Outline Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
CLEATOR MILLS, CLEATOR, CUMBRIA

Prepared on behalf of Gleeson Homes Ltd

Westwood Landscape

September 2020

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Revision:	
Date issued:	September 2020
Checked by:	HH

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Westwood Landscape Ltd, a Landscape Institute registered landscape design consultancy based in Carlisle, was commissioned by Gleeson Homes Ltd in August 2020 to undertake an outline Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed residential development on land at Cleator Mills, Cleator, Cumbria (herein referred to as 'the proposed development').

1.2 This report provides an appraisal of the effects of the proposed development on landscape as a resource and on views available to people and their visual amenity. It will form part of a Planning Application to Copeland Borough Council.

The site and proposed development

1.3 The proposed development is for 115 houses on semi-improved agricultural land with a gentle gradient falling southwards on the north-eastern edge of the settlement of Cleator and accessed from the A5086 road (Main Street joining Trumpet Terrace). The Site Location Plan (**Appendix 1 Photographic Landscape Appraisal**) indicates the location of the site in relation to the existing residential areas in the town, the adjacent redundant buildings of Cleator Mills and the surrounding agricultural land.

1.4 A full description of the proposed development is included in the Design and Access Statement and proposed plans provided by Knapton and Knapton Ltd.

Structure of this report

1.5 The report is organised in the following sections which are based on the processes outlined in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (GLVIA3):

- **Scope of appraisal:** the scope of the appraisal is based on the experience of Westwood Landscape undertaking previous landscape and visual appraisals for housing developments of similar scale and location as the proposed development;
- **Methodology:** an outline of the methodology and relevant guidance that has informed the LVIA;
- **Planning and legal context:** Refer to separate report for a review of planning policies, landscape designations and landscape strategies relevant to landscape and visual matters.

- **Proposed development:** a description of components of the proposed development that are of particular relevance to the appraisal of landscape and visual effects including the proposed landscape strategy;
- **Baseline conditions:** information on the baseline landscape and visual conditions;
- **Identification of landscape and visual effects:** a systematic identification and description of potential landscape and visual effects and effects on the appearance and character of the area of countryside surrounding the proposed development site; and
- **Assessment of landscape and visual effects:** a systematic and transparent assessment of the likely level of the effects identified.

2 SCOPE OF THE APPRAISAL

2.1 The scope of the appraisal is based on a desk study and site visits to assess the nature of the site and the proposed development and its possible effects. This is a broad outline assessment which is considered to be adequate for the moderate scale of the development and suitable to develop a Landscape Strategy to support the application. No detailed LVIA assessment and visualisations of selected viewpoints is included.

Study area

2.2 The study area for the assessment of landscape and visual effects includes the site itself and the wider landscape around it which the proposed development may influence in a significant manner. A preliminary study area of radius of 2 Km from the centre of the site within which the proposed development may potentially be visible was established. A digitally generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) was not considered necessary as the extent of visibility was clearly evident on site.

2.3 Following an initial site visit in September 2020 it was concluded that due to the limited height of the proposed development, and presence of landscape features including an enclosed landform, extensive trees and hedges, the proposed development would be unlikely to cause any significant landscape and visual effects on receptors beyond approximately 2 Km from the site.

2.4 No contact has been made with the Local Planning Authority to agree key visual receptors as the photographic landscape analysis covers all receptors comprehensively in a broad outline assessment.

Key landscape and visual issues

2.5 The proposed development is likely to give rise to landscape effects within the study area as a consequence of the character of the site changing from grazed agricultural land to residential development. Landscape effects are concerned with changes to the physical landscape, including effects on its character as a whole and on the individual elements contributing to this character.

2.6 It is predicted that the landscape receptors likely to be affected during the construction and operation of the proposed development would include:

- Lowland landscape character type and Urban Fringe sub type (and adjacent Ridge and Valley sub-type) within which the site lies due to change from semi-improved grassland to an urban form; and

- Physical features on the site such as semi-improved grassland and some hedgerow will require removal to accommodate the proposed development.

2.7 The proposed development is likely to give rise to visual effects within the study area as a consequence of the character of the site changing from an area of semi-improved grassland to an urban form. Visual effects are the effects of the proposed development on the views available to people and their visual amenity. The Photographic analysis (Appendix 1) illustrates the indicative extent of the surrounding area from which views of the proposed development may be available which is restricted by landscape features including landform, trees, hedges and buildings. Views from the north are curtailed by the rising landform and buildings with views restricted to the properties on the edge of the settlement. Views from the west and east are also largely restricted by the existing buildings and trees with only a few houses close to the west site boundary getting views of the development. To the south-east the land rises steeply to the hills NW Top and Dent (500m AOD) with dense woodland to the lower slopes which restricts views except for some occasional viewpoints on the Wath Bridge to Egremont minor road on the lower slopes from which the development will be visible.

2.8 It is predicted that the following visual receptors, selected to represent the range of visual receptor type and sensitivity, are likely to experience a change in their views during the construction and operation of the proposed development:

- Residents in properties at Acorn Bank, Cleator close to the south-west site boundary (Photo 2)

- Residents in properties at Brookside, Cleator close to the north- east site boundary (Photo 4)

- Residents in and adjacent to properties at Cross Grove, Cleator close to the north site boundary (Photo 4)

- Motorists passing the site on the A5086 road, Main Street, Cleator adjacent to the north site boundary (Photos 4, 6 and 10)

- Residents in properties at Hawthorne Fields, Cleator close to the west site boundary (Photos 11 and 12)

- Residents in properties at Black How Farm on the Wath Bridge to Egremont minor road. (Photo 22)
- Users of the wider network of public rights of way footpaths in the surrounding landscape including the Coast to Coast long distance footpath at Black How Farm (Photo 22).

Limitations of the appraisal

2.9 The appraisal was undertaken during the late Summer when the foliage on deciduous trees was present therefore increasing the screening and/or filtering of views of the development. During winter months there would be a significant reduction in vegetative screening. The Photographic Landscape Appraisal is limited to a series of representative viewpoints considered as sufficient to illustrate likely effects on visual receptors. No detailed assessment or visualisations were carried out as this report is an outline LVIA to support a moderate scale development.

3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

3.1 The methodology for the assessment of landscape and visual effects of the proposed development follows the current best practice approach for the process of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and draws upon information contained within the following documents:

- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA Third Edition)* (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013) and
- *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (Natural England, 2014).

3.2 The methodology is described in full in Appendix 5.

Process

3.3 The LVIA process is non-prescriptive and informed objective and subjective judgments are made in the appraisal of landscape and visual effects. For this appraisal, a structured approach consistent with good practice has been followed:

- Specifying the nature of the proposed development;
- Establishing a baseline by describing the existing landscape and the views and visual amenity in the area that may be affected;
- Identifying the effects of the proposed development; and
- Assessing the effects of the proposed development.

3.4 There are two elements of a LVIA:

1. Assessment of landscape effects: assessing the effects of the proposed development on landscape as a resource (GLVIA3 paragraph 5.1).
2. Assessment of visual effects: assessing the effects of the proposed development on the views available to people and their visual amenity (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.1).

Assessment of landscape effects

3.5 A landscape baseline is established to provide an understanding of the landscape in the area that may be affected – its constituent elements, its character and the way this varies spatially, its geographic extent, its history, its condition, the way the landscape is experienced and the value attached to it.

3.6 It references existing published landscape character assessments and describes the site and its context. The value of landscape is considered by a review of existing landscape designations and the value attached to undesignated landscapes and individual elements of the landscape, such as trees, buildings and hedgerows.

3.7 The landscape and ecological value and quality of existing trees, hedges and grassland on the site has not been assessed in details. No detailed ecological surveys were carried out.

3.8 The baseline information is combined with an understanding of the details of the proposed development to identify and describe the likely landscape effects.

3.9 An assessment of landscape effects considers: the sensitivity of landscape receptors (components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the proposed development) with reference to their susceptibility to change and their value; and the magnitude of change to the landscape receptors as a result of the proposed development with reference to the size and scale of the effect, the geographical extent of the effect and the duration/ reversibility of the effect.

3.10 An overall level of effect is determined by combining judgements on sensitivity and magnitude of change.

3.11 The criteria used to make judgements about landscape effects is set out in Appendix 5 including definitions of a high or low value landscape and a landscape with a high or low susceptibility to change.

Assessment of visual effects

3.12 A visual baseline is established by identifying the extent of the visibility of the proposed development, the different groups of people who may experience views of the proposed development, the viewpoints where they would be affected and the nature of the views at these points.

3.13 An assessment of visual effects considers: the sensitivity of visual receptors with reference to their susceptibility to change and the value of the view; and the magnitude of change as a

result of the proposed development with reference to the size and scale of the effect, the duration of the effect and the reversibility of the effect.

3.14 An overall level of effect is assessed by combining judgements on sensitivity and magnitude of change and a judgement is made on whether the effect is positive, negative or neutral in its consequences for views and visual amenity.

3.15 GLVIA3 states that there are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, but the following points should be noted:

- Effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant.
- Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant.
- Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view.

3.16 The criteria used to make judgements about visual effects is set out in Appendix 5 including definitions as to what might define a high or low value view or visual receptors with a high or low susceptibility to change.

4 PLANNING AND LEGAL CONTEXT

Introduction

4.1 Refer to separate Planning report.

Designated landscapes

Designation

4.2 Designated landscapes can be an indicator of the recognised value of a landscape. The site is not located within any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations. The closest point of the Lake District National Park is 1.5 Km to the north-east just east of Wath Bridge. The development site will not be visible from here and views from more distant higher ground of the lake district fells to the north east will be at long distances (eg Murton Fell summit 9 Km) which will ensure that the potential visual effect will be

negligible. The landscape character and setting of the LDNP will not be affected. The Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is situated 23 Km to the north of the site and will be unaffected by the development. The river Ehen corridor is a SSSI and a SAC to protect its habitats and this is just 15m from the development site boundary at its closest point. There will be some degree of impact on the setting of the SSSI/ SAC in both the construction and operational phases including light and noise impact. These factors must be carefully assessed at the detailed design stage. Refer to the Ecology report for a more detailed analysis.

