Appendix 6.1

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

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A6.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

A6.1.1 Introduction

1. The following outlines the guidance, methodology and approach used in the assessment of landscape and visual effects. The methodology sets out the criteria and definitions for the assessment of sensitivity, magnitude of change and significance of effects.

2. The potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development have been assessed separately.

3. Landscape effects include direct effects upon the fabric of the landscape, such as the addition, removal or alteration of structures, woodlands, trees or hedgerows, which may alter the character and perceived quality of the area, or more general effects on character and designated areas arising from the introduction of new man-made features.

4. Visual effects relate to specific changes in the composition of views and the effects of those changes on visual receptors (e.g. residents, business users, users of recreational open space, views to and from valued landscapes).

A6.1.2 Guidance and Best Practice

5. The methods of assessment used are based on the broad principles established, and approaches recommended in, the following best practice guidance:

- Landscape Insititute and IEMA (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3):
- Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment;
- Natura England (2019) An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management
- IEMA (2011) The State of Environmental Impact Assessment Practice in the UK;
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals;
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA);
- The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations (2017);
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (2018) A Handbook on Environmental Impact Assessment, Appendix 2: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Version 5; and
- The Holford Rules: Guidelines for the Routeing of New High Voltage Overhead Transmission Lines.

A6.1.3 Spatial Scope of Study Area

6. The landscape assessment will focus on those areas which are likely to experience significant effects. The visual assessment will focus on those groups of receptors which are likely to experience significant effects.

7. The study area for the landscape and visual assessments will extend up to 2 km either side of the proposed route corridor for the proposed development as shown in **Figure 6.1**. This is because experience of similar projects has shown that it is highly unlikely that a timber Trident pole would give rise to significant effects at distances of 1 km or greater. The study area is extended from 1 km to 2 km to ensure a worst-case scenario is considered and also to take account of the local topography, where longer distance views may be possible from high ground, and to include potentially sensitive receptors such as those within the village of Douglas which are over 1 km from the proposed route.

8. The design and route of the proposed 132kV overhead line, combined with the screening effects of landform and vegetation, means that its effects on landscape and views and visual amenity would generally be limited. Only those receptors close to the proposed development, would experience a significant change in their view and there is a limited number of such receptors. Although the OHL may be visible in the distance, the effects on views further away would not be significant as it would be perceived as a small feature in the view and would sometimes blend into the background scenery.

A6.1.4 Temporal Scope

9. The assessment will take account of the effects of the proposed development at the following points in time:

- Construction – the point at which the construction works would be visible; and
- Operation Year 1 – the point at which the proposed development would first be visible in its entirety.

10. Short-term effects are typically those which would arise during the construction phase of the proposed development. Construction of the proposed development is anticipated to take 12 months to complete.

11. Medium and long-term effects are typically those which would arise between years 1 and 15 of operation.

12. Long-term residual effects of the proposed development are typically those which would remain after a minimum of fifteen years, once any mitigation planting has had an opportunity to establish and mature, along with any proportionate and incremental growth in existing vegetation.

A6.1.5 Residential Visual Amenity

13. There is no published guidance that sets out the criteria for establishing whether or not the visual presence of a development impacts unacceptably on living conditions although the issue has been considered at a number of public inquiries. It is acknowledged that there may be a point when, by virtue of the proximity, size and scale of a development, a residential property would be rendered so unattractive a place to live that planning permission should be refused. The assessment of whether a change in outlook materially harms residential amenity or living conditions is ultimately a planning issue. Howevera judgement on the visual component of residential amenity is often needed from a landscape architect to inform the planning judgement and this is increasingly being undertaken as part of an EIA.

14. LI TGN 02/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) explains that, '*The purpose of RVAA is to provide an informed, well-reasoned answer to the question: 'is the effect of the development on Residential Visual Amenity of such nature and/or magnitude that it potentially affects 'living conditions' or Residential Amenity'? In this guidance this is referred to as the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold'*.

15. The LI TGN 02/19 explains that, *'factors which might contribute to the threshold being reached, or the way in which these are expressed, may be different for different types of development (for example, one might use terms such as 'overwhelming/overbearing' for tall structures, or 'overly intrusive' for a development overlooking a garden or principal room)'*.

