Downlands, Uckfield
Landscape and Visual Appraisal Methodology
edp6170_r002a_DRAFT

Methodology: Thresholds and Definitions of Terminology used in this Appraisal

1.1 Landscape and Visual Assessments are separate, though linked procedures. Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape fabric which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. Visual effects relate to changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the perception of the landscape, to people's responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.

Table EDP 1.1: Defining the sensitivity of the landscape baseline

EDP assessment terminology and definitions	
Landscape Baseline - Overall Sensitivity	
Very High	***Value***: Nationally/internationally designated/valued countryside and landscape features; strong/distinctive landscape characteristics; absence of landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Strong/distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; absence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in excellent condition. Landscapes with clear and widely recognised cultural value. Landscapes with a high level of tranquillity.
High	***Value***: Locally designated/valued countryside (e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas) and landscape features; many distinctive landscape characteristics; very few landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Many distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; very few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in good condition. The landscape has a low capacity for change as a result of potential changes to defining character.
Medium	***Value***: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape characteristics; few landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Some distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in fair condition. Landscape is able to accommodate some change as a result.
Low	***Value***: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; few distinctive landscape characteristics; presence of landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Few distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in poor condition. Landscape is able to accommodate large amounts of change without changing these characteristics fundamentally.
Very Low	***Value***: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; absence of distinctive landscape characteristics; despoiled/degraded by the presence of many landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Absence of distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of many landscape detractors; landscape receptors in very poor condition. As such landscape is able to accommodate considerable change.

Table EDP 1.2: Defining the sensitivity of the visual baseline

Visual Baseline - Overall Sensitivity	
Very High	***Value/Susceptibility***: View is: designed/has intentional association with surroundings; recorded in published material; from a publicly accessible heritage asset/designated/promoted viewpoint; nationally/internationally designated right of way; protected/recognised in planning policy designation.
	Examples: May include views from residential properties; National Trails; promoted holiday road routes; designated countryside/landscape features with public access; visitors to heritage assets of national importance; Open Access Land.
High	***Value/Susceptibility***: View of clear value but may not be formally recognised e.g. framed view of scenic value or destination/summit views; inferred that it may have value for local residents; locally promoted route or PRoW.
	Examples: May include from recreational locations where there is some appreciation of the visual context/landscape e.g. golf, fishing; themed rights of way with a local association; National Trust land; panoramic viewpoints marked on OS maps; road routes promoted in tourist guides and/or for their scenic value.
Medium	***Value/Susceptibility***: View is not widely promoted or recorded in published sources; may be typical of those experienced by an identified receptor; minor road routes through rural/scenic areas.
	Examples: May include people engaged in outdoor sport not especially influenced by an appreciation of the wider landscape e.g. pitch sports; views from minor road routes passing through rural or scenic areas.
Low	***Value/Susceptibility***: View of clearly lesser value than similar views from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible.
	Examples: May include major road routes; rail routes; receptor is at a place of work but visual surroundings have limited relevance.
Very Low	***Value/Susceptibility***: View may be affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued.
	Examples: May include people at their place of work, indoor recreational or leisure facilities or other locations where views of the wider landscape have little of no importance.

Magnitude of Change

1.2 The magnitude of any landscape or visual change is determined through a range of considerations particular to each receptor. The three attributes considered in defining the magnitude are:

- Scale of Change;
- Geographical Extent; and
- Duration and reversibility/Proportion.

1.3 **Table 1.3** below provides an indication of the criteria by which the geographical extent of the area will be affected within this assessment.

Table EDP 1.3: Geographical Extent Criteria

Landscape Receptors	Visual Receptor Criteria
Large scale effects influencing several landscape types or character areas	Direct views at close range with changes over a wide horizontal and vertical extent.
Effects at the scale of the landscape type or character areas within which the proposal lies	Direct or oblique views at close range with changes over a notable horizontal and/or vertical extent
Effects within the immediate landscape setting of the site	Direct or oblique views at medium range with a moderate horizontal and/or vertical extent of the view affected.
Effects at the site level (within the development site itself)	Oblique views at medium or long range with a small horizontal/vertical extent of the view affected.
Effects only experienced on parts of the site at a very localised level	Long range views with a negligible part of the view affected.

1.4 The third, and final, factor, in determining the predicted magnitude of change is duration and reversibility. Duration and reversibility are separate but linked considerations. Duration is judged according to the defined terms set out below, whereas reversibility is a judgement about the prospects and practicality of the particular effect being reversed in, for example, a generation. The categories used in this assessment are set out in **Table EDP 1.4** below.

