Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Third edition

Landscape Institute and
Institute of Environmental
Management & Assessment

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ROUTLEDGE

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Contents

Foreword

I am delighted that the third edition of GLVIA has now been published, as this updated guidance has been long awaited by those working in the field of LVIA. The new edition is comprehensive and clear, covering the many developments that have taken place in the scope and nature of impact assessment since publication of the second edition. There have been significant changes to the environmental framework within which LVIA is now undertaken, particularly with the UK Government's ratification of the European Landscape Convention, confirming the importance and role of the landscape as used and enjoyed by us all. At the same time, the demands that are put on our landscape to accommodate new development, and to adapt to the changing world environment confirm the need for a strong framework within which the effect of change can be assessed and understood.

The straightforward approach taken in this revised edition emphasises clarity and simplicity in approach, and the importance of sound professional judgement. It also usefully identifies aspects of assessment that are commonly misunderstood or misinterpreted, and advises on approaches to best practice without being prescriptive.

My particular thanks must go to Carys Swanwick, who wrote this edition, to Jeff Stevenson CMLI, Chair of the GLVIA Advisory Panel, and to all involved in producing these guidelines. The guidelines remain the benchmark for landscape and visual assessment.

Sue Illman PLI
President of the Landscape Institute

Preface to the third edition

The third edition of the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* has been produced under the joint auspices of the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA), as co-authors of the guidance. The third edition supersedes earlier editions, and while aimed primarily at landscape professionals is written in such a way as to provide a flavour for those who are simply interested in the subject, as well as more detailed (but less prescriptive) guidance for the professional engaged in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments.

The third edition clearly recognises that many different pressures have changed and will continue to change landscapes that are familiar to many, whether at national or local community level, and the landscape professional will be of particular importance in bringing forward measured and responsible assessments to assist decision making.

This new edition takes into account recognition of the European Landscape Convention by the United Kingdom government, and subsequently by the devolved administrations, which raises the profile of this important subject and emphasises the role that landscape can play in our day-to-day lives.

It has been produced to reflect the expanded range of good practice that now exists, and to address some of the questions and uncertainties that have arisen from the second edition. It also gives greater recognition to sustainable development as a concept – something that has come further to the fore through government policy and guidance across the UK. However, while mentioning government policy and guidance (whether at the UK level or through the devolved administrations) the third edition seeks to avoid reflecting a specific point in time, recognising that legislative, statutory and policy contexts change so that guidance that is tied to contexts will quickly become dated and potentially out of step.

A clear objective has been to continue to encourage higher standards in the conduct of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments – something which the two previous editions of the guidelines, published in 1995 and 2002, have already helped to achieve.

The third edition attempts to be clearer on the use of terminology. The emphasis should be on the identification of likely significant environmental effects, including those that are positive and negative, direct and indirect, long, medium and short term, and reversible and irreversible, as well as cumulative effects. This edition encourages professionals to recognise this and assess accordingly.

The Landscape Institute is the recognised expert and professional body for landscape matters and this edition again acknowledges the holistic perspective that landscape

professionals take and the particularly valuable contribution they can make to Environmental Impact Assessment in general and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment in particular. As such the third edition stresses that it is important that landscape professionals are able to demonstrate high professional standards and that their work should offer exemplars of good practice. It is to be hoped that this edition will further reinforce the professional's skills base by providing sound, reliable and widely accepted advice, aimed at helping professionals to achieve quality and consistency in their approach to Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

This edition concentrates on principles and process. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation – it remains the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand. The aim has been to make the advice specific enough to meet the needs of UK practitioners but also to avoid too much detail about specific legislation which will make it of less value elsewhere.

Two areas where there has been considerable discussion and where we feel that we are moving forward are in exploring and providing better advice concerning assessing significance of effect, and in identifying and assessing cumulative effects. In both cases, debate will continue as these subjects evolve.

It is especially important (a) to note the need for proportionality, (b) to focus on likely significant adverse or positive effects, (c) to focus on what is likely to be important to the competent authority's decision and (d) to emphasise the importance of the scoping process in helping to achieve all of these.

As Chair of the GLVIA Advisory Panel which oversaw the production of this edition, I offer the most heartfelt thanks to Professor Carys Swanwick of the University of Sheffield, commissioned as the writer of the text, to Lesley Malone, Head of Knowledge Services at the Landscape Institute who co-ordinated the project, and to Josh Fothergill of IEMA. Carys is to be praised and very warmly congratulated, given the complexity of the task of balancing the sometimes competing needs and wishes of members, practices, government agencies and interested others, along with the views and input of the Advisory Panel. Producing this new edition has been challenging for all concerned but ultimately highly rewarding.

Government agencies have an important role throughout the LVIA process, particularly at the initial scoping stage and also in reviewing the final assessment. This guidance has been prepared following feedback from English Heritage, Natural Resources Wales (formerly the Countryside Council for Wales), Scottish Natural Heritage (Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba), Natural England and the Environment Agency.

Thanks are also due to all those who, whether as individuals or as representatives of organisations or agencies, have contributed, with sometimes widely varying opinions and suggestions, to the evolution of the third edition. This edition could not and therefore will not satisfy every interest and opinion, but the Advisory Panel considers that it moves the subject forward considerably from the second edition. Doubtless debate will continue and new questions and issues will arise as this edition is applied and tested in practice but, after all, that is how progress in a subject is made.

The Landscape Institute and IEMA consider it essential to remember that the third edition is a 'step along the way'. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, along with Environmental Impact Assessment more generally, evolves and will continue so to do with the role of the professional making professional judgements at the heart of the process.

Jeff Stevenson CMLI
Chair, GLVIA Advisory Panel

Acknowledgements

The third edition of the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* was prepared by Professor Carys Swanwick guided by the GLVIA Advisory Panel:

- Jeff Stevenson CMLI (Chair)
- Julian Francis CMLI
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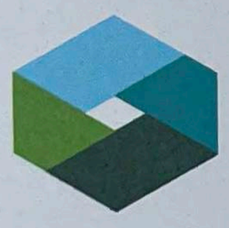
ENGLISH HERITAGE



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Copyright acknowledgements

Part 1

Introduction, scope and context

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter overview

- About this guidance
- When is LVIA carried out?
- Impacts, effects and significance
- Who is this guidance for?
- Organisation and structure of the guidance

About this guidance

1.1 **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity.** The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (and its predecessor the Institute of Environmental Assessment) have worked together since 1995 to publish guidance on LVIA. Two previous editions of these guidelines, published in 1995 and 2002, have been important in encouraging higher standards in the conduct of LVIA projects.

'Development' is used throughout this book to mean any proposal that results in a change to the landscape and/or visual environment.

1.2 This is the third edition of the guidance and replaces the earlier editions. The new version takes account of changes that have taken place since 2002, in particular:

- changes in the context in which LVIA takes place, including in the legal and regulatory regimes and in associated areas of practice;
- the much greater range of experience of applying LVIA and testing it through Public Inquiries and related legal processes, which has revealed the need for some issues to be clarified and for the guidance to be revised to take account of changing circumstances.

When is LVIA carried out?

1.3 LVIA may be carried out either formally, as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), or informally, as a contribution to the 'appraisal' of development proposals and planning applications. Both are important and the broad principles and the core of the approach is similar in each case.

LVIA as part of EIA

1.4 LVIA applies to all projects that could require a formal EIA but also includes projects that may be assessed informally. EIA has been formally required in the UK, for certain types of project and/or in certain circumstances, since 1985. It applies not only to projects that require planning permission but also to those subject to other consent procedures like use of agricultural land for intensive agricultural purposes, irrigation and land drainage requirements or reclamation of land from the sea. The various European Union Directives underpinning this requirement have now been consolidated in Directive 2011/92/EU *The assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment*. The objective of the Directive is to ensure that Member States

> adopt all measures necessary to ensure that, before consent is given, projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue, inter alia, of their nature, size or location are made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects.
>
> (European Commission, 2011)

The Directive and the Regulations that implement it in different countries of the UK specify the types of project and the circumstances in which EIA may be required. In summary, EIA is a way of ensuring that significant environmental effects are taken into account in decision making.

1.5 Devolution in the United Kingdom has meant growing emphasis on the individuality of approaches in devolved administrations and their related organisations. The framework within which EIA is carried out therefore consists of:

- the European Union Directive;
- UK Country Regulations which interpret and implement the Directive individually for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales;
- guidance documents produced by government departments to assist in implementation, including planning policy guidance and other forms of more specific EIA guidance, including guidance on specific types of change or development;
- specialised guidance produced by government agencies, or professional bodies (such as the Landscape Institute and IEMA), dealing with specific aspects of implementation.

This means, depending on project location, that the landscape professional must be aware of the relevant devolved government/administration's requirements with respect to EIA so far as it is pertinent to Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

1.6 The EU Directive covering EIA and related matters applies equally to all countries of the UK but is implemented through country Regulations that may be different in each and may also change periodically as they are updated. Each country also has a number of specific Regulations that cover a range of named activities, some of them outside the planning system. Such specific Regulations cover (among other things) electricity supply, transport, fish farming, energy production and transmission, gas and petroleum extraction, water abstraction, forestry, land drainage, agricultural improvements on uncultivated land or semi-natural areas and restructuring of rural land holdings.

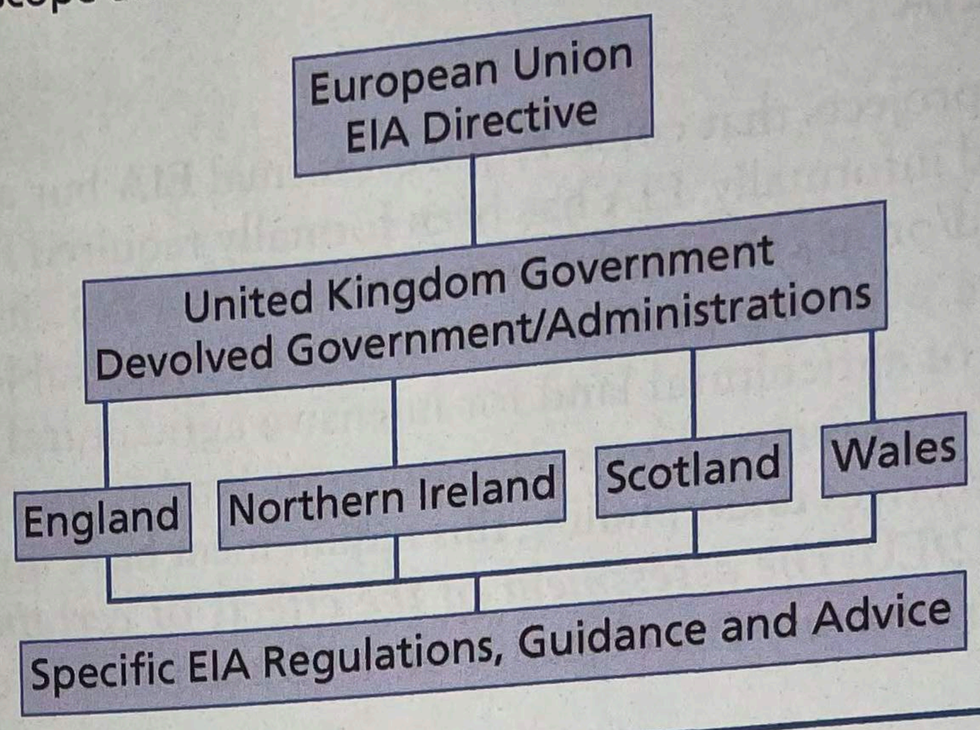


Figure 1.1 The EIA hierarchy

1.7 Planning policy guidance also differs across the four countries, as does the specialised guidance that has been issued by government departments and their agencies. The variety of specialist guidance from agencies and others also changes from time to time. Scottish Natural Heritage has been particularly active in producing advice and guidance both on EIA in general and on issues relating to the effects of wind farms in particular.

