LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

Sustainable Leachate Treatment System

Robertsbridge Works

Prepared for: British Gypsum Ltd

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1.0 Introduction

SLR Consulting Ltd (SLR) has been instructed by British Gypsum Ltd to prepare a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the proposed sustainable leachate treatment system in connection with its closed landfill site ('Old Tip') adjacent to the Robertsbridge Works, East Sussex, hereafter referred to as 'the site'. The proposed development also includes integrated renewable energy generation in the form of Solar Photovoltaics (PV).

1.1 The Proposed Development

Drawing RW/LVA/16 shows the proposed layout. Further detail is also provided in Section 4.0 of the Planning Statement.

The proposed development would comprise the following:

- **Organic media treatment area** - Four waterproof-lined holding 'tanks' formed of a series of engineered earth bunds (up to 3m above the height of the existing landfill) located in the south west section of the site. The external surface of the earth bunds would be seeded with a suitable grass seed/wildflower mix to blend visually with the grassed surface of the landfill and assist with soil stabilisation and enhanced biodiversity. The tanks would be filled with solid organic media comprising woodchip, limestone, straw and biochar in varying proportions. Leachate, destined for treatment in the organic media tanks, would be pumped from the existing underground holding tank on site into the first of the four proposed organic media tanks, following which it would then flow through pipework at a controlled rate under gravity through the three remaining tanks. A stock proof fence would be erected around the media tanks;
- **Sand filter bed** – The treated leachate would then be passed through a sand filter bed (up to 2m above the height of the existing landfill) before flowing under gravity to the reed bed;
- **Reed bed** - This would comprise a geomembrane lined pond formed from shallow terraces in the north east corner of the site, containing soil and locally harvested reed vegetation where the treated leachate would be re-aerated before being discharged to the River Line. A stock proof fence would be erected around the reed bed;
- **Pump House (Control Room)** – Located on the eastern edge of the site via the existing access road. Houses the pumps to feed the leachate to the organic media tanks (H 2.4m x L 6m X W 2.4m smooth green matt finish);
- **Solar PV System** – Non reflective photovoltaic glass solar panels (up to 2.6m high) would be set out in arrays facing south along the top of the landfill. The system would require small inverter units (H 1.5m x W 1m x D 0.7m in smooth green matt finish) and a switch house (H 2.4m x L 6m x W 2.4m smooth green matt finish) as part of the management and control system; and
- **New Access Road** - Access to the site would be provided from a new site entrance located along the north west boundary of the site leading from the main private access road within the Works complex. The site entrance would be hard surfaced for a distance of 50 m from the main access road. Access tracks within the site would be required for construction purposes and following commissioning of the facility would continue to be used for maintenance and monitoring purposes. Internal access tracks would be surfaced with hardcore (secondary aggregate).

These elements have the potential to affect landscape character, elements and features within the site itself and also the character and visual amenity of offsite receptors in the immediate surrounding area during construction and operation.

Construction is anticipated to take 6 months (Working hours = Monday – Saturday 7.00 – 19.00hrs. No Sundays or Bank Holidays) and would takes place in the following phases:

- New site entrance constructed;
- Topsoils from landfill stripped and stored at the edge of the site to form earth bunds and reed beds;
- Suitable engineered imported soils will be brought to site to form the media tanks and reed beds and then stored soils will be placed on top to form the suitable growing medium for the proposed wildflower grass seed mix;
- Tanks will be filled with locally sourced organic material and reed beds planted with locally sourced reeds;
- The sand filter will be installed;
- The solar panels will be erected on shallow concrete plinths; and
- The pumping house and equipment would be placed on concrete bases.

There is no requirement for lighting as part of the proposed development, other than for motion sensor lighting at the entrance to the pumphouse and switch house for health and safety purposes in case emergency access is needed to these units during the hours of darkness. This is expected to be only an occasional requirement and would not form part of standard operational requirements and as such is not considered further in this appraisal.

It is not envisaged that there would be any requirement for equipment to be brought to site as abnormal loads.

1.2 Methodology

As the development is not subject to Environmental Impact Assessment a Landscape and Visual Impact assessment has not been undertaken. However, it has been agreed with the landscape officer at ESCC that a Landscape and Visual Appraisal would be undertaken. This appraisal has been carried out by a Chartered Landscape Architect in accordance with the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition, 2013, also known as "GLVIA3". Refer to Appendix A for methodology).

Paragraph 5.1 of the GLVIA3 describes how landscape effects are concerned with "*how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character*".

Paragraph 6.1 of the GLVIA3 describes how visual effects are concerned with "*assessing how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements*".

This appraisal deals separately with each of these effects, although where relevant and appropriate, cross references are made to the same features or elements where they are relevant to both topics.

The current site context, including any permissions that are already in place, form the baseline against which the effects of the proposed development are assessed. As set out in the methodology (refer to Appendix A) the judgements that form the basis of the assessment of the magnitude of change and potential effects of the proposed development for this appraisal relate to size/scale, geographic extent and duration/reversibility. The level of detail presented in this appraisal is considered to be proportionate to the nature of the development and potential level of effects.

A study area extending to approximately 2km has been applied, illustrated on Drawings RW/LVA/1-3. The extent of the study area has been defined by desk top analysis and confirmed by field survey, and is based on the nature of the proposed development and visibility of elements that might affect landscape and visual receptors.

2.0 Background and Landscape Planning Context

2.1 National Policy: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

At the national level, planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), the fundamental principle of which is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In terms of the landscape, Section 15 "*Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*" sets out criteria that are relevant. These include the protection of valued landscapes in a manner that is commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan, and recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the fundamental principle of this document: that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. All development that is in accordance with the development plan should be approved "*without delay*" and that "*where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date*" permission should be granted for development "*unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole*."

In relation to landscape, the NPPF defines sustainability as including the protection and enhancement of the "*natural, built and historic environment*" (paragraph 8).

Paragraph 98 relates to rights of way and access, stating that these should be "*protected and enhanced*". It is noted that better facilities should be provided for users of rights of way, for example by "*adding links to existing rights of way*".

Paragraphs 124, 128 and 130 relate to the need for good design in new developments. Paragraph 124 states that *"good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities"*. Paragraph 128 states that applicants should work closely *"with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs which take account of the views of the community"*. Paragraph 130 states that *"permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions"*.

Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that the planning system, "*should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by [inter alia] …protecting and enhancing valued landscapes*" and by "recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside". Paragraph 171 states that the planning system should "*distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites*".

Paragraph 172 of the NPPF states that *"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues."* and that *"The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited."*

2.2 Local Planning Context

The East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan (Adopted 19th February 2013) (draft revised policies published March 2020) sets out strategic policy decisions for the area (as part of the Waste and Minerals Planning Strategy for East Sussex), with the following relating to the site and immediately surrounding area:

- The site is part of the existing British Gypsum mine and processing plant, which has a specific Policy WMP 12 'Provision of Gypsum', which aims to safeguard and maintain supplies to and from the works throughout the Plan period. This is also set out in the Waste and Minerals Site Plan (Feb 2017), Policy SP8 identifying the Robertsbridge site as a Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA), where any non-mineral developments should not sterilise or prejudice the extraction of mineral resource.

- Policy WMP17 recognises the need to *"secure appropriate restoration of mineral workings and waste sites. Restoration should seek environmental and amenity benefits reflecting local circumstances and relevant landscape and biodiversity objectives. Proposed after uses are likely to require ongoing management."*
- The site is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Policy SO4 aims to protect and enhance the environment by, *inter alia* minimising impacts on designated landscapes and areas which have landscape character and quality which is sensitive to development.
- Policy WMP 27 'Environment and Environmental Enhancement' states that; *"a) To conserve and enhance the local character and environment of the Plan Area, permission will not be granted where the development would have a significant adverse impact on the... High Weald AONB"* Policy WMP27 also calls for the conservation and enhancement of the local natural environment, maximising opportunities for biodiversity and habitat creation.
- Policy WMP 23b Operation of Sites states that *"Proposals for waste management, mineral extraction / processing, and associated activities should be accompanied by a working programme for the proposed operation which includes arrangements as applicable for the scale and nature of the operation, for:...*

  - e. protection of existing features of cultural and landscape significance;

  - f. a mitigation/compensation scheme for any other environmental impacts and enhancements; and

  - g. a landscaping scheme for the operational life of the site to include a means of screening the proposed development, including planting, with native species where appropriate, to maximise opportunities for habitat creation and supported by a management plan".
- Policy WMP 25 'General Amenity' states that all proposals should ensure:

  "a. there is no unacceptable effect on the standard of amenity appropriate to the established, permitted or allocated land uses of the local and host communities likely to be affected by the development including transport links;....

  d. there is no unacceptable effect on the recreational or tourist use of an area, or the use of existing public access or rights of way."

Robertsbridge Works was established to manufacture plaster and plasterboard using gypsum from the adjoining Mountfield Mine. Gypsum mining has taken place at Mountfield Mine since the late nineteenth century. As reserves began to become depleted, a second mine at Brightling was opened in 1963 and the extracted material from this mine has, since 1986, been transported to the Robertsbridge Works for processing via an overland conveyor, a distance of approximately 5km. The factory building for Robertsbridge Works operates under a planning permission that dates back to 8th June 1964 (planning permission ref A/64/350).

There are two landfills that formerly served the Works, known as 'Old Tip' and 'New Tip', both of which were used primarily for the disposal of plasterboard waste. Both landfills are closed, although they continue to be monitored and managed in accordance with Environmental Permits and regulated by the Environment Agency. The application site is located within the eastern section of 'Old Tip'.

There is no record of any specific planning permissions for the former landfill sites on the Council's website. It is possible that the permissions may pre-date the current system of records.

The proposed leachate treatment facility is the subject of a current application to the Environment Agency submitted in March 2021 to vary the Environmental Permit for 'Old Tip'. The variation, once approved, will allow the Environment Agency to regulate the operation of the facility in respect of any discharges to air, land and water.