16. For this proposed development it is not considered that the introduction of a Trident wood pole line would impact any residential property to the level that a full RVAA was required, especially as the closest the OHL is likely to be to any property is 120 m. As such a full RVAA, as part of the EIA, has not been undertaken. However, all individual properties within 200 m of theroute corridor have been named and likely visual impacts on the residents of those properties considered within the visual impact assessment of the EIA.

A6.1.6 Landscape and Visual Assessment Methodology Overview

17. The key aspects of the proposed development will be considered against the baseline conditions to allow the potential landscape and visual effects to be predicted. Consideration will be given to effects on:

- Landscape receptors, including the constituent elements of the landscape, its aesthetic or perceptual qualities and the character around the development; and
- Visual receptors or the people who could be affected by changes in views and visual amenity at different locations.

18. The effects will be identified by establishing and describing the changes resulting from the different components of the development and the predicted effects on individual landscape or visual receptors. This will take account of both the nature and sensitivity of the receptor and the nature and magnitude of the change likely to occur.

19. Each judgement will be determined by a combination of quantitative and qualitative assessment using professional judgement accompanied by a clearly explained rationale.

A6.1.7 Landscape Assessment Methodology

A6.1.7.1 Landscape Sensitivity

20. The first step in assessing landscape effects is to determine the sensitivity of the landscape to the proposed development. Paragraph 3.24 of GLVIA3 defines the nature of a landscape receptor's sensitivity by *"combining judgements about its susceptibility to change arising from the specific proposal with judgements about the value attached to the receptor"*. Judgements on the value attached to the landscape are unrelated to the nature of a development proposal, whilst judgements on susceptibility may vary in response to the type of development proposed and the attributes of the area in which it is to be located.

21. When assessing the sensitivity of woodland elements to be felled for the proposed development the landscape assessment has considered the sensitivity of the woodland area as per the assessment made in **Chapter 11 Forestry**, together with how that section or area of woodland contributes to local landscape character.

A6.1.7.2 Landscape Value

22. Value relates to the relative importance of the landscape to different stakeholders and can apply to areas of landscape as a whole, or to individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions which contribute to the character of the place. Paragraph 5.20 and box 5.1 of GLVIA3 lists a range of factors which can be used to identify valued landscapes. The criteria listed are: landscape quality (condition); scenic quality; rarity; representativeness; conservation interests; recreation value; perceptual characteristics; and associations. If a local planning authority has undertaken a landscape character and/or sensitivity study these can often be a useful resource, in conjunction with field survey work, to establish landscape value based on the listed criteria.

23. The value of a landscape may reflect communal perception at a local, regional, national or international scale and may be informed by a number of factors including scenic beauty, tranquillity, wildness, cultural associations or other conservation or recreation interests. Although landscape value or importance is usually determined by reference to statutory or local planning policy designations, an absence of such designation does not automatically imply a lack of value as other factors, such as scarcity, may be considered relevant. The value or importance of landscape elements will also be considered. The European Landscape Convention recognises that ordinary (undesignated) landscapes also have their value to the communities for whom they provide a resource in which to live, work and spend their leisure.

24. The degree of landscape value or importance is therefore a matter for reasoned professional judgement and the value of the general landscape will be categorised as very high, high, medium or low, as shown in **Table A6.1.1**.