1.8 EIA procedures require a wide range of environmental topics to be investigated. The European Union Directive, the Regulations that apply in the UK and the guidance documents that support them all list these, albeit with slight variations in the wording. The topics can be summarised as:

- human beings, population;
- flora and fauna;
- soil, water, air, climate;
- landscape;
- cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage);
- material assets.

1.9 As well as specifically identifying landscape as a topic to be considered, the Directive and the Regulations also make clear the need to deal with the interrelationship between topics. This raises the issue of how landscape interrelates with matters such as, for example, population, flora and fauna, and cultural heritage. Consequently in the context of EIA, LVIA deals with both effects on the landscape itself and effects on the visual amenity of people, as well as with possible interrelationships of these with other related topics.

1.10 This guidance intentionally does not set out to identify or summarise the complex regulatory framework of legislation, Regulations and policy for EIA in general or for more specific aspects of it. To do so would immediately date it as the regulatory frame-work changes. The websites of relevant government departments and agencies provide the starting point for finding up-to-date information and will usually contain links to other relevant material. Anyone who may be involved in carrying out an LVIA as part of an EIA must ensure that they are fully familiar with the current legislation, Regulations and guidance documents that may be relevant to the specific project or location they are dealing with.

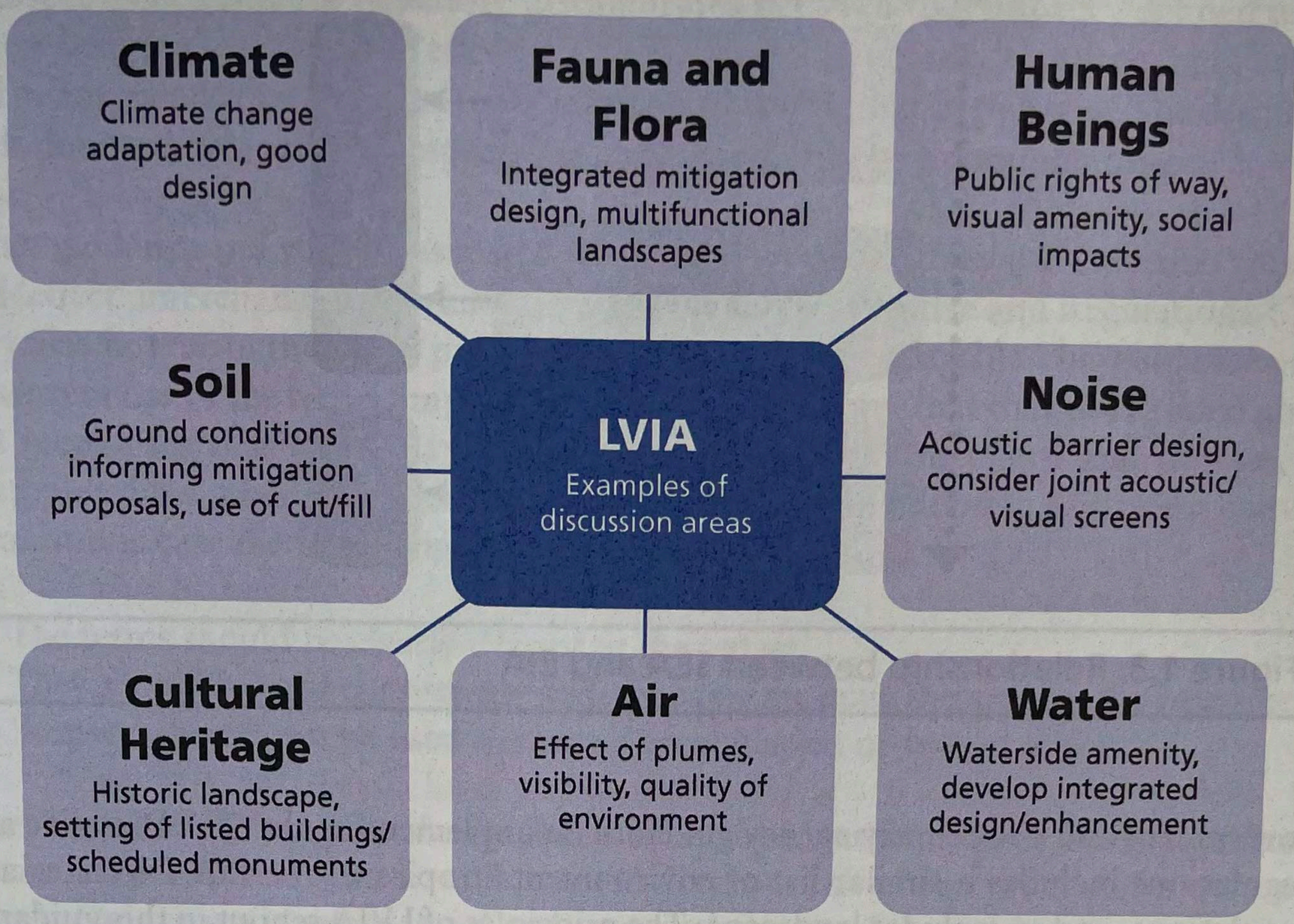


Figure 1.2 Examples of LVIA's relationship with other topics

LVIA in the 'appraisal' of development proposals

1.11 The principles and processes of LVIA can also be used to assist in the 'appraisal' of forms of land use change or development that fall outside the requirements of the EIA Directive and Regulations. Applying such an approach in these circumstances can be useful in helping to develop the design of different forms of development or other projects that may bring about change in the landscape and in visual amenity. Reference is sometimes made to the 'appraisal' of landscape and visual effects when such work is carried out outside the requirements of the EIA Directive and Regulations, and Local Planning Authorities may ask for such 'appraisals' where planning applications raise concerns about effects on the landscape and/or visual amenity. While much of this guidance is concerned with formal requirements for EIA and with the role LVIA plays in that process, the methods described will also be useful in such situations.

LVIA in Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.12 It has been widely recognised that project-level EIA alone cannot lead to comprehensive environmental protection or sustainable development. The European Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC *The assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment* (European Commission, 2001) is intended to address this and ensure that environmental consequences are addressed at strategic as well as project levels. It applies to certain plans and programmes that are developed by the public sector and by private companies that undertake functions of a public nature under the control or direction of government. This Directive is again transposed into UK law by a series of country-specific Government Regulations.

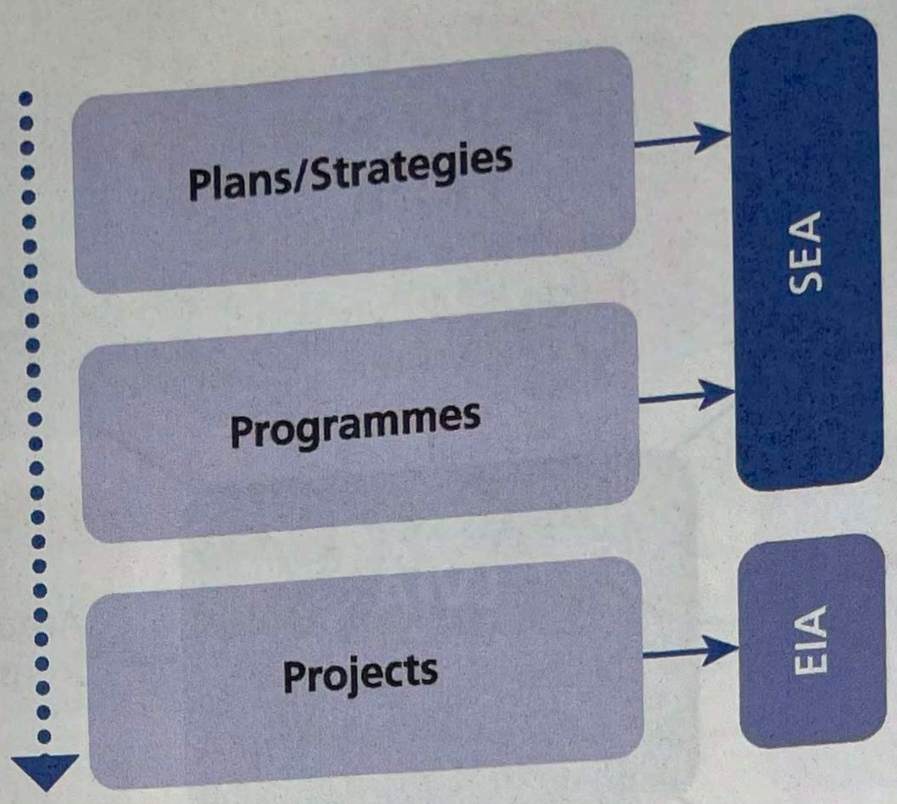


Figure 1.3 Relationship between SEA and EIA

1.13 Government and UK country agency guidance on implementing the SEA Directive and Regulations includes a similar list of environmental topics to the EIA Directive and Regulations, and so includes landscape. The principles of LVIA set out in this guidance are therefore equally applicable to SEA. There is a degree of overlap between the two processes and landscape and visual amenity issues may arise in both. However, as there is no clearly specified project to be assessed in SEA, the approach is more strategic and generic. The SEA process allows the cumulative effects of potential developments to be taken into account at an early stage of planning and alternative strategic approaches to be considered before decisions are taken, all in a way which is transparent. In England there are close relationships between SEA and sustainability appraisals of development plans, which have been carried out in various forms since the 1990s and have become an integral part of spatial planning, covering plans at all levels from national to local. There is a degree of overlap between the two processes and landscape and visual amenity issues may arise in both.

1.14 The approach is generally to judge how far the plan, programme or strategy performs against criteria relating to matters such as:

- conservation and enhancement of landscape character and scenic value;
- protection and enhancement of the landscape everywhere and particularly in designated areas;
- protection and enhancement of diversity and local distinctiveness;
- improvement of the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open space;
- restoration of landscapes degraded as a consequence of past industrial activity.

Impacts, effects and significance

1.15 Terminology can be complex and potentially confusing in this area, particularly in the use of the words 'impact' and 'effect' in LVIA within EIA and SEA. The process is generally known as **impact** assessment but the European Union Directive refers to assessment of the **effects**, which are changes arising from the development that is being

assessed. This guidance generally distinguishes between the 'impact', defined as the action being taken, and the 'effect', defined as the change resulting from that action, and recommends that the terms should be used consistently in this way. The document itself does use both, using 'impact' where this is the term in common usage.

Other guidance and advice has recognised that practitioners may use the terms 'impact' and 'effect' interchangeably while still adhering to the Directive and Regulations.[1] This may also be true of the wider public who become involved in EIA. This guidance urges consistent use of the terms 'impact' and 'effect' in the ways that they are defined above but recognises that there may be circumstances where this is not appropriate, for example where other practitioners involved in an EIA are adopting a different convention. In this case the following principles should apply: 1.16

- The terms should be clearly defined at the outset.
- They should be used consistently with the same meaning throughout the assessment.
- 'Impact' should not be used to mean a combination of several effects.

The Directive is clear that the emphasis is on the identification of **likely significant** environmental effects. This should embrace all types of effect and includes, for example, those that are positive/beneficial and negative/adverse, direct and indirect, and long and short term, as well as cumulative effects. Identifying significant effects stresses the need for an approach that is in proportion to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of its likely effects. Judgement needs to be exercised at all stages in terms of the scale of investigation that is appropriate and proportional. This does not mean that effects should be ignored or their importance minimised but that the assessment should be tailored to the particular circumstances in each case. This applies to 'appraisals' of landscape and visual impacts outside the formal requirements of EIA as well as those that are part of a formal assessment. 1.17

Who is this guidance for?