4.3 Landscape strategies

The Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit

4.4 The Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit maps and describes the character of different landscape types across the county and provides guidance to help maintain their distinctiveness. It was published by Cumbria County Council in March 2011 to provide a baseline of information for use by land owners, managers, developers, communities and planning authorities when making decisions on future land use and management. It supports the local development frameworks and influences where future development takes place and what it might look like. It addresses the aims of the European Landscape Convention by identifying and assessing landscape types and by providing a strategic framework that includes visions and objectives for future landscapes and guidelines to help protect, manage and plan changes to maintain and enhance landscape distinctiveness.

4.5 The landscape character assessment describes and maps the elements and features that make up distinctively different types of landscape throughout the county.

4.6 The vision, landscape changes and guidelines provide a framework to help protect, manage, enhance and restore landscapes in the future and keep their distinctiveness.

4.7 The site lies within the Landscape Type 5: *Lowland* and Landscape Sub Type 5d: *Urban Fringe* (not identified on the summary map as the urban area is small but the sub-type is considered appropriate). The surrounding land is Type 5 *Lowland* and Landscape Sub-Type *Ridge and Valley*. To the east and south of the site the LCA is category 11 *Upland Fringe* and sub-type 11a *Foothills*. Guidelines to help protect, manage and plan changes to maintain and enhance landscape distinctiveness in the *Urban Fringe* sub type which are relevant to the proposed development include:

- Carry out schemes of structural planting to contain settlements, punctuate and reinforce the identity of each settlement and contain urban edges.

- Increase planting of deciduous trees as feature trees, within hedgerows, along watercourses and in tree groups to enrich the general landscape.

- Ensure, where possible, that linked networks of vegetation are created using native trees and shrubs to enhance their nature conservation value and their use as 'ecological corridors'.

- When new development takes place consider opportunities to enhance and strengthen green infrastructure to provide a link between urban areas and the wider countryside. Reinforcing woodland belts, enhancing water and soil quality and the provision of green corridors from and between settlements could all help reinforce landscape and biodiversity features.

- Careful siting of any new development in non-prominent locations.

- Strengthen undeveloped areas of land with mixed woodland and hedgerow planting and restoration of natural landscape features.

Guidelines to help protect, manage and plan changes to maintain and enhance landscape distinctiveness in the Ridge and Valley sub type which are relevant to the proposed development include:

- Seek to enhance hedge boundaries around fields. Planting should respect the scale of the local landscape features.
- Use appropriate large-scale new planting to integrate settlements and associated industrial development with the surrounding countryside and provide landscape frameworks for development expansion.
- Undertake environmental improvement within villages and built up areas to complement planting proposals within the surrounding farmland areas: to include roadside tree planting and within public open spaces to create a more established appearance and a stronger identity to individual settlements.
- Discourage the further nucleation of the settlement pattern.
- Manage and restock maturing hedgerow trees and woodlands.
- Public rights of way should be well maintained and quiet recreational areas and facilities should be improved and developed to be compatible with the pastoral character of this

sub type.

- Seek opportunities to enhance access to farmland through farm stewardship or other schemes.
- Disused railway lines could provide opportunities for discrete recreational routes and the enhancement of landscape features and ecological corridors.

5 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

5.1 The assessment is based on the proposed development description provided in the plan from Knapton and Knapton Ltd. The key component being the change in use from an agricultural field to a residential development with a landscape framework. The proposed layout is shown on the Landscape Concept Plan at Appendix 3.

Development proposals

5.2 The proposed development would comprise:

- 115 two storeys detached and semi-detached houses arranged in a series of cul-de-sacs with a single access from the existing road to Cleator Mills from the A5086 Main Street with additional direct access from the A5086 to a small cul-de-sac.
- A sustainable drainage system (details not developed);
- A landscape setting to relate the development to the landscape context
- Tree, hedge and shrub planting along the cul-de-sac roads and boundaries.

Mitigation of landscape and visual effects

5.3 Mitigation of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development have been incorporated into the design as far as possible through the design process.

5.4 landscape mitigation to reduce the likely landscape and visual effects of the development. The key principles were to:

- Retaining the existing tree groups within POS areas
- Arranging the houses in clustered groups, some around POS areas, combined with additional tree groups and setting the houses back from the boundaries adjoining the existing houses to reduce the visual impact of the proposed housing as a component in the landscape.

- Arranging the cul-de-sacs and associated houses along the contours where possible to ensure good integration with the landform and to maximise the screening effect of garden and streetscape trees.
- Retain and protect the existing hedges and trees on and adjacent to the site as far as possible and enhance these with additional planting to boundary hedges, streetscape and gardens.

Construction activities

5.5 During construction, there would be potential for short-term landscape and visual effects arising from the following activities connected with construction of the Development:

- Creation of temporary compounds and tracks;
- Excavation and levelling;
- Construction of the new access routes;
- Connection to services; and
- Construction of new buildings and surrounding landscape treatment.

6 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Landscape baseline

Historic Landscape and Designated Cultural Heritage

6.1 Designated cultural heritage in the study area includes the grade II listed Roman Catholic Church was designed by Architect EW Pugin and built in 1872. It was listed in 2005 (English Heritage ID ref 491308). It occupies a prominent position on the north side of Main Street/ Trumpet Terrace (A5086) facing the proposed development site (see Photo 5). The proposals will affect the setting of the listed building as new housing fronting the A5086 will increase the extent of urban character. It is important that the mature trees within the site and at the west boundary are protected to retain some components of the rural character and retention of some open space would be beneficial to this setting. The proposals include setting the houses back from the frontage of the A5086 at the north-east corner to retain POS area in front of the church. Members and visitors to the church will not get views of the proposed development from within the church but open views will be experienced from the curtilage as illustrated in Photo 5. Views from within the adjacent church hall will be possible although these are partially obscured by roadside vegetation. These visual receptors are considered to be moderately sensitive to the proposals and the anticipated magnitude of change in visual amenity will be moderate.

6.2 The Ennerdale Country House Hotel is Grade II listed hotel lies within 5 acres of grounds which adjoin the proposed housing area at the west boundary. Mature trees along this boundary will ensure that views eastwards from the hotel and the grounds will be prevented and the proposals will not affect the visual amenity of the hotel guests and staff. This was verified in the survey by appraising various viewpoints within the hotel and grounds. (Refer to Photo 12).

Landscape features on and adjacent to the site

6.3 The proposed development site is predominantly grazing land with mature tree groups of rural parkland character (Photos 1 and 2) dividing Cleator Moor to the north-east and Cleator to the south-west although these settlements are linked by housing, a hotel (former school) and St Marys RC church on the north side of the A5086 road. The church, church hall and school are fine historic buildings of imposing scale (photo 2).

6.4 The derelict factory (former Kangol factory) to the south and south-east (Photos 4a and 11c) impose an industrial character on the area as they are visually prominent from all areas of the site. The older sandstone building and chimney are attractive landscape features of historic interest and industrial heritage character which enhance the area and are prominent local landmarks. Renovation and removal of the unsympathetic extensions with modern materials will further enhance the character of this building and a new commercial or residential use will ensure its future upkeep. The factory is situated on relatively flat land in a bow of the River Ehen which has established tree-lined banks which gives a more enclosed, wooded character to the riverside corridor (Photo 24). To the south of the mill the river corridor becomes more open in character (Photo 3) and is an attractive view which will be experienced from the upper floors of Cleator Mill. The northern part of the mill has been recently demolished and is under reconstruction for commercial development.

6.5 To the south-east of the river corridor the land rises steeply to the foothills of the Dent and Cow Field on the western edge of the Lake District National Park with densely wooded upper slopes (Photos 7, 11c).

6.6 To the north-west the land rises more gently from the valley floor to a shallow ridge on which the settlement of Bigrigg on the A595 lies. Views of the proposed development from this higher ground and views westwards from the site will be restricted by mature trees and intervening houses.

6.7 The group of mature trees within the site (photos 1, 4 and 11) is a prominent landscape feature within semi- improved grassland on a gentle gradient falling south-eastwards enclosed with fences, walls and tree groups to all boundaries. Several semi- mature and mature trees are present at the boundaries which extends the screening effect (photos 2 and 12).

6.8 There are no Public Rights of Way footpaths on the site but there are two PROWs close to the site: the Trumpet Terrace to Low Wath Farm path 480m to the north-east which is enclosed by hedges and screened by trees (photo 18) and the Coast to Coast path at Black How Farm 420m to the south west from which walkers will get views of the development from a short section of the route.

6.9 In summary this landscape has been subjected to urban influences for a long time with a predominantly sub-urban character but it has however retained some rural character on a localised scale.

Landscape value

6.10 Landscape value is the 'relative value that is attached to different landscape by society' (GLVIA3, paragraph 5.19). Landscape designations are an indicator of landscape value.

6.11 There is no existing evidence in the form of landscape designations to indicate that the site or its immediate surroundings has any value. The following range of factors considered to confer value on an area of landscape (GLVIA3 Box 5.1) is used to determine the value of the site and surrounding area:

- **Landscape Quality (Condition): medium-low**
  The landscape of the site or its immediate surroundings is urban fringe. The large scale building of Cleator Mills adjacent to the site and residential development with variable quality boundaries influence the character. Generally, the vegetation on the site has a low ecological significance.