Value	Criteria	Examples
Very High	Very attractive and rare landscape of outstanding scenic quality and very distinctive characteristics, features and elements. Existence of national or international landscape designations. Very good condition/very well-managed and intact. High cultural heritage interest which contributes significantly to landscape character with sites of designated national or international importance. Very high recreational value and accessibility which contributes significantly to recreational/visitor experience. Rich and valued cultural associations. Unique sense of place with very positive perceptual responses. No detracting features.	Internationally or nationally recognised including: National Parks, World Heritage Sites, Heritage Coasts
High	Attractive landscape with some distinctive characteristics, features and elements. Presence of national landscape designations. Good condition/well-managed and largely intact. Cultural heritage interest which contributes to landscape character. Recreational value and accessibility which contributes to recreational/visitor experience. Valued cultural associations. Strong sense of place with positive perceptual responses. Occasional detracting features.	Nationally, regionally or district recognised including: National Scenic Areas, Gardens and Designed Landscapes, country parks, conservation areas
Medium	Typical, commonplace and unremarkable landscape, which although scenically pleasing has limited variety or distinctiveness. Average condition with some intactness but scope to improve management for land use. Limited historic interest. Limited recreational value, poor accessibility and few visitors. No or very few recorded cultural associations. Some features worthy of conservation. Unremarkable sense of place with neither particularly positive nor negative perceptual responses. Some dominant detracting features.	Locally recognised. Generally undesignated but value expressed through, for example cultural associations, local plan designations, conservation areas and demonstrable use. May contain listed buildings, tree preservation orders and sites of county or local importance.
Low	Landscape degraded or in obvious decline, visually unattractive and with poor sense of place. Lack of management has resulted in degradation and poor condition. Limited to no cultural heritage interest. Limited to no recreational value or public accessibility. No recorded cultural associations. Frequent dominant detracting features. Poor sense of place with negative perceptual responses. Disturbed or derelict land requires treatment.	District or Locally recognised. Some individual landscape elements or features may be worthy of conservation, landscape either identified for or would benefit from regeneration or restoration, site or area may be valued at a community level.

Table A6.1.1 – Landscape Value

A6.1.7.3 Landscape Susceptibility

25. Susceptibility to change is defined as 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 or 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."* (GLVIA 3 para. 5.40).

26. The landscape's key characteristics will be identified and an assessment made of their susceptibility to change brought about specifically by the proposed development. The assessment of the susceptibility of the landscape to the proposed development may subsequently be modified by consideration of any special value or importance attributed to the landscape. The assessment will seek to identify the ability of the existing landscape to absorb change and the ease with which the proposed development might fit.

27. The relationship between the value attached to landscape receptors and their susceptibility to change as a result of the proposed development can be complex. An internationally valued landscape does not automatically have a high susceptibility to change as the specific development type proposed may not compromise the particular components of the landscape that it is valued for. In contrast a locally valued landscape may be highly susceptible to a particular development type that detrimentally affects a key element or elements of the landscape resource.

28. The susceptibility of landscape character to the specific changes likely to be associated with the introduction of the proposed development will be categorised as high, medium or low, as detailed below in **Table A6.1.2**.

Susceptibility	Description
High	The overall character or quality/condition of the landscape receptor has a low ability to accommodate the proposed development and effective mitigation would be difficult to achieve. An individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect may be significantly affected.
Medium	The overall character or quality/condition of the landscape receptor has a medium ability to accommodate the proposed development and effective mitigation would be achievable. Individual elements and/or features, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect may be affected. There will be some consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation (landscape receptor value) and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Low	The overall character or quality/condition of the landscape receptor has a high ability to accommodate the proposed development and effective mitigation would be readily achievable. Only individual elements and/or features, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect may be affected.

Table A6.1.2 – Landscape Susceptibility

29. The sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors will be based on the judgements regarding the susceptibility of the landscape or visual receptor to change and the value placed on the landscape character, as explained above, or the visual amenity as explained below. The sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors will be assessed as very high, high, medium or low. **Table A6.1.3** indicates general categories of sensitivity based on combining these judgements and serves as a useful guide when making these judgements.

	Susceptibility		
Value	High	Medium	Low
Very High	Very High	High	Medium - High
High	High	Medium - High	Medium - Low
Medium	Medium - High	Medium	Medium - Low
Low	Medium - Low	Low	Low

Table A6.1.3 – Categories of Receptor Sensitivity

30. Depending on the individual circumstance of each receptor, the assessment of sensitivity in **Table A6.1.3** will be adjusted up or down to fully reflect the nature of the development proposed in that location.