Table EDP 1.4: Factors influencing judgements on magnitude of change

Duration	Reversibility
Long Term (20+ years)	Permanent with unlikely restoration to original state e.g. major road corridor, power station, urban extension, hydrocarbons
Medium to long term (10 to 20 years)	Permanent with possible conversion to original state e.g. agricultural buildings, retail units;
Medium term (5 to 10 years)	Partially reversible to a different state e.g. mineral workings;
Short term (1 – 5 years)	Reversible after decommissioning to a similar original state e.g. renewable energy development;
Temporary (less than 12 months)	Quickly reversible e.g. temporary structures.

Table EDP 1.5: Defining the magnitude of change to the landscape and visual baseline

Magnitude of Change	
(Considers Scale of Proposal/Geographical Extent/Duration and Reversibility/Proportion)	
Very High	***Landscape***: Total loss/major alteration to key receptors/characteristics of the baseline; addition of elements that strongly conflict or integrate with the baseline.
	Visual: Substantial change to the baseline, forming a new, defining focus and having a defining influence on the view.

Magnitude of Change	
High	***Landscape:*** Notable loss/alteration/addition to one or more key receptors/-characteristics of the baseline; or addition of prominent conflicting elements.
	Visual: Additions are clearly noticeable and part of the view would be fundamentally altered.
Medium	***Landscape:*** Partial loss/alteration to one or more key receptors/characteristics; addition of elements that are evident but do not necessarily conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.
Low	***Landscape:*** Minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape receptors/-characteristics; additional elements may not be uncharacteristic within existing landscape.
	Visual: Proposed development will form a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component.
Very Low	***Landscape:*** Barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.
	Visual: Proposed development will form a barely noticeable component of the view, and the view whilst slightly altered would be similar to the baseline.
Imperceptible	*In some circumstances, changes at representative viewpoints or receptors will be lower than 'Very Low' and changes will be described as 'Imperceptible'. This will lead to negligible effects.*

Predicted Effects

1.5 In order to consider the likely level of any effect, the sensitivity of each receptor is combined with the predicted magnitude of change to determine the level of effect, with reference also made to the geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the effect within the assessment. Having taken such a wide range of factors into account when assessing sensitivity and magnitude at each receptor, the level of effect can be derived by combining the sensitivity and magnitude in accordance with the matrix in **Table 1.6.**

Table EDP 1.6: Determining the predicted levels of effects to the landscape and visual baseline

Overall Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude of Change				
	Very High	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Very Low**
Very High	Substantial	Major	Major/-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor
High	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor
Medium	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/-Minor	Minor	Minor/Negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor/Negligible	Negligible
Very Low	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor/-Negligible	Negligible	Negligible/None

Table EDP 1.7: Definition of effects

Definition of Effects	
Substantial	Effects that are in complete variance to the baseline landscape resource or visual amenity.
Major or Major/Moderate	Effects that result in noticeable alterations to much (*Major effect*) or some (*Moderate/Major effect*) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
Moderate	Effects that result in noticeable alterations to a few of the key characteristics of the baseline landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
Minor or Minor/Negligible	Effects that result in slight alterations to some (*Minor effect*) or a few (*Minor/Negligible*) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
Negligible or Negligible/None	Effects that result in barely perceptible alterations to a few (*Negligible effect*) or some (*Negligible/None effect*) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
None	No detectable alteration to the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.

1.6 Effects can be adverse (negative), beneficial (positive) or neutral. The landscape effects will be considered against the landscape baseline, which includes published landscape strategies or policies if they exist. Changes involving the addition of large scale man-made objects are typically considered to be adverse, unless otherwise stated, as they are not usually actively promoted as part of published landscape strategies.

1.7 Visual effects are more subjective as peoples' perception of development varies through the spectrum of negative, neutral and positive attitudes. In the assessment of visual effects the assessor will exercise objective professional judgement in assessing the level of effects and, unless otherwise stated, will assume that all effects are adverse, thus representing the worst case scenario. Effects can be moderated by maturation of landscape strategies.

1.8 The timescale of each effect is also important and effects are generally assessed at time stamps in the whole development life cycle: temporary (at a mid-point in construction), short-term (completion at year 1), medium-term (typically 15 years), medium- to long-term (15+ years). In some cases, the operational phase of a scheme could be considered 'temporary'.