  Scenic Quality: medium-low

  The site and its immediate landscape are considered to be medium-low attractiveness locally due to the variable quality urban edge and the derelict mill buildings but with good views south-eastwards with an attractive combination of landscape elements.

  Rarity and Representativeness: low

  The site does not contain any rare landscape types or features as they are prevalent in the wider landscape.

  Conservation Interest: low

  The site has no statutory or non-statutory designation for nature conservation.

  Recreational Value: low

The site makes no contribution to recreation experience with no public footpaths on the site.

- **Perceptual Aspects: low**

  This is an area where modern development influences the pastoral character of the site.

  Associations: low

  As far as it is known the site and the immediate landscape are not subject to any specific cultural associations in terms of artists or writers, nor known events in history.

6.12 The site and surrounding landscape are not nationally or locally designated but are valued at the level of the immediate setting of residential development on the southern fringe of Cleator. The range of factors that confer value on a landscape, high and medium criteria are poorly reflected and it is judged that the site and the immediate landscape are of **medium-low** landscape value.

Visual baseline

6.13 The visual baseline establishes the area in which the proposed development may be visible, different groups of people who may experience views of the proposed development, the viewpoints where they will be affected and the nature of views at those points.

6.14 The Photographic Landscape Analysis (Appendix 1) and Landscape Analysis indicates that medium range views from the north, west and east are limited by the undulating landform, existing buildings and trees with only short range views from these directions. Medium and long range views are possible from the south but the study area was limited to approximately 2Km as the likely visual effects of the development on receptors at greater view distances are likely to be negligible, especially when visible with a backcloth of existing housing from this direction.

Receptors of visual effects

The key visual receptors within the short to medium range visual envelope are listed in section 2.8.

6.15 The visual receptors most susceptible to a change in their view are residents at home particularly in properties immediately adjacent to the site and people undertaking activities or visiting locations associated with the experience and enjoyment of the landscape including users of Public Rights of Way footpaths.

Viewpoints and views

6.16 The selection of viewpoints illustrated in the Photographic Landscape Analysis to represent and assess the visual effects of the proposed development was informed by fieldwork and desk research on access and recreation, including footpaths, public access land, tourism including popular vantage points, and distribution of population. The viewpoints were not formally agreed with Copeland Borough Council and no detailed assessment with visualisations was carried out. It is not a comprehensive list of locations from which the proposed development would be visible. The viewpoints provide views in the short and medium-distance range, are all publicly accessible and represent a range of visual receptor type and sensitivity.

6.17 The viewpoints used to assess the visual effects of the proposed development are listed on **Table 1** and their locations shown in the Photographic Landscape Analysis in Appendix 1.

Table 1: Viewpoint locations and rationale for selection

Photographs	Name/Location/Proximity	Selection criteria
2	Properties at Acorn Bank, Cleator View distance 100m to nearest boundary	Residents at home in properties with **high** susceptibility to a change in their view.
4	Properties at Brookside, Cleator View distance 15m from nearest boundary	Residents at home in properties with **high** susceptibility to a change in their view.
8, 9	Properties at Cross Grove, Cleator Users of the A5086 road View distance 30-100m at closest point.	Residents at home in properties with **high** susceptibility to a change in their view. Users of the A5086 road with **medium** susceptibility to a change in their view.
11, 12	Properties at Hawthorne Fields, Cleator View distance <10m	Representative of effect on residents at home with a **high** susceptibility to a change in their view.

22	Properties at Black How Farm, Cleator (includes Black How cottage and Dawn View bungalow) Users of the Coast to Coast footpath View distance 420m from nearest boundary	Representative of effect on residents at home with a **high** and users of the footpath with **medium** susceptibility to a change in their view.

7 IDENTIFICATION OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

7.1 The predicted landscape and visual effects of the proposed development are:

- the direct physical effects that the proposed development would have on the individual elements and features of the site including hedges and semi-improved grassland;
- the effect on the overall character and key characteristics of the site and surrounding area and the Urban Fringe Landscape Character Sub Type due to changes that would occur in the composition of the landscape as a result of the presence of the proposed development; and

7.2 The effects may occur during construction, when the proposed development is complete and in use and after 15 years as the new landscape features mature. This appraisal is concerned with the effects of the proposed development at completion and after 15 years.

7.3 The causes of likely landscape and visual effects on completion and after 15 years will include:

- The change in land use from an area of semi-improved grassland to residential development.
- Presence of new built development of mostly 2 storeys (typically up to 9.5 metres in height).
- Ecological mitigation works, comprising of planting of native trees, shrubs, hedgerow and potential creation of new wetland habitats in association with SUDS design.

Landscape effects

7.4 The identification of likely landscape effects considers the changes which are predicted would result from the proposed development. The landscape receptors (overall character and key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic and perceptual effects)

and their interactions with the different components of the proposal on completion are identified.

Effects on landscape features of the site

7.5 The only existing features within the site is a group of mature trees which will be retained and protected.

7.6 The following would be likely direct effects of the proposed development on the landscape features of the site:

- Removal of approximately 4.1 Ha of semi-improved grassland.
- Removal of up to 20m of hedge fronting the A5086 Main Street to accommodate the sightlines for the proposed access to the small cul-de-sac.

7.7 The green infrastructure incorporated into the proposed development would offset the effect on landscape features of site over a 15-year period. Refer to the Landscape Strategy in Appendix 3. There would be a net gain in tree planting through extensive planting of young trees across the site including around the site boundaries to tie in with existing hedges. The hedgerow reinforcement planting to the boundaries could be combined with native hedgerow trees and hedge margin seeding with wildflower grassland to enhance biodiversity and provide an improvement in habitat value. The open space associated with the SUDS area presents opportunities to establish wet marshland and species rich wet meadows and a diverse range of native trees and shrubs to enhance habitat diversity.

7.8 The proposed development would comply with guidelines to maintain and enhance landscape distinctiveness in the Urban Fringe sub type. Native deciduous trees would be planted as feature trees within existing hedgerows and in tree groups throughout the proposed development to create a natural setting. New mixed native species Hawthorn dominant hedge infill will enhance the low- level screening.

7.9 Based on the contribution the proposed development would make to the implementation of guidelines for the Urban Fringe sub type and in particular the net gain in tree planting, it is judged that the effects on landscape features of the site would be slight.

Effects on the landscape character of the site and surrounds

Landscape Character Sub Type 5d: Urban Fringe

7.10 Alongside the direct effect on landscape features of the site, there would be indirect effects on the landscape beyond the site and in the wider Urban Fringe sub type in which it lies. The

proposed development would introduce a new residential development into this character area on one field of semi-improved grassland. This would increase the amount of built development and lighting in the landscape but also improve the condition and character of the landscape within the site through the incorporation of green infrastructure. The retention and enhancement of existing landscape features (boundary trees and hedges and one tree group within the site) and planting of new trees would implement guidelines to maintain and enhance landscape distinctiveness in the Urban Fringe sub-type.

7.11 Although the landscape beyond the site is predominantly rural and agricultural, it contains built form of the urban fringe including the large scale building of the Cleator Mills and residential developments. This built form lies directly adjacent to the site and with the incorporation of appropriate green infrastructure the proposed development would be sympathetic to the urban fringe character of the surrounding area and offers an opportunity to design a more natural and sympathetic urban boundary. It is judged that effects on the landscape character of the Urban Fringe sub type would be moderate- slight reducing to slight following implementation of the proposals and mitigation measures.

Visual effects

7.12 Likely visual effects have been identified with reference to interactions between the proposed development and visual receptors.

7.13 The Photographic Landscape Analysis (Appendix 1) and Landscape Analysis indicates that medium range views from the west, east and north are limited by the undulating landform, existing buildings and trees with only short range views from these directions. Examples of short range views are Photos 5-10 from the north (properties close to the A5086 road), Photo 11 from the west (Hawthorne Fields), Photo 4 from the east (Brookside).

7.14 Medium range views are possible from the south-east which are represented by Photo 20 (Black Hall Farm).

7.15 Longer range views from receptors on the higher ground and hills to the north-east were not considered in detail as the long view distances of over 8 Km to the nearest LDNP fells would ensure that any potential visual effect would be negligible.

Effects on visual receptors

7.16 The likely visual effects of the proposed development on the potential visual receptors are set out in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Effects on visual receptors

Visual receptors	Effect on completion and mitigation
Residents of properties at Acorn Bank, Cleator Photo 2 View distance 100m	Views towards the proposed housing will be contained by intervening trees and other houses. Some oblique filtered views are possible from first floor rear windows. The effect would be **negative**.
Residents of properties at Brookside, Cleator View distance 15m Photo 4	The twelve terraced houses on Brookside and detached Ches Nous are accessed from the A5086 Trumpet Terrace (continuous with Main Street) and adjoin the access road to Cleator Mills separated with a wide verge and stone wall between the roads which will curtail views south-westwards from ground floor windows and the access road. The terraces face south-westwards and from upper floors the residents will get views over the existing farmland and oblique views. The character of these views and setting of these terraces will change as a result of the proposals with the new houses visible in the foreground but the distant oblique views southwards to the foothills will be maintained. The effect would be **negative**.
Properties at Cross Grove, Cleator (Flosh Meadows similar) Also Grove Court Hotel View distance 30-100m Users of the A5086 Main Street Photos 8, 9 (also 7 from hotel)	These two modern cul-de-sacs of 12 bungalows are situated on the north side of the A5086 Main Street and close to the western corner of the proposed development. Views from these properties are largely restricted by intervening trees and buildings but some views eastwards to the site will be possible. Photo 7 represents an open view from the adjacent elevated conservatory of the Grove Court Hotel. Views from the bungalows will be partially obscured by trees and other buildings. Distant views to the foothills will be partially maintained as the proposed housing will be at a lower

	level than these properties. The effect would be **negative**.
Residents of properties at Hawthorne Fields, Cleator View distance <10m Photos 11, 12	This is a small cul-de-sac of twelve houses accessed from the A5086 which adjoins the western edge of the proposed development site. Six of the houses adjoin the site boundary but due to the screening effect of mature trees at or near the boundary only three properties (numbers 7, 9 and 12) have clear views into the site (see Photo 11). The residents currently get views of the derelict Kangol factory with the open grazing land in the foreground and the wooded foothills backcloth. The character of these views will change with lower level views being restricted by the proposed housing and associated planting. Views from the entrance to the cul-de-sac are screened (photo 12). The effect would be **negative.**
Residents of properties at Black How Farm (includes Black How Cottage and Dawn View bungalow) Photo 22 Users of the Coast to Coast footpath View distance 420m	From this elevated viewpoint the development will be clearly visible. However, the rising landform, housing and tree backcloth to this view will limit the potential visual impact of the proposals which will not extend the boundaries of the urban settlement. Note: The adjacent property at Row to the south-west will be visually unaffected as the view northwards is screened by trees (Photo 23). The two properties at East Dent Cottages further to the north-east on this minor road may get views of the development over the roadside hedge from upper floor windows (Photo 20). The effect would be **negative.**

