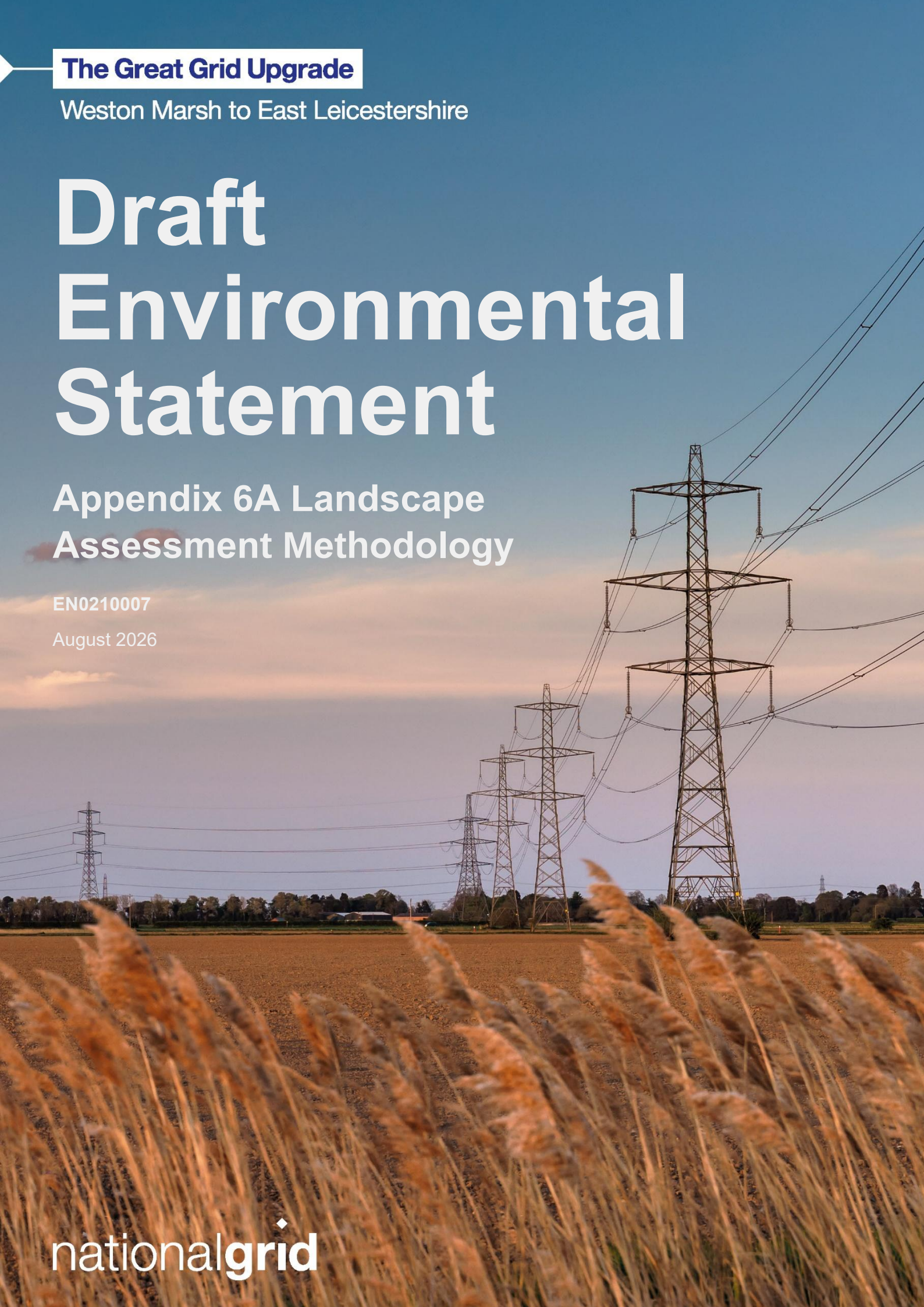




The Great Grid Upgrade

Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire

Draft Environmental Statement

Appendix 6A Landscape Assessment Methodology

EN0210007

August 2026

nationalgrid

Contents

6A.	Landscape Assessment Methodology	6A-1
6A.1	Introduction	6A-1
6A.2	Technical Scope	6A-1
6A.3	Temporal Scope	6A-2
6A.4	Study Area	6A-2
6A.5	Assessment Process	6A-3
6A.6	Method of Assessment	6A-3
	Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors	6A-4
	Landscape Magnitude of Effect	6A-8
	Significance of Effects	6A-9
	Cumulative Effects	6A-10
	Assumptions and Limitations	6A-11
	Table 6A.1 Typical value indicators	6A-5
	Table 6A.2 Typical susceptibility indicators	6A-6
	Table 6A.3 Sensitivity of landscape receptors	6A-6
	Table 6A.4 Magnitude of effect – landscape receptors	6A-8
	Table 6A.5 Significance of effect	6A-10
	Image 6A.1 Classification of landscape effects	6A-9
	References	6A-12

6A. Landscape Assessment Methodology

6A. Landscape Assessment Methodology

6A.1 Introduction

6A.1.1 This appendix sets out the approach and methodology which will be used for the detailed landscape assessment in the Environmental Statement (ES). The key principles of the approach have also been used to inform the preliminary assessment provided in the non-statutory Draft Environmental Statement (DES) (referred to in this document as “DES” and non-statutory DES”). The approach has been informed by the following good practice guidance and professional experience:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3) (Ref 6A.1);
- Notes and Clarifications on aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3), Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 (Ref 6A.2);
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, (Ref 6A.3);
- Planning Inspectorate Advice Note: Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment (Ref 6A.4);
- Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations (Ref 6A.5); and
- Tranquillity – An overview – Technical Information Note 01/17 (Ref 6A.6).

6A.1.2 It is important to note that in order to align with good practice set out in the above guidance and particularly GLVIA3 (Ref 6A.1), elements of the landscape assessment methodology differ from the general assessment methodology presented in **Chapter 5 EIA Approach and Methodology**. For example, landscape sensitivity includes consideration of both the landscape value, identified as part of the baseline, and susceptibility, which is influenced by the specific nature of the Project. The landscape assessment also refers to ‘*magnitude of effect*’ rather than ‘*magnitude of impact*’ in accordance with GLVIA3.

6A.2 Technical Scope

6A.2.1 The landscape assessment aims to identify the likely significant landscape effects resulting from the Project. The assessment is receptor based and considers potential impacts of all relevant aspects of the Project as a whole, including across Project Section boundaries.