3.0 Landscape Appraisal

3.1 Landscape Baseline

3.1.1 Landscape Character

The site is located within National Character Area (NCA) 122: High Weald. The key characteristics of this area of relevance to the site and wider area are as follows:

- *A faulted landform of clays, sand and soft sandstones with outcrops of fissured sandrock and ridges running east–west, deeply incised and intersected with numerous gill streams forming the headwaters of a number of the major rivers... which flow in broad valleys.*
- *A dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads and medieval ridgetop villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries...*
- *Ancient routeways in the form of ridgetop roads and a dense system of radiating droveways, often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wild flower-rich verges and boundary banks. Church towers and spires on the ridges are an important local landmark. There is a dense network of small, narrow and winding lanes, often sunken and enclosed by high hedgerows or woodland strips.*
- *An intimate, hidden and small-scale landscape with glimpses of far-reaching views, giving a sense of remoteness and tranquillity...*
- *Strong feeling of remoteness due to very rural, wooded character...*
- *Extensive broadleaved woodland cover with a very high proportion of ancient woodland with high forest, small woods and shaws, plus steep valleys with gill woodland.*
- *Small and medium-sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws...*
- *A predominantly grassland agricultural landscape grazed mainly with sheep and some cattle.*

As indicated on Drawing RW / LVA /2, the East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment (2016) identifies the site as located within the north-western part of "LCA 11: Brede Valley", which extends for over 16km to the east and 10km to the south. The boundary with "LCA 9: Darwell Valley" is located along the northern edge of the British Gypsum Works at c. 0.4km north of the site, whilst the nearest part of "LCA 5: South Slopes of High Weald" is c. 2km to the west and "LCA 13: Lower Rother Valley" is c. 2km to the north-east.

The relevant key landscape characteristics and features of "LCA 11: Brede Valley", are described as follows:

- *A sense of tranquillity away from the main settlements and roads;*
- *Few detracting elements;*
- *Well wooded sides slopes with scattered farmsteads and orchards;*
- *Extensive areas of Semi-Natural Ancient deciduous woodland around the valley head to the west of the area;*
- *Villages and their churches perched on the slopes overlooking the valley...;*
- *Much of the open valley is free of roads and traffic, but four A roads cross the valley A2100, A21, A28 and the A259. These are linked by the B roads which traverse the enclosing ridges and link the villages; and*
- *Winding and very narrow sunken country lanes with steep gradients.*

"*The British Gypsum Factory on the edge of the area at Mountfield*" is identified as one of several past / current forces for change impacting on the positive attributes of the "LCA 11: Brede Valley".

Under Point 7 of the Vision and Strategy for "LCA 11: Brede Valley" there is also several requirements of relevance to the proposed development as follows:

- *2. Protect and manage existing habitats and plan for restoration of ditches and riverside vegetation to restore habitat linkages and continuity.*
- *7. Ensure that the design and layout of new developments respect the character and form of the landscape and existing settlements.*
- *10. Consider appropriate species for new plantings to maintain landscape character and biodiversity but also adaptation to climate change influences.*

Under Part D, Proposals need to have regard to the current High Weald AONB Management Plan.

The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 sets out long term objectives for conserving the landscape and the local authorities' ambitions for how the High Weald will be looked after for the next 5 years. It defines the five following components of character that have made the High Weald "*a recognisably distinct and homogenous area for at least the last 700 years:*

- *1. Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams.*
- *2. Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.*
- *3. Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).*
- *4. Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings.*
- *5. Field and Heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys."*

3.1.2 Landscape Context

The site covers an area of c. 4ha, within the larger 14ha British Gypsum Works, positioned c. 1.3km west of the main site entrance off Eatenden Lane.

The site is located on the eastern half of an area of previously restored landfill known as 'Old Tip'. As such the land currently rises steeply from c. 49m AOD at the north eastern corner of the site to c. 66m AOD towards its south western edge. The land falls away to c. 55mAOD to the north west towards the existing lorry park, whilst levelling off towards the existing woodland to the south of the site. To the north of the site, the wider British Gypsum complex occupies a gently sloping valley location, the land rising to the north between c. 50m and 75m AOD. A ridge is located c. 0.5km north of the site, extending in a north easterly direction, falling initially and then rising to 83m AOD around Mountfield Court at c. 1.2km to the north east of the site, whilst the land to the east falls away to elevations of around 34m AOD over a distance of 1.8km. The land rises to the south west of the site towards Netherfield to c. 145m AOD at the highest point, south of Netherfield Court, the sloping valley sides are heavily associated with mature woodland blocks.

The British Gypsum Works are located mainly to the west of the site, with the exception of the weighbridge facility to the north east, and comprises several plant, conveyors and buildings, hardstanding, roads and parking areas. Immediately to the north west of the site is an existing trailer park, adjacent to the site access road. The site currently comprises semi-improved neutral grassland which is managed by mowing and intermittent grazing. To the south of the site lies Crowhurst Wood which also wraps around the eastern edge of the site to meet Millham Wood, although separated by an existing access road and current test facility. The River Line passes

along the northern edge of the site, largely in culvert. There is a rail head which connects with the railway network at c. 0.3km to the east of the site.

As shown on Drawing RW / LVA / 2, the aerial photographs from 2018 show the distinctive built up and disturbed footprint of the British Gypsum Works, set amongst a mixture of well-wooded areas (such as Millham Wood to the east, Crowhurst Wood to the south east, Great Wood and Snep's Wood to the west and Limekiln and Castle Wood to the north) which provide a high level of visual enclosure, and small fields and hedgerows in the surrounding area. The application site currently appears as a pastoral field within the context of the wider British Gypsum site.

The site is located within the context of the existing British Gypsum works but is positioned within a predominately rural area and well separated by both vegetation and topography from the nearest residential areas and dwellings, as follows:

- Netherfield village c. 1.6km to the south west (refer to Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3 Drawings RW/LVA/4 - 6);
- Mountfield village at c. 0.7km to the north east (refer to Viewpoints 9 and 10 Drawings RW/LVA/12 & 13); and
- Other isolated farmsteads and properties such as Crowhurst Farm at c. 0.6km to the south (Grade II Listed), Darwell Beech at c. 1.8km to the west, Banks Farm at c. 0.8km to the north west, Castle Farm at c. 0.7km to the north (Grade II Listed) and Little Millham at c. 0.4km to the north east.

The woodland and hedgerows (both along the roadside and as field boundaries) reduce the potential dominance of built development within views across the surrounding landscape, supported by the undulating hills, ridges and valleys topography.

Darwell Wood SSSI is located c.1.2km to the north-west of the site and consists of a 8.76ha area of broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland with open space provided by the British Gypsum Works conveyor belt (linking Brightling Mine to Robertsbridge Works). Limekiln Wood Complex Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is also located north west of the site.

The River Line SSSI is located c. 1km to the south-west of the site and extends for over 2.1ha as a narrow band, designated for its occasional exposures of earth heritage interest along the banks of the stream.

There are also several Grade II Listed Buildings (and Grade II*) in the villages and farmsteads in the study area including:

- Church of St John, Netherfield Primary School and the School Masters House and The Old Rectory along Eatenden Lane at c. 1.2km to the south west;
- Crowhurst Farmhouse and Crowhurst Farm Cottage at c. 0.7km to the south;
- Stonywood Cottage on Netherfield Road at c. 1.7km to the south-west;
- Riverhall House The Bakery at Solomon's Lane, c. 1.3km east of the site and 0.3km north of the British Gypsum Works access;
- Castle Farmhouse, Keepers Cottage and Parish Church of All Saints (Grade II*) on Church Road at c. 0.7km to the north-east of the site; and
- Mountfield Court (Grade II*) at c. 1.2km to the north-east of the site.

The A2100 London Road follows a straight north-south orientated route, at c. 1.6km east of the site, with local minor roads providing most of the highway network within the study area:

- Eatenden Lane extends over a south-west to north-east alignment at c.1km south-east of the site at its nearest point;

- Eatenden Lane becomes Hoath Hill (at c.1.4km to the north-east of the site) and Solomon's Lane spurs to the north-east, joining with A2100;
- New Cut extends from a junction with Hoath Hill (at c. 1.5km north east of the site) to join with the A2100;
- Church Road extends westwards from a junction with Hoath Hill (at c. 1.4km away from the site); and
- Netherfield Road extends over a west-east alignment at c.1.2km south of the site at its nearest point and connects to B2096 Darwell Hill at c. 2km to the south-west.

As a result of the operation of the existing British Gypsum Works, HGV and other traffic is characteristic on local routes northwards onto Eatenden Lane and to the A2100 London Road.

There are several public rights of way in the local area, with the nearest being a connection between Eatenden Lane and Church Road (MOU18C) at c0.2km to the south-east of the site at its closest point (refer to Viewpoint 6 Drawing RW/LVA/9). This includes a crossing over the British Gypsum Works access road and railway line, connecting to Mountfield village to the north and Riverhill Bridge to the east. A further route also connects Church Road with Darwell Wood (MOU11A) at c. 0.5km to the north and is separated from the site by the wooded slopes and ridges (refer to Viewpoint 11 Drawing RW/LVA/14).

There is a village hall and recreation ground at Netherfield at c.1.6km to the south west of the site (refer to Viewpoint 1 Drawing RW/LVA/4) and there is informal recreational use of the woodlands around the edge of the village. There is also a village hall at Mountfields, on Church Road c. 0.6km to the north of the site, and a children's play area and 'Bonfire Field' on Solomon's Lane on the east of the village c.1.5km north west of the site.

Overall, the site and study area are consistent with the descriptions of "LCA 11: Brede Valley" in the published East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment. The site can be classified at a local level as an area of restored landfill within an established area of "Industrial Land / Gypsum Works", located within a wider envelope of "Wooded Farmland Ridges and Valleys".

3.1.3 Landscape Value

Overall, the landscape of the study area is of national value, located within the High Weald AONB, although at a local level the site and immediate context have several physical, aesthetic and perceptual attributes that may reduce an area's value as follows (refer to GLVIA3 Box 5.1 in Appendix A Methodology):

- The site is a previously restored landfill site currently comprising of semi improved neutral grassland bound by mature woodland to the south and east (beyond an existing access/service road) but also set within the context of the British Gypsum Works access road, hard standing areas, including trailer parking areas, weighbridge facility as well as other large buildings and infrastructure associated with the British Gypsum Works to the north, and west. However, the broader study area is a largely unspoilt and tranquil rural landscape with few intrusive features and in a good condition with a strong historic structure of small fields and woodlands;
- Whilst the landfill site occupies an elevated position within the wider British Gypsum site, views are typically enclosed to within the confines of the wider British Gypsum site owing to the surrounding landform, i.e. ridgelines, and woodland vegetation. Views within the wider landscape are also typically enclosed, although occasional longer distance views are obtained at elevated or more open locations. "*Wonderful views and scenic beauty*" are identified as a key quality for the High Weald AONB;
- The previously developed land within the site is not considered to be a rare feature, although the relatively unchanged landscape of the High Weald (and as present in the wider study area) is a recognised aspect of the AONB;

- The current grazed pastures of the restored landfill assimilate with the more rural parts of the wider High Weald Study area, although the evidence of the site's former landfilling past and links with the wider British Gypsum site are still evident;
- Sections of Public Right of Way and other recreational activities are identified within the study area, although 0.2km from the site at the closest point and set within a wooded context, thus views of the site are screened (refer to Viewpoint 6 Drawing RW/LVA/9);
- Tranquillity is limited within and immediately surrounding the site, with disturbance from vehicles and plant at the existing British Gypsum Works during working hours. Such qualities are however more apparent in the open farmland and woodland further away from the site and road network, and the relative tranquillity of the area is identified as a key quality for the High Weald AONB; and
- No evidence of artistic or literary associations with the site or immediate study area have been noted as part of this appraisal.