8 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

8.1 The overall level of landscape and visual effects identified in section 7 are judged in this section with reference to the sensitivity of the receptor (derived from its susceptibility to change and value) and the magnitude of effect (a combination of the size or scale of the effect, geographical extent and duration and reversibility).

Assessment of landscape effects

Effects on landscape features of the site

8.2 The proposed development would result in the loss of one field of semi-improved grassland. Semi-improved grassland is easily replaceable and considered to have a **medium- low** susceptibility to change.

8.3 The value of the landscape features has been established in section 6 and judged to be **medium-low**.

8.4 The overall level of effect for these landscape features is judged to be slight. Their loss would be a perceptible but small negative effect, over a localised area, on landscape elements key to the character of a landscape which is of community value. On maturity of the planting mitigation measures this effect will be positive.

Effects on the landscape character of the site and surrounds

Landscape Character Sub Type 5d: Urban Fringe

8.5 The Urban Fringe sub type has a **medium-low** susceptibility to the Development because although it is rural and agricultural, it contains large scale modern buildings associated with the Milk First and Lakeland Cheese factory and areas of residential development.

8.6 The setting of the grade II listed St Marys Church will be affected as views from the receptor towards the development site will become more urban and less rural in character. (Photo 5).

8.7 Direct effects on the Urban Fringe sub type would occur including removal of one agricultural field and a short length of hedge but this loss would be more than compensated for by the proposed green infrastructure.

8.8 The scale of change would be **moderate** due to the noticeable alteration created by loss of 4.1 Ha of semi-improved grassland and approximately 20m of native hedge. The effect of the

Development would be **restricted** to the site level and immediate setting of the site and the change would be **permanent**.

8.9 The overall level of effect on the Urban Fringe sub type is considered to be **moderate-slight** and summarised in **Table 3**. There would be a perceptible but small **negative** effect, over a localised area, on landscape elements key to the character of a landscape which is of community value.

Table 3: Summary of effects on landscape character of the Urban Fringe sub type

Susceptibility	High	Medium	Low	
Value	High	Medium	Low	
Scale of change	Major	Moderate	Minor	None
Geographical extent	Extensive	Major	Localised	Restricted
Duration	Permanent	Long term	Medium term	Short term
OVERALL EFFECT	**Substantial**	**Moderate**	**Slight**	**Negligible**

Assessment of visual effects

Table 4: Summary of effects on residents at Acorn Bank, Cleator

		Photograph number	2
Receptor type and susceptibility to change	Representative of effect on residents at home with a **high** susceptibility to a change in their view.		
Value of view	Low	**Distance to site boundary**	100m
Nature of view	partial	**Permanent or transient**	Permanent
Visual baseline	Oblique views from the rear windows to Cleator Mills and the hills beyond. Views partially screened by trees and hedges and mostly restricted to upper floor windows and only few receptors at eastern edge of the cul-de-sac.		
Predicted effect	Residents at home are considered to have a **high** susceptibility to visual change but the development will not be the main focus of the view. The value of the view is **low** as the landscape is valued at the community level. There would be **moderate** change in the composition due to the proportion of the view occupied by houses. The extent of the area over which the proposed development would be		

	visible is **restricted** to the site level. The effect would be **permanent**.
Overall effect	The overall effect is judged to be **moderate** for residents at home and summarised in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Summary of effects on residents at home in Acorn Bank

Susceptibility	High	Medium	Low
Value	High	Medium	Low

Scale of change	Major	**Moderate**	Minor	None
Geographical extent	Extensive	Major	Localised	Restricted
Duration	Permanent	Long term	Medium term	Short term
OVERALL EFFECT	**Substantial**	**Moderate**	**Slight**	**Negligible**

Table 5 Summary of effects on residents at home in Brookside

		Photograph number	4
Receptor type and susceptibility to change	Representative of effect on residents at home with a **high** susceptibility to a change in their view,		
Value of view	Low	**Distance to site boundary**	15m
Nature of view	partial	**Permanent or transient**	Permanent
Visual baseline	Views from the upper floor across the agriculture land with oblique views of Cleator Mills and the hills beyond. The stone boundary wall on the west side of the cul-de-sac screens views from the lower floors and street.		
Predicted effect	Residents at home are considered to have a **high** susceptibility to visual change and their attention is likely to be focused mainly on the proposed houses from the upper floors although they will still get views to the old mill buildings and hills beyond. The value of the view is **low** as the landscape is valued at the community level. There would be **major** change in the composition due to the proportion of the view occupied by houses. The extent of the area over which the proposed development would be visible is **restricted** to the site level. The effect would be **permanent**.		

Overall effect	The overall effect is judged to be **substantial- moderate** for residents at home as summarised in Table 5.1below.

Table 5.1 Summary of effects on residents at home in Brookside

Susceptibility	High	Medium	Low	
Value	High	Medium	Low	
Scale of change	Major	Moderate	Minor	None
Geographical extent	Extensive	Major	Localised	Restricted
Duration	Permanent	Long term	Medium term	Short term
OVERALL EFFECT	**Substantial**	**Moderate**	**Slight**	**Negligible**

Table 6.0 Summary of effects on residents at home in Cross Grove and users of the A5086 road

		Photograph numbers	8, 9
Receptor type and susceptibility to change	Representative of effect on residents at home with a **high** susceptibility to a change in their view and users of the A5086 with **medium** susceptibility. Guests and visitors to the hotel with **medium** susceptibility.		
Value of view	Low	**Distance to site boundary**	30-100m
Nature of view	partial	**Permanent or transient**	Permanent (transient for motorists)
Visual baseline	Views from the eastern-most properties across the agriculture land with oblique views of Cleator Mills and the hills beyond but partially screened by the tree group. Motorists approaching the site will experience a screening effect of roadside trees until they are opposite the site (photos 6 and 9) which limits the duration of views across the site.		
Predicted effect	Residents at home are considered to have a **high** susceptibility to visual change and their attention is likely to be focused mainly on the proposed houses particularly from the upper floors although they will still get views to the old mill buildings and hills beyond. The value of the view is **low** as the landscape is valued at the community level.		

	There would be **major** change in the composition due to the proportion of the view occupied by houses. The extent of the area over which the proposed development would be visible is **restricted** to the site level. The effect would be **permanent**. Motorists on the road will be affected for only a short duration of their journey.
Overall effect	The overall effect is judged to be **substantial- moderate** for residents at home and **moderate- slight** for road users and guests at the hotel as summarised in Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 below.

6.1 Effects on residents at home in Cross Grove

Susceptibility	High	Medium	Low	
Value	High	Medium	Low	
Scale of change	Major	Moderate	Minor	None
Geographical extent	Extensive	Major	Localised	Restricted
Duration	Permanent	Long term	Medium term	Short term
OVERALL EFFECT	**Substantial**	**Moderate**	**Slight**	**Negligible**

6.2 Effects on users of the A5086 road

Susceptibility	High	Medium	Low	
Value	High	Medium	Low	
Scale of change	Major	Moderate	Minor	None
Geographical extent	Extensive	Major	Localised	Restricted
Duration	Permanent	Long term	Medium term	Short term
OVERALL EFFECT	**Substantial**	**Moderate**	**Slight**	**Negligible**

6.3 Effects on guests at the Grove Court Hotel

Susceptibility	High	Medium	Low	
Value	High	Medium	Low	
Scale of change	Major	Moderate	Minor	None
Geographical extent	Extensive	Major	Localised	Restricted
Duration	Permanent	Long term	Medium term	Short term
OVERALL EFFECT	**Substantial**	**Moderate**	**Slight**	**Negligible**

Table 7: Summary of effects on residents at home at properties at Hawthorne Fields

		Photograph number	11,12
Receptor type and susceptibility to change	Representative of effect on residents at home with a **high** susceptibility to a change in their views.		
Value of view	Low	**Distance to site boundary**	<10m
Nature of view	partial	**Permanent or transient**	Permanent
Visual baseline			
Predicted effect	Residents are considered to have a **high** susceptibility to visual change The value of the view is **low** as the landscape is valued at the community level. The scale of effect on the composition of the view would be **major** due the extent of the area over which the proposed houses would be visible. The effect would be **permanent**.		
Overall effect	The overall effect is judged to be **substantial-moderate** for residents at home and summarised in Table 7.1 below. The moderate scale of effect would act upon a viewer with a high susceptibility to a change in their view.		

