

Troston Overhead Line Grid Connection

Appendix 6.1: LVA Methodology

1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 *"Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 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 people's views and visual amenity."* (GLVIA3, paragraph 1.1). Wherever possible, identified effects are quantified, but the nature of landscape and visual assessment requires interpretation using professional judgement. In order to provide a level of consistency to the assessment, the prediction of magnitude and assessment of significance of the residual landscape and visual effects have been based on pre-defined criteria.
- 1.1.2 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (Third Edition) (GLVIA3) states that *"professional judgement is a very important part of the LVIA"* (paragraph 2.23) and that *"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."* (paragraph 2.24).
- 1.1.3 Landscape and Visual Assessments are separate, though linked processes which GLVIA3 notes are "related but very different considerations". The assessment of the potential effect on the landscape is carried out as an effect on the environmental resource (i.e. the landscape). Visual effects are assessed as an inter-related effect on people.
- 1.1.4 Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape elements which may give rise to changes in its distinctive character and how this is experienced, including consideration of aesthetic and perceptual aspects.
- 1.1.5 Visual effects relate to changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.

2 Establishing the Baseline

- 2.1.1 The baseline for consideration of landscape and visual effects is evaluated through desk study and site work and is the current situation at the time of the assessment, unless noted otherwise. Operational developments and those under construction are considered as part of the baseline and included as part of the assessment of landscape and visual effects.
- 2.1.2 The future baseline is considered to be changes to the landscape which are considered certain or likely to happen – including consented proposals which are not yet present in the landscape but are expected to be constructed. These may or may not be included as part of the landscape and visual baseline depending on

individual project circumstances and the approach and reasoning is set out within the assessment.

3 Landscape Effects

- 3.1.1 The starting point for any assessment is a desk-based assessment of published landscape studies, which may include landscape character assessments, sensitivity and capacity studies and/or landscape designation reviews. These documents are listed in the assessment references and relevant extracts may be included as appendices where this is judged appropriate.
- 3.1.2 The landscape effects of the proposed development are considered against the key characteristics of the receiving landscape. The degree to which the proposed development changes “*distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse*” (‘An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment’, Natural England, 2014), enables a judgement to be made as to the significance of the effect in landscape character terms.
- 3.1.3 Direct and indirect landscape effects are defined in GLVIA3. Direct effects may be defined as resulting “*directly from the development itself*” (paragraph 3.22). An indirect (or secondary) effect is one that results “*from consequential change resulting from the development*” (paragraph 3.22) and is often produced away from the site of the proposed development or as a result of a complex pathway or secondary association. The direct or physical landscape effects of the proposed development would generally be limited to within the planning application boundary. The indirect landscape effects are concerned with the visual effects and relate to effects associated with the introduction of the development seen in the context of the existing landscape and visual character of the view.
- 3.1.4 In order to reach an understanding of the effects of development upon the landscape resource it is necessary to consider different aspects of the landscape baseline including:
- **Landscape Fabric/Elements:** The individual features of the landscape, such as hills, valleys, woods, hedges, tree cover, vegetation, buildings and roads for example which can usually be described and quantified.
 - **Landscape key characteristics:** The particularly notable elements or combinations of elements which make a particular contribution to defining or describing the character of an area, which may include experiential characteristics such as wildness and tranquillity.
- 3.1.5 The **sensitivity** (high, medium, low) of the landscape to a particular development is considered on a case by case basis and considers the susceptibility of the landscape, which varies depending on the type of development proposed and the particular site location, and the landscape value (identified as national, regional, or community). As stated in GLVIA3, “*LVIA sensitivity is similar to the concept of*

landscape sensitivity used in the wider arena of landscape planning, but is not the same”.