The holistic perspective that landscape professionals take, coupled with the broad scope of their interests as embodied in the Landscape Institute's Royal Charter (Landscape Institute, 2008b) means that they make a particularly valuable contribution to EIA in general and to LVIA in particular, often playing leading or key roles in the multidisciplinary teams who carry out EIAs. It is important that they are able to demonstrate the highest professional standards and that their work should offer exemplars of good practice. While there has been continuous improvement in the standard and content of Environmental Statements – which are the documents resulting from the process of EIA – as experience has grown, there is still a clear need for sound, reliable and widely accepted advice on good practice for all aspects of EIA. Good practice in LVIA is key to this and also applies as much to 'appraisals' carried out informally as to contributions to the 'appraisal' of development proposals and planning applications. 1.18

As with the previous editions, this guidance is therefore aimed primarily at practitioners and is designed to help achieve quality and consistency of approach, to raise standards in this important area of professional work and so to ensure that change in the landscape is considered in an effective way that helps to achieve sustainable development 1.19

objectives. The intention is to encourage good practice and achieve greater consistency in the use of terminology and in overall approach.

1.20 The guidance concentrates on principles while also seeking to steer specific approaches where there is a general consensus on methods and techniques. It is not intended to be prescriptive, in that it does not provide a detailed 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation. It is always the primary responsibility of any landscape professional carrying out an assessment to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the particular circumstances.

1.21 Although aimed mainly at those carrying out LVIAs, the guidance should also be of value to others who have an interest in understanding more about the importance of landscape and visual amenity issues, about the role of LVIA and about the way that it is carried out. They may include:

- developers, members of professional development project teams and other organisations who own or manage land and may be involved in projects that have the potential to change the landscape and visual amenity;
- other professionals involved in assessing the consequences of change for other aspects of the environment;
- planners and others within local government and the government agencies who may be the recipients of reports on the consequences of change and development and be required to review them;
- politicians, amenity societies and the general public who may be involved in decisions about proposals for change and development;
- those providing education and training in LVIA as one of a range of tools and techniques contributing to landscape planning and design;
- students and others wishing to learn about the process of LVIA.

1.22 While written primarily in the context of the UK, it is recognised that previous editions of the guidance have also been used in other parts of the world. The aim has been to make the advice specific enough to meet the needs of UK practitioners while at the same time avoiding too much detail about particular legislation which will make it of less value elsewhere.

1.23 If this guidance is used beyond the UK, it will be important to remember that concepts and definitions vary and approaches must be tailored to local circumstances and legislation. There is a focus on the overall approach and methods rather than the specifics of their application in particular places or to particular types of development. More specific guidance may exist for certain types of development, such as roads for example, in which case account will need to be taken of both the general and the specific guidance.

Organisation and structure of the guidance

1.24 Given the different needs of the professional and the wider audiences the guidance is organised in two parts, as follows:

Part 1: Introduction, scope and context is aimed mainly at a wider audience with a more general interest in the topic, although it also contains material of relevance to practitioners. It provides an introduction to LVIA, in the context of some of the changes that have taken place since 2002. It sets the scene but is **not** concerned with the practicalities of actually carrying out LVIA.

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** – this chapter – gives a brief introduction to LVIA and its relationship with EIA and SEA, introducing some key terms and describing the audience at which the guidance is aimed.
- **Chapter 2: Definitions, scope and context** describes the introduction of the European Landscape Convention, and definitions of landscape, seascape and townscape. It discusses the role of LVIA in dealing with landscape change in the context of sustainable development, the role of professional judgement and the relationship of LVIA to the design process.

Part 2: Principles, processes and presentation is the core of the practical guidance. It sets out fundamental principles and provides guidance on methods, procedures and technical issues.

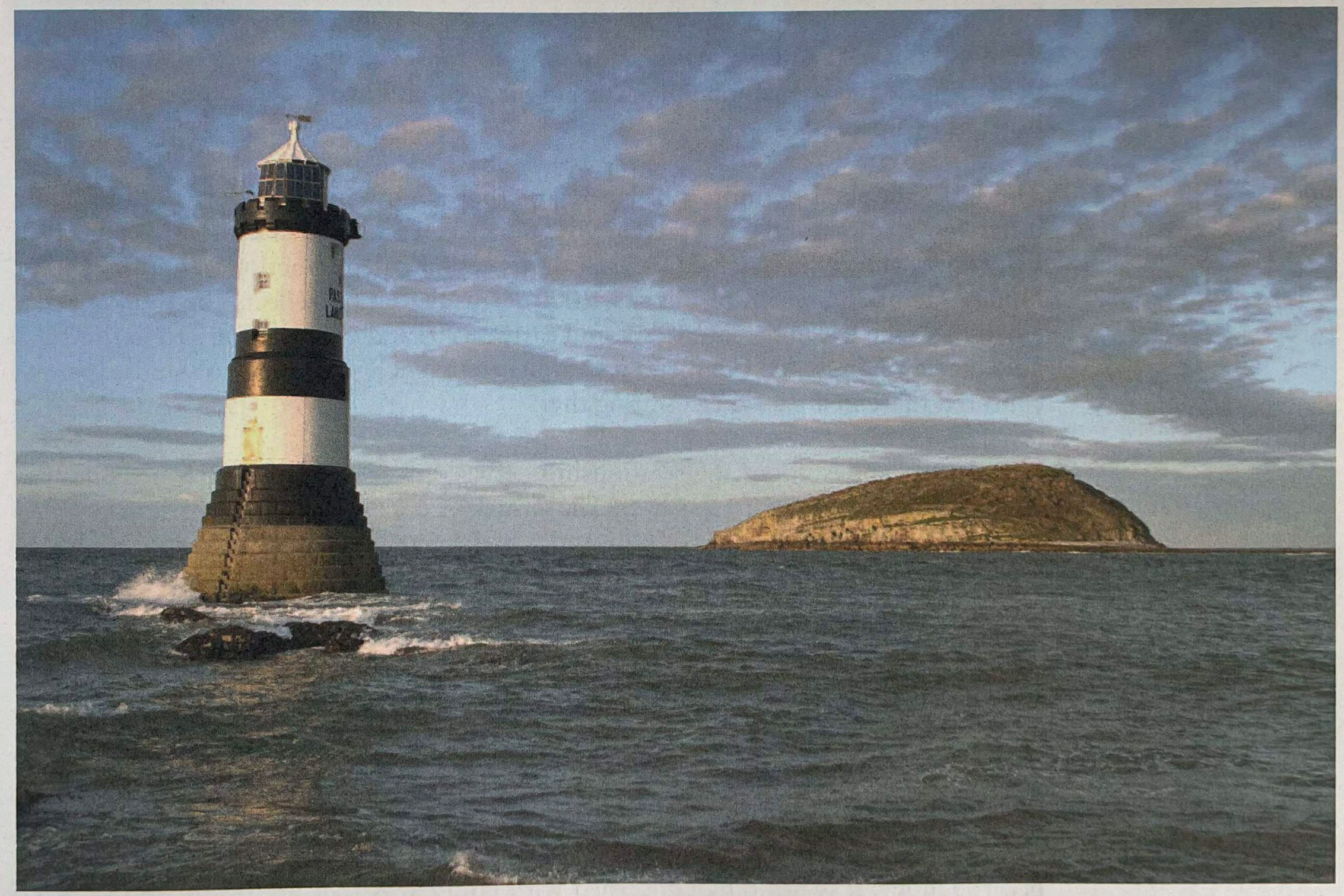
- **Chapter 3: Principles and overview of processes** outlines the process of LVIA and places it in the context of wider EIA processes. It provides a framework for the later chapters on assessing landscape effects and visual effects by setting out the general approach to the core steps of describing the baseline, identifying the effects and assessing their significance.
- **Chapter 4: The proposed development, design and mitigation** describes what those involved in carrying out LVIA need to know about the development or change that is proposed and discusses the detail of approaches to mitigation, which may become part of the scheme proposals through the iterative design process.
- **Chapter 5: Assessment of landscape effects** describes how the general approach and processes apply when assessing landscape effects.
- **Chapter 6: Assessment of visual effects** describes how the general approach and processes apply when assessing visual effects.
- **Chapter 7: Assessing cumulative landscape and visual effects** describes ways of approaching the issue of cumulative landscape and visual effects.
- **Chapter 8: Presenting information on landscape and visual effects** summarises approaches to presenting material about LVIA whether as a chapter in an Environmental Statement or as a standalone document.

Summary advice on good practice

- LVIA may be carried out either formally, as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), or informally as a contribution to the 'appraisal' of development proposals and planning applications. Both are important and the broad principles and the core of the approach are similar in each case.
- Anyone involved in carrying out an LVIA, whether as part of an EIA or not, must ensure that they are fully familiar with the current legislation, Regulations and guidance documents that may be relevant to the specific case they are dealing with.
- This guidance recognises a clear distinction between the **impact**, as the action being taken, and the **effect**, being the result of that action, and recommends that the terms should be used consistently in this way. 'Impact' should not be used to mean a combination of several effects.
- The emphasis on **likely significant** effects 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. This applies to 'appraisals' of landscape and visual impacts outside the formal requirements of EIA as well as those that are part of a formal assessment.

Chapter 2

Definitions, scope and context



Chapter overview

- What does landscape mean?
- The importance of landscape
- Landscape change and sustainable development
- The role of LVIA
- Professional judgement in LVIA

What does landscape mean?

2.1 The UK has signed and ratified the European Landscape Convention (ELC) since 2002, when the last edition of this guidance was published. The recognition that government has thus given to landscape matters raises the profile of this important area and emphasises the role that landscape can play as an integrating framework for many areas of policy. The ELC is designed to achieve improved approaches to the planning, management and protection of landscapes throughout Europe and to put people at the heart of this process.

2.2 The ELC adopts a definition of landscape that is now being widely used in many different situations and is adopted in this guidance: 'Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors' (Council of Europe, 2000). This definition reflects the thinking that emerged in the UK in the late 1980s and early 1990s and was summarised in the 2002 guidance on Landscape Character Assessment. The inclusive nature of landscape was captured there in a paragraph stating that:

> Landscape is about the relationship between people and place. It provides the setting for our day-to-day lives. The term does not mean just special or designated landscapes and it does not only apply to the countryside. Landscape can mean a small patch of urban wasteland as much as a mountain range, and an urban park as much as an expanse of lowland plain. It results from the way that different components of our environment – both natural (the influences of geology, soils, climate, flora and fauna) and cultural (the historical and current impact of land use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions) – interact together and are perceived by us. People's perceptions turn land into the concept of landscape.
>
> (Swanwick and Land Use Consultants, 2002: 2)

2.3 This guidance embraces this broad interpretation of what landscape means and uses it throughout. It is not only concerned with landscapes that are recognised as being special or valuable, but is also about the ordinary and the everyday – the landscapes where people live and work, and spend their leisure time. The same approach can be taken in all these different landscape settings, provided that full attention is given to the particular characteristics of each place.

2.4 The importance of the ELC definition is that it moves beyond the idea that landscape is only a matter of aesthetics and visual amenity. Instead it encourages a focus on

landscape as a resource in its own right. It provides an integrated way of conceptualising our surroundings and is increasingly considered to provide a useful spatial framework for thinking about a wide range of environmental, land use and development issues.