Table 7.1: Summary of effects on residents at home at Hawthorne Fields

Susceptibility	High	Medium	Low	
Value	High	Medium	Low	
Scale of change	Major	Moderate	Minor	None
Moderate	Minor	Major	Localised	Restricted
Duration	Permanent	Long term	Medium term	Short term
OVERALL EFFECT	**Substantial**	**Moderate**	**Slight**	**Negligible**

Table 8: Summary of effects on residents at properties at Black How and users of the adjacent Coast to Coast footpath

		Photograph number	22
Receptor type and susceptibility to change	Representative of effect on residents at home with a **high** susceptibility to a change in their views. Walkers on the long distance footpath will have a **medium** susceptibility (not high as only short section of route affected).		
Value of view	low	**Distance to site boundary**	420m
Nature of view	partial	**Permanent or transient**	Permanent (residents) Transient (walkers)
Visual baseline	The visual receptors have views across the valley to Cleator with a rural character but including the mill buildings and urban edge.		
Predicted effect	Residents are considered to have a **high** susceptibility to visual change but the view of the site will not be the main focus of the landscape and the proposed houses will register as part of the existing urban settlement. The value of the view is **low** as the landscape is valued at the community level. The scale of effect on the composition of the view would be **moderate** for residents and for walkers due the view distances of 420m and the partial view of proposed development. The new built form will register in the view with the existing urban edge and the skyline will not be changed in the view. The extent of the area over which the proposed houses would be visible is **localised** limiting visibility of the proposed development. The effect would be **permanent**.		
Overall effect	The overall effect is judged to be **moderate** for residents at home and **slight** for users of the footpath route summarised in Tables 8.1and 8.2 below.		

Table 8.1: Summary of effects on residents at home at Black How Farm

Susceptibility	High	Medium	Low
Value	High	Medium	Low
Scale of change	Major	Moderate	Minor	None
Geographical extent	Extensive	Major	Localised	Restricted
Duration	Permanent	Long term	Medium term	Short term
OVERALL EFFECT	**Substantial**	**Moderate**	**Slight**	**Negligible**

Table 8.2: Summary of effects on walkers on Coast to Coast footpath at Black How Farm

Susceptibility	High	Medium	Low
Value	High	Medium	Low
Scale of change	Major	Moderate	Minor	None
Geographical extent	Extensive	Major	Localised	Restricted
Duration	Permanent	Long term	Medium term	Short term
OVERALL EFFECT	**Substantial**	**Moderate**	**Slight**	**Negligible**

9 LANDSCAPE CONCEPT/ MITIGATION

9.1 The landscape strategy summarised in the Landscape Concept Plan in Appendix 3 aims to:

- Enhance the natural screening between the proposed houses and the existing properties to control potential inter-visibility issues and minimise the magnitude of landscape and visual impact whilst capitalising upon good views out from the development site and existing housing. This will involve planting hedgerow, to the boundaries, some with native species, including hedgerow trees combined with tree and shrub planting within the proposed gardens and public open space.

The Landscape Design objectives can be summarised as:

- Create an attractive landscape setting and environment for residents and visitors.
- Retain and protect the hedges and trees on the site and reinforce these with additional planting of native species to enhance the ecological diversity and wildlife value of the area including wild flower grass seeding and plug planting to the hedgerow margins and to the SUDS when detailed.
- Establish tree and shrub areas which define and enhance private gardens and streetscapes, reinforce boundaries, provide shelter and create year-round colour displays. This will include trees and specimen shrubs along the access roads with low shrubs, hedging, specimen shrubs and flowering groundcover.
- Create a distinct identity for the area with high quality landscape features at entrances and high profile locations through the use of local materials and bold planting and focal point features. The aim will be to achieve a sense of semi-privacy in the cul-de-sacs through changes to surfacing and planting style themes and layout.
- Reduce the potential landscape and visual impact of the development in views from higher ground to the south and south-east by incorporating trees positioned along the contours within gardens and streetscapes.
- To accommodate pedestrian circulation through the development.
- Accommodate the requirements of the service statutory authorities and SUDS design when detailed keeping access and easements clear.
- Ensure that the maintenance requirements for the landscape areas are minimised through design and specification of high quality, robust materials from sustainable, energy efficient sources and appropriate plant species.
- To develop a landscape management strategy to ensure that the design objectives are realised and sustained in the long term.

10 SUMMARY

10.1 This appraisal presents an assessment of the effects on landscape as a resource and on views available to people and their visual amenity which are predicted to result from the erection of 115 two storey dwellings with associated landscaping and vehicular and pedestrian access on agricultural land with a gentle south facing gradient adjacent to the disused Cleator Mills on the north-east edge of Cleator, Cumbria.

Potential landscape effects

10.2 There would be a direct loss of 4.1 Ha of semi-improved grassland and up to 20m of hedgerow to accommodate the junction sightlines. The loss of these landscape features would be perceptible over a localised area but represent a slight negative effect on a landscape element of low value.

10.3 The assessment concludes that there would be a moderate-slight (direct and permanent) localised negative effect on the character of the Urban Fringe landscape character sub type area which is of community value. It is acknowledged that the rural nature of the site would be changed by the proposed development so that the landscape baseline could not be maintained. This change would be in the context of existing development in the form of the large scale buildings of the Cleator Mills factory and adjacent houses which form the immediate setting of the site. As the landscape framework of the proposed development matures and contributes to landscape distinctiveness in the Urban Fringe sub-type, this effect would reduce to slight.

Potential visual effects

10.4 The assessment considers the effects of the development on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity. These include residents at home where the site forms part of their visual amenity, people using the network of public footpaths in the vicinity of the site and motorists on the adjacent A5086 road.

10.5 The development site is well visually contained to the north, west and east with views restricted to properties close to the site boundaries. It has an open aspect to the south and south-east with medium range views from elevated viewpoints.

10.6 For residents at home in a few properties immediately adjacent to the east, north and west boundaries of the site at Brookside, Cross Grove and Hawthorne Fields respectively the overall visual effect on their views would be substantial-moderate. This effect would be negative as the proposed development would change the character of their views. For residents at a few properties at Acorn Bank to the south-west of the site the overall visual effect will be moderate. For residents at three properties at higher ground 420m to the south-east at Black How Farm the overall visual effect will be moderate.

10.7 There are no Public Rights of Way footpaths on or close to the site only informal paths. However, walkers on the long distance Coast to Coast footpath at Black How Farm on elevated land 420m to the south- west would get views of the proposed development over a

short length of the route. The visual effect would be no worse than slight due to the moderate scale of change in their views which are partially restricted by the existing trees, hedges and buildings. The effect on walkers in the LDNP was not assessed in detail as the nearest boundary is 1.5 Km from the site at low lying land adjacent to Wath Bridge to the north-east from where views of the development site are screened by trees. The nearest high fells within the LDNP are over 8 Km to the north-east and whilst the development is likely to be visible from some visual receptors the predicted visual effect will be negligible at these long view distances.

10.8 The effect of the proposed development on the views of motorists and other road users travelling on the A5086 Main Street, Cleator would be moderate-slight and affects only a short section of road at the site frontage.

10.9 The setting of the grade II listed St Marys Church, Cleator will be affected by the proposals to some degree due to the increase in urban form. The proposed design is sensitive to this setting by retaining an area of open space opposite the church.

10.10 The design layout and landscape strategy have been developed to be sensitive to the landscape character and integrate mitigation measures to minimise the potential landscape and visual effects.

Appendix I

Photographic Landscape Analysis

Appendix 2

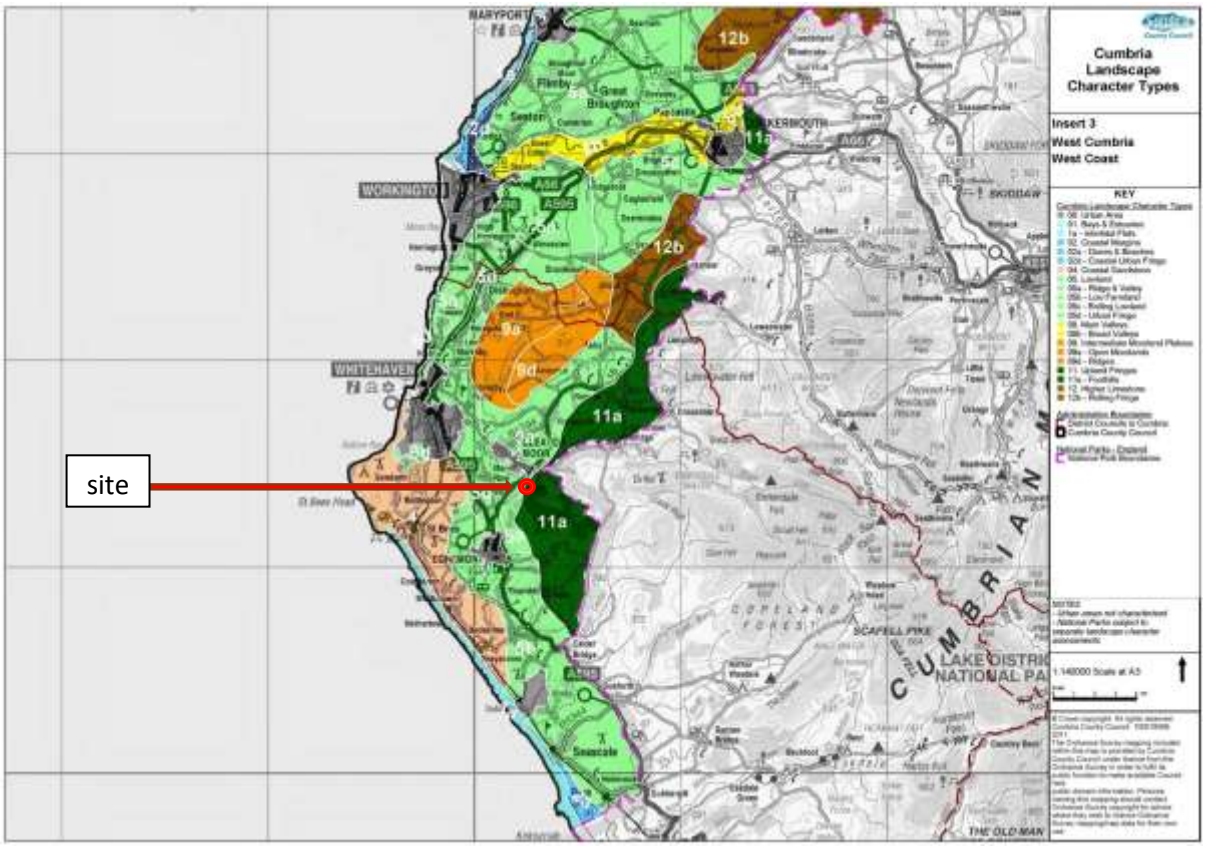
Landscape Analysis Plan

Appendix 3

Landscape Concept Plan

Appendix 4

Cumbria Landscape Character Plan



Appendix 5

LVIA Methodology

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Methodology

Introduction

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of the effects of change resulting from a proposed development (the 'Development') in both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity.