- 3.1.6 **Landscape value:** The importance attached to a landscape, often used as a basis for designation or recognition which expresses national or local authority consensus, because of its special qualities/attributes. The factors which are considered in landscape include aesthetic or perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness or cultural associations as well as recreational/community value, conservation interests, landscape character and condition and representativeness/rarity.
- 3.1.7 **Landscape susceptibility** according to GLVIA3 means “*the ability of the landscape to accommodate the proposed Development without undue consequences for maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies*”. Judgements on landscape susceptibility (high, medium, low) include references to both the physical and aesthetic characteristics and the potential scope for mitigation.
- 3.1.8 Susceptibility of landscape character areas are influenced by their characteristics and are often considered (though often recorded as ‘sensitivity’ rather than susceptibility) within landscape character assessments and capacity studies.
- 3.1.9 Susceptibility of designated landscapes is influenced by the nature of the special qualities and purposes of designation and/or the valued elements, qualities or characteristics, indicating the degree to which these may be unduly affected by the development proposed.
- 3.1.10 The criteria and the detailed judgements regarding susceptibility and value of landscape receptors are identified within the sensitivity tables included within Appendix 6.3 to this assessment.
- 3.1.11 Sensitivity is judged taking into account the component judgments about the value and susceptibility of the receptor as illustrated by the table below. Where sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment will be adopted.

		Susceptibility		
		High	Medium	Low
Value	National	High	High/Medium	Medium
	Regional	High/Medium	Medium	Medium/Low
	Community	Medium	Medium/Low	Low

- 3.1.12 The magnitude of landscape change arising from the proposed development at any particular location is assessed in terms of its size or scale, geographic extent of the area or receptor that is influenced and its duration and reversibility.
- 3.1.13 The scale of the change takes account of:
 - degree of loss or alteration to key landscape features/elements; characteristics; and for designated areas – special qualities and/or purposes of designation;
 - distance from the development;

- landscape context to the development.
- 3.1.14 The approach to assessing effects on landscape character is to consider the key characteristics for the Landscape Character Type (LCT) within which the proposed development is located (host) and the adjacent LCT's (non-host) and identify which of these the proposed development would affect. For the host LCTs, a large scale change in landscape character is likely to occur where key characteristics would be lost or substantially changed. Where particular views are a key characteristic of a landscape type, large or medium scale landscape character effects may occur where the proposed development becomes a key feature of those views. A similar approach applies to designated landscapes, for which the effects on the defined purposes of designation and special qualities are considered.
- 3.1.15 Having established the size/scale of change (large, medium, small, negligible) to the landscape baseline, the geographic extent of the change can be identified (wide, intermediate, localised or limited) and a judgement made as to the degree of change for each landscape receptor.
- 3.1.16 Duration and reversibility can be linked depending on the nature of the development. Reversibility is a judgement about the ability and practicality of the proposed development to be reversible (such as wind farms which are predominantly reversible), partially reversible to something similar (such as mineral extraction¹) or a permanent change in the landscape (such as housing). Duration reflects how long the change will last. The duration of the change would be considered short term when lasting less than 2 years; medium term when lasting between 2 and 10 years; or long term when lasting between 10 and 25 years, and permanent for more than 25 years.
- 3.1.17 Magnitude is considered taking into account the three contributory factors as illustrated by the diagrams included below.

4 Visual Effects

- 4.1.1 In order to identify the significance of a visual effect it is necessary to establish the relative sensitivity of the viewers and the magnitude of the change they experience. In this case sensitivity is a combination of both susceptibility of the viewer to the proposed change and the value of the views.
- 4.1.2 Those living within view of the scheme are usually regarded as the highest susceptibility group as well as those engaged in outdoor pursuits for whom landscape experience is the primary objective. The susceptibility of potential visual receptors will also vary depending on the activity of the receptor. For visual

¹ GLVIA3 page 91, paragraph 5.52

receptors susceptibility and value are closely linked - the most valued views are also likely to be those where viewer's expectations will be highest.

4.1.3 The value of public views, which is the focus of GLVIA3, is identified as national, regional or community and will vary depending on the nature, location and context of the view and the recognised importance of the view. Considerations include cultural associations; designation or policy protection; views of or from landmarks; and/or the scenic quality of the view. The value attributed relates to the value of the view, e.g. a National Trail is nationally valued for access, but not always for the available views from every section.

4.1.4 Visual receptor **susceptibility** is defined in accordance with the criteria below:

- **High** - Local residents; users of outdoor recreation focussed on the appreciation of views including footpaths, beauty spots and picnic areas; people experiencing views to or from important features of physical, visual, cultural or historic interest.
- **Medium** - Local road users and travellers on trains. People engaged in outdoor recreation with some appreciation of the landscape e.g. road cycling, nature conservation, golf and water based recreation.
- **Low** - Workers, users of facilities and commercial buildings (indoors) experiencing views from buildings. Road and rail users on fast moving commuting or trunk routes. Visual receptors where views are incidental to the activity and/or location.

