* (paragraph 5.40).
- 13.4.38 The features and characteristics which are more or less susceptible to the type of changes proposed have been set out for each LCA. The narrative provides a clear explanation based upon analysis of the landscape receptor and the extent to which it is able to accommodate the type of change arising from the specific proposal.
- 13.4.39 **Table 13.6** sets out examples of characteristics and features of landscapes which may indicate higher and lower susceptibility in respect of solar farm development.

Table 13.6: Considerations for landscape susceptibility

Landscape features or characteristics	Indicators of higher landscape susceptibility	Indicators of lower landscape susceptibility
Field pattern, scale and enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale fields. • Complex or irregular field pattern. • Ancient field patterns and boundaries. • Field boundaries formed by low fences or walls or hedges with few hedgerow trees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale fields. • Simple, regular or rectilinear field pattern. • Uniform field pattern. • High field boundaries.
Landform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steep topography. • Exposed hillsides. • Irregular or complex landform. • Narrow valleys and ridges. • Distinctive landform features. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat landscapes. • Expansive lowland landscapes. • Uniform landform. • Landscapes with no or minimal distinctive landform features.
Land cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaches and inter-tidal foreshore between the high and low tide marks • Coastal marshes, including reedbed and brackish waterbodies • Heathland habitats on sandy soils • Pastures, particularly where grazing forms key characteristic of the landscape. • Native broadleaved woodland or woodland within heathland areas. • Parkland or designed landscapes. • Natural or semi-natural land cover, particularly where conservation or restoration is a priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large-scale arable fields, particularly monoculture or with evidence of intensive farming practices.
Tranquillity/human influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seaside towns and villages and their setting, which are important to local tourism • Absence of human influences or natural landscapes. • Rural character with infrequent built form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major infrastructure (transport, utilities, industry). • Large concentrations of residential, commercial, industrial development.

Landscape features or characteristics	Indicators of higher landscape susceptibility	Indicators of lower landscape susceptibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote, tranquil, spiritual or peaceful landscape. • Sense of wildness. 	
Condition /intactness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intact landscapes with natural or historic features in good condition. • Fragments of rare habitat which are difficult to replace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degraded landscapes, likely to have evidence of human influences or modern intensive farming practices. • Intermittent boundaries.
Historic features and cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient or historic field patterns. • Important, distinctive or remnant features of the landscape. • Cultural associations with a particular landscape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern landscape with limited historic features.
Scenic quality and character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High scenic quality. • Strong sense of place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low scenic quality. • Weak sense of place.
Intervisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open landscapes with exposed or far-reaching views. • Sparse woodland and vegetative cover. • Field systems defined by low or permeable boundaries. • Strong intervisibility with sensitive landscapes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enclosed landscape • Limited invisibility with sensitive landscapes, key views, or landmarks. • Intact, overgrown or tall vegetated boundaries with high proportion of hedgerow trees. • High proportion of woodland blocks, copses, connected woodlands and belts.

13.4.40 The susceptibility to change for each landscape receptor has been categorised with reference to the criteria in **Table 13.7**.

Table 13.7: Landscape susceptibility criteria

Landscape susceptibility	Typical description
Very high	The type of change arising from the specific proposal are very likely to lead to undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
High	The type of change arising from the specific proposal are likely to lead to undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Medium	The type of change arising from the specific proposal may lead to undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline

Landscape susceptibility	Typical description
	situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Low	The type of change arising from the specific proposal are unlikely to lead to undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Very low	The type of change arising from the specific proposal are very unlikely to lead to undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

Combining judgements to define sensitivity

- 13.4.41 The sensitivity of each LCA has been defined by combining professional judgements on the value attached to the landscape and its susceptibility to change and is supported by a clear narrative. Reference has been made to the criteria set out in **Table 13.8** below.

Table 13.8: Sensitivity of landscape receptors criteria

Landscape sensitivity	Typical description
Very high	Landscapes with statutory status or national policy protection with very limited ability to accommodate the type of change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
High	Landscapes which may be locally designated or otherwise supported by a detailed evidence base or landscape with other strong indicators of value with limited ability to accommodate the type of change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Medium	Landscapes which are unlikely to be a designated for landscape quality but may exhibit some indicators of value and which may have some ability to accommodate the type of change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Low	Not designated for landscape quality and likely to exhibit few indicators of value and likely to accommodate the type of change no or limited undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Very low	Landscapes of very low value able to accommodate the type of change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the

Landscape sensitivity	Typical description
	baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

Assigning magnitude of landscape impacts

- 13.4.42
- In summarising the magnitude of landscape impacts, reference has been made to the following:
- a.