A6.1.7.4 Magnitude of Change

31. Assessment of the magnitude of landscape change brought about by the potential effects of the proposed development will take account of the following criteria, as relevant. Professional judgement will be used to determine the relevance and appropriate weighting to be attributed to each:

- The size and scale of the development taking into consideration:
  - the extent of landscape elements that would be lost and the contribution of that element/those elements to landscape character;
  - the degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape would be altered either by the removal of existing components of the landscape, or, the addition of new features; and
  - whether any change or changes in key characteristics are critical to a distinctive landscape character.
- The geographical extent of the landscape area that would be changed considering the geographical area over which landscape effects would be felt. For example, there may be a moderate loss of landscape elements over a wide area, or a major addition affecting a very localised area;
- The likely duration of the change to the landscape; and
- Whether the change to the landscape would be potentially reversible.

32. For each effect professional judgement will be used to determine the relevance and appropriate weighting to be attributed. The magnitude of landscape change will be assessed as high, medium, low or negligible dependent upon these judgements, with examples provided in **Table A6.1.4**.

Magnitude of Change	Description
High	The proposed development occupies most of the landscape and/or its setting. The proposed development is a new component in the landscape ranging from a notable change in landscape characteristics over a wide area to intensive change over a more limited area. The proposed development would be very noticeable. There would be loss or major alteration to key elements, features, and/or characteristics of the baseline which would fundamentally alter the character of the landscape. The duration of this effect may be permanent and irreversible.
Medium	The proposed development would occupy a large proportion of the landscape and/or its setting. The proposed development is quite different in appearance to the main component of the landscape but similar to other more minor components. The proposed development would be readily noticeable. There would be partial loss of, or alteration to, key elements, features and/or characteristics of the baseline but the character of the landscape would not fundamentally change. The duration of this effect may be semi-permanent and irreversible.
Low	The proposed development would occupy a small proportion of the landscape and/or its setting. The proposed development is similar in appearance to the main component of the landscape. The proposed development would not be readily noticeable. There would be minor loss of, or alteration to, key elements, features and/or characteristics of the baseline. The duration of this effect may be temporary and reversible.
Negligible	There would be little discernible change to the landscape and/or its setting.
No Change	There would be no change to the landscape and/or its setting.

Table A6.1.4 – Indicative Criteria for Assessing Likely Magnitude of Landscape Change

A6.1.8 Visual Appraisal Methodology

33. The assessment of visual effects will address potential changes in people's views or visual amenity caused by the appearance and prominence of the proposed development in those views. In accordance with GLVIA3, the assessment will focus on publicly accessible rather than private viewpoints, and on those receptor groups who are likely to be most sensitive to the effects of an OHL. Receptor groups which will be assessed include communities, where views contribute to the wider landscape setting enjoyed by residents in an area, road users and residents or visitors using recreational routes, features and

attractions. It will include an assessment of the effects on views from the edges of defined settlements and from aggregated groups of dispersed properties.

A6.1.8.1 Visual Sensitivity

34. The first step in assessing visual effects is to determine the sensitivity of the visual receptors to the proposed development. Paragraph 3.24 of GLVIA3 states that professionals should assess the nature of a visual receptor's sensitivity by *"combining judgements about its susceptibility to change arising from the specific proposal with judgements about the value attached to the receptor".*

A6.1.8.2 Visual Receptor Value

35. Paragraph 6.37 of GLVIA3 explains judgement needs to be made about the value attached to the view experienced, taking account of the existing recognition attached to particular views (e.g., through planning designations) and other indicators such as appearance in guidebooks, tourist maps or cultural references. The value of a view will be assessed as very high, high, medium or low by applying professional judgement and the indicative criteria listed in **Table A6.1.5**.