4.1.5 Sensitivity is judged taking into account the component judgments about the value and susceptibility of the receptor as illustrated by the table below. Where sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment will be adopted.

		Susceptibility		
		High	Medium	Low
Value	National	High	High/Medium	Medium
	Regional	High/Medium	High/Medium	Medium/Low
	Community	High/Medium	Medium	Low

4.1.6 The **magnitude of visual change** arising from the proposed development at any particular location is assessed in terms of its size or scale (large, medium, small, negligible), geographic extent of the area or receptor that is influenced (wide, localised, limited) and its duration (short, medium, long, permanent).

4.1.7 The representative viewpoints are used as 'samples' on which to base judgements of the scale of effects on visual receptors. The wider extent of the effect and its duration are not captured in the viewpoint analysis (as a viewpoint cannot capture these factors for an entire route or area). As duration and extent are necessary considerations in determining magnitude of change; magnitude and significance judgements are provided for visual receptors and not for all representative viewpoints. The exceptions to this are specific viewpoints - where people visiting that location to look at the view are assessed as a visual receptor group.

- 4.1.8 With the exception of specific viewpoints, each route and receptor group will encompass a range of possible views, which might vary from no view of the development to very clear, close views. Therefore effects are described in such a way as to identify where views towards the development are likely to arise and what the scale and duration and extent (wide, intermediate, Localised, Limited) of those views are likely to be. In some cases this will be further informed by a nearby viewpoint and in others it will be informed with reference to ZTV studies, aerial photography and site visits. Each of these individual effects are then considered together in order to reach a judgement of the effects on the visual receptors along that route, or in that place.
- 4.1.9 The **scale of effect** arising from the proposed development at any particular viewpoint reflects the degree to which the nature of the views from that location would be changed and is taking into account:
- The distance of the viewpoint from the development;
 - the degree to which the development is visible or screened;
 - the angle of view in relation to main receptor activity or main focus of the view;
 - the horizontal and vertical field of view occupied by the development; and
 - the extent and nature of other built development visible.
- 4.1.10 The approach to assessing effects on views is to consider the full 360 degree view from any given receptor – not just those towards the development and/or shown in visualisations. It is assumed that the change would be seen in clear visibility and the assessment is carried out on that basis. Where there are operational (and consented) developments considered as part of the baseline, the visual effects consider the effects of adding the proposed development to that baseline. Where appropriate, comment may be made on lighting and weather conditions.
- 4.1.11 **Duration** reflects how long the change will last and are rated in the same way as described above for landscape effects. The effects as a result of the proposed development would be considered short term when lasting less than 2 years; medium term when lasting between 2 and 10 years; or long term when lasting between 10 and 25 years, and permanent for more than 25 years. For visual receptors moving through the landscape (e.g. road and rail users), the length of their journey during which they would see the development is reflected in the judgement of the geographic extent of effects.
- 4.1.12 Magnitude is considered taking into account the three contributory factors as illustrated by the diagrams included below.

5 Magnitude of Landscape and Visual Change

5.1.1 Scale of effect is the first factor in determining magnitude; which may be higher if the effect is particularly widespread and/or long lasting, or lower if it is constrained in geographic extent and/or timescale. The tables below illustrate how this judgement is considered as a two-step process. Firstly, scale and extent are considered, for which the outcomes are illustrated by the first part of the table; the second part of the table illustrates the influence of duration on this initial judgement. Where magnitude is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment will be adopted.

Scale / extent	Large	Medium	Small	Negligible
Wide	Substantial			
Intermediate		Moderate		
Localised			Slight	
Limited				Negligible

Stage 1 Result / Duration	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
Permanent	Substantial			
Long-term		Moderate		
Medium-term			Slight	
Short-term				Negligible

6 Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

6.1.1 The significance of any identified landscape or visual effect is assessed as major, moderate, minor or negligible. These categories are based on the consideration of sensitivity with the predicted magnitude of change. The table below is not used as a prescriptive tool and illustrates the typical outcomes, allowing for the exercise of professional judgement. In some instances a particular parameter may be considered as having a determining effect on the analysis.