The ELC definition of landscape is inclusive. Article 2 of the European Landscape Convention states that 2.5

> Subject to the provisions contained in Article 15, this Convention applies to the entire territory of the Parties and covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban

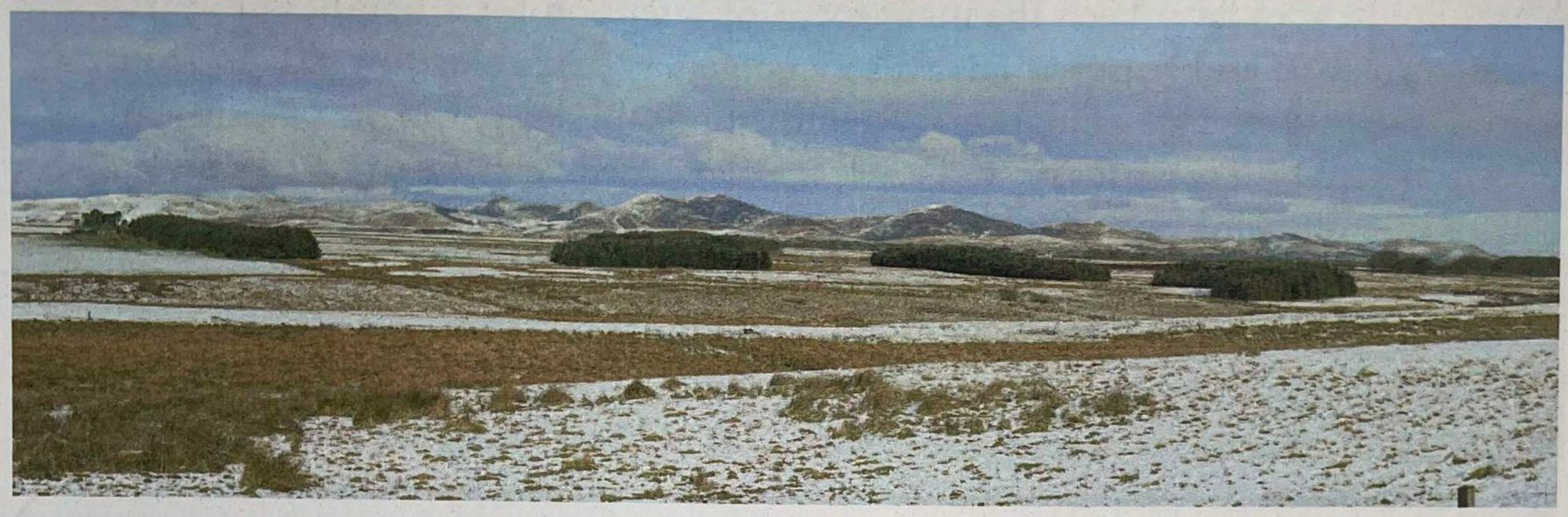


Figure 2.1A–D The European Landscape Convention definition of landscape is inclusive and covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It includes land, inland water and marine areas

> areas. It includes land, inland water and marine areas. It concerns landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as everyday or degraded landscapes.
> (Council of Europe, 2000)

The definition therefore applies, among other things, to:

- all types of rural landscape, from high mountains and wild countryside to urban fringe farmland (rural landscapes);
- marine and coastal landscapes (seascapes);
- the landscapes of villages, towns and cities (townscapes).

2.6 Rural landscapes have been the main focus of attention for a number of years. Now both townscape and seascape have also emerged as particular sub-sets of 'landscape' for consideration. This guidance is equally applicable to all forms of landscape and does not separate townscape and seascape out for special treatment. However, for clarity the following paragraphs define these terms. All LVIA work needs to respond to the particular context in which it takes place. Whether the project is located in a rural, an urban or a marine context, attention will need to be paid to the distinctive character of the area and reference made to any relevant specific guidance.

Chapter 5 sets out how the different forms of landscape are assessed to provide baseline descriptions for LVIA.

Townscape

2.7 'Townscape' refers to areas where the built environment is dominant. Villages, towns and cities often make important contributions as elements in wider-open landscapes but townscape means the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, the relationships between them, the different types of urban open spaces, including green spaces, and the relationship between buildings and open spaces. There are important relationships with the historic dimensions of landscape and townscape, since evidence of the way that villages, towns and cities change and develop over time contributes to their current form and character.

Seascape

2.8 The importance of coasts and seascapes as part of our marine environment has increasingly been acknowledged, not least due to the growing pressures being placed upon them by new forms of development, notably aquaculture, offshore wind farms, tidal energy schemes and the development of coastal risk management defences. The definition of landscape from the European Landscape Convention includes seascapes and marine environments. As the UK Marine Policy Statement indicates, 'seascape should be taken as meaning landscapes with views of the coast or seas, and coasts and the adjacent marine environment with cultural, historical and archaeological links with each other' (HM Government, Northern Ireland Executive, Scottish Government and Welsh Assembly Government, 2011: 21).

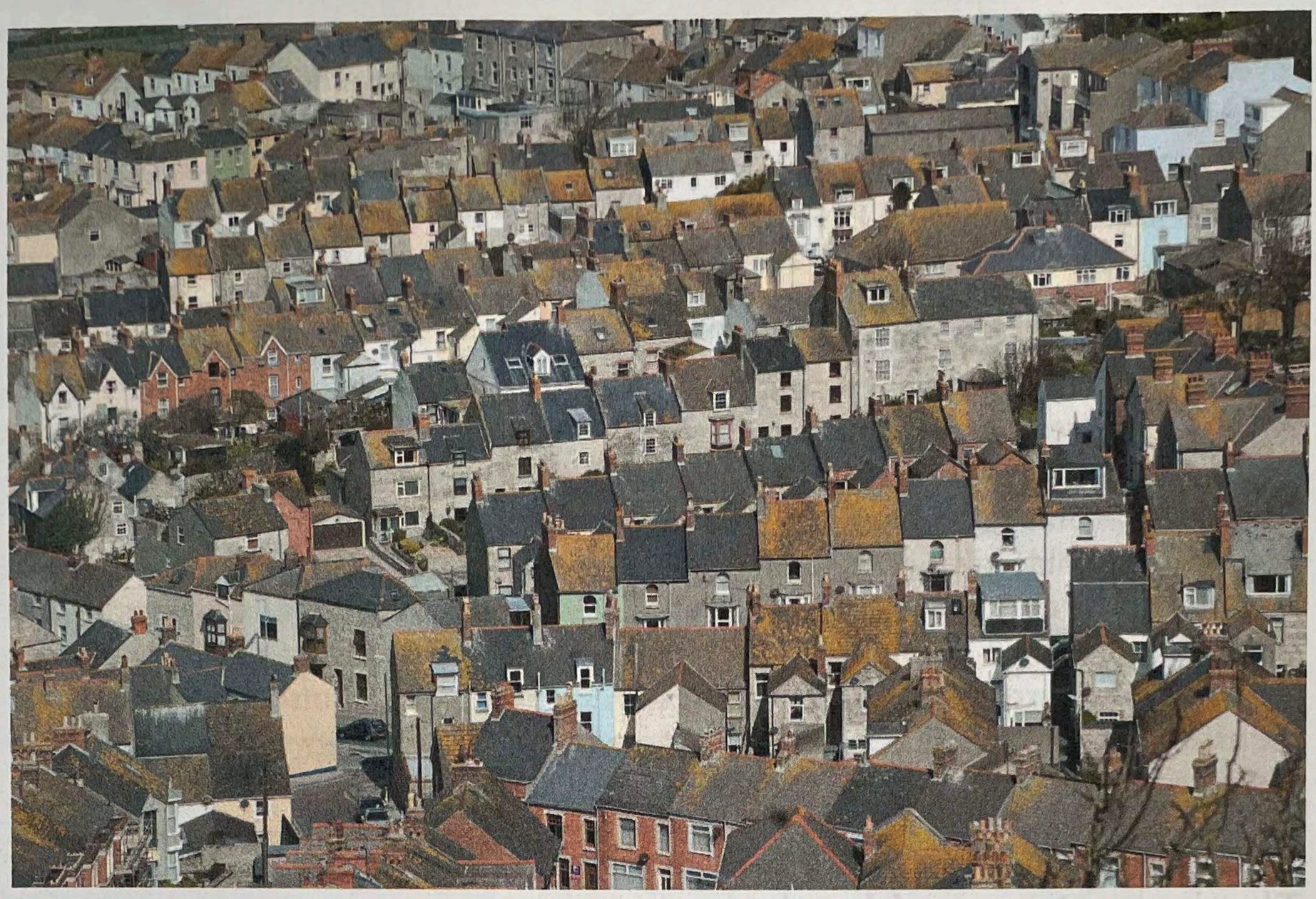


Figure 2.2 'Townscape' means the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings and the relationships between them

Figure 2.3 'Seascape' means landscapes with views of the coast or seas, and coasts and the adjacent marine environment

2.9 This definition includes the meeting point of land and sea but also encompasses areas beyond the low water mark, and so includes both areas near to the shore and the open sea. Any assessment of the landscape and visual effects of change in marine and coastal environments should carefully consider the relationship between land and sea in coastal areas and also take account of possible requirements to consider the open sea.

Relationship to green infrastructure

2.10 Green infrastructure has come to the fore since the publication of the second edition of this guidance. It refers to networks of green spaces and watercourses and water bodies that connect rural areas, villages, towns and cities. Such networks are increasingly being planned, designed and managed to achieve multiple social, environmental and economic objectives. Green infrastructure is not separate from the landscape but is part of it and operates at what is sometimes referred to as the 'landscape scale'. It is generally concerned with sites and linking networks that are set within the wider context of the surrounding landscape or townscape. LVIA will often need to address the effects of proposed development on green infrastructure as well as the potential the development may offer to enhance it.

The importance of landscape

2.11 As the ELC makes clear, particular attention needs to be given to landscape because of the importance that is attached to it by individuals, communities and public bodies. Landscape is important because it provides:

- a shared resource which is important in its own right as a public good;
- an environment for flora and fauna;
- the setting for day to day lives – for living, working and recreation;
- opportunities for aesthetic enjoyment;
- a sense of place and a sense of history, which in turn can contribute to individual, local, national and European identity;
- continuity with the past through its relative permanence and its role in acting as a cultural record of the past;
- a source of memories and associations, which in turn may contribute to wellbeing;
- inspiration for learning, as well as for art and other forms of creativity.

2.12 In addition landscape provides economic benefits, both directly by providing an essential resource to support livelihoods, especially in agriculture, forestry and other land management activities, and in recreation and tourism, as well as indirectly through its now widely acknowledged benefits for health and wellbeing.

Landscape change and sustainable development

2.13 Landscape is not unchanging. Many different pressures have progressively altered familiar landscapes over time and will continue to do so in the future, creating new landscapes. Today many of these drivers of change arise from the requirement for development to meet the needs of a growing and changing population and economy.

They include land management, especially farming and forestry, and many forms of development, including (among many others): new housing; commercial developments; new forms of energy generation including wind turbines; new infrastructure such as roads, railways and power lines; and extraction of minerals for a variety of uses.

2.14 In the last thirty years there has been growing emphasis on the need to accommodate such change and development in ways that are sustainable. Definitions of sustainable development have been extensively debated but according to the widely accepted definition in the Brundtland report this means 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). It is broadly agreed that it involves finding an appropriate balance between economic, social and environmental matters, and that protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment is an important part of this.

2.15 As a technical process LVIA has an important contribution to make to the achievement of sustainable development. It takes place in a context where, over time, landscapes evolve and society's needs and individual and community attitudes change. This can make the professional judgements about the significance of effects identified through LVIA, and whether they are positive or negative, particularly challenging.

2.16 Climate change is one of the major factors likely to bring about future change in the landscape, and is widely considered as the most serious long-term threat to the natural environment. The need for climate change mitigation and adaptation is now well established at a policy level in the UK and beyond. There are many different ways in which mitigation and adaptation can be addressed and landscape professionals are directed to the Landscape Institute's policy document on climate change (Landscape Institute, 2008a) when considering such matters. Some climate change mitigation and adaptation projects may in themselves require EIA. Further information on climate change and EIA is available in IEMA guidance (e.g. IEMA, 2010a, 2010b).

2.17 There is some emphasis in the UK and elsewhere on appropriate renewable energy development as a means of mitigating climate change. Renewable energy development proposals are subject to the same LVIA process as any other type of development proposal, with the same need for careful siting, design and mitigation, and impartial assessment of the landscape and visual effects. It is for the competent authority to judge the balance of weight between policy considerations and the effects that such proposals may have.

The role of LVIA

2.18 LVIA must address both effects on landscape as a resource in its own right and effects on views and visual amenity.

Effects on landscape as a resource

2.19 The ELC definition of landscape supports the need to deal with landscape as a resource in its own right. In the UK this particularly reflects the emphasis on landscape character

Figure 2.4 Landscape Institute position statement on green infrastructure

that has developed since the 1980s. Landscape results from the interplay of the physical, natural and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations of these elements and their spatial distribution create the distinctive character of landscapes in different places, allowing different landscapes to be mapped, analysed and described. Character is not just about the physical elements and features that make up a landscape, but also embraces the aesthetic, perceptual and experiential aspects of the landscape that make different places distinctive.