Size or scale - the degree to which key characteristics or features identified in the baseline would change judgements on size or scale of change depend on the extent of existing landscape elements that would be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape. It is also influenced by the degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered through removal or addition of components such as solar panels, buildings, roads, paths and vegetation; and whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape which are critical to its distinctive character;
- b.

Geographical extent – the area over which the change would occur. For example, whether the effects of the Proposed Scheme are perceived over a large or very localised area;
- c.

Duration – the time over which the change would occur, set out on the following scale: short term (0 -5 years), medium term (5 -15 years), or long term (over 15 years); and
- d.

Reversibility - related to whether the change can be reversed and is reported as reversible, partially reversible or permanent, e.g. effects arising from presence of construction traffic will cease at the end of construction and therefore is considered to be reversible, whereas effects arising from presence of new built development could be partially reversible or permanent.
- 13.4.43
- The Landscape Institute clarified the guidance on the weighting of the components of magnitude of impact in LI TGN-2024-01 (Ref 3). This states in 3(3) that “for magnitude of effect [defined as magnitude of impact in this LVIA], it is likely that the size/scale of effect will be the most important factor, with geographical extent and duration/reversibility considered as ‘modifiers’.” Therefore, the size and scale of likely impacts has been considered first in this assessment in drawing conclusions on the likely magnitude of impact.
- 13.4.44
- The criteria set out in **Table 13.9** has been referred to in determining the magnitude of landscape impacts.

Table 13.9: Sensitivity of landscape receptors criteria

Landscape susceptibility	Typical description
Very high	Substantial changes to key characteristics across most of the area or to unique and distinctive features at a local level. May be longer term impacts, permanent or reversible.

Landscape susceptibility	Typical description
High	Changes to the character of the landscape across large parts of the area or to distinctive features at a local level. May be longer term impacts, permanent or reversible
Medium	Changes to the character of the landscape across parts of the area or to some existing features at a local level. May be medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Low	Slight change to landscape character or landscape features across a small area. May be short to medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Very low	Barely perceptible change to the landscape receptor or may impact a limited area or no key characteristics. May be short term impacts, permanent or reversible.

- 13.4.45 There may be cases where there will be no impacts on a receptor, for example where the design has been changed to avoid such impacts. In such cases this is recorded as no change.

13.5 Assessment of visual effects

- 13.5.1 The assessment of visual effects considers the likely changes that the Proposed Scheme would cause to the views available to people and their visual amenity. Judging visual effects requires consideration of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the impact. The criteria against which judgements have been made are provided below.
- 13.5.2 Visual receptors have been identified with reference to the ZTVs which will be presented as part of the ES. A ZTV is a computer-generated image which analyses the relationship between the existing topography and the maximum parameters of the Proposed Scheme to map the theoretical extent of views. In line with GLVIA3 (Ref 2), 'bare earth' ZTVs do not take account of potential screening by vegetation or buildings and have been constructed using multiple-point analysis. All ZTVs have assumed an observer height of 1.6 m above ground level, based on the midpoint of average heights for men and women. ZTVs do not take account of the acuity of the eye, which is the ability to resolve details in the distance. This is addressed in the definition of the study area and selection of representative viewpoints, refined through desk study and fieldwork.
- 13.5.3 Paragraph 6.10 of GLVIA3 (Ref 2) states that *"other landscape components that may affect visibility, for example buildings, walls, fences, trees, hedgerows, woodland and banks, can in theory be added to digital models that are based on terrain but this is difficult to achieve accurately, especially for a large study area."* The height of surface features can now be modelled from modern mapping data. The ZTVs with screening include building heights and woodland derived and calculated from the Environment Agency (EA) digital surface map (DSM) data. These ZTVs have helped to further refine the study area and target fieldwork,

which has recorded the location, size and extent, and their effect in screening visibility at key points.