		Magnitude of Change			
		Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
Receptor Sensitivity	High	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor/Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Negligible

6.1.2 Where the effect has been classified as Major or Major/Moderate this is considered to be equivalent to likely significant effects referred to in the EIA Regulations. Where ‘Moderate’ effects are predicted, professional judgement will be applied to ensure that the potential for significant effects arising has been thoroughly considered.

7 Beneficial/Adverse

7.1.1 Landscape and visual effects can be beneficial or adverse and in some instances may be considered neutral. Neutral effects are those which overall are neither adverse nor positive but may incorporate a combination of both. Whether an effect is beneficial, neutral or adverse is identified based on professional judgement. GLVIA3 indicates at paragraph 2.15 that this is a “particularly challenging” aspect of assessment, especially in the context of a changing landscape.

ANNEX 1: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
CLVIA	Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
Cumulative Effects	Cumulative effects are the additional effects arising from changes caused by a development in conjunction with other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions.
Direct Effect	A direct (or primary) effect may be defined as an effect that is directly attributable to the development. ²
GLVIA3	'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition', published jointly by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013.
Indirect Effect	An indirect (or secondary) effect is an effect that results indirectly from the proposed project as a consequence of the direct effect, often occurring away from the site, or as a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway. They may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects. ³
Key Characteristics	Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place.
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
Landscape Capacity	The amount of change which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate without significant detrimental effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change proposed.
Landscape Character	The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse. ⁴
Landscape Character Areas	These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type.
Landscape Character Types	These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur, they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern, and perceptual and aesthetic attributes.
Landscape Effects	Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right. ⁵
Landscape Elements	Individual components which make up the landscape such as trees and hedges.
Landscape Features	Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements, like tree clumps, church towers or wooded skylines.

² The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Spon; 2013; p155

³ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Spon; 2013; p156

⁴ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Spon; 2013; p156

⁵ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Spon; 2013; p157

Term	Definition
Landscape Quality or Condition	This is a measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which a typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements. ⁶
Landscape Receptor	Defined aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
Landscape Resource	The combination of elements that contribute to landscape context, character and value.
Landscape Value	The relative value or importance attached to different landscapes by society on account of their landscape qualities. ⁷
Level of Effect	Determined through the combination of sensitivity of the receptor and the proposed magnitude of change brought about by the development.
Magnitude (of effect)	A term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration.
Mitigation	Measures including any process, activity or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse environmental impact or effects of a development.
Photomontage	A visualisation which superimposes an image of a proposed development upon a photograph or series of photographs.
Residential Visual Amenity	A collective term describing the views and visual amenity from a residential property, relating to the type, nature, extent and quality of views that may be experienced from the property and its 'domestic curtilage' including gardens and access driveway. Residential Visual Amenity is only one component of the overall Residential Amenity, others being for example noise, shadow flicker and access amongst others.
Residual Effects	Potential environmental effects remaining after mitigation.
Sense of Place	The essential character and spirit of an area: <i>genius loci</i> literally means 'spirit of the place'.
Sensitivity	A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor. ⁸
Significant Effects	It is a requirement of the EIA Regulations to determine the likely significant effects of development on the environment which should relate to the level of an effect and the type of effect. Where possible significant effects should be mitigated. The significance of an effect gives an indication as to the degree of importance (based on the magnitude of the effect and sensitivity of the receptor) that should be attached to the impact described. Whether an effect should be considered significant is not absolute and requires the application of professional judgement.
Type or Nature of Effect	Whether an effect is direct, indirect, temporary or permanent, positive (beneficial), neutral or negative (adverse) or cumulative.
Visual amenity	Value of a particular place in terms of what is seen by visual receptors taking account of all available views and the total visual experience.
Visual Effect	Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people. ⁹

⁶ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Spon; 2013; p157

⁷ The Landscape Institute; Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations

⁸ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Spon; 2013; p157

⁹ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Spon; 2013; p158

Term	Definition
Visual Receptors	Individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
Visualisation	Computer simulation, photomontage or other technique to illustrate the appearance of a development. ¹⁰
Wildness	A quality of appearing to be remote, inaccessible and rugged with little evidence of human influence.
Wireframe or Wireline	A computer generated line drawing of the DTM (Digital Terrain Model) and the proposed development from a known location.
Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)	Area within which a proposed development may have an influence or an effect on visual amenity. ¹¹

¹⁰ *The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Spon; 2013; p158*

¹¹ *The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Spon; 2013; p158*