Views and visual amenity

2.20 When the interrelationship between people ('human beings' or 'population' in the language of the Directive and Regulations) and the landscape is considered, this introduces related but very different considerations, notably the views that people have and their visual amenity – meaning the overall pleasantness of the views they enjoy of their surroundings.

2.21 Reflecting this distinction the two components of LVIA are:

1. **assessment of landscape effects:** assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right;
2. **assessment of visual effects:** assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

2.22 The distinction between these two aspects is very important but often misunderstood, even by professionals. LVIA must deal with both and should be clear about the difference between them. If a professional assessment does not properly define them or distinguish between them, then other professionals and members of the public are likely to be confused.

Professional judgement in LVIA

2.23 Professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA. While there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters, for example the number of trees lost to construction of a new mine, much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements, for example about what effect the introduction of a new development or land use change may have on visual amenity, or about the significance of change in the character of the landscape and whether it is positive or negative.

2.24 The role of professional judgement is also characteristic of other environmental topics, such as ecology or cultural heritage, especially when it comes to judging how significant a particular change is. In all cases there is a need for the judgements that are made to be reasonable and based on clear and transparent methods so that the reasoning applied at different stages can be traced and examined by others. Professional judgements must be based on both training and experience and in general suitably qualified and experienced landscape professionals should carry out Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments.

2.25 Even with qualified and experienced professionals there can be differences in the judgements made. This may result from using different approaches or different criteria, or

from variation in judgements based on the same approach and criteria. Ideally, and especially for complex projects, more than one person should be involved in the assessment to provide checks and balances, especially in identifying the likely significant effects. If, for example, the professional judgements made on behalf of different interested parties vary widely it is the decision makers in the competent authority who will ultimately need to weigh up the evidence and reach a conclusion.

2.26 Landscape professionals are likely to be closely involved in the development of the scheme and its design. If they also undertake the LVIA, they must be able to take a sufficiently detached and dispassionate view of the proposals in the final assessment of landscape and visual impact. In carrying out an LVIA the landscape professional must always take an independent stance, and fully and transparently address both the negative and positive effects of a scheme in a way that is accessible and reliable for all parties concerned.

Summary advice on good practice

- LVIA should adopt the broad and inclusive ELC definition of landscape embracing, among other things, seascapes and townscapes as well as all forms of rural landscape.
- LVIA will often need to address the effects of development on green infrastructure and also the potential for enhancing it. Green infrastructure is not a separate consideration from landscape – rather it is part of it and should be treated as such.
- As a technical process LVIA has an important contribution to make to the achievement of sustainable development, including assessment of proposals for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.
- LVIA must deal with and clearly distinguish between the assessment of landscape effects, dealing with changes to the landscape as a resource, and the assessment of visual effects, dealing with changes in views and visual amenity.
- Professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA. Ideally, and especially for complex projects, more than one person should be involved in the assessment to provide checks and balances, especially in identifying the significant effects likely to influence decisions.

Across the UK there is also a variety of designations aimed at aspects of the historic environment (such as Conservation Areas and listed buildings) and non-statutory recognition of particular types of environment (such as Heritage Coasts). An LVIA should consider the implications of the full range of statutory and non-statutory designations and recognitions and consider what they may imply about landscape value. 5.22

The criteria and terms used in making statutory designations vary and may not always be explicitly stated. If a project subject to LVIA is in or near to one of them, it is important that the baseline study should seek to understand the basis for the designation and why the landscape is considered to be of value. Great care should be taken to understand what landscape designations mean in today's context. This means determining to what degree the criteria and factors used to support the case for designation are represented in the specific study area. 5.23

Desk study of relevant documents will often, although not always, provide information concerning the basis for designation. But sometimes, at the more local scale of an LVIA study area, it is possible that the landscape value of that specific area may be different from that suggested by the formal designation. Fieldwork should help to establish how the criteria for designation are expressed, or not, in the particular area in question. At the same time it should be recognised that every part of a designated area contributes to the whole in some way and care must be taken if considering areas in isolation. 5.24

Local landscape designations

In many parts of the UK local authorities identify locally valued landscapes and recognise them through local designations of various types (such as Special Landscape Areas or Areas of Great Landscape Value). They are then incorporated into planning documents along with accompanying planning policies that apply in those areas. As with national designations, the criteria that are used to identify them vary, and similar considerations apply. It is necessary to understand the reasons for the designation and to examine how the criteria relate to the particular area in question. Unfortunately many of these locally designated landscapes do not have good records of how they were selected, what criteria were used and how boundaries were drawn. This can make it difficult to get a clear picture of the relationship between the study area and the wider context of the designation. 5.25

Undesignated landscapes

The fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value. This is particularly so in areas of the UK where in recent years relevant national planning policy and advice has on the whole discouraged local designations unless it can be shown that other approaches would be inadequate. The European Landscape Convention promotes the need to take account of all landscapes, with less emphasis on the special and more recognition that ordinary landscapes also have their value, supported by the landscape character approach. 5.26

Where local designations are not in use a fresh approach may be needed. As a starting point reference to existing Landscape Character Assessments and associated planning policies and/or landscape strategies and guidelines may give an indication of which landscape types or areas, or individual elements or aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are particularly valued. A stated strategy of landscape conservation is usually a good indicator of this. 5.27

5.28 In cases where there is no existing evidence to indicate landscape value, and where scoping discussions suggest that it is appropriate, value should be determined as part of the baseline study through new survey and analysis. This requires definition of the criteria and factors that are considered to confer value on a landscape or on its components. There are a number of possible options:

- Draw on a list of those factors that are generally agreed to influence value (see Box 5.1). They need to be interpreted to reflect the particular legislative and policy context prevailing in particular places. The list is not comprehensive and other factors may be considered important in specific areas.
- Draw up a list of criteria and factors specific to the individual project and landscape context.
- Apply a form of the ecosystem services approach, although this is a cross-cutting and integrating approach and is likely to encroach on other themes or topics in the EIA. Although there is interest in this approach, experience of using it in EIA is limited, although it is under active consideration (IEMA, 2012a).

Box 5.1

Range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes

- **Landscape quality (condition)**: A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
- **Scenic quality**: The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses).
- **Rarity:** The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type.
- **Representativeness**: Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.
- **Conservation interests**: The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.
- **Recreation value**: Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.
- **Perceptual aspects**: A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and/or tranquillity.
- **Associations**: Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

Based on Swanwick and Land Use Consultants (2002)

In practice one option, or a combination of the first two options, is likely to be most effective. There are several key points to consider in deciding how to approach this: 5.29

- There cannot be a standard approach as circumstances will vary from place to place.
- Areas of landscape whose character is judged to be intact and in good condition, and where scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity, and natural or cultural heritage features make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important associations, are likely to be highly valued.
- Many areas that will be subject to LVIA will be ordinary, everyday landscapes. In such areas some of the possible criteria may not apply and so there is likely to be greater emphasis on judging, for each landscape type or area, representation of typical character, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of the elements of the landscape. Scenic quality may also be relevant, and will need to reflect factors such as sense of place and aesthetic and perceptual qualities. Judgements may be needed about which particular components of the landscape contribute most to its value.

Individual components of the landscape, including particular landscape features, and notable aesthetic or perceptual qualities can be judged on their importance in their own right, including whether or not they can realistically be replaced. They can also be judged on their contribution to the overall character and value of the wider landscape. For example, an ancient hedgerow may have high value in its own right but also be important because it is part of a hedgerow pattern that contributes significantly to landscape character. 5.30

Assessment of the value attached to the landscape should be carried out within a clearly recorded and transparent framework so that decision making is clear. Fieldwork can either be combined with the Landscape Character Assessment work, as described above, or be carried out at a later stage. Field observations supporting the assessment should be clearly recorded using appropriate record sheets, and records should as far as possible be retained in an accessible form for future reference. If there is reliance on previous assessments, for example carried out by a local authority as part of a wider Landscape Character Assessment or landscape management strategy, this must be made clear and such information should be treated in a critically reflective way. 5.31

A role for consultation

In making the assessment of landscape value it is important where possible to draw on information and opinions from consultees. Consultation bodies will usually give an expert view as well as providing relevant existing information. Consultations with local people or groups who use the landscape in different ways may, where practicable, also suggest the range of values that people attach to the landscape. Scoping discussions with the competent authority should help to determine the reasonable extent of such consultation. 5.32

5.36 All effects that are considered likely to take place should be described as fully as possible:

- Effects on individual components of the landscape, such as loss of trees or buildings for example, or addition of new elements, should be identified and mapped (and if appropriate and helpful quantified by measuring the change).
- Changes in landscape character or quality/condition in particular places need to be described as fully as possible and illustrated by maps and images that make clear, as accurately as possible, what is likely to happen.

Good, clear and concise description of the effects that are identified is key to helping a wide range of people understand what may happen if the proposed change or development takes place.

5.37 One of the more challenging issues is deciding whether the landscape effects should be categorised as positive or negative. It is also possible for effects to be neutral in their consequences for the landscape. An informed professional judgement should be made about this and the criteria used in reaching the judgement should be clearly stated. They might include, but should not be restricted to:

- the degree to which the proposal fits with existing character;
- the contribution to the landscape that the development may make in its own right, usually by virtue of good design, even if it is in contrast to existing character.

The importance of perceptions of landscape is emphasised by the European Landscape Convention, and others may of course hold different opinions on whether the effects are positive or negative, but this is not a reason to avoid making this judgement, which will ultimately be weighed against the opinions of others in the decision-making process.

Assessing the significance of landscape effects

5.38 The landscape effects that have been identified should be assessed to determine their significance, based on the principles described in Paragraphs 3.23–3.36. Judging the significance of landscape effects requires methodical consideration of each effect identified and, for each one, assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the effect on the landscape.

Sensitivity of the landscape receptors

5.39 Landscape receptors need to be assessed firstly in terms of their **sensitivity**, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape. In LVIA sensitivity is similar to the concept of landscape sensitivity used in the wider arena of landscape planning, but it is not the same as it is specific to the particular project or development that is being proposed and to the location in question.

Susceptibility to change

5.40 This means the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it 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.

The assessment may take place in situations where there are existing landscape sensitivity and capacity studies, which have become increasingly common. They may deal with the general type of development that is proposed, in which case they may provide useful preliminary background information for the assessment. But they cannot provide a substitute for the individual assessment of the susceptibility of the receptors in relation to change arising from the specific development proposal. 5.41

Some of these existing assessments may deal with what has been called 'intrinsic' or 'inherent' sensitivity, without reference to a specific type of development. These cannot reliably inform assessment of the susceptibility to change since they are carried out without reference to any particular type of development and so do not relate to the specific development proposed. Since landscape effects in LVIA are particular to both the specific landscape in question and the specific nature of the proposed development, the assessment of susceptibility must be tailored to the project. It should not be recorded as part of the landscape baseline but should be considered as part of the assessment of effects. 5.42

Judgements about the susceptibility of landscape receptors to change should be recorded on a verbal scale (for example high, medium or low), but the basis for this must be clear, and linked back to evidence from the baseline study. 5.43

Value of the landscape receptor

The baseline study will have established the value attached to the landscape receptors (see Paragraphs 5.19–5.31), covering: 5.44

- the value of the Landscape Character Types or Areas that may be affected, based on review of any designations at both national and local levels, and, where there are no designations, judgements based on criteria that can be used to establish landscape value;
- the value of individual contributors to landscape character, especially the key characteristics, which may include individual elements of the landscape, particular landscape features, notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities, and combinations of these contributors.

The value of the landscape receptors will to some degree reflect landscape designations and the level of importance which they signify, although there should not be over-reliance on designations as the sole indicator of value. Assessments should reflect: 5.45

- internationally valued landscapes recognised as World Heritage Sites;
- nationally valued landscapes (National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Scenic Areas or other equivalent areas);
- locally valued landscapes, for example local authority landscape designations or, where these do not exist, landscapes assessed as being of equivalent value using clearly stated and recognised criteria;
- landscapes that are not nationally or locally designated, or judged to be of equivalent

value using clearly stated and recognised criteria, but are nevertheless valued at a community level.

5.46 There can be complex relationships between the value attached to landscape receptors and their susceptibility to change which are especially important when considering change within or close to designated landscapes. For example:

- An internationally, nationally or locally valued landscape does not automatically, or by definition, have high susceptibility to all types of change.
- It is possible for an internationally, nationally or locally important landscape to have relatively low susceptibility to change resulting from the particular type of development in question, by virtue of both the characteristics of the landscape and the nature of the proposal.
- The particular type of change or development proposed may not compromise the specific basis for the value attached to the landscape.

5.47 Landscapes that are nationally designated (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England and Wales and their equivalents in Scotland and Northern Ireland) will be accorded the highest value in the assessment. If the area affected by the proposal is on the margin of or adjacent to such a designated area, thought may be given to the extent to which it demonstrates the characteristics and qualities that led to the designation of the area. Boundaries are very important in defining the extent of designated areas, but they often follow convenient physical features and as a result there may be land outside the boundary that meets the designation criteria and land inside that does not. Similar principles apply to locally designated landscapes but here the difficulty may be that the characteristics or qualities that provided the basis for their designation are not always clearly set down.

Magnitude of landscape effects

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

Size or scale

5.49 Judgements are needed about the size or scale of change in the landscape that is likely to be experienced as a result of each effect. This should be described, and also categorised on a verbal scale that distinguishes the amount of change but is not overly complex. For example, the effect of both loss and addition of new features may be judged as major, moderate, minor or none, or other equivalent words. The judgements should, for example, take account of:

- the extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape – in some cases this may be quantified;
- the degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by addition of new ones – for example, removal of hedges may change a small-scale, intimate landscape into a large-scale, open one, or introduction of new buildings or tall structures may alter open skylines;

- whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.

Geographical extent

The geographical area over which the landscape effects will be felt must also be considered. This is distinct from the size or scale of the effect – there may for example be moderate loss of landscape elements over a large geographical area, or a major addition affecting a very localised area. The extent of the effects will vary widely depending on the nature of the proposal and there can be no hard and fast rules about what categories to use. In general effects may have an influence at the following scales, although this will vary according to the nature of the project and not all may be relevant on every occasion: 5.50

- at the **site** level, within the development site itself;
- at the level of the **immediate setting** of the site;
- at the scale of the **landscape type or character area** within which the proposal lies;
- on a **larger scale**, influencing several landscape types or character areas.

Duration and reversibility of the landscape effects

These are separate but linked considerations. Duration can usually be simply judged on a scale such as short term, medium term or long term, where, for example, short term might be zero to five years, medium term five to ten years and long term ten to twenty-five years. There is no fixed rule on these definitions and so in each case it must be made clear how the categories are defined and the reasons for this. 5.51

Reversibility is a judgement about the prospects and the practicality of the particular effect being reversed in, for example, a generation. This can be a very important issue – for example, while some forms of development, like housing, can be considered permanent, others, such as wind energy developments, are often argued to be reversible since they have a limited life and could eventually be removed and/or the land reinstated. Mineral workings, for example, may be partially reversible in that the landscape can be restored to something similar to, but not the same as, the original. If duration is included in an assessment of the effects, the assumptions behind the judgement must be made clear. Duration and reversibility can sometimes usefully be considered together, so that a temporary or partially reversible effect is linked to definition of how long that effect will last. 5.52

Judging the overall significance of landscape effects

To draw final conclusions about significance, the separate judgements about the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the landscape effects need to be combined to allow a final judgement to be made about whether each effect is significant or not, as required by the Regulations, following the principles set out in Chapter 3. The rationale for the overall judgement must be clear, demonstrating how the assessments of sensitivity and magnitude have been linked in determining the overall significance of each effect. 5.53

Significance can only be defined in relation to each development and its specific location. It is for each assessment to determine how the judgements about the landscape receptors and landscape effects should be combined to arrive at significance and to 5.54

explain how the conclusions have been derived. There may also be a need to adopt a consistent approach across all the EIA topic areas and the EIA co-ordinator will need to be involved in the decisions on suitable approaches.

5.55 As indicated in Chapter 3 (see Paragraph 3.30) there are two main approaches to combining the individual judgements made under the different contributing criteria (although there may also be others):

1. They can be sequentially combined: susceptibility to change and value can be combined into an assessment of sensitivity for each receptor, and size/scale, geographical extent and duration and reversibility can be combined into an assessment of magnitude for each effect. Magnitude and sensitivity can then be combined to assess overall significance.
2. All the judgements against the individual criteria can be arranged in a table to provide an overall profile of each identified effect. An overview can then be taken of the distribution of the judgements for each criterion to make an informed professional assessment of the overall significance of each effect.

5.56 There are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and landscape context and with the type of proposal. At opposite ends of a spectrum it is reasonable to say that:

- major loss or irreversible negative effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes are likely to be of the greatest significance;
- 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

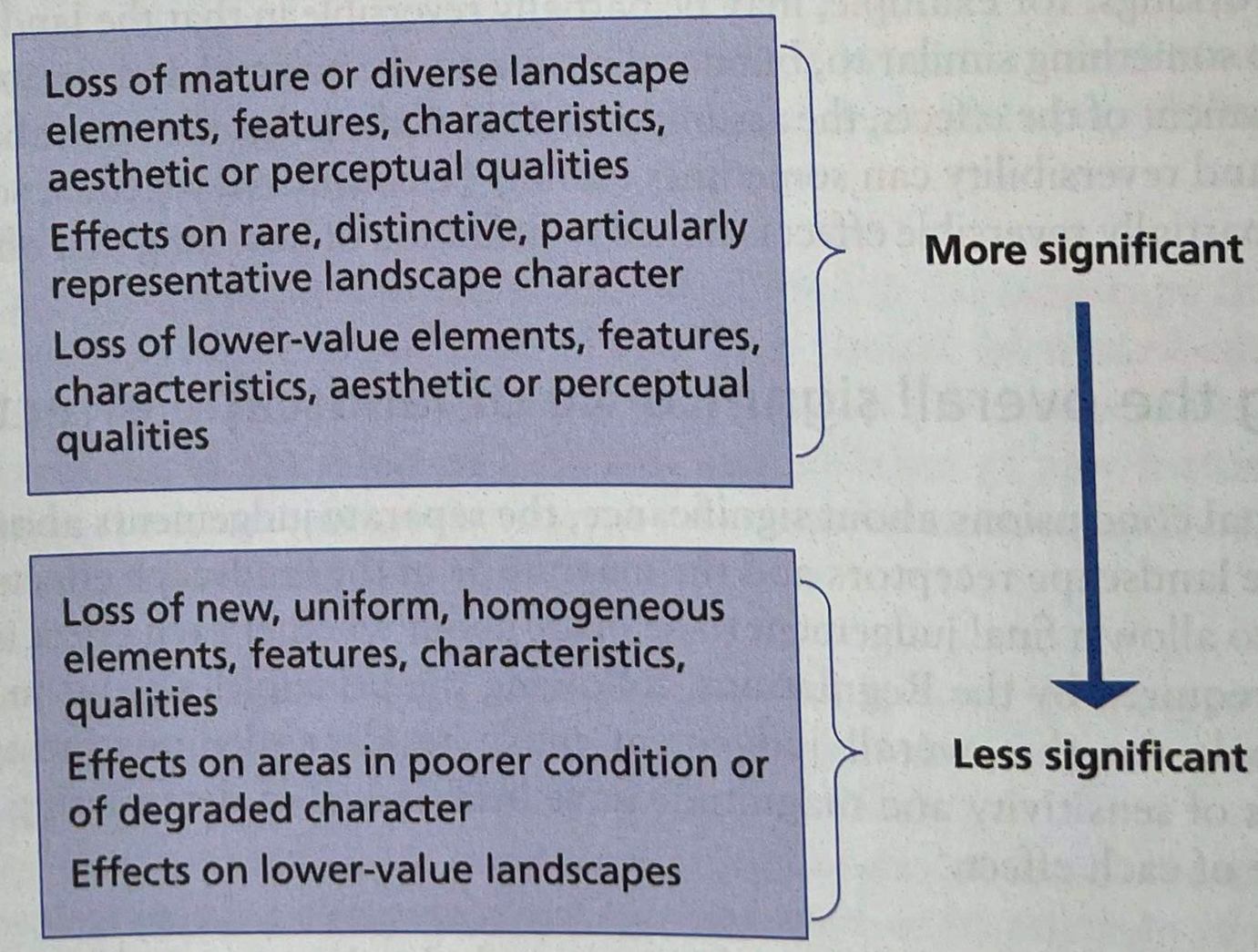


Figure 5.10 Scale of significance

characteristics of the character of landscapes of community value are likely to be of the least significance and may, depending on the circumstances, be judged as not significant;

- where assessments of significance place landscape effects between these extremes, judgements must be made about whether or not they are significant, with full explanations of why these conclusions have been reached.

Where landscape effects are judged to be significant and adverse, proposals for preventing/avoiding, reducing, or offsetting or compensating for them (referred to as mitigation) should be described. The significant landscape effects remaining after mitigation should be summarised as the final step in the process. 5.57

Further detail on mitigation is provided in Paragraphs 4.21–4.43.

Summary advice on good practice

- An assessment of landscape effects should consider how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, its aesthetic and perceptual aspects, its distinctive character and the key characteristics that contribute to this.
- Scoping should try to identify the range of possible landscape effects to be considered, but a decision can be made, in discussion with the competent authority, whether any are not likely to be significant and therefore do not need to be considered further.
- Scoping should also identify the area of landscape that needs to be covered in assessing landscape effects. The study area should include the site itself and the extent of the wider landscape around it which it is likely that the proposed development may influence. This will normally be based on the extent of Landscape Character Areas likely to be significantly affected either directly or indirectly, but the Zone of Theoretical Visibility developed as part of the assessment of visual effects (see Chapter 6) may also inform the decision.
- Baseline landscape studies should be appropriate to the context into which the development proposal will be introduced and in line with current guidance and terminology for Landscape Character Assessment, townscape character assessment and seascape character assessment, as relevant.
- Baseline studies for LVIA should ensure that, working with experts if necessary, cultural heritage features and relevant aspects of the historic landscape are recorded and judgements made about their contribution to the landscape, townscape or seascape. Assessment of the effects of development on historic aspects of the landscape must, however, be dealt with in the cultural heritage topic of an EIA and not as part of the landscape and visual topic.
- The first step in preparing the landscape baseline should be to review any relevant existing assessments that may be available. Existing assessments must be reviewed

in which case this will supplement and form part of the normal LVIA for a project. Some of the principles set out here for dealing with visual effects may help in such assessments but there are specific requirements in residential amenity assessment.

The viewpoints to be used in an assessment of visual effects should be selected initially through discussions with the competent authority and other interested parties at the scoping stage. But selection should also be informed by the ZTV analysis, by fieldwork, and by desk research on access and recreation, including footpaths, bridleways and public access land, tourism including popular vantage points, and distribution of population. 6.18

Viewpoints selected for inclusion in the assessment and for illustration of the visual effects fall broadly into three groups: 6.19

1. **representative viewpoints,** selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptor, where larger numbers of viewpoints cannot all be included individually and where the significant effects are unlikely to differ – for example, certain points may be chosen to represent the views of users of particular public footpaths and bridleways;
2. **specific viewpoints,** chosen because they are key and sometimes promoted viewpoints within the landscape, including for example specific local visitor attractions, viewpoints in areas of particularly noteworthy visual and/or recreational amenity such as landscapes with statutory landscape designations, or viewpoints with particular cultural landscape associations;
3. **illustrative viewpoints,** chosen specifically to demonstrate a particular effect or specific issues, which might, for example, be the restricted visibility at certain locations.

The selection of the final viewpoints used for the assessment should take account of a range of factors, including: 6.20

- the accessibility to the public;
- the potential number and sensitivity of viewers who may be affected;
- the viewing direction, distance (i.e. short-, medium- and long-distance views) and elevation;
- the nature of the viewing experience (for example static views, views from settlements and views from sequential points along routes);
- the view type (for example panoramas, vistas and glimpses);
- the potential for cumulative views of the proposed development in conjunction with other developments.

Issues relating to the cumulative effects of proposals are covered in Chapter 7.

The viewpoints used need to cover as wide a range of situations as is possible, reasonable and necessary to cover the likely significant effects. It is not possible to give specific guidance on the appropriate number of viewpoints since this depends on the context, the nature of the proposal and the range and location of visual receptors. The 6.21

emphasis must always be on proportionality in relation to the scale and nature of the development proposal and its likely significant effects, and on agreement with the competent authority and consultation bodies.

6.22 In addition to fixed views, the viewpoints should also, as far as possible, cover important sequential views along key routes and transport corridors. Viewpoints should cover both near and more distant views, though not so distant as to be meaningless, unless it is useful to demonstrate the influence of distance. And they should cover the full range of different types of people who may be affected. The detailed location of each viewpoint should be carefully considered and should be as typical or representative as possible of the view likely to be experienced there. The details of viewpoint locations should be accurately mapped and catalogued and the direction and area covered by the view recorded. The information should be sufficient for someone else to return to the exact location and record the same view.

6.23 At each agreed viewpoint baseline photographs should be taken to record the existing views. The Landscape Institute has published separate technical guidance on photography and photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Landscape Institute, 2011), which should be consulted when taking baseline photographs. Additional useful information is also available from other sources.[2]

Combining the baseline information

6.24 The completed visual baseline should focus on information that will help to identify significant visual effects. Visual receptors, viewpoints and views that have been

Figure 6.9 The details of viewpoint locations should be accurately mapped and catalogued and the direction and area covered by the view recorded

identified as unlikely to experience significant visual effects either at the scoping stage or in establishing the baseline should not be included in detailed reporting but should be noted, with reasons given for their exclusion. A baseline report should combine information on:

- the type and relative numbers of people (visual receptors) likely to be affected, making clear the activities they are likely to be involved in;
- the location, nature and characteristics of the chosen representative, specific and illustrative viewpoints, with details of the visual receptors likely to be affected at each;
- the nature, composition and characteristics of the existing views experienced at these viewpoints, including direction of view;
- the visual characteristics of the existing views, for example the nature and extent of the skyline, aspects of visual scale and proportion, especially with respect to any particular horizontal or vertical emphasis, and any key foci;
- elements, such as landform, buildings or vegetation, which may interrupt, filter or otherwise influence the views.

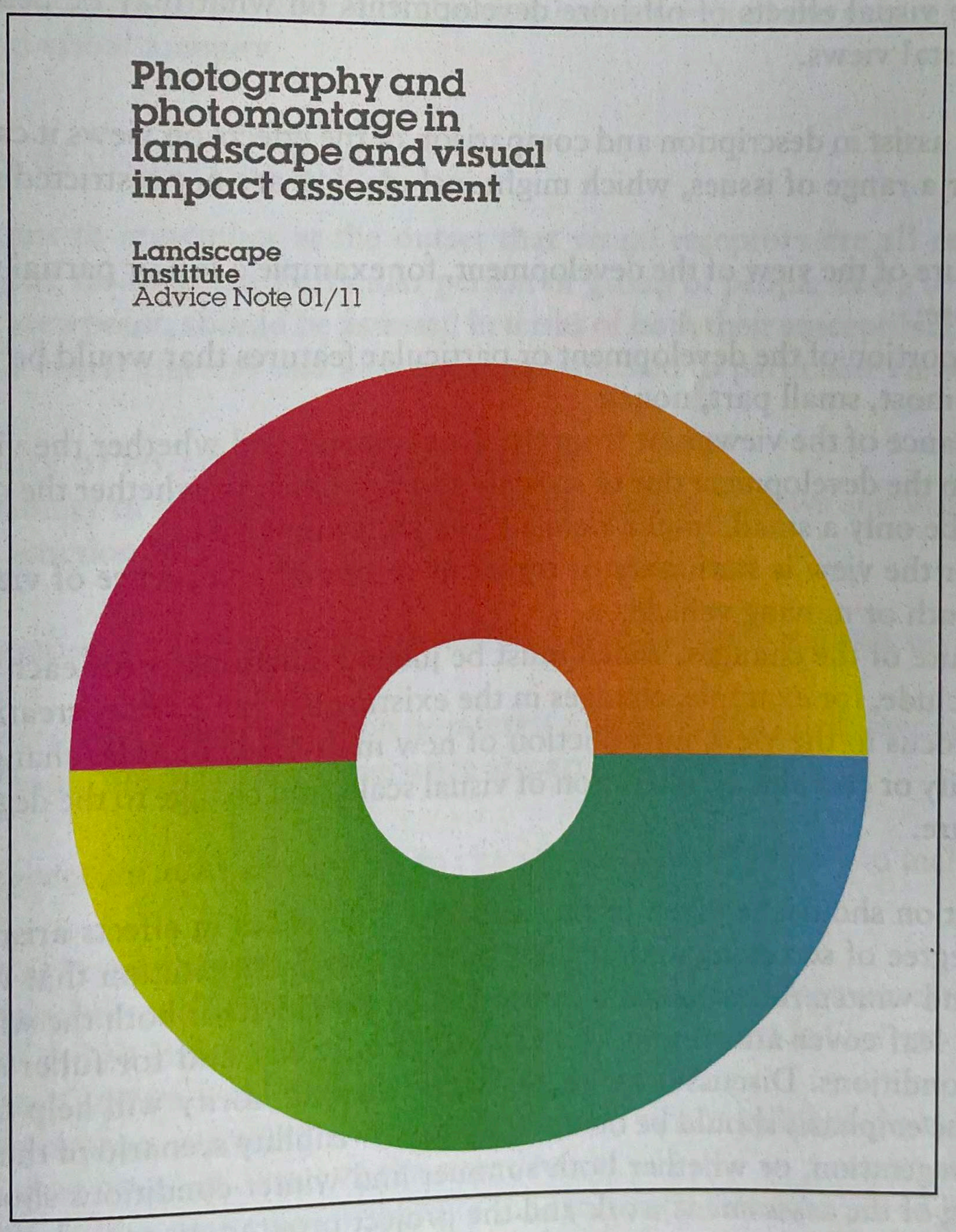


Figure 6.10 Landscape Institute technical advice note

6.25 The potential extent to which the site of the proposed development is visible from surrounding areas (the ZTV), the chosen viewpoints, the types of visual receptor affected and the nature and direction of views can all be combined in well-designed plans. Existing views should be illustrated by photographs or sketches with annotations added to emphasise any particularly important components of each view and to help viewers understand what they are looking at. It is important to include technical information about the photography used to record the baseline, including camera details, date and time of photography and weather conditions.

Predicting and describing visual effects

6.26 Preparation of the visual baseline is followed by the systematic identification of likely effects on the potential visual receptors. Considering the different sources of visual effects alongside the principal visual receptors that might be affected, perhaps by means of a table, will assist in the initial identification of likely significant effects for further study. Changes in views and visual amenity may arise from built or engineered forms and/or from soft landscape elements of the development. Increasingly, attention is being paid to the visual effects of offshore developments on what may be perceived to be valued coastal views.

6.27 In order to assist in description and comparison of the effects on views it can be helpful to consider a range of issues, which might include, but are not restricted to:

- the nature of the view of the development, for example a full or partial view or only a glimpse;
- the proportion of the development or particular features that would be visible (such as full, most, small part, none);
- the distance of the viewpoint from the development and whether the viewer would focus on the development due to its scale and proximity or whether the development would be only a small, minor element in a panoramic view;
- whether the view is stationary or transient or one of a sequence of views, as from a footpath or moving vehicle;
- the nature of the changes, which must be judged individually for each project, but may include, for example, changes in the existing skyline profile, creation of a new visual focus in the view, introduction of new man-made objects, changes in visual simplicity or complexity, alteration of visual scale, and change to the degree of visual enclosure.

6.28 Consideration should be given to the seasonal differences in effects arising from the varying degree of screening and/or filtering of views by vegetation that will apply in summer and winter. Assessments may need to be provided for both the winter season, with least leaf cover and therefore minimum screening, and for fuller screening in summer conditions. Discussion with the competent authority will help to determine whether the emphasis should be on the maximum visibility scenario of the winter condition of vegetation, or whether both summer and winter conditions should be used. The timing of the assessment work and the project programme will also influence the practicality of covering more than one season.

As with landscape effects an informed professional judgement should be made as to whether the visual effects can be described as positive or negative (or in some cases neutral) in their consequences for views and visual amenity. This will need to be based on a judgement about whether the changes will affect the quality of the visual experience for those groups of people who will see the changes, given the nature of the existing views. 6.29

Methods of communicating visual effects are covered in Chapter 8.

Assessing the significance of visual effects

The visual effects that have been identified must be assessed to determine their significance, based on the principles described in Paragraphs 3.23–3.36. As with landscape effects, this requires methodical consideration of each effect identified and, for each one, assessment of the nature of the visual receptors and the nature of the effect on views and visual amenity. 6.30

Sensitivity of visual receptors

It is important to remember at the outset that visual receptors are all people. Each visual receptor, meaning the particular person or group of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint, should be assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views. 6.31

Susceptibility of visual receptors to change

The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of: 6.32

- the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and
- the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.

The visual receptors most susceptible to change are generally likely to include: 6.33

- residents at home (but see Paragraph 6.36);
- people, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views;
- visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;
- communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area.

Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate category of moderate susceptibility to change. Where travel involves recognised scenic routes awareness of views is likely to be particularly high.

6.34 Visual receptors likely to be less sensitive to change include:

- people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape;
- people at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings, and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life (although there may on occasion be cases where views are an important contributor to the setting and to the quality of working life).

6.35 This division is not black and white and in reality there will be a gradation in susceptibility to change. Each project needs to consider the nature of the groups of people who will be affected and the extent to which their attention is likely to be focused on views and visual amenity. Judgements about the susceptibility of visual receptors to change should be recorded on a verbal scale (for example high, medium or low) but the basis for this must be clear, and linked back to evidence from the baseline study.

6.36 The issue of whether residents should be included as visual receptors and residential properties as private viewpoints has been discussed in Paragraph 6.17. If discussion with the competent authority suggests that they should be covered in the assessment of visual effects it will be important to recognise that residents may be particularly susceptible to changes in their visual amenity – residents at home, especially using rooms normally occupied in waking or daylight hours, are likely to experience views for longer than those briefly passing through an area. The combined effects on a number of residents in an area may also be considered, by aggregating properties within a settlement, as a way of assessing the effect on the community as a whole. Care must, however, be taken first to ensure that this really does represent the whole community and second to avoid any double counting of the effects.

Value attached to views

6.37 Judgements should also be made about the value attached to the views experienced. This should take account of:

- recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations;
- indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearances in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment (such as parking places, sign boards and interpretive material) and references to them in literature or art (for example 'Ruskin's View' over Lunedale, or the view from the Cob in Porthmadog over Traeth Mawr to Snowdonia which features in well-known Welsh paintings, and the 'Queen's View' in Scotland).

Magnitude of the visual effects

Each of the visual effects identified needs to be evaluated in terms of its **size or scale**, the **geographical extent** of the area influenced, and its **duration and reversibility.** 6.38

Size or scale

Judging the magnitude of the visual effects identified needs to take account of: 6.39

- 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 proposed 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;
- 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.