Value	Criteria	Examples
Very High	Iconic views of national or international importance, which are important in relation to the special qualities of a designated landscape, the cultural associations of which are widely recognised in art, literature or other media. The view is widely known and well-frequented and often includes interpretation and other facilities.	Identified and recorded view to or from a World Heritage Site.
High	View of national or international importance; or is associated with nationally designated landscapes or important heritage assets; or is promoted as a visitor destination for its scenic beauty. The view is widely known and well-frequented.	Public open spaces where focus is on views, public rights of way through valued landscapes, views from important tourist routes or promoted viewpoints, popular visitor attractions where the view forms a recognised part of the visitor experience, or which have important cultural associations.
Medium	A view identified in a supplementary planning document, conservation area appraisal and/or views of local importance. The view is in an area of ordinary landscape value, or reasonably good landscape value but with detracting elements or features. People are unlikely to visit the viewpoint to experience the view.	Public rights of way through landscapes of moderate value, setting for elements of local and/or regional cultural heritage value or national value whose settings are already compromised.
Low	Viewpoint is within an area of low landscape quality, is extremely common or has little aesthetic appeal. People are unlikely to visit the viewpoint to experience the view.	Standard town centre or suburban location, with little rarity value or aesthetic quality. Industrial estate or busy main road that has very few positive characteristics. A poor-quality rural view with detracting elements in the view.

Table A6.1.5 – Visual Receptor Value

A6.1.8.3 Visual Receptor Susceptibility

36. Susceptibility to visual change is determined by the occupation and activity of people experiencing a particular view and the extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on that view in a particular location.

37. The susceptibility to change of visual receptors will be assessed as high, medium or low by applying professional judgement and the indicative criteria contained in **Table A6.1.6**.

Susceptibility	Description
High	Visual receptors with a low ability to accommodate the proposed change. There will be undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation (visual receptor value) and/or the landscape within the view. The viewpoint location may have been specifically created for its view and/ or is experienced by people, whether residents or visitors, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the view. People with a particular interest in their available view or with prolonged viewing opportunities such as: residential locations; tourist destinations providing a specific important and highly valued view; recreational hilltops; ornamental parks/designed landscapes; and national trails.
Medium	Visual receptors with a moderate ability to accommodate the proposed change. There will be some consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation (visual receptor value) and/or the landscape value within the view. The view may be experienced by people who are drawn to the view yet do not feel compelled to stop and take it in. People with a general interest in their surroundings or with transient viewing opportunities such as users of road, rail or transport routes; and users of general public open spaces.
Low	Visual receptors with a high ability to accommodate the proposed change. There will be limited consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation (visual receptor value) and/or the landscape value within the view. The viewpoint location may be transient and/or experienced only in passing by people, whether residents or visitors, whose attention or focus is on other activities, not on their surroundings. People with a passing interest in their surroundings such as users of recreation grounds and play areas; places of employment; major highways; commercial buildings; and commuters.

Table A6.1.6 – Visual Receptor Susceptibility

38. The sensitivity of visual receptors will be based on the judgements regarding the susceptibility of the visual receptor to change and the value placed on the landscape and view. The sensitivity of visual receptors will be assessed as very high, high, medium or low. **Table A6.1.3** indicates general categories of sensitivity and serves as a useful guide when making these judgements.

39. The assessment of the sensitivity of visual receptors to changes in the view may be subsequently modified (either up or down) by consideration of whether any particular value or importance is likely to be attributed by people to their available views. For example, travellers on a highway may be considered likely to be more sensitive should the road have a scenic context or residents of a particular property may be considered likely to be less sensitive than usual should the property have an existing degraded visual setting.

40. In formulating sensitivity categories, it is also important to acknowledge the special circumstances where peoples' expectations in relation to the view are particularly enhanced. This could include locations at widely known and promoted viewpoints, the cultural associations of which are typically recognised in art, literature or other media. Here the category of 'very high' sensitivity applies. If this were not the case then all receptors within a National Park would be defined as having 'very high' sensitivity, which would undervalue the primacy of iconic and highly valued viewpoints. Similarly, the rationale behind attributing a 'high' rather than 'very high' sensitivity for residents and people in local communities is because they do

not have the highest level of sensitivity unless standing at a particularly valued viewpoint, in which case they are captured under the category of visitor.

A6.1.8.4 Magnitude of Change

41. The magnitude of a visual effect is about understanding the scale, nature, extent and duration of visual change a new development will have on a view.

42. The magnitude of change arising from the proposed development at any particular location will be described as high, medium, low, negligible or no change based on the interpretation of a combination of largely quantifiable parameters, as discussed below.