Assigning visual receptor sensitivity

- 13.5.4
- Paragraph 6.31 of GLVIA3 (Ref 2) states that “each visual receptor, meaning the particular person or group of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint, should be assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views.” The sensitivity of visual receptors results from a combination of parameters, such as:
 - a. The activity/occupation/pastime of the receptors at particular locations;
 - b. The extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on the views; and
 - c. The visual amenity they experience.
- 13.5.5
- Consideration has also been given to the:
 - a. location, focus and orientation;
 - b. features or characteristics of value within the view;
 - c. principal or secondary interests;
 - d. static or kinetic nature of views; and
 - e. duration of the view.

Value attached to views

- 13.5.6
- A three-stage process has been used to determine the value attached to views. This relates to the features and characteristics of the baseline landscape within the view and other indicators of value, for example reference in policy, guide books, literature or art.
 - a. Stage 1: identify if the view or the landscape within the view is covered by any relevant policy or designations and note features and characteristics of value with reference to the landscape baseline;
 - b. Stage 2: identify if the view is identified on maps, is likely to be from a popular visitor location or has historical or cultural importance or associations; and
 - c. Stage 3: Determine the value attached to the view with reference to the criteria provided in **Table 13.10** using the evidence from Stages 1 and 2.

Table 13.10: Value attached to views criteria

Landscape susceptibility	Typical description
Very high	Views within or across a nationally or internationally designated landscapes and/or specific views designated in national or regional policy. Views are likely to have few or no detracting features and which may also have strong cultural associations supported by evidence, which could include links to historical events or people, representation in art or literature, for example.
High	Views within or across regionally or locally designated landscapes, other or landscapes with strong indicators of value,

Landscape susceptibility	Typical description
	or views identified in the development plan or evidence base. Views are likely to have few or no detracting features and may also have some cultural associations supported by strong evidence.
Medium	Views across landscapes which are unlikely to be designated but may exhibit some indicators of value which are identified in the development plan or evidence base and are important at the community level. Views may have some detracting features and cultural associations supported by evidence.
Low	Views across landscapes which are not designated for landscape quality and likely to exhibit few indicators of value which are identified in the development plan or evidence base. Views are likely to have some detracting features and lack cultural associations supported by evidence.
Very low	View across landscapes which are neither designated, nor identified in the development plan or evidence base, and without cultural associations. The landscape in the view is in poor condition or notably detracts from the experience of the view.

Susceptibility of visual receptors to change

- 13.5.7 The sensitivity of visual receptors is also dependent upon their susceptibility to changes in views and the visual amenity they experience.
- 13.5.8 Paragraph 6.32 of GLVIA3 (Ref 2) explains that “*the susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:*
- The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and*
 - The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.”*
- 13.5.9 GLVIA3 (Ref 2) notes that visual receptors “*most susceptible to change*”, include residents and visitors engaged in outdoor recreation “*whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views*” (para 6.33). Residential visual amenity is addressed in **Section 13.5.19** below.
- 13.5.10 **Table 13.11** sets out the criteria that have been referred to in determining the susceptibility of visual receptors to the Proposed Scheme.

Table 13.11: Susceptibility of visual receptors criteria

Landscape susceptibility	Typical description
Very high	Visitors to nationally or internationally designated landscapes, particularly at specific viewpoints or viewing places, where views of the landscape are fundamental to the experience. People engaged in specific activities for enjoyment of dark skies.

Landscape susceptibility	Typical description
High	Residents of local communities Visitors to tourist hotspots, heritage assets or other attractions outside of nationally or internationally designated landscapes, particularly at specific viewpoints or viewing places, where views of the landscape are important to the experience. People engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views, for example those using promoted walking and cycling routes. People travelling along promoted scenic routes.
Medium	People engaged in outdoor recreation or travelling along public rights of way or local roads, which are not promoted routes but where an appreciation of the surrounding landscape are relevant to the experience. People working outdoors.
Low	People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape. People travelling on major road, rail or other transport routes which are not recognised as scenic routes.
Very low	People working indoors.

Summarising the sensitivity of visual receptors

- 13.5.11 The sensitivity of visual receptors is based on professional judgement and has been informed by the criteria in **Table 13.12**, considering the value attached to views and susceptibility of visual receptors to the changes proposed.