Geographical extent

The geographical extent of a visual effect will vary with different viewpoints and is likely to reflect: 6.40

- 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 changes would be visible.

Duration and reversibility of visual effects

As with landscape effects these are separate but linked considerations. Similar categories should be used, such as short term, medium term or long term, provided that their meaning is clearly stated with clear criteria for the lengths of time encompassed in each case. Similar considerations related to reversibility apply, as set out in Paragraph 5.52. 6.41

Judging the overall significance of visual effects

To draw final conclusions about significance the separate judgements about the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the magnitude of the visual effects need to be combined, to allow a final judgement about whether each effect is significant or not, as required by the Regulations, following the general principles set out in Chapter 3, and also in Chapter 5 in relation to landscape effects. Significance of visual effects is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its specific location. It is for each assessment to determine the approach and if necessary to adopt a consistent approach across all the EIA topic areas. 6.42

As indicated in Chapter 3, there are two main approaches to combining the individual judgements made under the criteria (although there may also be others): 6.43

1. They can be sequentially combined into assessments of sensitivity for each receptor and magnitude for each effect. Sensitivity and magnitude can then be combined to assess overall significance.

2. They can be arranged in a table to provide an overall profile of each identified effect. An overview can then be taken of the distribution of the assessments for each criterion to make an informed professional judgement about the overall assessment of the significance of the effect.

6.44 There are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and context and with the type of proposal. In making a judgement about the significance of visual effects 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.

6.45 Where visual effects are judged to be significant and adverse, proposals for preventing/avoiding, reducing, or offsetting or compensating for them (referred to as mitigation) should be described. The significant visual effects remaining after mitigation should be summarised as the final step in the process.

Further details on mitigation is provided in Paragraphs 4.21–4.43.

Summary advice on good practice

- An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity.
- Scoping should identify the area that needs to be covered in assessing visual effects, the range of people who may be affected by these effects and the related viewpoints in the study area that will need to be examined.
- The study area should be agreed with the competent authority at the outset and should cover the area from which the proposed development will potentially be visible. The emphasis must be on a reasonable approach which is proportional to the scale and nature of the proposed development.
- Baseline studies for visual effects should establish, in more detail than is possible in the scoping stage, the area in which the development may be visible, the different groups 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.
- These factors are all interrelated and need to be considered in an integrated way rather than as a series of separate steps.

Figure 8.1 Photomontage of a new building near the urban edge showing its appearance from a viewpoint in the surrounding landscape after one year and after fifteen years (extract)

be stated with reasons given for the choices made. For further details see the Landscape Institute's technical note on photography (Landscape Institute, 2011).

8.16 Photographs should be used in the baseline for the **visual effects** assessment to illustrate existing views and visual amenity at agreed viewpoints. The predicted changes must be described in the text but should also be illustrated by means of visualisations showing, from representative viewpoints, how the changes in views will appear. It will not usually be possible to prepare visualisations for every viewpoint that has been identified and there will need to be discussions with the competent authority and consultation bodies to ensure that an appropriate number and range of viewpoints is used, allowing the significant visual effects to be illustrated at a range of representative locations covering the types of visual receptor.

8.17 Since the second edition of this guidance was published there have been great developments in digital technology, providing a range of options including both two-dimensional (2D) and three-dimensional (3D) approaches. Many different factors need

Table 8.1 Choosing appropriate illustrative techniques

Step 1	Discuss the project with the client and the competent authority to work out what is required for illustration of the assessment, taking account of the audience. Consider the type of graphics and presentation likely to be most appropriate for the proposed development, taking account of the scale and complexity of the proposal and taking steps to ensure that the approach is proportionate – there is little advantage in using advanced techniques if a simple thumbnail sketch may be more appropriate.
Step 2	Explore further to determine which options should be pursued, from 2D photomontages to 3D animation or fully interactive virtual reality. This may reflect time constraints, resource issues and the needs of the different audiences involved.
Step 3	Consider the level of costs and benefits associated with each approach to enable the client to make an informed choice, bearing in mind the requirements of the Regulations and the requirements of the competent authority.
Step 4	Identify delivery dates for the presentation material and relate this to critical project milestones, such as submission of the planning application, to ensure appropriate time is allowed for key steps, such as delivery of Ordnance Survey data or preparation of a site survey, as well as for work with the project design team.
Step 5	Agree with the client the technique to be used, the projected costs and a programme, and inform the competent authority of the approach to be used.
Step 6	Allow time for consultation with the client and the competent authority at an intermediate stage to allow for any changes in the proposed development.

to be taken into account in deciding what form of illustrative techniques to use in a particular project, especially when choosing between 2D and 3D techniques. They need to be appropriate to the type and scale of project envisaged and also to take account of a wide range of practical considerations. Table 8.1 summarises some of the key steps to take in reaching decisions on which approach to use, assuming flexibility in the resources and time available.

Photomontage

8.18 Photomontage is the most widespread and popular visualisation technique for illustrating changes in views and visual amenity. A photomontage is the superimposition of an image onto a photograph for the purpose of creating a representation of potential changes to any view. Its main advantage is that it can illustrate the development within the 'real' landscape and from known viewpoints. The Landscape Institute has provided comprehensive guidance on this subject, noting that:

> The objective of a photomontage is to simulate the likely visual changes that would result from a proposed development, and to produce printed images of a

size and resolution sufficient to match the perspective in the same view in the field.

(Landscape Institute, 2011: 3)

8.19 To meet the rigorous requirements of planning applications and public inquiries photomontages must be technically accurate, to a degree appropriate to the nature of the project. If other images are also prepared simply to show the nature of the proposed development then the same degree of accuracy may not be required, although fair representation remains important. As both products may appear graphically similar it is vital that all parties understand the distinction between them, in terms of the time that they take to prepare, the associated costs and their practical use, remembering their purpose is to illustrate the effects on viewers rather than to illustrate the proposals themselves (as in artists' impressions).

8.20 The photomontages that are included in an Environmental Statement must meet appropriate standards, as described in the Landscape Institute's advice note on requirements for photography and photomontage. There is also specific guidance on preparing and presenting visual representations of wind farms, produced in Scotland but which, as noted previously, is widely used elsewhere. Particular reference should be made to these documents (and any amendments) for detailed technical guidance and for discussion of more theoretical aspects of visual representation. This is an evolving area of practice and landscape professionals should be alert to any new guidance that may emerge.

8.21 Approaches to the preparation of photomontages and the means of making them available to different audiences should be discussed with the competent authority at the scoping stages and as the work on the assessment evolves. The methods used, any difficulties that may arise, decisions taken and final specifications for the visual material included in or with the Environmental Statement should all be set out clearly in a statement of methods.

8.22 In preparing photomontages key requirements are that:

- all viewpoints that are to be used should be photographed at locations that are representative of the view in question and of the character of the location;
- sufficiently high-quality photographs should be used as the starting point for the production of the images;
- weather conditions shown in the photographs should (with justification provided for the choice) be either:
  - representative of those generally prevailing in the area; or
  - taken in good visibility, seeking to represent a maximum visibility scenario when the development may be highly visible;
- the photomontages should show relevant components of the development that are predicted to be visible from each viewpoint, including any associated land use change and, where appropriate and feasible, access arrangements;
- rendering of the photomontages should in general be as photorealistic as possible, but:

Viewpoint Photograph 1 : View north from pedestrian crossing at junction of Arragon Road and London Road (September 2010)

Viewpoint Photograph 1 : Cumulative photomontage view with proposed redevelopment of Twickenham Railway Station and permitted Travelodge

Figure 8.3 Cumulative photomontage of redevelopment at Twickenham Railway Station with other permitted development, a neighbouring hotel extension. Note the aspect ratio of the image to encompass the vertical field of view of the urban context; camera used in portrait orientation

  - where the scheme is not fully developed visualisations must be based on clearly stated assumptions about how the development may appear;
  - for large-scale urban developments block models are often used, illustrating scale, massing and arrangement, but without architectural detailing – although not photorealistic these can still be useful in representing the change in the view;

- the field of view and image sizes of the completed photomontages should be selected to give a reasonably realistic view of how the landscape will appear when the image

is held at the correct specified viewing distance from the eye (usually between 300 millimetres and 500 millimetres).

8.23 Visual representations can never be the same as the real experience of the change that is to take place. They are tools designed to assist all interested parties to understand how the change proposed will affect views at particular viewpoints. It is sometimes argued that the most suitable way to view photomontages is in the field where they can be compared with the real view. There is no doubt that this is desirable, but it is not always possible, especially for the general public, and one of the purposes of photomontages is to make up for the fact that not all interested parties can visit the site and the viewpoints. It is therefore essential that not only should the development itself be represented fairly and accurately but that it should be capable of being understood within its landscape context (see Landscape Institute, 2011). Careful thought must also be given to how images are made available to different audiences, including sizes and types of image and printing quality. Photomontages should be printed at an appropriate scale for comfortable viewing at the correct distance.

8.24 Photomontages are preceded by creation of wirelines or wireframes, which in themselves can be a valuable aid to understanding the effects of a proposed development. These are computer-generated line drawings, based on a digital terrain model combined with information about the location and scale of components of the development, to give a relatively simple indication of how the proposal will appear from different viewpoints. They are relatively quick to produce and so can be developed for a larger number of viewpoints, only some of which may then need to be used for preparation of full photomontages and for reporting purposes.

8.25 It has been common practice in the past, especially for wind farms, to present photomontages in what has been called the 'triple arrangement', in which, for a particular view, a panoramic baseline photograph, a matching wireframe image of the proposal and a fully rendered photomontage are combined on one landscape-format A3 sheet. It is now generally accepted that this arrangement may compromise other important standards such as image size and ideal viewing distance. This form of presentation may still be useful for discussion between landscape professionals involved in technical work on assessing visual effects, but in general is not considered to be the best way to communicate with non-landscape experts, for example in the competent authority or stakeholder organisations, or with the general public. For non-expert audiences the emphasis should be on images that are more straightforward to read and that do not require a high degree of technical interpretation.

8.26 Photomontages should be reproduced at an agreed image size and should show an appropriate level of detail. Together with associated baseline photographs and wireframes for key viewpoints, these will generally be incorporated into a separate volume of the Environmental Statement, although this can sometimes make cross-referencing to the text more difficult.

8.27 The Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Statement, which is required to communicate the content to a wider non-specialist audience (IEMA, 2012b), may also include some photomontages of key views in an appropriate format but in this case it should be emphasised that they are only selected images and that full understanding

Glossary

This glossary has been prepared specifically for this edition of the GLVIA and defines the meanings given to these terms as used in the context of this guidance.

Access land Land where the public have access either by legal right or by informal agreement.

Baseline studies Work done to determine and describe the environmental conditions against which any future changes can be measured or predicted and assessed.

Characterisation The process of identifying areas of similar landscape character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.

Characteristics Elements, or combinations of elements, which make a contribution to distinctive landscape character.

Compensation Measures devised to offset or compensate for residual adverse effects which cannot be prevented/avoided or further reduced.

Competent authority The authority which determines the application for consent, permission, licence or other authorisation to proceed with a proposal. It is the authority that must consider the environmental information before granting any kind of authorisation.

Consultation bodies Any body specified in the relevant EIA Regulations which the competent authority must consult in respect of an EIA, and which also has a duty to provide a scoping opinion and information.

Designated landscape Areas of landscape identified as being of importance at international, national or local levels, either defined by statute or identified in development plans or other documents.

Development Any proposal that results in a change to the landscape and/or visual environment.

Direct effect An effect that is directly attributable to the proposed development.

'Do nothing' situation Continued change or evolution in the landscape in the absence of the proposed development.

Ecosystem services The benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (www.unep.org/maweb/en/index.aspx) grouped ecosystem services into four broad categories:

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Locators in *italics* refer to diagrams, figures or photographs.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) can be key to planning decisions by identifying the effects of new developments on views and on the landscape itself.

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