43. Each of the visual effects identified will be evaluated in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced, and its duration and reversibility, as detailed below:

- The size and scale of visual change that takes place, taking account of:
  - the loss or addition of features;
  - changes in composition including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;
  - the degree of contrast or integration of new features with existing landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale, mass, line, height, colour, texture; and
  - the nature of the view of the proposed development in terms of the relative amount of time over which it would be experienced, and, whether views would be full, partial or glimpsed;
- The geographical extent of the change taking account of:
  - the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
  - the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development; and
  - the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible;
- The likely duration of the visual change; and
  - Whether the visual change is potentially reversible.

44. With reference to visual impacts caused by OHL, consideration is also given to skylining and/or backgrounding i.e., whether a development is viewed against the sky or against a solid, such as landform or vegetation, as this can affect the level of contrast and scale. For example, wood poles, conductors (wires) and other electricity infrastructure are more difficult to discern when viewed against a textured background than against an open sky. Any backgrounding minimises the scale of change on the view, as is acknowledged in the Holford Rules.

45. For each effect professional judgement will be used to determine the relevance and appropriate weighting to be attributed. The magnitude of visual change will be assessed as high, medium, low or negligible dependent upon these judgements, with examples provided in **Table A6.1.7**.

Magnitude of Change	Description
High	The proposed development will occupy most of the view and/or its setting. The proposed development will be a new component in the view which will cause a notable change in the characteristics of the view over an extensive area, or an intensive change over a more limited area. The proposed development will be very noticeable and will alter the overall perception of the view. Visual loss of, or major disruption to, key elements, features and/or characteristics of the baseline (value of the view). The duration of this effect may be permanent and non-reversible.
Medium	The proposed development will occupy a significant portion of the view and/or its setting. The proposed development is dissimilar to the main component of the view but similar to other components. The proposed development will be clearly noticeable but will not change the overall perception of the view.
	Partial visual loss of, or disruption to, one or more key elements, features and/or characteristics of the baseline. The duration of this effect may be temporary and reversible.
Low	The proposed development will occupy a small portion of the view and/or its setting. The proposed development is similar to the main component of the view. The proposed development will not be readily noticeable and to the casual observer there will be no discernible change. Minor visual loss of, or alteration to, one or more key elements, features and/or characteristics of the baseline. The duration of this effect may be temporary and reversible.
Negligible	There will be little discernible change to the view.
No Change	There will be no change to the view.

Table A6.1.7 – Indicative Criteria for Assessing Likely Magnitude of Visual Change

A6.1.8.5 Overall Level of Effects and Determining Significance

46. A final judgement will be made on the overall level of effect upon receptors (both landscape and visual) through a combination of sensitivity and magnitude of change. The level of effect will be assessed by combining all of the considerations and criteria set out above. This is described by GLVIA3 as an 'overall profile' approach to combining judgements and requires that all the judgements, against each of the identified criteria, are used within an informed professional appraisal of the overall level of effect, with reasoning provided in the text as to how the conclusions have been reached. Table A6.1.8 provides a guide as to how sensitivity and magnitude of change are combined to give an overall level of effect, for both landscape and visual amenity, but these are not hard and fast rules.

47. The relative weight attributed to each of the considerations is a matter for experienced professional judgement and will vary depending on the specific receptor or effect being assessed.

48. Level of effects will be identified in the absence of further (i.e., not embedded) mitigation, with the residual effect confirmed once any further mitigation measures, if applicable, have been considered.

49. Overall effects will be described as major, moderate, minor, negligible or neutral.

Overall Effect		Magnitude of Change			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Sensitivity	Very High	Major	Major or moderate	Moderate or minor	Minor or negligible
	High	Major or moderate	Moderate or major	Minor or moderate	Negligible
	Medium	Moderate or major	Moderate or minor	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Minor or moderate	Minor	Minor or negligible	Negligible

Table A6.1.8 – Level of Overall Effect

50. It is important to note that effects can be adverse (negative), beneficial (positive) or neutral. Adverse effects would result from development that caused an increase in degradation of the landscape resource or a negative effect on the attributes that contribute to the value of views; an example could be the introduction of a feature which appears discordant within the existing landscape or view. Beneficial effects would result from development that created overall improvement of elements that contributed to the value of the landscape resource or views; this could include the addition of valued elements or high-quality built form; or the removal of existing detractors. A neutral effect could occur where changes were considered neither positive nor negative within the context of the landscape or view being assessed; this could include the addition of an element within the landscape or view that already exists, such as the accretion of additional units to an existing development that does not result in the degradation or removal of valued aspects of the landscape resource or view.