6A.2.2 When considering the potential changes that future development may have on the landscape, it is necessary to identify those key elements of the landscape which make it distinctive. Landscape effects arise from changes to the physical components of the landscape, its character and how this is experienced.

6A.2.3 Landscape effects can be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse). The landscape resource of an area can be affected both directly and indirectly. GLVIA3 (Ref 6A.1) requires consideration of landscape effects as follows:

‘...thought must be given to whether the likely significant landscape... effects can result directly from the development itself (direct effects) or from consequential change resulting from the development (indirect and secondary effects); are additional effects caused by the proposed development when considered in conjunction with other proposed developments of the same or different types (cumulative effects); are likely to be short term or to carry on over a longer period of time; are likely to be permanent or temporary, in which case their duration is important; are judged to be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) in their consequences for landscape...’.

6A.2.4 Details of the approach to cumulative assessment within the DES are provided in **Chapter 19 Cumulative Effects**, which also presents a preliminary assessment of potential cumulative landscape effects of the Project with other developments. A full cumulative assessment will be presented in the ES.

6A.3 Temporal Scope

6A.3.1 The level and nature of effects can vary at different stages of the Project and can change over time, particularly where mitigation planting is proposed. The landscape assessment therefore includes consideration of the following:

- Construction: temporary effects associated with introduction of activity and movement of plant and machinery, temporary compounds and accommodation, structures and fencing, and access tracks, temporary vegetation clearance, topsoil stripping and earthworks, storage of materials and lighting.
- Operation Year 1 (the first year of operation, after all construction activities are completed): including consideration of potential medium to longer term effects associated with the operational overhead lines and towers and the substations and associated fencing, lighting and access roads. This is intended to represent the potential worst-case operation phase effects prior to establishment of mitigation planting.
- Operation Year 15: including consideration of potential longer-term effects of the Project 15 years after becoming operational. This is intended to help demonstrate how proposed mitigation planting would influence effects over time as it establishes and begins to mature.

6A.3.2 As set out in the Scoping Report and confirmed in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (ID 3.2.14), potential landscape effects relating to maintenance activities during operation and potential future decommissioning have been scoped out of the assessment.

6A.4 Study Area

6A.4.1 As set out in **Chapter 6 Landscape**, a Study Area of 3 km from the extents of the horizontal Limits of Deviation (LoD) for the new overhead line (outlined in **Chapter 4 Description of the Project**) and from the WMEL-A and WMEL-B substations has been identified for the landscape assessment. The extent of the Study Area has been informed by desk-based review, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping, targeted field survey, application of professional judgement and consultation with Lincolnshire County Council and South Holland District Council.

- 6A.4.2 In accordance with good practice guidance set out in the GLVIA3 (Ref 6A.1), the Study Area for the landscape assessment seeks to encompass all landscape receptors with the potential to be significantly affected by the Project.
- 6A.4.3 It is acknowledged that elements of the Project may be visible beyond the Study Area. However, at distances of greater than 3 km potential indirect impacts resulting from the Project are unlikely to lead to a fundamental change to the perception or experience of the landscape and as such potential effects are unlikely to be significant.
- 6A.4.4 The Study Area will be reviewed as part of the detailed assessment stage in light of any relevant feedback received during Stage 2 Consultation, ongoing site surveys, and following the production of updated ZTV mapping as the Project design develops.

6A.5 Assessment Process

- 6A.5.1 The assessment is part of an iterative process where, as potentially significant effects are identified, these inform the siting, routeing and design of the Project alongside consideration of other constraints. The assessment has been carried out based on the following key steps:
- Establishment of the baseline conditions, including identification and evaluation of key physical and perceptual attributes and receptor value. The landscape baseline is based on local landscape character units defined within published district and local landscape character assessments.
 - Appreciation of the Project, including an understanding of the location, nature, scale and maximum parameters of each element and any embedded mitigation measures. Consideration is also to be given to any required tree removals identified within the arboriculture surveys and reports for the Project which will be provided with the ES and include details of trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders.
 - Assessment of effects on landscape receptors, with a focus on potential for significant effects.
- 6A.5.2 Each of the above steps has been informed by a combination of desk-based research, evaluation and site-based survey. Surveys were undertaken at different times of the year to gain an appreciation of how the landscape changes with the seasons.
- 6A.5.3 GLVIA3 (Ref 6A.1) places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape effects. The landscape assessment has been undertaken by experienced Chartered Landscape Architects and professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to determine the significance of effect.

6A.6 Method of Assessment

- 6A.6.1 The following section sets out the detailed assessment methodology and criteria used to determine the level and significance of potential effects.

Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

- 6A.6.2 Landscape receptors are described as components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the Project. These can include overall character and key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects. It is the interaction between the different components of the Project and these landscape receptors which has potential to result in landscape impacts and effects (both adverse and beneficial).
- 6A.6.3 The sensitivity of a landscape receptor has been derived by combining the value of the landscape (undertaken as part of the baseline study) and the susceptibility to change of the receptor to the specific type of development being assessed.

Value

- 6A.6.4 Landscape value is frequently addressed by reference to international, national, regional, and local designations. An absence of such a designation does not necessarily imply a lack of quality or value. Factors such as accessibility and local scarcity can render areas of nationally unremarkable quality, highly valuable as a local resource. The evaluation of landscape value has been informed by Technical Guidance Note 02/21 (Ref 6A.5) and classified as very high, high, medium, low and negligible with evidence provided as to the basis of the evaluation, having considered the following factors:
- *'natural heritage – Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape;*
 - *cultural heritage – Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape;*
 - *landscape condition – Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure;*
 - *associations – Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts;*
 - *distinctiveness – Landscape that has a strong sense of identity;*
 - *recreational – Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important;*
 - *perceptual (scenic) – Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense;*
 - *perceptual (wildness and tranquillity) – Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies; and*
 - *functional – Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.'*
- 6A.6.5 **Table 6A.1** provides an example of typical indicators of higher and lower landscape value.