3.2 Potential Landscape Effects

3.2.1 Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

The proposed development would result in the disturbance of the current landform of the restored landfill with the addition of a series of earth mounds stepping across the upper plateau area to the south of the site to form the organic media tanks, and within the lower north eastern corner of the site in order to create the reed beds. An access road would also be created from the eastern edge of the existing lorry park to enable construction of the aforementioned features as well as installation of solar arrays and other associated features, and their longer-term maintenance. Therefore, there would be a temporary increase in activities on site. Whilst the initial works would change the nature of the existing site, this would not be entirely out of keeping with works undertaken in the context of the British Gypsum Complex, past and present. In addition, the proposed features would also be in keeping with the existing site context longer term. The woodland of the areas immediately surrounding the site, as well as nature of existing infrastructure, and low level and largely organic nature of proposed features, as well as reseeding, means that the characteristics of the landscape are generally able to accommodate the proposed development without transformational adverse changes. The site would have a medium susceptibility to the nature of change proposed within the wider context of the High Weald AONB. The overall sensitivity of landscape receptors to the proposed development would therefore be medium at most given the National value of the study area (as described above).

3.2.2 Potential Magnitude of Landscape Change

The physical disturbance of the site would result in the following changes to elements and features (refer also to Section 1.1 for details of the proposed development):

- The existing restored landfill would include the addition of 4. No. organic media treatment tanks constructed on the plateau of the landfill following initial soil stripping, storage and importation. The tanks would be formed from clay/soil bunding with a waterproof membrane and concealed pipework and would be a maximum of 3m above the existing ground level. In addition, a large reedbed area will be developed with locally sourced vegetation in the north east corner of the site;
- To the south of the reedbed several solar arrays would be constructed to a maximum height of 2.6m (glass within metal frames) on concrete plinths. An inverter unit would also be constructed to 1.5m high and switch house to 2.4m high (smooth green matt finish);
- A sand filter unit would also be installed up to 2m in height (green) between the organic media tanks and the reedbed;

- In addition, a pumphouse (2.4m high. smooth green matt finish) would be constructed on the lower ground at the eastern edge of the site, accessed via the existing access;
- During construction, access to the site would be via a new access to the east of the existing trailer park on the northern edge of the site. Access tracks would be retained for longer term maintenance but all other areas of disturbed landfill would be reseeded with the appropriate High Weald Wildflower mix as used elsewhere on site to assist with soil stabilisation and biodiversity enhancement; and
- There would be no visually distinctive or mature landscape elements or features removed.

The aesthetic and perceptual aspects that would change within the site and its immediate landscape setting are as follows:

- Existing grazing pasture would be replaced by several landscape elements in the form of the organic media tanks and reed beds as well as the built form of solar panels, inverter units, switch house, piping and a pump house along with associated access tracks;
- The development would be visually contained within a wooded setting;
- The proposed features would introduce muted colours and greens adjacent to areas to the north of built development of similar muted colours and materials as well as the greens of the wider landscape; and
- Whilst during construction the vehicle and plant movements would continue, the activity on the local road network longer term would reduce as leachate would no longer need to be taken off site.

Although the proposed development would introduce new features/elements into an area of land currently occupied by grazing pastures, areas of which would be lost to the footprint of the new elements and would therefore change the aesthetics of the site (more so during construction), all the proposed elements would be relatively low level, muted and green in colour, and would sit below the height of surrounding woodland. Furthermore, all areas of disturbance would be reseeded and the addition of reedbeds would contribute to enhanced biodiversity. The addition of solar panels and other control buildings would be small scale within the context of the existing massing of other built form on the wider British Gypsum site to the north and west. There would be a small level of landscape change within the geographical extent of the site itself and the immediately surrounding works, but no effect on the wider landscape character owing to the nature of surrounding woodland and topography. The proposed development would be long term but reversible (operational for 25 years followed by 1 year decommissioning). Overall, the magnitude of landscape change would be slight.

3.2.3 Potential Landscape Effects of Development

At a local level, the proposed development would partially alter the character of the site to a proposed Leachate Treatment facility on an area of restored landfill within an established area of Industrial Land / Gypsum Works, located within a wider envelope of Wooded Farmland Ridges and Valleys. This would be positioned within and would not alter the published key characteristics of the East Sussex Landscape Character Assessments' LCA 11: Brede Valley for the wider area.

The High Weald AONB extends over approximately 1,500 sq. km, with the proposed development occupying and influencing a small part of the existing British Gypsum Works. The proposed development would not constitute any further noticeable detraction from the five key components of character identified in the AONB Management Plan. The High Weald AONB's essentially rural and human scale character, with woodland and traditional mixed farming would not be affected as a result of the proposals.

The proposed development on this site is likely to result in some minor adverse landscape effects at most during construction.

4.0 Visual Appraisal

4.1 Visual Baseline

A combination of desk-based analysis (of OS mapping, topography and aerial photography) and fieldwork has reviewed the nature of views towards the site and the degree of screening provided by vegetation and/or built form. Generally, this indicated that the undulating ridge and valley topography, in combination with the landcover of woodland, hedgerows and trees, reduces the potential visibility of the proposed development. As such a 2km study area was considered appropriate for the purpose of the appraisal.

4.1.1 Visual Receptors

Potential visual receptors include the following:

- inhabitants of Netherfield village to the south (and properties along Netherfield Road), Mountfield village to the north (and properties along Eatenden Lane, Hoath Hill and Church Lane) and other isolated farmsteads or residential properties in the surrounding area (such as Crowhurst Farm, Castle Farm, Mountfield Court and New House Farm, Banks Farm, Millham and Darwell Beech);
- users of public highways, such as Eatenden Lane, Church Lane and Netherfield Road;
- users of public rights or way or other paths and recreational facilities in the local area; and
- visitors to the British Gypsum Works (workers).

The representative viewpoints used for the appraisal have taken account of the following range of factors:

- accessibility to the public;
- potential number and sensitivity of viewers who may be affected;
- viewing direction, distance and elevation;
- nature of the viewing experience (for example static views, views from settlements and views from sequential points along routes); and
- view type (for example panoramas, vistas and glimpses).

4.1.2 Selected Viewpoints

The following viewpoints have been selected as part of this appraisal (with locations shown on Drawing RW / LVA / 3 and initial photographs shown on Drawings RW / LVA / 4 - 15):

- Viewpoint 1 – View north east towards site from Netherfield Recreation Ground (c. 1.6km from site)
- Viewpoint 2 – View north east towards site from Netherfield Road and the entrance to 'The Lodge' residential property (c. 1.2km from site)
- Viewpoint 3 – View north east towards site from the Church of St John, Church Yard (c. 1.2km from site)
- Viewpoint 4 – View north towards the site from PRoW (BAT7) where it meets Eatenden Lane (c. 1km from site)
- Viewpoint 5 – View north from PRoW (MOU18C) towards the site, on the north western edge of Crowhurst Farm (c. 0.4km from site)
- Viewpoint 6 – View north west from PRoW (MOU18C) towards site (c. 0.2km from site)
- Viewpoint 7 – View south west from PRoW (MOU18C) where crosses the site access road (c. 0.4km from site)

- Viewpoint 8 – View west towards site from main site entrance off Eatenden Lane (c. 1.2km from site)
- Viewpoint 9 – View south west towards site from PRoW (MOU21A) south of Mountfield Church and adjacent residential properties (c. 0.7km from site)
- Viewpoint 10 – View south west from PRoW (MOU6A) on southern edge of Mountfield Court towards site (c.1.2km from site)
- Viewpoint 11 – View south from PRoW (MOU11A) south of Castle farm towards site (c.0.6km to site)

4.2 Potential Visual Effects

4.2.1 Overall Visibility

The existing site is not visible from the immediately surrounding area or further afield, owing to the nature of intervening landform and woodland vegetation. The existing site is however visible from the immediately adjoining areas of the British Gypsum works complex, i.e., from the access road to the north. Whilst the main access road into the British Gypsum complex is visible in views within the study area (refer to Viewpoint 8 Drawing RW/LVA/11) this does not support views to the site itself.

4.2.2 Assessment of Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

In relation to value, all of the selected viewpoints are located within the High Weald AONB. As such the value attached to the views at these viewpoints is high.

Residential receptors are likely to be more susceptible to visual change (high), as well as recreational receptors where appreciating one's view is part of the experience, as they are more likely to be focused on views of the landscape. Vehicle users are less susceptible to visual change as they have intermittent, transitional views of the landscape. However, the susceptibility for vehicle users along country lanes is likely to be greater (medium) than for those travelling along a motorway or busy A road (low).

It therefore follows that residents, walkers and cyclists have a high sensitivity to visual change on the site. Vehicle users would be of medium sensitivity.

4.2.3 Potential Magnitude of Change for Receptors

Residents

There are no residential properties located immediately adjacent to the site. The closest residential property is located at Millham (c. 0.4km north east of the site) but like those properties further afield is largely screened by surrounding woodland and localised topography. Netherfield village to the south, and Mountfield Village to the north occupy ridgeline locations, but the nature of surrounding topography and woodland continues to provide screening of longer distance views to and from these villages.

For the inhabitants of Netherfield village to the south (and properties along Netherfield Road), which extends along the higher ground on a distinctive ridge at approximately 1.2km from the site, the elevated and potentially long-distance views are often enclosed or filtered, either by other buildings or vegetation around the properties. Where open views are available, for example from the edge of the recreation ground, 'The Lodge' and Church yard (refer to Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3 Drawings RW/LVA/4 - 6), woodland blocks obscure views of the existing British Gypsum Works, save for the vapour from the mill building stack and upper elements set against the backdrop of further woodland, and as such views of the site and proposed development would be obscured.

For the inhabitants of Mountfield village to the north, longer distance views towards the site to the south are further screened by mature woodland blocks. Although audible, the British Gypsum Works are not visible in the view from properties to the north (refer to Viewpoint 9 Drawing RW/LVA/12). The orientation of the dwellings themselves also affects the degree of visibility for individual residential receptors, for example whether the views

would be direct or indirect (or oblique). At Mountfield Court, there are several properties arranged along a north-south aligned farm access road leading up to the main house (including New House Farm). The properties are on rising ground with the main house elevated at 83m AOD and offering longer distance views from certain locations. However, the ridge to the north of the site also reaches 85m AOD and this landform in conjunction with the woodland around Castle Wood and Millham Wood offers additional enclosure in the direction of the site, restricting views of the proposed development (refer to Viewpoint 10 Drawing RW/LVA/13). Vegetation around each of the properties also restricts views, to varying degrees.