51. For this project no identified effects on landscape character or visual amenity could be considered as 'beneficial'. **Table A6.1.9** provides some guidance on what the identified level of effect can equate to.

Overall Effect	Description
Neutral/No Change	There would be no effect on the landscape character/value of the existing view.
Negligible	The proposed development would be barely perceptible and have very little or no effect on the landscape character/value of the existing view.
Minor Adverse	The proposed development would cause a perceptible deterioration in the value of the landscape character/value of the existing view.
Moderate Adverse	The proposed development would cause a noticeable deterioration in the landscape character/value of the existing view.
Major Adverse	The proposed development would be the dominant feature and cause a major deterioration in the landscape character/value of the existing view.

Table A6.1.9 – Examples of Identified Level of Effect

52. Separate judgements about the sensitivity of receptors and the magnitude of likely effect will be combined to allow a final judgement to be made about whether or not the effect is considered significant, using the detailed guidance outlined above and briefly summarised and presented in **Table A6.1.10**.

Less likely to be significant		More likely to be significant
The development is generally well accommodated within the landscape and does not conflict with or undermine its key characteristics. The effects will be small in scale and typically (but not always) limited in their geographical extent. The development is generally well accommodated in views and/or is a small feature(s) within a view that does not have recognised value. The effect is typically small in scale. The development is seen at only a few locations and affects relatively few receptors. The effects are more likely to be short term, temporary and reversible.	⇔	The development conflicts with the character of the landscape, forming an intrusive feature which substantially erodes the valued characteristics. The effects will be large in scale and will typically (but not always) be perceived across a wide geographical area, or continuously along a route. The development is dominant or prominent in views and the effect is typically large in scale, and/or within a view that is promoted or advertised. The development is seen at many locations and affects many receptors. The effects are more likely to be long term, permanent and irreversible.

Table A6.1.10 – Judging Significance of Effect

53. The relationship between receptors and effects is not generally a linear one and there are no hard or fast rules about what makes an effect significant. Judgements will therefore be supported by qualitative text to draw out the important issues, describe the effects and explain the underlying decision-making rationale.

54. Paragraph 5.54 of GLVIA3 notes that significance of landscape effects is not absolute and *"can only be defined in relation to each development and its specific location"*.

55. At opposite ends of the spectrum GLVIA3 notes 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*; and
- *Reversible negative effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key characteristics of the character of landscapes of community value are likely to be of the least significance and may, depending on the circumstances, be judged as not significant.'*

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

57. In making a judgement about the significance of visual effects GLVIA3 notes:

- *'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; and*
- *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 which are already present within the view.'*

58. The final decision on the level of effect and therefore significance ultimately relies on professional judgement which has to be supported through clear and transparently explained text. For this assessment those effects described as 'Major' or 'Moderate' would be considered significant in EIA terms.

A6.1.10 Residual Effects

59. Residual effects are those effects which will persist after any further mitigation measures (i.e., not embedded) have taken effect. Long-term residual effects of the proposed development are typically those which would remain after a minimum of fifteen years. When assessing landscape and visual effects this includes consideration of the establishment of any planting within the design and mitigation proposals and further growth of existing vegetation.

A6.1.11 Viewpoints and Photography

60. To illustrate the nature and extent of the potential landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development, a series of viewpoint locations have been selected to demonstrate the visual context of the site and study area from a range of publicly accessible receptors within 2 km of the proposed route. In addition, viewpoints may be selected from outside the study area if they are from a particularly sensitive location or higher ground where the development may be perceptible. Each viewpoint will be visited, and a photographic record taken.