Table 6A.1 Typical value indicators

Higher Value Indicators	Lower Value Indicators
A nationally designated landscape and/or a landscape in very good condition, recognised highly important associations, exceptional scenic quality, very high recreational opportunities, a very high degree of distinctiveness, with very strong perceptual aspects and/or very important natural and cultural heritage features and functional qualities.	An undesignated landscape and/or landscape containing few if any notable elements/features, of poor condition or containing several detracting features and limited aesthetic qualities. Landscapes which have limited recognised associations, recreational opportunities, natural and cultural heritage features and/or functional qualities.

Susceptibility

- 6A.6.6 Landscape susceptibility relates to the ability of a particular landscape to accommodate the Project. It is assessed through consideration of the baseline characteristics of the landscape, including the following:
- *Scale* – a measure of how well the Project would relate to the overall scale of the landscape, landform and/or landscape features.
 - *Landform* – the extent to which the Project would relate to and/or integrate with the existing landform and topographic features.
 - *Pattern* – the extent to which the Project would relate to the existing landscape pattern.
 - *Landcover* – a measure of how well the Project would relate to existing landcover.
 - *Openness/enclosure* – the level of which the openness or enclosure of a landscape would influence the ability of a landscape to accommodate the Project.
 - *Landmarks* – a measure of how well the Project would relate to existing landmark features.
 - *Development context* – the level to which existing similar development within a landscape influences the ability to accommodate the Project.
 - *Perceptual qualities (remoteness, tranquillity, dark skies etc.)* – extent to which existing perceptual qualities would influence the ability of the landscape to accommodate the Project.
- 6A.6.7 There is a degree of overlap and interrelationship between the above factors, and this is taken into consideration when forming overall professional judgements. The landscape susceptibility for each receptor is classified as very high, high, medium, low or very low and is supported by explanation of the basis of the evaluation.
- 6A.6.8 **Table 6A.2** provides an example of typical indicators of higher and lower landscape susceptibility.

Table 6A.2 Typical susceptibility indicators

Higher Susceptibility Indicators	Lower Susceptibility Indicators
Attributes that make up the character of the landscape which offer very limited or no opportunities to accommodate change of the type proposed without fundamentally altering key characteristics	Attributes that make up the character of the landscape which are tolerant of extensive change of the type proposed without altering the existing characteristics

Overall sensitivity

- 6A.6.9 The overall sensitivity assessment of the landscape receptor has been made by applying professional judgement to combine and analyse the identified value and susceptibility ratings. Overall sensitivity has been rated as very high, high, medium, low and negligible.
- 6A.6.10 **Table 6A.3** below outlines indicators that inform landscape value, susceptibility, and sensitivity.

Table 6A.3 Sensitivity of landscape receptors

Sensitivity	Typical Criteria Descriptors
Very high	Landscape of national value in very good condition and with unique and distinctive elements and characteristics, very highly susceptible to even small changes of the type of development proposed, which it would not be able to accommodate without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. Typically, this would include landscape receptors that are: • nationally designated and/or iconic, unspoiled with no degrading features or existing context of development of the type proposed; • of very high quality, with rare and irreplaceable elements and features making a positive contribution to character and unique sense of place; and • areas of special recognised value through use and access, perception or very important historic and cultural associations.
High	Landscape of national or regional value, in good condition and with some distinctive elements and characteristics, highly susceptible and/or with some limited ability to accommodate change of the type proposed without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. Typically, this would include landscape receptors that are: • nationally designated with few, if any, detracting features and/or limited context of development of the type proposed;