At Crowhurst Farm, c. 0.6km south west of the site, a localised ridgeline wraps around the north western side of the farm, which coupled with the boundary vegetation and mature woodland of Crowhurst Wood provides a screening of views towards the site and thus the proposed development. It is however just possible to make out some of the larger infrastructure of the adjacent works when the trees are not in leaf, e.g. from the adjacent PRoW (MOU18C) (refer to Viewpoint 5, Drawing RW/LVA/8).

At Castle Farm, c. 0.8km north of the site, there are several properties arranged along a north-south section of road but orientated east-west. The properties are also set down at 50-55m AOD and north of a ridge which is 20m higher (refer to Viewpoint 11 Drawing RW/LVA/14). This landform offers enclosure in the direction of the site and in conjunction with the vegetation to the rear of the properties and the woodland blocks will obscure the proposed development.

At Darwell Beech the main property is orientated south-east to north-west, whilst the site is located to the east (and c. 1.7km away). The property is on elevated ground at 155m AOD and affords longer distance views from certain locations. However, the crest of the ridge extends gently over 300m to the east before sloping more steeply down to the British Gypsum site at over 70m below and this landform in conjunction with surrounding woodland blocks (Snep's Wood and Limekiln Wood) screens the site.

At Millham, c 0.4km north east of the site there are several properties arranged to the north of the east-west aligned access road leading up to the British Gypsum Works, with properties facing north-south. The properties are on lower-lying ground at 50m AOD and amongst dense woodland (Millham Wood) which encloses and obscures the development, with the exception of potential glimpsed views of the access road when in use.

There are also a number of properties orientated east west adjacent to the main site access off Eatenden Road (refer to Viewpoint 8 Drawing RW/LVA/11). Whilst they have clear views of lorry and vehicle movements into and out of the site along the access road, Upper and Lower Hucksteep Woods screen longer distance views into the British Gypsum site itself and the location of the proposed development.

In summary, there would be no change to the composition of views and visual amenity offered from residential properties surrounding the site as a consequence of the proposed development.

Walkers and Users of Recreational Routes/Sites

There is a network of public rights of way surrounding the site and connecting across the wider AONB.

Public Footpath No. BAT7 joins with Public Footpath No. MOU18C linking Eatenden Lane with Church Road, north to south, c. 0.2km east of the site at its closest point. Whilst to the south of the site around Crowhurst Farm there are some more open views across pastures on the valley sides, longer distance views in the direction of the site are screened by intervening woodland (refer to Viewpoint 5 Drawing RW/LVA/8). Likewise, to the east of the site, Millham Wood and Lower Hucksteep Wood screen views of the site from adjacent public footpaths, the density of woodland providing all year round screening even when the trees are not in leaf (refer to Viewpoint 6 Drawing RW/LVA/9). As Public Footpath No. MOU18C crosses the British Gypsum Works access road (refer to Viewpoint 7, Drawing RW/LVA/10), the view opens out along the access road towards the weighbridge and parking area. Whilst vehicle movements would be visible along this route, as existing, the site itself would remain screened by intervening woodland cover.

Public Footpath No. MOU21A joins with Public Footpath No. MOU21B on the southern edge of Mountfield village (c. 0.7km north east of the site), passing east to Riverhill Bridge. The section of the route between Mountfield

village and Riverhill Bridge consists of small fields sloping to the south, which support some open views but away from the direction of the site which is thus not visible (refer to Viewpoint 9 Drawing RW/LVA/12).

Public Footpath MOU6A passes south of Mountfield Court, c. 1.2km north east of the site. The path occupies an elevated position supporting open views across parkland to the south and the distant wooded ridgeline beyond Netherfield. However, in the middle ground of the view the localised wooded ridgeline around Collier's Croft Wood and Castle Wood screens views of the British Gypsum site, save for the steam from the top of the mill building stack and faint outline of rooflines, and as such the site is not visible in this view.

Public Footpath No. MOU11A passes east west, c. 0.6km north of the site towards Castle Farm. From this footpath the undulating landscape, coupled with the wooded ridgeline at Castle Wood, screen views in the direction of the site and thus the proposed development (refer to Viewpoint 11 Drawing RW/LVA/14).

A recreation ground is also located at Netherfield, c. 1.6km south west of the site. The recreation ground offers elevated long-distance views, i.e. to the wooded horizon to the north, but users of the ground are generally focussed on their activities on the grounds rather than the view. In addition, whilst the steam from the mill building chimney and upper rooflines of buildings within the western half of the British Gypsum Works site are just visible against a wooded backdrop, the site is not visible in this view owing to the nature of intervening woodland, e.g. Crowhurst Wood, as well as trees along field boundaries within the foreground (refer to Viewpoint 1 Drawing RW/LVA/4).

In summary, there would be no change to the composition of views and visual amenity offered to walkers/users of recreational routes and sites surrounding the site.

Vehicle Users

The visibility from roads is inevitably influenced by the direction of travel and position of the proposed development relative to the viewer (for example whether perpendicular to the road alignment and difficult to see, or along the road corridor and in the field of view of the driver). The area immediately surrounding the site is accessed by a number of rural lanes linking to the A2100 (London Road) to the east, however in the main these roads are narrow and twisting, enclosed by woodland and roadside vegetation, particularly where the carriage way is sunken, thus restricting views towards the British Gypsum Works and application site.

For road users travelling along Eatenden Lane, over a south-west to north-east alignment at c.1km south of the site at its nearest point, the site is offset and away from the main road corridor and field of view. In addition, Crowhurst Wood and Lower and Upper Hucksteep Woods visually enclose the site, even where views open up along the main access road at the site entrance to the east (refer to Viewpoint 8 Drawing LVA/RW/11).

For road users travelling along Church Road, which extends westwards from a junction with Hoath Hill (at c. 1.4km north east of the site) the site is also offset and away from the main road corridor and field of view. Furthermore, much of this route is narrow and slightly twisting and enclosed by hedgerows or properties, with woodland nearer to the site (Millham Wood and Limekiln Wood) providing additional enclosure and screening.

For road users travelling along Netherfield Road, which extends over a west-east alignment at c.1.2km south west of the site at its nearest point, the site will be offset and away from the main road corridor and field of view. Although on elevated ground, much of this route is narrow and slightly twisting, with enclosure from roadside hedgerows or properties (refer to Viewpoint 2 Drawing RW/LVA/5).

In summary, there would be no change to the composition of views and visual amenity offered to vehicle users travelling along roads surrounding the site. There may be additional vehicles travelling along surrounding routes during the construction of the proposed development, but this would not be out of keeping with the frequency of any existing movements and in the longer term there would be a reduction in vehicle movements as the need to remove leachate from 'Old Tip' would be minimised.

Workers

Visitors to the British Gypsum Works (workers and members of the public) would notice a difference to the site, with the addition of new organic media treatment tanks, reed beds, solar panels and other associated infrastructure located on the rising ground, as well as a new access route.

4.2.4 Potential Visual Effects of Development

Overall, there would be no effect on the views or visual amenity at the selected representative public viewpoints and associated visual receptors, due to the nature of the proposed development and its immediate landscape context, but also the level of screening and enclosure provided by the wooded farmland ridges and valleys in the wider area. Whilst the proposed development would be visible from within the existing British Gypsum Works site, this would be within the existing industrial context.

5.0 Conclusions

This appraisal of potential landscape and visual effects has concluded that the proposed development would result in limited and site specific/localised landscape and visual effects. The proposed development would not be detrimental to the overall character, qualities and appearance (in views) of the site and its surrounding environment, including the High Weald AONB.

The undulating nature of the surrounding landscape and the dominance of woodland visually contain the site and also mean that there is a limited number and separation to potential visual receptors, such as local residents, road and footpath users.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Method used in Assessing Landscape and Visual Effects

Introduction

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of the effects of development on *"landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity"* (GLVIA3[1], paragraph 1.1). Although it refers to landscape, GLVIA3 (paragraphs 2.6 - 2.8) also makes clear that the same principles apply to townscapes and seascapes. GLVIA3 is the main source of guidance on the principles and processes of LVIA and recognises that, having signed and ratified the European Landscape Convention, the United Kingdom government has obligations to deal with such matters. The guidance also takes into account the formal requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment in response to European Union Directives.

Landscape is a definable set of characteristics resulting from the interaction of natural, physical and human factors: it is a resource in its own right. Its assessment is distinct from visual assessment, which deals specifically with effects on the views and visual amenity of different groups of people at particular locations. GLVIA3 (paragraph 2.22) makes clear that these two elements, although inter-related, should be assessed separately and that the assessment should clearly demonstrate the difference between them.

As GLVIA3 (paragraph 2.23) states, professional judgement is an important part of the LVIA process: whilst there may be some scope for objective measurement of landscape and visual changes, much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements. It is critical that these judgements are based upon a clear and transparent method so that the reasoning can be followed and examined by others.

GLVIA3 sets out a framework for making judgements about the level of effects that may result from change or development. It describes a step by step approach in which: judgements about the value and susceptibility of the receptor are combined into a judgement about sensitivity; judgements about the size/scale of the effect, its geographical extent and its duration and reversibility are combined into a judgement about the magnitude of the effect; and finally, the judgements about sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the effect are combined to judge the level of the effect. If the assessment forms part of an EIA, a threshold may then be identified to show which effects are considered to be significant and which are not. In non-EIA appraisals this step is not required though levels of effect may be described in terms of their relative importance.

GLVIA3 is not prescriptive about exactly how the various judgments required in this framework should be made. This is a matter for individual practitioners to decide and explain. This document therefore sets out the criteria and definitions used by SLR, in both EIA and non-EIA landscape and visual assessments, to make judgements about levels of effects and their importance or significance.

[1] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (Third Edition, April 2013)

Landscape Effects

Landscape, as defined in the European Landscape Convention, is "*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*", (Council of Europe, 2000). Landscape does not apply only to special or designated places, nor is it limited to countryside.

GLVIA3 (paragraph 5.34) recommends that the effect of the development on landscape receptors is assessed. Landscape receptors are the components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the proposed development, and can include individual elements (such as hedges or buildings), aesthetic and perceptual aspects (for example sense of naturalness, tranquillity or openness), or, at a larger scale, the character of a defined character area or landscape type. Designated landscapes, such as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), may also be treated as landscape receptors, in which case attention is also given to effects on their special qualities.