LVIA may be carried out formally as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or informally as a contribution to the design process and appraisal of development proposals and planning applications. The broad principles and the core of the approach are the same in each case.

LVIA as part of EIA

EIAs have been required formally for certain types of development since 1985. Stemming from a European directive, the requirements of EIA are translated into domestic law in each member state. With devolution in the UK, the devolved legislation is leading to subtle differences in each area. While the practitioner must be aware of these differences in legislation, the principles of LVIA will remain the same.

Within the context of an EIA, LVIA deals with effects on the landscape itself and on people's visual amenity, as an aspect of effects on human beings, and also with possible inter-relationships of these with other related topics.

LVIA in the appraisal of development proposals

Where no EIA is required for a development, planning authorities may still ask for an LVIA as part of the appraisal process of a proposed development that may bring about a change in the landscape and in the visual amenity. While there will be no rigid requirement to follow the defined terms of an EIA, the required approach is likely to be broadly similar.

Landscape and visual impact assessments focus on proportionality, transparency, professional judgement, clear communication and presentation.

Methodology

The methodology used to carry out LVIAs is informed by:

- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment 2013 *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition* (referred to as GLVIA3);
- Countryside Agency and Scottish National Heritage 2002 *Landscape Character Assessment. Guidance for England and Scotland*;
- Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11 *Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment.*

In addition, LVIAs for EIA developments will comply with the scoping opinion given by the planning authority where this has been sought.

The core components of the methodology and their relevance to LVIA as part of EIA and LVIA in the appraisal of development proposals are:

Component	LVIA as part of EIA	LVIA in the appraisal of development proposals
Project description	Required	Required
Baseline studies	Required	Required
Identification and description of effects	Required	Required
Assessment of significance (or level) of effects	Required	Not required[1]
Mitigation	Required	If required

[1] For Non-EIA Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13, 10th June 2013 states:

In carrying out appraisals, the same principles and process as LVIA may be applied but, in so doing, it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are or are not significant given that the exercise is not being undertaken for EIA purposes. The emphasis of 'significant effects' in formal LVIA stresses the need for an approach that is proportional to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of its likely effects. The same principle - focussing on a proportional approach – also applies to appraisals of landscape and visual impacts.

Project description

The planning application will include a description of the project at each phase in its life cycle in sufficient detail to allow the assessment of landscape and visual effects including:

- a description of the siting, layout and characteristics of project as a minimum;

  Refer to GLVIA3, paragraph 4.15 for information to be presented and illustrated.

- information concerning relevant stages in the project's life cycle including, as appropriate, construction, operation, and decommissioning and restoration/reinstatement stages.

  Refer to GLVIA3, paragraphs 4.17-4.20 for relevant information.

The LVIA will highlight those aspects of the development that are the key sources of landscape and visual change.

Baseline studies

The baseline studies will set out the existing landscape and visual conditions within the study area.

Landscape

The landscape baseline will identify and record the character of the landscape and the elements, features and aesthetic and perceptual factors which contribute to it and determine the value attached to the landscape.

The area of landscape to be studied will be agreed with the local planning authority. It will include the site itself and the full extent of the wider landscape around it which the proposed development may influence in a significant manner (based on extent of Landscape Character Areas or a Zone of Theoretical Visibility).

Information will be collected on land use, landscape features, landscape character and landscape designations (value), drawing on published landscape character assessments including National Character Area Profiles published by Natural England, relevant Regional Landscape Character Assessments, relevant District/Unitary/AONB Landscape Character Assessments and management plans for designated landscapes.

A field survey will be undertaken to supplement desk based information and to capture aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities of the area of landscape from a number of survey points. A field survey sheet will guide the collection of field data at each survey point. The survey sheet will be tailored to the development and will provide space for: a written description, a checklist of landscape elements and their significance, a checklist of aesthetic and perceptual factors, and space for observations about the sensitivity and management needs of the landscape.

A description of relevant policies and plans will also be included and the relevant Parish Plan consulted, where available, to understand local landscape values.

A landscape baseline report supported by illustrations where necessary should:

- Map, describe and illustrate the existing landscape and its character;
- Identify and describe the potential receptors of landscape effect (individual elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape);
- Indicate the condition of the landscape, including elements and features.
- Consider the value attached to the landscape

Visual

The visual baseline will establish the area in which the Development may be visible, the range of people who may experience views of the Development, the viewpoints where they will be affected and the nature of the views at those points and agree with the relevant planning authority.

A zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) may be prepared or provided by the Client to indicate the area over which the development may be seen. A ZTV is a computer generated plan that shows the visibility of the development in the surrounding landscape. ZTVs are based on topography and

because they do not take into account screening elements within the landscape such as trees, woodland or buildings they indicate theoretical visibility only.

Viewpoints from which the Development will actually be seen by the different groups of people will be identified (with the aid of the ZTV) and discussed and agreed with the local planning authority and other stakeholders where relevant. The number of viewpoints required will vary with the location and scale of the proposal. Priority should be given to views from distances of less than 3km, views from sensitive locations (e.g. residential areas, areas popular with visitors or for outdoor recreation where views may be focussed on the landscape and recognised /iconic views), and views from elevated locations. These should include the clearest views of the development and if the development is visible from a protected landscape there will be a requirement for at least one viewpoint from that landscape. The purpose for selection should be recorded within the LVIA.

Final selection of viewpoints for inclusion in the assessment and for illustration of the visual effects should take account of a range of factors.

Refer to GLVIA3, paragraphs 6.18-6.23 for factors.

At each agreed viewpoint, baseline photographs will be taken to record the existing views in accordance with the Landscape Institute technical advice note *Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment (Landscape Institute 2011)*.

A visual baseline report will combine information on:

- Type and relative numbers of people (visual receptors) likely to be affect and the activities they are likely to be involved in;
- Location, nature and characteristics of selected representative, specific and illustrative viewpoints and details of visual receptors likely to be affected at each;
- Nature, composition and characteristics of existing views experienced at these viewpoints, including direction of view;
- Visual characteristics of existing views e.g. nature and extent of skyline, aspects of visual scale and proportion (horizontal or vertical emphasis) and any key foci;
- Element, such as landform, buildings and vegetation which may interrupt, filter or otherwise influence views.

The report will be supported by:

- Plans to combine potential extent to which site of proposed development is visible from surrounding areas (ZTV), chosen viewpoints, types of visual receptor affected and nature and direction of views;
- Illustrations of existing views by photographs or sketches with annotations added to emphasise any important components and to help viewers understand what they are looking at;
- Technical information about the photography used to record the baseline including camera details, date and time of photography and weather conditions.

Identification and description of effects

This component will systematically identify and describe the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposal, identifying magnitude of change as a deviation from baseline conditions.

Landscape effects

The landscape baseline information is combined with an understanding of the details of the proposed change or development that is to be introduced into the landscape to identify and describe landscape effects:

Step 1:

The components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the proposal, the **landscape receptors**, are identified. These can include overall landscape character and key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects.

Step 2:

Interactions between these landscape receptors and the different components of the development at all its different stages, including construction, operation and, where relevant, decommissioning and restoration/ reinstatement, are identified.

The assessment will consider direct, indirect, secondary, short-, medium- and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development.

Direct physical effects of a proposal will be described in the LVIA, including quantities where appropriate.

Indirect effects: perceptual and visual effects on landscape character and visual effects on specific receptors.

Secondary effects: may include further LVIA effects arising from related development, which may be remote from the development site itself.

Short-, medium- and long-term effects: effects during various stages of a project including the construction stage and/or phased implementation.

Permanent and temporary effects: the LVIA process should identify whether effects are temporary or permanent (e.g. are they reversible or irreversible).

Positive and negative effects: interpreted as either a beneficial (positive) or adverse (negative) effect in LVIA terms.

Judgements on positive and negative effect will be based on clear criteria, such as: degree to which the proposal fits with existing character; and contribution to the landscape that the development may make in its own right (good design).

All effects on landscape features/fabric, landscape character and landscape values and visual amenity will be described.

- Effects on landscape features/fabric will consider loss of elements (e.g. hedges, trees).
- Effects on landscape character will describe the direct changes that will occur to the character of the landscape as described in the County/ District/Unitary/AONB Landscape Character Areas (i.e. with reference to Landscape Character Areas and Landscape Character Types as appropriate) – this should include how the development will affect perceptions of character and how widespread and prominent the changes will be.
- Effects on landscape values will also describe any potential changes in special qualities of landscapes as recorded in County/ District/Unitary/AONB Landscape Character Assessments. Particular weight should be given to protecting the special qualities of protected landscapes (i.e. AONB and National Parks), focussing on the reasons for designation referred to in their Management Plans.

Visual effects

Likely significant visual effects will be identified by considering the different sources of visual effects alongside the principal visual receptors that might be affected.

A range of issues will be considered to inform a description and comparison of effects including:

- Nature of the view of the development (full, partial, glimpse);
- Proportion of development that would be visible (full, most, small, part, none);
- Distance of viewpoint from development;
- Whether view is stationary or transient or one of a sequence of views (from footpath or moving vehicle);
- Nature of changes (changes in existing skyline profile, creation of new visual focus, introduction of new man-made objects, changes visual simplicity or complexity, alteration of visual scale and change to degree of visual enclosure).

All effects on visual amenity will be described.

- Effects on visual amenity will describe and illustrate the extent of visibility and record changes in views from the representative assessment viewpoints with reference to photographs and visualisations.
- Effects on settlements and at any properties with a clear view of the site will also be considered.

Assessment of significance (or level) of effects

Landscape effects

The landscape effects that have been identified will be assessed to determine their overall level of effect by combining judgements on the **sensitivity** of the landscape receptor and the **magnitude** of landscape effects.

Sensitivity of landscape receptors

The sensitivity of a landscape receptor is determined by an evaluation of its susceptibility to change (or the development type) and its value.

Susceptibility to change means *the ability of the landscape (whether that be the overall character or quality/ condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies* (GLVIA3, paragraph 5.40).

The criteria for determining the susceptibility to change are based on the special qualities and landscape character attributes of the landscape most likely to be affected by a residential development in Table 1.

Table 1: Criteria for determining susceptibility to change

		LOWER SUSCEPTIBILITY CRITERIA	⟷	HIGHER SUSCEPTIBILITY CRITERIA
CRITERIA	Scale	Larger scale and more open landforms. Open fields. Existing human-scale elements e.g. buildings or trees.		Smaller scale, enclosed landforms. Smaller, more intricate field cover
	Landform	Little topographic variation. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms.		Dramatic or distinct landforms such as prominent ridges, rolling hills or steep slopes.
	Landscape pattern	Large, regular scale field patterns. Limited tree cover.		Small, irregular field patterns. Areas of woodland, water and semi-natural habitats.
	Settlement	Concentrated settlement pattern. Presence of modern development e.g. utility, infrastructure or industrial elements. An exposed settlement edge.		Dispersed settlement pattern. Absence of modern development, presence of small scale, historic or vernacular settlement. A well-integrated settlement edge with an intact landscape structure.
	Historic landscape character	Relatively few historic features e.g. Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings important to the character of the area and little time depth		A high density of historic features e.g. Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings important to the character of the area and great time depth

	Perceptual qualities	Site is significantly influenced by development/ human activity.		A tranquil or highly rural landscape, lacking strong intrusive elements. Higher degree of remoteness.
	Visual character	Site is enclosed/ visually contained and/or has a low degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes, and the site does not form a visually distinctive or important undeveloped skyline.		Site is open and/ or has a high degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes, and/ or the area forms a visually distinctive skyline or an important undeveloped skyline.

Judgements on susceptibility of receptors (which may include individual features or areas) are recorded on a scale of **high**, **medium** or **low** according to Table 2.

Table 2: Susceptibility of landscape receptors

		DESCRIPTION
SUSCEPTIBILITY	High	The landscape receptor has limited capacity to accommodate residential development and undue consequences to the baseline situation are to be expected. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape offer limited opportunities for accommodating residential development without being altered, leading to a different landscape character. Landscapes of particularly distinctive character and without detracting features, vulnerable to relatively small changes
	Medium	The landscape receptor has some capacity to accommodate residential development and undue consequences to the baseline situation may occur. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape offer some opportunities for accommodating residential development without key characteristics being altered. Recognisable landscape structure, characteristics, patterns and combinations of landform and land cover moderately valued characteristics with some detracting features and reasonably tolerant of changes.
	Low	The landscape receptor has more capacity to accommodate residential development and undue consequences to the baseline situation are unlikely. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape are resilient to being changed by residential development. Non-designated landscape, very weak or degraded structure, extensive detracting features and tolerant of substantial change.

Value of a landscape receptor is concerned with the importance attached to a landscape, often as a basis for designation or recognition which expresses national or regional consensus, because of its distinctive landscape pattern, cultural associations, scenic or aesthetic qualities. It should be noted that, in virtually all circumstances, landscapes are valued in the local context by various if not all sectors of the community e.g. due to its contribution to a community or its cultural significance e.g. landscapes reflected through literature, poetry, art etc.

Where there is no clear existing evidence on landscape value, an appraisal is made based on the following factors (based on the guidance in GLVIA3 paragraph 5.28, Box 5.1):

- Landscape quality (condition);
- Scenic quality;
- Rarity;
- Representativeness;
- Conservation interest;
- Recreation value;
- Perceptual aspects; and

- Associations

The criterion in Table 3 is used to assess landscape value for non-designated landscapes.

Table 3: Criterion for assessment of landscape value for non-designated landscapes

		VALUE		
		Low	**Medium**	**High**
CRITERIA	***Condition/quality***	A landscape with no or few areas intact and/ or in poor condition	A landscape with some areas that are intact and/or in reasonable condition	A landscape with most areas intact and/or in good condition
	Scenic quality	A landscape of little or no aesthetic appeal	A landscape of some aesthetic appeal	A landscape of high aesthetic appeal
	Rarity and representativeness	A landscape which does not contain rare landscape types or features	A landscape which contains distinct but not rare landscape types or features	A landscape which contains one or more rare landscape types or features
	Conservation interests	A landscape with no or limited cultural and/or nature conservation value	A landscape with some cultural and/or nature conservation value	A landscape with rich cultural and/or nature conservation value
	Recreation value	A landscape with no or limited contribution to recreation experience	A landscape with some contribution to recreation experience	A distinct landscape with a strong contribution to recreation experience
	Perceptual aspects	A landscape with prominent detractors, probably part of the key characteristics	A landscape with detractors that retains some perceptual values	A wild, tranquil or unspoilt landscape without noticeable detractors
	Cultural associations	A landscape without recorded associations	A landscape with some and/or moderately valued associations	A landscape of rich and/or highly valued associations

A landscape value for each receptor is defined on a scale of high, medium or low according to Table 4.

Table 4: Value attached to landscape

		DESCRIPTION
VALUE	High	Internationally or nationally valued landscapes (World Heritage Sites, National Parks, areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Receptor highly reflects high and medium value criteria in Table 3.
	Medium	Designated and locally valued landscapes (local authority landscape designations). Receptor moderately reflects high and medium value criteria in Table 3.
	Low	Landscapes not nationally or locally designated but valued at or community or site level. Landscape receptor poorly reflects high and medium value criteria in Table 3.

Magnitude of landscape effects

Each effect on a landscape receptor is assessed in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility.

Size or scale of effect is a consideration of the degree of change arising from the development and is described as being major, moderate, minor and none, with reference to the definitions set out in Table 5.

Table 5: Size or scale of change to landscape receptor

		DESCRIPTION
SIZE OR SCALE	Major	Major alteration to existing landscape elements, features or characteristics potentially resulting in a new landscape character type.
	Moderate	Noticeable alteration to existing landscape elements, features or characteristics.
	Minor	A perceptible but small alteration to existing landscape elements, features or characteristics.
	None	An imperceptible or barely perceptible alteration to existing landscape elements, features or characteristics.

Geographic extent is a consideration of the geographical area over which the landscape effects will be felt and is determined by the following scale:

- on a **larger scale** affecting several landscape types or character areas (**Extensive**)
- at the scale of the **landscape type or character area** (**Major**)

- at the level of the **immediate setting** of the site (**Localised**)
- at the **site level**, within the Development site itself (**Restricted**)

Duration and reversibility of effects are linked considerations and are determined by the following scale:

- The change is expected to be permanent without the intention for it to be reversed (**Permanent**);
- The change is expected to effect the receptor for a period of 10-25 years and thereafter will be fully reversed or fully mitigated such that the baseline conditions are restored (**Long term**);
- The change is expected to have effect on the receptor for a period of 5-10 years and thereafter will be fully reversed or fully mitigated such that the baseline conditions are restored (**Medium-term**);
- The change is expected to have effect the receptor for a period of up to 5 years and thereafter will be fully reversed or fully mitigated such that the baseline conditions are restored (**Short-term**).

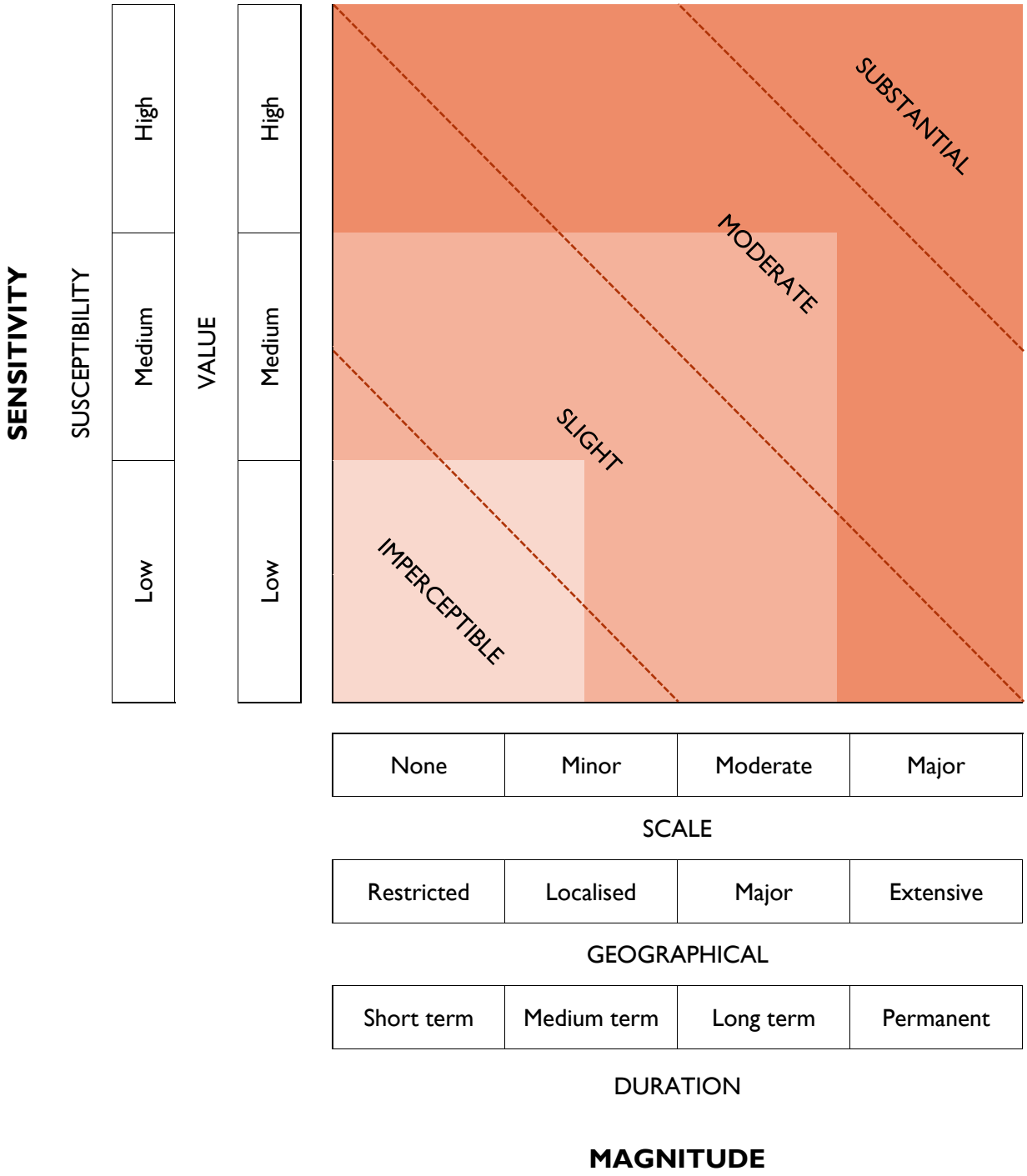
Reversibility is related to whether the change can be reversed (e.g. effects arising from the presence of construction traffic will cease at the end of construction, whereas effects arising from presence of new built development such as housing will be not reversible).

Overall level of landscape effects

To draw final conclusions about the level (or significance) of landscape effects, the separate judgements about the sensitivity of landscape receptors and the magnitude of landscape effects are combined to allow a final judgement to be made about the level of each effect.

All judgements against the individual criteria are arranged in Diagram 1 to provide an overall profile of each identified effect. An overview is then taken of the distribution of judgements for each criterion to make an informed professional assessment.

Diagram 1: Level of effects assessment diagram



Levels of landscape effect are identified as: **Negligible**, **Slight**, **Moderate** or **Substantial**. Where it a judgement falls between or encompasses two of these terms, then the judgement may be described as: **Slight-Negligible**, **Moderate-Slight** or **Substantial-Moderate**. The terms are defined in Table 6.

Table 6: Levels of landscape effect

		DESCRIPTION
LEVEL OF LANDSCAPE EFFECT	Substantial	Major loss or permanent negative effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes.
	Moderate	Noticeable or long term negative effects, over a landscape character type or area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to local authority designated landscape.
	Slight	Perceptible but small negative effects, over a localised area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of landscapes of community value.
	Negligible	Reversible negative effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key characteristics of the character of landscapes of community value.

A judgement is made on whether the effects are **positive** (beneficial), **negative** (adverse) or **neutral** in relation to the degree to which the Development fits with existing character; and the contribution to the landscape that the Development may make in its own right.

Visual effects

The visual effects that have been identified will be assessed to determine their overall level of effect by combining judgements on the **sensitivity** of a visual receptor and the **magnitude** of visual effect.

Sensitivity of visual receptors

Visual receptors are all people and their sensitivity is assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and the value attached to particular views.

The susceptibility of visual receptors to changes in views and general visual amenity is typically a function of the activity of people experiencing the view and the extent to which their attention is likely to be focused on the view (GLVIA3, paragraph 6.32)

The susceptibility of visual receptor groups is recorded on as scale of **high**, **medium** and **low** using the definitions in Table 7.

Table 7: Susceptibility of visual receptors to change

		VISUAL RECEPTORS
SUSCEPTIBILITY	High	Residents at home particularly using rooms normally occupied in daylight hours; people engaged in outdoor activities whose attention is focused on the landscape or particular views e.g. users of public rights of way; visitors to heritage assets or tourist attractions where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experiences.
	Medium	Road and rail users where views of the surroundings form an incidental contribution to the journey; Cyclists or users of scenic roads where views of the surroundings contribute to the experience.
	Low	People engaged in outdoor sport and recreation which does not involve an appreciation of views of the landscape. People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity and where the setting is not important to the quality of their working life.

Value attached to views is concerned with the value placed on the landscape resource in a view and will take account of:

- Recognition of the value attached to particular views e.g. in relation to heritage assets or through planning designations;
- Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors e.g. through appearance in guide books or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment (parking places, sign boards and interpretive material) and references to them in literature or art.

Judgements on value of views are recorded on scale of high, medium and low according to Table 8.

Table 8: Value attached to views

		DESCRIPTION
VALUE	High	Views appearing in guidebooks or on tourist maps; Provision of facilities for the enjoyment of a view (e.g. parking places, sign boards and interpretive material); and references to a view in literature. Views associated with nationally designated landscapes, designed views recorded in records for historic parks and gardens or scheduled monuments.
	Medium	Views associated with local authority designated landscapes or recorded as of importance in Conservation Area Appraisals or local authority landscape/townscape assessments.
	Low	Views valued at a community level.

Magnitude of visual effects

Each effect on visual receptors will be assessed in terms of its **size or scale**, the **geographical extent** of the area influenced and its **duration and reversibility**.

Size or scale of an effect considers:

- the scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the Development;
- the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture; and
- the nature of the view of the proposed development in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses.

Size or scale is determined by the classification in Table 9.

Table 9: Size or scale of change in view

		DESCRIPTION
SIZE OR SCALE	Major	Major change to features in the view and major changes in its composition due to a large proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development.
	Moderate	Noticeable change to features in the view and noticeable changes in its composition due to a moderate proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development.
	Minor	Minor change to features in the view and minor changes in its composition due to a small proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development.
	Negligible	Very minor change to features in the view and very minor changes in its composition due to a limited proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development

Geographic extent of a visual effect considers:

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

Geographical extent is described as being **extensive**, **major**, **localised** or **restricted**.

Duration and reversibility of effects are linked considerations and are determined by the following scale:

- The change is expected to be permanent without the intention for it to be reversed (**Permanent**);
- The change is expected to effect the receptor for a period of 10-25 years and thereafter will be fully reversed or fully mitigated such that the baseline conditions are restored (**Long-term**);
- The change is expected to have effect on the receptor for a period of 5-10 years and thereafter will be fully reversed or fully mitigated such that the baseline conditions are restored (**Medium-term**);
- The change is expected to have effect the receptor for a period of up to 5 years and thereafter will be fully reversed or fully mitigated such that the baseline conditions are restored (**Short-term**).

Reversibility is related to whether the change can be reversed (e.g. effects arising from the presence of construction traffic will cease at the end of construction, whereas effects arising from presence of new built development such as housing will be not reversible).

Overall level of visual effects

To draw final conclusions about the level (or significance) of visual effects, the separate judgements about the sensitivity of landscape receptors and the magnitude of landscape effects are combined to allow a final judgement to be made about the level of each effect.

All judgements against the individual criteria are arranged in Diagram 1 to provide an overall profile of each identified effect. An overview is then taken of the distribution of judgements for each criterion to make an informed professional assessment.

Levels of landscape effect are identified as: **Imperceptible**, **Slight**, **Moderate** or **Substantial**. Where a judgement falls between or encompasses two of these terms, then the judgement may be described as: **Slight-Imperceptible**, **Moderate-Slight** or **Substantial-Moderate**. The terms are defined in Table 10.

Table 10: Levels of visual effect

		DESCRIPTION
LEVEL OF VISUAL EFFECT	Substantial	Major change to features in the view and major changes in its composition due to a large proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development.
	Moderate	Noticeable change to features in the view and noticeable changes in its composition due to a moderate proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development.
	Slight	Minor change to features in the view and minor changes in its composition due to a small proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development.
	Imperceptible	Very minor change to features in the view and very minor changes in its composition due to a limited proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development

Mitigation

As a consequence of the assessment process there are likely to be modifications to the scheme designed to minimise landscape and visual effects. In addition, there may be measures to prevent, reduce or offset very substantial or substantial adverse effects. These will be described in terms of relationship to/conservation of valued landscape features, relationship to landscape character and appearance from sensitive viewpoints and designated landscapes. All mitigation measures will be described and an indication of how they will be implemented provided. A description of the main reasons for site selection and any alternatives in site design or layout will also be provided where relevant.