Sensitivity	Typical Criteria Descriptors
	• of high quality, with distinctive elements and features that are difficult to replace and make a positive contribution to character and sense of place; and • containing features of value through use, perception, or important historic and cultural associations.
Medium	Landscape of regional or local value, in reasonable condition and with mostly common elements and characteristics, which although susceptible are able to partly accommodate change of the type proposed without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. Typically, this would include landscape receptors that are: • locally or regionally designated and may include some detracting features and/or context of development of the type proposed; • of reasonable quality and comprised of mostly commonplace elements and features but may include some rarer elements and with some sense of place; and • containing some features of value through use, perception or locally important historic and cultural associations.
Low	Landscape of local or limited value and relatively common or inconsequential elements and characteristics, of limited susceptibility and tolerant of a large degree of change of the type proposed without notably altering the existing character. Typically, this would include landscape receptors that are: • not designated and with few, if any features that could not be replaced and/or with context of development of the type proposed; • comprised of some features and elements that are discordant, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct character with little or no sense of place; and • containing few, if any, features of value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations.
Negligible	Landscape of very low or limited value that is damaged, degraded or a substantially modified landscape pattern, with few or no natural or original features remaining, such that it is tolerant of extensive change of the type proposed without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.

Landscape Magnitude of Effect

- 6A.6.11

Landscape magnitude of effect refers to the extent to which the Project would alter the existing characteristics of the landscape. It is an expression of the size or scale of change to the landscape, the geographical extent of the area influenced, and its duration and reversibility. Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of GLVIA3 Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 (Ref 6A.2) notes that the size/scale of effect is likely to be the most important factor with geographical extent and duration/reversibility considered as ‘modifiers’. The variables involved are:

 - 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;
 - the extent to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by the addition of new components;
 - whether the change alters the key characteristics of the landscape that are integral to its distinctive character;
 - the geographic area over which the change would be experienced (for example within the application boundary, the immediate setting around that boundary, at the local landscape character area scale, or on a larger scale influencing broader areas of landscape character);
 - the duration of the change (i.e., short-term (0-5 years), medium term (6-10 years), or long term (11+ years)), and its reversibility (i.e., whether it is permanent, temporary, or partially reversible); and
 - landscape change can be both direct, through alteration of physical components, or indirect, resulting from changes to perceptual aspects of character and how it is experienced.
- 6A.6.12

An overall assessment of the magnitude of landscape effect resulting from the Project on landscape receptors has been made by combining the above judgements using evidence and professional judgement. The levels of landscape magnitude of change are described as being very high, high, medium, low, very low and none as defined in **Table 6A.4** below which has been informed by good practice guidance, including the GLVIA3 (Ref 6A.1).