This assessment is being undertaken because the proposed development has the potential to remove or add elements to the landscape, to alter aesthetic or perceptual aspects, and to add, remove or alter characteristics and thus potentially change overall character.

Judging landscape effects requires a methodical assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors to the proposed development and the magnitude of effect which would be experienced by each receptor. The criteria and definitions used in making these judgements are set out below.

Landscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of landscape receptors is assessed by combining assessments of the value attached to each receptor and the susceptibility of each receptor to the type of change which is proposed. (GLVIA3, paragraph 5.39).

Value Attached to Landscape Receptors

Landscape value is generally assessed as part of the baseline and is not influenced by the nature of the project, whereas susceptibility and overall landscape sensitivity form part of the detailed assessment of the effects and are specific to the particular project and its landscape context.

Landscape receptors may be valued at community, local, national or international level. Existing landscape designations provide the starting point for this assessment, as set out in Table 1 below.

The table sets out the interpretation of landscape designations in terms of the value attached to different landscape receptors. As GLVIA3 (paragraph 5.24) notes, at the local scale of an LVIA study area it may be found that the landscape value of a specific area may sometimes be different to that suggested by the presence or absence of a formal designation.

Table 1: Interpretation of Landscape Designations

Designation	Description	Value
World Heritage Sites, candidate World Heritage Site	Unique sites, features or areas identified as being of international importance according to UNESCO criteria. Consideration should be given to their settings especially where these contribute to the attributes of outstanding universal value for which such an area of landscape is valued.	International
National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Scenic Areas (in Scotland)	Areas of landscape identified as being of national importance. Consideration should be given to their settings especially where these contribute to the special qualities for which the landscape is valued.	National

Designation	Description	Value
Parks, gardens and designed landscapes	Gardens and designed landscapes included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest as Grade I, II* or II or included in Historic Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland	National
Local Landscape Designations (such as Special Landscape Areas, Areas of Great Landscape Value and similar) included in local planning documents; or other landscapes of identified value	Areas of landscape identified as having value, which are either recognised at the local authority level by a local designation or other equivalent recognition of value OR are landscapes considered to have elevated value, having regard to the criteria in Table 2 below and/or by virtue of demonstrable physical attributes.	Local Authority
Undesignated landscapes	Landscapes which do not have any formal designation and which are not considered to have demonstrable physical attributes that elevate their value but which may be valued by local communities.	Community
Undesignated landscapes with negative attributes	Landscapes with no designations or demonstrable physical attributes that elevate their value, which are in poor condition or are degraded or fundamentally altered by presence of man-made structures judged to be intrusive.	Low

Where landscapes are not designated and where no other local authority guidance on value is available (for example, in the form of a landscape strategy, or information about previous local landscape designations, or a Landscape Character Assessment that, in the absence of a separate strategy, may be referred to in planning policies) an assessment is made by reference to criteria in the Table 2 below. This is based on Box 5.1 in GLVIA3 which in turn is based on the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance of 2002[2]. In such cases landscapes may be judged to be of local authority, community or low value on the basis of one or more of these factors.

An overall assessment is made for each receptor, based on an overview of the above criteria, to determine its value - whether for example it is comparable to a local authority landscape designation or similar, or whether it is of value to local people and communities. For example, an intact landscape in good condition, where scenic quality, tranquillity, and/or conservation interests make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important cultural or historical associations, might be of equivalent value to a local landscape designation. Conversely, a degraded landscape in poor condition, with no particular scenic qualities or natural or cultural heritage interest is likely to be considered of limited landscape value.

In applying the criteria, and in accordance with the judgement of Justice Ouseley,[3] an assessment is also made to determine whether the site has demonstrable physical attributes which elevate its value.

Table 2: Factors Considered in Assessing the Value of Non-Designated Landscapes

Factor	Criteria
Landscape Quality	Intactness of the landscape demonstrated by, for example: presence of characteristic natural and man-made elements, which are generally in good condition; absence of significant incongruous elements (or elements having only localised or temporary effects).

[2] Swanwick C and Land Use Consultants (2002), Landscape Character Assessment for England and Scotland, Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage

[3] CO/4082/2014 Neutral Citation Number: [2015] EWHC 488 (Admin) In the High Court of Justice Queen's Bench Division the Administrative Court Before: Mr Justice Ouseley Between: Stroud District Council, Claimant V Secretary of State for Communiti es and Local Government, Defendant

Factor	Criteria
Scenic Quality	General appeal of the landscape to the senses through, for example, combinations of some of the following: a clear and recognisable sense of place; striking landform or patterns of land cover; strong aesthetic qualities such as scale, form, colour and texture; simplicity or diversity; presence of ephemeral or seasonal interest.
Rarity	Presence of landscape character areas, types or features that are relatively rare in the local area.
Representativeness	Presence of locally important examples representing particular landscape character areas or types or particular characteristics/features/elements.
Conservation Interests	Presence of some of the following **where they contribute positively to experience of the landscape**: natural heritage features, including geological or geomorphological features, wildlife, and habitats, including those that are designated or notified as SSSIs and features such as veteran trees or trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders; cultural heritage features, including buildings, especially listed buildings, settlements including conservation areas, gardens, parkland and other designed landscapes not on the register, and historic landscape types which demonstrate the time depth of the landscape.
Recreation Value	The extent to which experience of the landscape makes an important contribution to recreational use and enjoyment of an area.
Perceptual Aspects including tranquillity	Presence of ephemeral or seasonal interest and/or notable sensory stimuli such as sounds and smells, qualities of light, or weather patterns. Opportunities to experience a sense of relative wildness and/or relative tranquillity in comparison with other local landscapes in the vicinity, demonstrated by degree of influence of overt man-made structures, level of visual and audible intrusions, and degree of perceived naturalness.
Associations	Evidence that the landscape is associated with locally important written descriptions of the landscape, or artistic representation of it in any media, or events in history, or notable people or important cultural traditions or beliefs.

Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors to Change

As set out in GLVIA3, susceptibility refers to the ability of the landscape receptor to "a*ccommodate the proposed development without undue adverse consequences for the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies*". Judgement of susceptibility is particular to the specific characteristics of the proposed development and the ability of a particular landscape or feature to accommodate the type of change proposed, and makes reference to the criteria set out in Table 3 below. Aspects of the character of the landscape that may be affected by a particular type of development include landform, skylines, land cover, enclosure, human influences including settlement pattern and aesthetic and perceptual aspects such as the scale of the landscape, its form, line, texture, pattern and grain, complexity, and its sense of movement, remoteness, wildness or tranquillity. They will vary with the type of development in question.

For example, an urban landscape which contains a number of industrial buildings may have a low susceptibility to buildings of a similar scale and character. Conversely a rural landscape containing only remote farmsteads is likely to have a high susceptibility to large scale built development.

Table 3: Landscape Receptor Susceptibility to Change

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	The landscape receptor is highly susceptible to the proposed development because the key characteristics of the landscape have no or very limited ability to accommodate it without transformational adverse effects, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape.
Medium	The landscape receptor is moderately susceptible to the proposed development because the relevant characteristics of the landscape have some ability to accommodate it without transformational adverse effects, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape.

Susceptibility	Criteria
Low	The landscape receptor has low susceptibility to the proposed development because the relevant characteristics of the landscape are generally able to accommodate it without transformational adverse effects, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape.

Defining Sensitivity

As noted above, the sensitivity of landscape receptors is defined in terms of the relationship between value and susceptibility to the proposed change, as indicated in Figure 1 and Table 4. These summarise the general nature of the relationship but the combination of the two factors is not formulaic. Table 4 provides examples of common combinations but is not comprehensive and other combinations may be judged appropriate. Professional judgement is applied on a case by case basis in determining the sensitivity of individual receptors with the diagram and table only serving as a guide.

Where, taking into account the component judgements about the value and susceptibility of the landscape receptor, sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment of high/medium or medium/low may be adopted. In a few limited cases a category of less than low (very low) may be used where the landscape is of low value and susceptibility is particularly low.

Figure 1: Example Levels of Sensitivity defined by Value and Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors

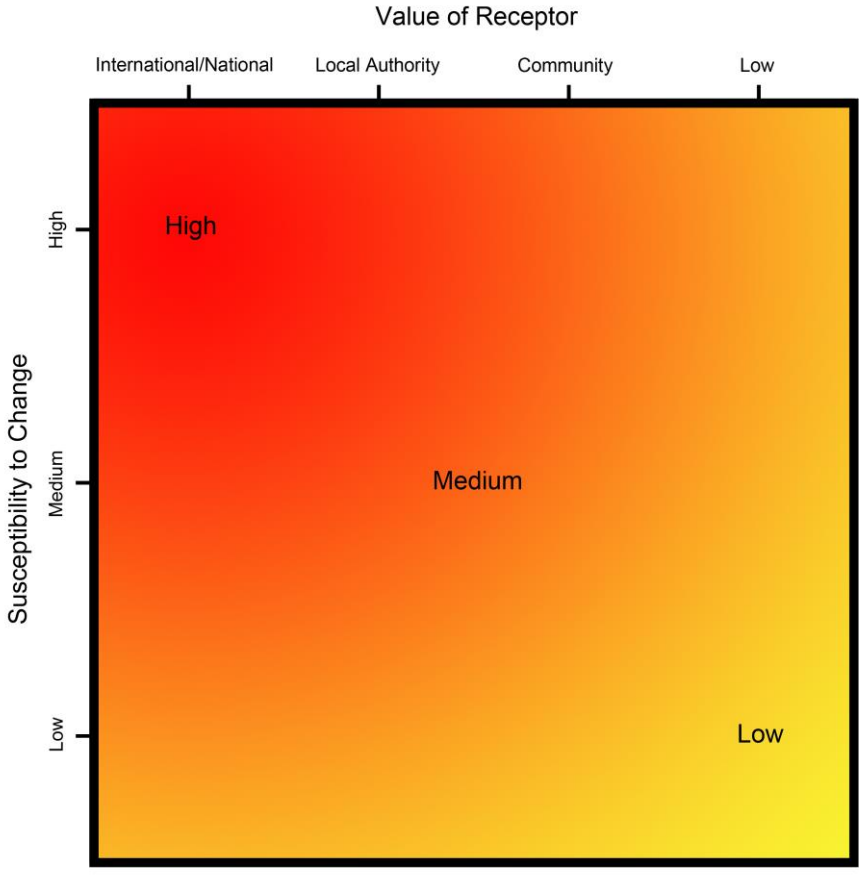


Table 4: Example Levels of Sensitivity defined by Value and Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors

Sensitivity	Criteria
High	The landscape receptor is of international or national value and is considered to have high susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development OR The landscape receptor is of national value and is considered to have medium susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development OR The landscape receptor is of local authority value and is considered to have high susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development
Medium	The landscape receptor is of international or national value and is considered to have low susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development OR The landscape receptor is of local authority value and is considered to have medium susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development OR The landscape receptor is of community value and is considered to have high susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development
Low	The landscape receptor is of local authority value and is considered to have low susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development OR The landscape receptor is of community value and is considered to have medium susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development OR The landscape receptor is of community value and is considered to have low susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development

Magnitude of Landscape Change

The magnitude of landscape change is established by assessing the size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration and potential reversibility of the change.

Size and Scale of Change

The size and/or scale of change in the landscape takes into consideration the following factors:

- the loss or addition of landscape elements; and/or
- the degree to which aesthetic/perceptual aspects are altered; and
- whether this is likely to change the key characteristics of the landscape.

The criteria used to assess the size and scale of landscape change are based upon the amount of change that will occur as a result of the proposed development, as described in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Size/Scale of Change

Category	Description
Large level of landscape change	There would be a large level of change in landscape character, and especially to the key characteristics if, for example, the proposed development:

Category	Description
	• becomes a dominant feature in the landscape, changing the balance of landscape characteristics; and/or • would dominate important visual connections with other landscape types, where this is a key characteristic of the area.
Medium level of landscape change	There would be a medium level of change in landscape character, and especially to the key characteristics if, for example: • the proposed development would be more prominent but would not change the overall balance or composition of the landscape; and/or • key visual connections to other landscape types may be interrupted intermittently by the proposed development, but these connections would not be dominated by them.
Small level of landscape change	There would be a small level of change in landscape character, and especially to the key characteristics if, for example: • there would be no introduction of new elements into the landscape and the proposed development would not significantly change the composition/balance of the landscape.
Negligible level of landscape change/ No change	There would be a negligible level of change in landscape character, and especially to the key characteristics if, for example, the proposed development would be a small element and/or would be a considerable distance from the landscape receptor/ the proposed development will cause no change to the landscape.

Geographical Extent of Change

The geographical extent of landscape change is assessed by determining the area over which the changes will influence the landscape, as set out in Table 6. For example, this could be at the site level, in the immediate setting of the site, or over some or all of the landscape character types or areas affected.

Table 6: Geographical Extent

Category	Description
Large extent of landscape change	The change will affect all or the majority of the landscape receptor under consideration.
Medium extent of landscape change	The change will affect approximately half of the landscape receptor under consideration.
Small extent of landscape change	The change will affect a small extent of the landscape receptor under consideration.
Negligible extent of landscape change	The change will affect only a limited or negligible extent of the landscape receptor under consideration.

Duration and Reversibility of Change

The duration of the landscape change is categorised in Table 7 below, which considers whether the change will be permanent and irreversible or temporary and reversible.

Table 7: Duration and Reversibility

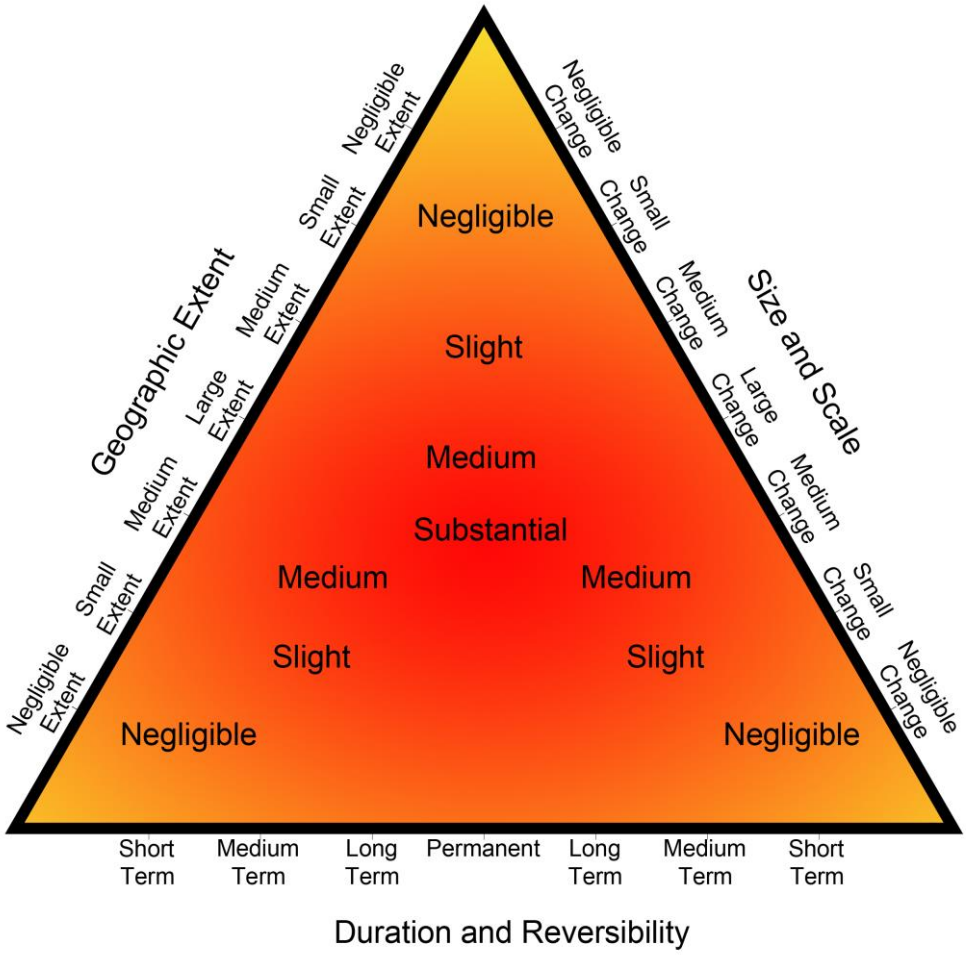
Category	Description
Permanent/ Irreversible	Change that will last for over 25 years and is deemed permanent or irreversible.

Category	Description
Long term reversible	Change that will endure for between 10 and 25 years and is potentially, or theoretically reversible.
Medium term reversible	Change that will last for up to 10 years and is wholly or partially reversible.
Temporary/ Short term reversible	Change that will last from 0 to 5 years and is reversible - includes construction effects.

Deciding on Overall Magnitude of Landscape Change

The relationships between the three factors that contribute to assessment of the magnitude of landscape effects are illustrated graphically, as a guide, in Figure 2 below. Various combinations are possible and the overall magnitude of each effect is determined using professional judgement rather than by formulaic application of the relationships in the diagram.

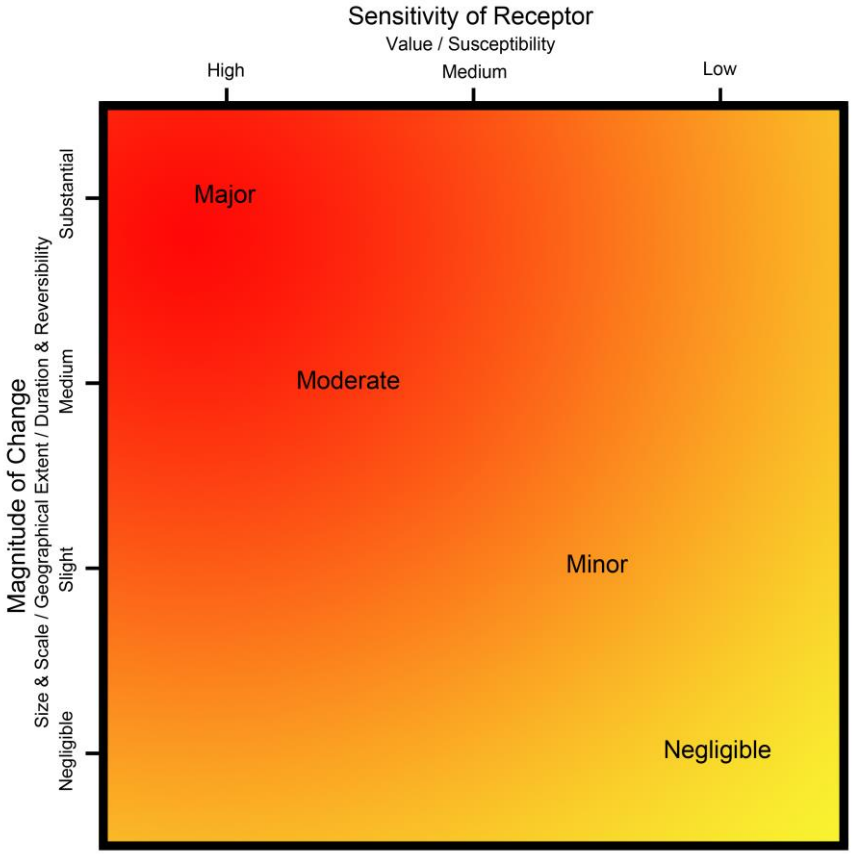
Figure 2: Determining the Magnitude of Landscape Change



Assessment of Landscape Effects and Significance

The assessment of landscape effects, and whether these are significant or not significant, is defined in terms of the relationship between the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the change. The diagram below (Figure 3) summarises the nature of the relationship but it is not formulaic. Judgements are made about each landscape effect using this diagram as a guide.

Figure 3: Assessment of Landscape Effects and Overall Significance



Effects that fall in the red (darker) section of the diagram, that is those which are considered to be **major** and **major/moderate** effects by virtue of the more sensitive receptors and the greater magnitude of effects, are generally considered to be the **significant landscape effects**. Those effects falling outside the major or major/ moderate categories are generally considered to be not significant. However, it should be noted that GLVIA3 states *"there are no hard and fast rules about what effects should be deemed significant"* and in some cases professional judgement may determine that a moderate effect is significant. Moderate effects are considered individually on a case by case basis, to determine whether each effect is considered to be significant or not significant. In determining whether moderate effects are or are not significant, particular attention is given to the constituent judgements leading to the assessment of a moderate effect and particularly to value, susceptibility and size/scale of effect, and in addition whether the effect is found across a number of receptors or in a pattern that intensifies the overall impact.