Table 13.12: Susceptibility of visual receptors criteria

Landscape susceptibility	Typical description
Very high	Activity where views are fundamental to the experience and are related to landscapes with national or international designation and with few or no detracting features and which may also have strong cultural associations supported by evidence.
High	Activity resulting in a particular interest or appreciation of the view and/or views within or across regionally or locally designated landscapes, other or landscapes with strong indicators of value, or views identified in the development plan or evidence base with few or no detracting features and may also have some cultural associations supported by strong evidence.
Medium	Activity resulting in a general interest or appreciation of the and/or a view, likely to exhibit some indicators of value which are identified in the development plan or evidence base and are important at the community level.
Low	Activity where interest or appreciation of the view is secondary to the activity or the period of exposure to the view is limited, and/or views across landscapes which are not designated for landscape

Landscape susceptibility	Typical description
	quality and likely to exhibit few indicators of value and likely to have some detracting features and lack cultural associations supported by evidence.
Very low	Activity where interest or appreciation of the view is inconsequential to their activity, and/or across landscapes which are neither designated, nor recognised in policy, and without cultural associations or is in poor condition or notably detracts from the experience of the view.

Assigning magnitude of visual impacts

- 13.5.12
- The magnitude of visual impacts relates to the extent to which the baseline view would change as a result of the Proposed Scheme. This assessment has been made with reference to fieldwork observations, photographs and photomontages where relevant from the representative viewpoints identified.
- 13.5.13
- Paragraph 3.28 of GLVIA3 (Ref 2) notes that magnitude is informed by combining considerations relating to the “*scale, extent and duration*” of impacts. This includes the geographical extent of influence, the spatial extent of the impact, the level of integration of new features with existing elements, its duration and degree to which the impact is reversible. Point 3(3) of LI TGN-2024-01 (Ref 3) clarifies that for the magnitude of impact, “it is likely that the size/scale of effect will be the most important factor, with *geographical extent and duration/reversibility considered as ‘modifiers’*.”
- 13.5.14
- Reference has been made to the following in summarising the magnitude of visual impacts:

a.

Size and scale – loss of existing features or addition and integration of new features and the time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpsed;

b.

Geographical extent – the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor, the distance of the viewpoint from the Proposed Scheme and the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible; and

c.

Duration and reversibility – the time over which the change would occur, set out on the following scale: short term (0 - 5 years), medium term (5 - 15 years), or long term (over 15 years).

Combining judgements to define magnitude of visual impact

- 13.5.15
- The magnitude of impact has been defined by combining judgements on size or scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility, with reference to **Table 13.13**, based on guidance from GLVIA3 (Ref 2).

Table 13.13: Magnitude of visual impacts criteria

Landscape susceptibility	Typical description
Very high	The Proposed Scheme will result in extensive changes to the character and composition and will become the dominant feature of the landscape within the view. There may be longer term impacts, permanent or reversible.
High	The Proposed Scheme will change the character and composition of large parts of the landscape within the view. There may be longer term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Medium	The Proposed Scheme will change the character and composition of discrete parts of the landscape within the view. There may be medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Low	The Proposed Scheme will cause small changes to the character and composition of the landscape within the view. There may be short to medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Very low	The Proposed Scheme will cause barely perceptible changes in the character and composition of the landscape within view. May be short term impacts, permanent or reversible.

13.5.16 There may be cases where there will be no impacts on a receptor, for example where the design has been changed to avoid such impacts. In such cases this has been recorded as no change.

Residential visual amenity

- 13.5.17 The Landscape Institute published Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) (LITGN-2024-01) (Ref 3) in August 2024. This confirmed that “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.” It goes on to state that “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”. Views of communities and groups of properties, or in some cases individual properties, have been considered within the LVIA with reference to publicly accessible, representative viewpoints.
- 13.5.18 Paragraph 5.10.22 of NPS EN-1 (Ref 1) states that “the assessment should also address the landscape and visual effects of noise and light pollution, and other emissions (see Section 5.2 and Section 5.7), from construction and operational activities on residential amenity and on sensitive locations, receptors and views, how these will be minimised.”
- 13.5.19 With respect to private views, LITGN-2024-01 (Ref 3) states that “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)". Paragraph 2.1 of TGN 02/2019 (Ref 15) explains that the purpose of RVAA is to "provide an informed, well-reasoned answer to the question: 'is the effect of the development on Residential Visual Amenity of such nature and/or magnitude that it potentially affects 'living conditions' or 'Residential Amenity'?'", which is referred to as the 'Residential Visual Amenity Threshold'. It explains in paragraph 2.5 that RVAA may be appropriate for "properties in (relatively) close proximity to a development proposal, and which experience a high magnitude of visual change". RVAA is a four-step process, with the first three steps being consistent with the methodology set out for the LVIA. The fourth step of RVAA would be carried out "only for those properties where the largest magnitude of effect has been identified", after mitigation has been applied (i.e. residual effects at year 15 of operation).