Table 6A.4 Magnitude of effect – landscape receptors

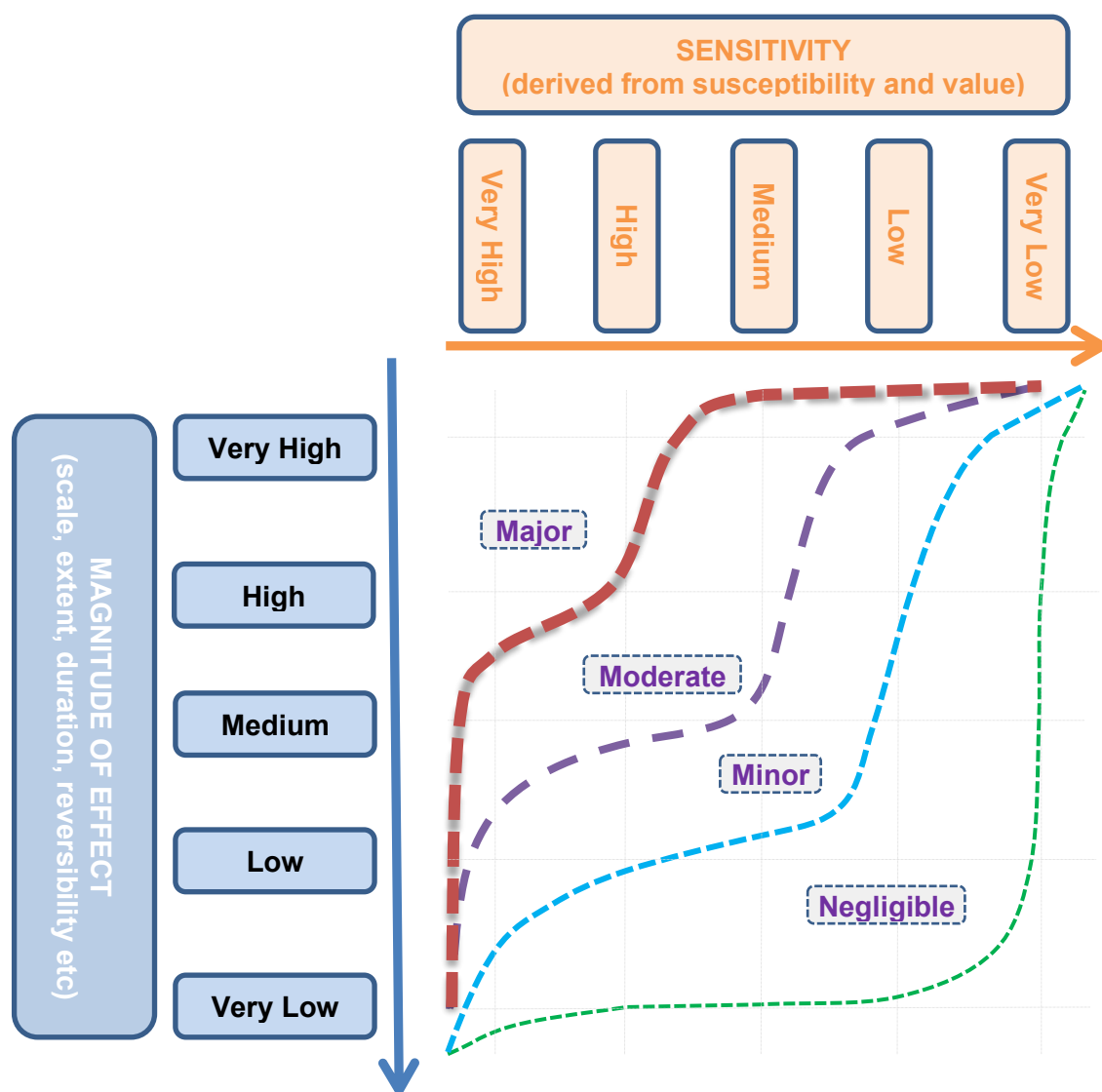
Magnitude	Criteria
Very high	Substantial alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact an extensive area or unique characteristics at a local level. May be longer term, permanent or reversible.
High	Large alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact an extensive area or unique characteristics at a local level. May be longer term, permanent or reversible.
Medium	Partial alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a wide area or characteristics at a local level. May be medium term, permanent or reversible.

Magnitude	Criteria
Low	Slight alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a restricted area and few key characteristics. May be short to medium term, permanent or reversible.
Very low	Very slight alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a limited area or no key characteristics. May be short-term, permanent or reversible.
None	No change to the landscape receptor.

Significance of Effects

6A.6.13 Determination of the significance of landscape effects has been undertaken by employing professional judgement and experience to combine and analyse the magnitude of effect against the identified sensitivity of landscape receptors. **Image 6A.1** below, draws upon good practice guidance, including GLVIA3 (Ref 6A.1) and illustrates how sensitivity and magnitude will be considered together to identify the significance of effect.

Image 6A.1 Classification of landscape effects



- 6A.6.14 The landscape assessment has taken account of direct and indirect changes to existing landscape elements, features and, key characteristics and evaluates the extent to which these would be lost or modified, in the context of their importance in determining the existing baseline character.
- 6A.6.15 The significance of landscape effects is described with reference to the criteria presented in **Table 6A.5** below which has been informed by good practice guidance, including GLVIA3 (Ref 6A.1). For the purposes of the assessment, effects rated as being **moderate** or **major** will be considered to be significant, and **negligible** and **minor** effects will be considered not significant.