Visual Effects

Visual effects are the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity. Visual receptors are the people whose views may be affected by the proposed development. They may include:

- Communities within settlements (i.e. towns, villages and hamlets);
- Residents of individual properties and clusters of properties outside settlements;
- People using nationally designated or regionally promoted footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways and others using areas of Open Access Land agreed under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;
- Users of the local public rights of way (PRoW) network;
- Visitors at publicly accessible sites including, for example, gardens and designed landscapes, historic sites, and other visitor attractions or outdoor recreational facilities where the landscape or seascape is an important part of the experience;
- Users of outdoor sport and recreation facilities;
- Visitors staying at caravan parks or camp sites;
- Road users on recognised scenic or promoted tourist routes;
- Travellers using other roads who may pass through the study area because they are visiting, living or working there;
- Rail passengers; and
- People at their place of work.

Judging visual effects requires a methodical assessment of the sensitivity of the visual receptors to the proposed development and the magnitude of effect which would be experienced by each receptor.

Viewpoints are chosen, in discussion with the competent authority and other stakeholders and interested parties, for a variety of reasons but most commonly because they represent views experienced by relevant groups of people although they may also include specific promoted or otherwise important viewpoints.

Visual Sensitivity

Sensitivity of visual receptors is assessed by combining an assessment of the susceptibility of visual receptors to the type of change which is proposed with the value attached to the views. (GLVIA3, paragraph 6.30).

Value Attached to Views

Different levels of value are attached to the views experienced by particular groups of people at particular viewpoints. Assessment of value takes account of a number of factors, including:

- Recognition of the view through some form of planning designation or by its association with particular heritage assets; and
- The popularity of the viewpoint, in part denoted by its appearance in guidebooks, literature or art, or on tourist maps, by information from stakeholders and by the evidence of use including facilities provided for its enjoyment (seating, signage, parking places, etc.); and
- Other evidence of the value attached to views by people including consultation with local planning authorities, some of whom have carried out assessments of valued views, and professional assessment of the quality of views.

- The assessment of the value of views is summarised in Table 8 below. These criteria are provided for guidance only.

Table 8: Examples of Factors Considered in assessing the Value Attached to Views

Value	Criteria
High	Views from nationally (and in some cases internationally) known viewpoints, which: • have some form of planning designation; or • are associated with internationally or nationally designated landscapes or important heritage assets; or • are promoted in sources such as maps and tourist literature; or • are linked with important and popular visitor attractions where the view forms a recognised part of the visitor experience; or • have important cultural associations. Also, may include views judged by assessors to be of high value.
Medium	Views from viewpoints of some importance at regional or local levels, which: • have some form of local planning designation associated with locally designated landscapes or areas of equivalent landscape quality; or • are promoted in local sources; or • are linked with locally important and popular visitor attractions where the view forms a recognised part of the visitor experience; or • have important local cultural associations. Also, may include views judged by the assessors to be of medium value.
Low	Views from viewpoints which, although they may have value to local people: • have no formal planning status; or • are not associated with designated or otherwise high-quality landscapes; or • are not linked with popular visitor attractions; or • have no known cultural associations. Also, may include views judged by the assessors to be of low value.

Where judgements are made about the value attached to views experienced by residential receptors, the following considerations also apply:

- Views in a rural or designed context (e.g. an avenue of trees or designed view from a parkland), especially if associated with landscapes of national or local authority value, where residential receptors are positioned to take advantage of the views, will generally be considered to be of high value;
- Views in a semi-rural or general townscape context, and/or where locations of residential receptors are not positioned to take full advantage of views, will generally be considered of medium value; and
- Views in an urban/industrial context, and/or where locations of residential receptors are not positioned to take advantage of views, will generally be considered of low value.

Susceptibility of Visual Receptors to Change

The susceptibility of different types of people to changes in views is mainly a function of:

- The occupation or activity of the viewer at a given viewpoint; and

- The extent to which the viewer's attention or interest be focussed on a particular view and the visual amenity experienced at a given view.

The susceptibility of different groups of viewers is assessed with reference to the guidance in Table 9 below. However, as noted in GLVIA3 "*this division is not black and white and, in reality, there will be a gradation in susceptibility to change*". Therefore, the susceptibility of each group of people affected is considered for each project and assessments are included in the relevant text in the report.

Table 9: Visual Receptor Susceptibility to Change

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	Residents; People engaged in outdoor recreation where their attention is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views; Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where views of the surroundings are an important part of the experience; Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by the residents.
Medium	Travellers on scenic routes where the attention of drivers and passengers is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views. People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which may involve appreciation of views e.g. users of golf courses.
Low	People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which does not involve appreciation of views; People at their place of work whose attention is focused on their work; where the setting is not important to quality of working life; Travellers, where the view is incidental to the journey.

Defining Sensitivity

As noted above, the sensitivity of visual receptors is defined in terms of the relationship between the value of views and the susceptibility of the different receptors to the proposed change, as indicated in Figure 4 and Table 10. These summarise the general nature of the relationship but the combination of the two factors is not formulaic. Table 10 provides examples of common combinations but is not comprehensive and other combinations may be judged appropriate. Professional judgement is applied on a case by case basis in determining the sensitivity of individual receptors with the diagram and table only serving as a guide.

Where, taking into account the component judgements about the value and susceptibility of the visual receptor, sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment of high/medium or medium/low may be adopted. In a few limited cases a category of less than low (very low) may be used where the visual receptor is of low value and susceptibility is particularly low.

Figure 4: Levels of Sensitivity Defined by Value and Susceptibility of Visual Receptor Groups

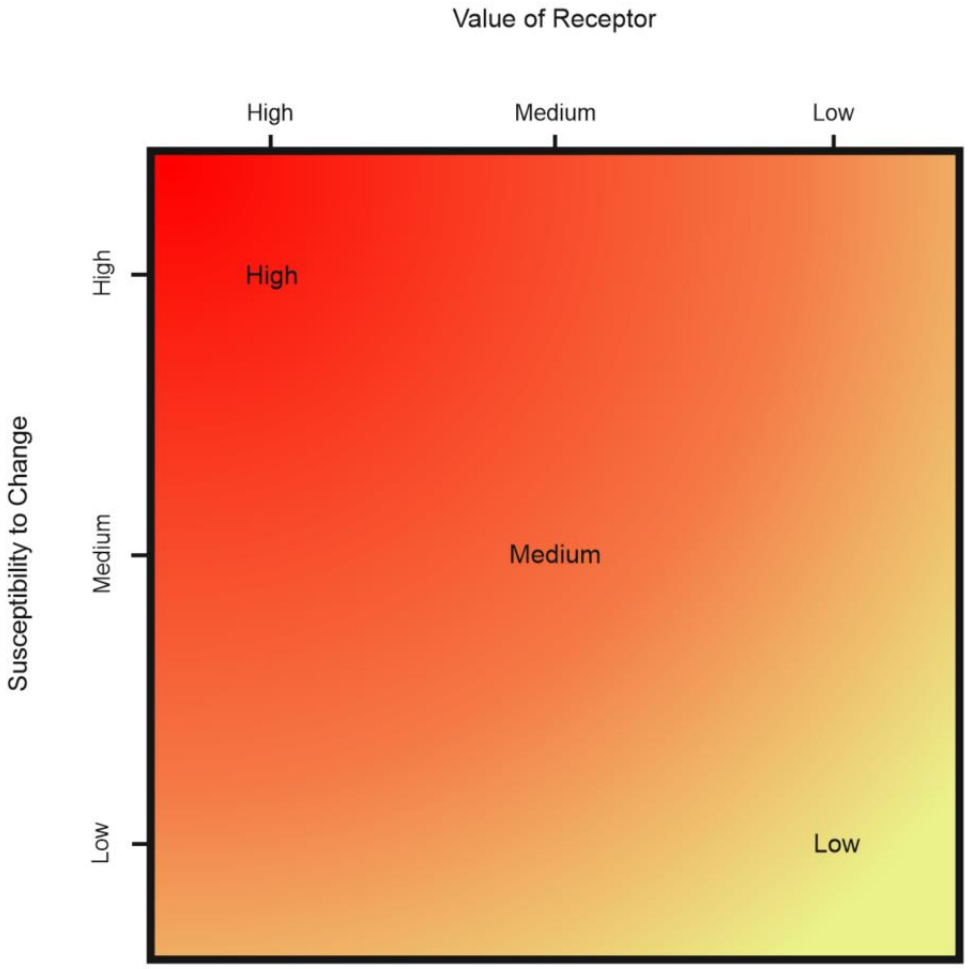


Table 10: Example Levels of Sensitivity defined by Value and Susceptibility of Visual Receptors

Sensitivity	Criteria
High	The visual receptor group is highly susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of high value OR The visual receptor group has a medium level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of high value OR The visual receptor group is highly susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the medium level.

Sensitivity	Criteria
Medium	The visual receptor group is highly susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the low level OR The visual receptor group has a medium level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the medium level OR The visual receptor group has a low level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the high level.
Low	The visual receptor group has a medium level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the low level OR The visual receptor group has a low level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the medium level OR The visual receptor group has a low level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the low level.

Magnitude of Visual Change

The magnitude of visual change is established by assessing the size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration and potential reversibility of the change. Representative viewpoints are used as "*sample*" points to assess the typical change experienced by different groups of visual receptors at different distances and directions from the proposed development.

Size and Scale of Change

The criteria used to assess the size/scale of visual change are as follows:

- the scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view, changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development and distance of view;
- the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of factors such as form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture; and
- the nature of the view of the proposed development, for example whether views will be full, partial or glimpses or sequential views while passing through the landscape.

The above criteria are summarised in the Table 11 below.

Table 11: Size/Scale of Change

Category	Criteria
Large visual change	The proposed development will cause a complete or large change in the view, resulting from the loss of important features in or the addition of important new ones, to the extent that this will substantially alter the composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers.
Medium visual change	The proposed development will cause a clearly noticeable change in the view, resulting from the loss of features or the addition of new ones, to the extent that this will alter to a moderate degree the composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers. Views may be partial/intermittent.

Category	Criteria
Small visual change	The proposed development will cause a perceptible change in the view, resulting from the loss of features or the addition of new ones, to the extent that this will partially alter the composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers. Views may be partial only.
Negligible visual change	The proposed development will cause a barely perceptible change in the view, resulting from the loss of features or the addition of new ones, to the extent that this will barely alter the composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers. Views may be glimpsed only.
No change	The proposed development will cause no change to the view.

Geographical Extent of Change

The geographical extent of the visual change identified at representative viewpoints is assessed by reference to a combination of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), where this has been prepared, and field work. The way that geographical extent is assessed varies with circumstances.