- 13.5.20 The design of the Proposed Scheme has sought to avoid significant adverse residual effects on residents through the application of the Design Principles. This includes providing a minimum 50 m offset from the façades of residential properties to avoid situations where the living conditions of properties could be affected.
- 13.5.21 The LVIA has not identified the likelihood of significant adverse effects at Year 15 of operation on local communities. As such the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold has not been reached and therefore a RVAA has not been carried out.

13.6 Significance criteria

- 13.6.1 The approach to determining the level of landscape effects and visual effects and whether these effects are considered significant in EIA terms is the same.
- 13.6.2 Judgements on the sensitivity of each receptor and the magnitude of impact have been combined to establish the level of effect and whether effects are considered significant in EIA terms. There are important distinctions between these two terms:
- a. Level of effect relates to the level recorded for any effect, with reference to the matrix set out in **Table 13.14** below; and
 - b. An effect is considered significant in EIA terms if it is major or moderate. All other effects have been categorised as not significant.
- 13.6.3 **Table 13.14** has been used to guide judgements on the relationship between the sensitivity of a visual receptor, the magnitude of impact, and the resulting level and significance of effect. Where there are two categories, a judgement has been made and this is supported by a clear narrative to justify the choice. Where conclusions differ from this guide, a reasoned explanation is provided in the assessment text.

Table 13.14: Significance of landscape and visual effects matrix

Magnitude of impact						
		Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low
Sensitivity	Very high	Major	Major	Major or moderate	Moderate	Moderate or minor
	High	Major	Major or moderate	Moderate	Moderate or minor	Minor
	Medium	Major or moderate	Moderate	Moderate or minor	Minor	Minor or negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate or minor	Minor	Minor or negligible	Negligible
	Very low	Moderate or minor	Minor	Minor or negligible	Negligible	Negligible

- 13.6.4 The identification of the likely significant effects on landscape and visual receptors relies on detailed analysis and the professional judgement of competent experts, and consultation with stakeholders.
- 13.6.5 There may be cases where there is a balance between adverse and beneficial effects. In such cases, these have been recorded as neutral effects. Whether effects are adverse, beneficial or neutral has been determined by considering the way in which the changes are likely to affect the baseline.
- 13.6.6 Adverse effects are likely to occur where the Proposed Scheme introduces new elements or changes which are discordant or intrusive resulting in a deterioration to existing character or valued features of the landscape or of views and visual amenity.
- 13.6.7 Beneficial effects are likely to occur where the Proposed Scheme enhances the character of the landscape or existing views.
- 13.6.8 Paragraphs 5.37 and 6.29 of GLVIA3 (Ref 2) state that it is possible for effects to be neutral in their consequences for landscape and for visual receptors. Where a judgement of neutral effects has been reached, reference has been made to the contribution of the Proposed Scheme to the baseline and acknowledging the positive and negative aspects which have been considered.
- 13.6.9 Where the assessment has concluded that there will be no change on a receptor, this has been reported as no effect. This may, for example, be a consequence of changes to the design which has avoided impacts on receptors identified at the scoping stage.
- 13.6.10 Residual effects are those which remain even with embedded or primary mitigation at construction and year 15 of operation and which cannot be further mitigated by design or other measures in this time period.

Topic Glossary

Acronym/ Phrase/ Abbreviation	Definition
AIA	Arboricultural Impact Assessment
AONB	Areas of Outstanding of Natural Beauty
CPRE	The Countryside Charity
DCO	Development Consent Order
DSM	Digital Surface Map
EA	Environment Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GLVIA	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
LCA	Landscape Character Area
LCT	Landscape Character Types
LI	Landscape Institute
LLCA	Local Landscape Character Area
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
m	Metres
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPS	National Policy Statement
SLA	Special Landscape Areas
TGN	Technical Guidance Note
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

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National Grid LionLink Limited

Company number 14722364

1-3 Strand

London

WG2N-5EH

United Kingdom

nationalgrid.com/lionlink