Table 6A.5 Significance of effect

Significance of effect	Landscape
Major	Highly noticeable change affecting key characteristics of a very highly sensitive landscape, resulting in a fundamental change to its character.
Moderate	Noticeable change affecting some key characteristics in a highly sensitive landscape or very noticeable change in a medium sensitivity landscape, resulting in a change to the overall impression of its character.
Minor	Small change affecting few characteristics in a medium to highly sensitive landscape or noticeable change to a less sensitive landscape, resulting in a limited or localised change to the impression of its character.
Negligible	Very little change from baseline conditions, resulting in a barely distinguishable or indistinguishable change.
No change	No alteration to any of the components that contribute to the existing landscape resource

Cumulative Effects

- 6A.6.16 The DES includes initial consideration of potential cumulative effects of the Project in relation to other proposed and committed developments, including renewable energy schemes and other National Grid infrastructure projects. A full cumulative assessment will be presented in the ES.
- 6A.6.17 As outlined in **Chapter 19 Cumulative Effects** and in line with Planning Inspectorate Advice (Ref 6A.4), an initial evaluation process has been undertaken to first identify a long list followed by a refined short list of other developments to be considered within the cumulative assessment.
- 6A.6.18 The cumulative baseline is based on a theoretical scenario in which other developments identified and shortlisted as described in **Chapter 19 Cumulative Effects** are present or under construction, in addition to existing schemes. The assessment of cumulative magnitude and significance of effects involves consideration of the additional change resulting from the Project to the defined cumulative baseline scenario. Further details on the scope and approach to cumulative assessment are provided in **Chapter 19 Cumulative Effects**.

Assumptions and Limitations

- 6A.6.19 The preliminary assessment has been undertaken based on initial Project design information. This information is iterative and will be updated for the detailed assessment in the ES, as the design evolves and relevant changes are accounted for in the assessment.
- 6A.6.20 The following assumptions and limitations have been made in undertaking the preliminary assessment, reflecting the evolving nature and preliminary stage of the Project:
- Assumptions in relation to vegetation clearance and management are set out in **Chapter 4 Description of the Project**, and include the following:
 - targeted clearance of vegetation with potential to impede construction of overhead line towers and wiring works and/or infringe on statutory clearance zones;
 - temporary removal of vegetation in construction compounds, laydown areas and along temporary access tracks; and
 - permanent loss of vegetation within the footprint of proposed substations and along associated permanent access tracks, including bellmouths and visibility splays.
 - The preliminary assessment assumes that vegetation removed during construction would be reinstated, except where there are planting restrictions associated with requirements to maintain an overhead line safety clearance and within the footprint of permanent works (e.g. substation and permanent access roads). It is anticipated that grassland reinstatement would be achieved within up to 1 to 2 years, whereas hedgerow and tree planting would take longer to become established and mature and as such would not represent a direct replacement but would develop over time.
 - Field surveys to inform establishment of the baseline, capture photography and inform the assessment of effects are ongoing and are undertaken from publicly accessible locations, such as from the road network and Public Rights of Way (PRoWs), in line with standard practice for landscape assessment.
 - The preliminary assessment is supported by ZTV mapping. The use and limitations of ZTVs and how they are used in the assessment process is set out in **Appendix 7A Visual Assessment Methodology**.
- 6A.6.21 The key parameters and assumptions will be reviewed based on the design presented in the application for development consent and, where required, updated, or refined. The ES will present the final key parameters and assumptions used within that assessment, including any areas that may have changed from what is presented in this preliminary assessment.

References

- Ref 6A.1 Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Ref 6A.2 Landscape Institute, (2024). Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition (GLVIA3). Available at: https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/LITGN-2024-01-GLVIA3-NC_Aug-2024.pdf. Accessed 06 July 2026.
- Ref 6A.3 Natural England (2014). An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment [Online]. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/691184/landscape-character-assessment.pdf. Accessed 06 July 2026.
- Ref 6A.4 Planning Inspectorate, (2025). Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment [Online]. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-on-cumulative-effects-assessment>. Accessed 06 July 2026.
- Ref 6A.5 Landscape Institute, (2021). Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations. Available at: <https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2021/05/tgn-02-21-assessing-landscape-value-outside-national-designations.pdf>. Accessed 06 July 2026.
- Ref 6A.6 Landscape Institute, (2017). Tranquillity – An overview, Technical Information Note 01/2017 [Online]. Available at: <https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2017/02/Tranquillity-An-Overview-1-DH.pdf>. Accessed 06 July 2026.

National Grid plc
National Grid House,
Warwick Technology Park,
Gallows Hill, Warwick.
CV34 6DA United Kingdom

Registered in England and Wales
No. 4031152
nationalgrid.com