Most commonly a number of representative viewpoints are used as *"sample"* points to assess the typical change experienced by a particular group of visual receptors in locations at different distances and directions from the proposed development. In such cases the geographical extent of the visual change is judged for each group of receptors (for example, people using a particular route or public amenity) drawing on the relevant viewpoint assessments, plus information about the approximate number and distribution of that particular group of people in the Study Area. For example, the geographical extent would be small if the change is experienced at only one or two locations and/or by a smaller number of viewers. Community views may, for example, be experienced from a small number of dwellings, or affect numerous properties in the community, or several different communities. Similarly, changes to a view from a public footpath may be visible from a single isolated viewpoint (small geographical extent), or over a prolonged stretch of the route (large geographical extent).

In the case of individual (rather than representative) viewpoints in a specific location, the following factors (as noted in GLVIA), are considered in judging geographical extent:

- the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
- the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development; and
- the extent of the area over which changes would be visible.

For example, from an elevated area of Open Access Land the proposed development may be widely visible from much or all of the accessible area, be close to it and so occupy a wide angle of the view, suggesting large geographical extent. Alternatively, the proposed development may be visible from only a small proportion of the area, be quite distant from it and so occupy a small proportion of the view, suggesting small geographical extent.

Table 12 describes the most common categories of geographical extent based on these two approaches.

Table 12: Geographical Extent of Change

Category	Description
Large extent of visual change	Either: The proposed development is seen by the group of receptors in many locations across the Study Area or from the majority, or a large proportion, of a linear route and/or by large numbers of viewers; Or: The proposed development is visible from much or all of a specific site is close to it and so occupies a wide angle of the view. .
Medium extent of visual change	Either: The proposed development is seen by the group of receptors in several locations across the Study Area or from a moderate proportion of a linear route and/or by moderate numbers of viewers; Or: The proposed development is visible from a moderate part of a specific site, is at a moderate distance from it and so occupies a moderate angle of the view.

Category	Description
Small extent of visual change	Either: The proposed development is seen by the group of receptors at a small number of locations across the Study Area or from limited sections of a linear route and/or by a small numbers of viewers; Or: The proposed development is visible from a small part of a specific site, is at some distance from it and so occupies a small angle of the view.
Negligible extent of visual change	Either: The proposed development is not visible in the Study Area or is seen by the group of receptors at only one or two locations or from a very short length of a linear route and/or by a very small number of viewers; OR: The proposed development is visible from only a very small part of a site, is at a considerable distance from it and so occupies a very small angle of the view.

Duration and Reversibility of Change

The duration of the visual change at viewpoints is categorised in Table 13 below, which considers whether views will be permanent and irreversible or temporary and reversible.

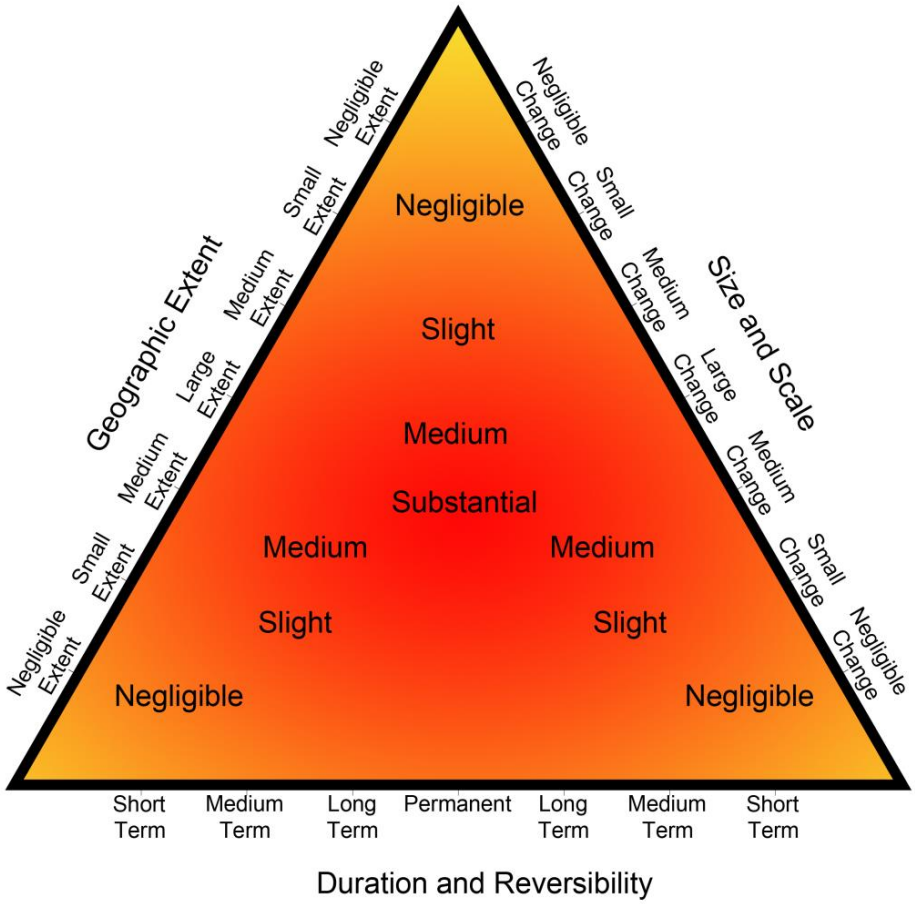
Table 13: Duration and Reversibility

Category	Description
Permanent/ Irreversible	Change that will last for over 25 years and is deemed permanent or irreversible.
Long term reversible	Change that will endure for between 10 and 25 years and is potentially, or theoretically reversible.
Medium term reversible	Change that will last for up to 10 years and is wholly or partially reversible.
Temporary/ Short term reversible	Change that will last from 0 to 5 years and is reversible - includes construction effects.

Deciding on Overall Magnitude of Visual Change

The relationships between the three factors that contribute to assessment of the magnitude of visual effects are illustrated graphically, as a guide, in Figure 5 below. Various combinations are possible and the overall magnitude of each effect is made using professional judgement rather than by formulaic application of the relationships in the diagram.

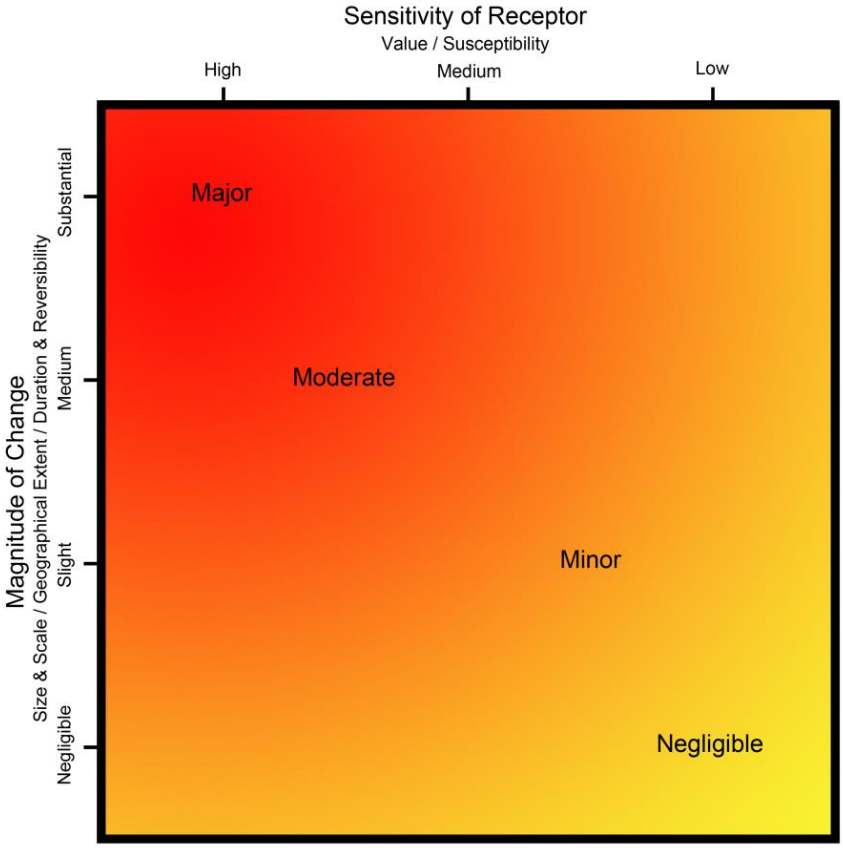
Figure 5: Determining the Magnitude of Visual Change



Assessment of Visual Effects and Significance

The assessment of visual effects, and whether these are significant or not significant, is defined in terms of the relationship between the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the magnitude of the change. The diagram below (Figure 6) summarises the nature of the relationship but it is not formulaic and only indicates broad levels of effect. Judgements are made about each visual effect using this diagram as a guide.

Figure 6: Assessment of Visual Effects and Overall Significance



Effects that fall in the red (darker) section of the diagram, that is those which are considered to be **major** and **major/moderate** effects by virtue of the more sensitive receptors and the greater magnitude of effects, are generally considered to be the **significant visual effects**. Those effects falling outside the major or major/ moderate categories are generally considered to be not significant. However, it should be noted that GLVIA3 states *"there are no hard and fast rules about what effects should be deemed significant"* and in some cases professional judgement may determine that a moderate effect is significant. Moderate effects are considered individually on a case by case basis, to determine whether each effect is considered to be significant or not significant. In determining whether moderate effects are or are not significant, particular attention is given to the constituent judgements leading to the assessment of a moderate effect and particularly to value, susceptibility and size/scale of effect, and in addition whether the effect is found across a number of receptors or in a pattern that intensifies the overall impact.

DRAWINGS

EUROPEAN OFFICES

United Kingdom

AYLESBURY
T: +44 (0)1844 337380

BELFAST
belfast@slrconsulting.com

BRADFORD-ON-AVON
T: +44 (0)1225 309400

BRISTOL
T: +44 (0)117 9064280

CARDIFF
T: +44 (0)2920 491010

CHELMSFORD
T: +44 (0)1245 392170

EDINBURGH
T: +44 (0)131 3356830

EXETER
T: +44 (0)1392 490152

GLASGOW
glasgow@slrconsulting.com

GUILDFORD
guildford@slrconsulting.com

LONDON
T: +44 (0)203 6915810

MAIDSTONE
T: +44 (0)1622 609242

MANCHESTER (Denton)
T: +44 (0)161 5498410

MANCHESTER (Media City)
T: +44 (0)161 8727564

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
T: +44 (0)191 2611966

NOTTINGHAM
T: +44 (0)115 9647280

SHEFFIELD
T: +44 (0)114 2455153

SHREWSBURY
T: +44 (0)1743 239250

STIRLING
T: +44 (0)1786 239900

WORCESTER
T: +44 (0)1905 751310

Ireland

DUBLIN
T: +353 (0)1 296 4667

France

GRENOBLE
T: +33 (0)4 76 70 93 41