61. As explained in GLVIA3 (para 6.19), viewpoints are selected to be either representative of the view experienced by different groups of people, to be specific to a particular location, or to demonstrate a particular effect. The selection will take account of a number of factors, including:

- The accessibility to the public;
- The potential type, relative number and sensitivity of the viewers who may be affected;
- The viewing direction and distance (short, medium and long distance);
- Whether the view is static or part of a sequential view along a route;
- The view types (glimpsed, framed or panoramic); and
- The potential for cumulative views of the proposed development in conjunction with other similar proposed developments.

62. It should be noted that the selected viewpoints are not intended to be a representative sample of all the visual receptors but are deliberately biased to be representative of the most sensitive visual receptor groups – namely residential areas and valued landscapes or sites. This enables consideration of 'worst case' scenarios.

63. No access to private land will be sought and the assessment will therefore be based on a best assumption from publicly accessible locations.

64. Wherever possible, viewpoints will be selected in places where they represent several different receptor groups (e.g., on the edge of a settlement where a footpath leaves the village; at a car park or picnic site on promoted footpath, or at a trig point in an area of Open Access Land).

65. As wood pole overhead lines do not require any artificial lighting, and construction is anticipated to take place during normal working hours, no significant effects arising from lighting are anticipated. Therefore, a night-time visual assessment and photography will not be undertaken or included in the EIA.

66. The viewpoints were agreed in conjunction with NatureScot.

67. All viewpoint photographs were taken in accordance with the Landscape Institute's (LI) Advice Note 06/19 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals'.

68. In some locations the assessment of visual effects has been supported by the production of wirelines and photomontages. These help to illustrate the scale of the proposals within the view and to assist the assessment process. Wirelines and photomontages do not form the basis of the assessment but are illustrative, with locations chosen to illustrate the proposed scheme to the public and stakeholders and highlight specific issues.

A6.1.12 Cumulative Impact Assessment

69. Cumulative landscape and visual effects are the likely additional landscape and visual effects to arise from the Proposed Development when considered in conjunction with other relevant development proposals.

70. Paragraph 6.2 of GLVIA3 identifies cumulative landscape and visual effects as those that, *"…result from additional changes to the landscape or visual amenity caused by the proposed development in conjunction with other development (associated with or separate to it), or actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the reasonable future"*.

71. Paragraph 6.5 of GLVIA3 acknowledges that cumulative landscape assessment is complex and approaches to it are evolving, noting also that the *"challenge is to keep the task reasonable and in proportion to the nature of the project under consideration……It is always important to remember that the emphasis in EIA is on likely significant effects rather than on comprehensive cataloguing of every conceivable effect that might occur…"*.

72. The assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects will follow a similar methodology to that described above for the main assessment, in that the degree of effect is determined by combining an evaluation of the sensitivity of the landscape/visual receptor and the magnitude of change. The resulting effect will be described in the EIAR as major, moderate, minor or negligible. The difference from the main landscape and visual assessment is that the cumulative assessment considers the magnitude of change which would potentially arise from multiple developments.

A6.1.12.1 Defining a Study Area

73. The study area for the cumulative assessment will take account of other proposed developments which are consented but not yet under construction. Other relevant developments under construction are considered within the existing baseline. If necessary, the zones of visual influence for each development within the cumulative assessment will be overlaid to produce a composite map showing areas from where multiple developments are likely to be seen. Where sufficient information is not available for the other developments then reasonable assumptions and judgments will be made. Theoretically, the areas where the effects of the different developments overlap are those which would potentially experience cumulative landscape and/or visual effects. The larger the extent of the overlap, the greater the degree of cumulative effect likely to be experienced.

A6.1.13 References

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition: The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment: 2013

An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment: Natural England: 2014

An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management: Natural England: 2019

The State of Environmental Impact Assessment Practice in the UK: Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment: 2011

Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals: Landscape Institute: 2019

Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA): Landscape Institute: 2019

The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations: 2017

A Handbook on Environmental Impact Assessment, Appendix 2: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Version 5: Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH): 2018

The Holford Rules: Guidelines for the Routeing of New High Voltage Overhead Transmission Lines

NatureScot (formerly SNH) 'Landscape Character Assessment in Scotland' accessed at https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions