



# EAST PARK ENERGY

**East Park Energy**

EN010141

## **Preliminary Environmental Information Report Volume 2 – Technical Appendices**

Appendix 5-1: Landscape and Visual Impact  
Assessment Methodology

**September 2024**

Version 01

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### **Appendix 5-1: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
01	September 2024	PEIR

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## 1.0 GUIDANCE

1.1.1 The methodology and criteria used for this assessment of landscape and visual effects has been developed based on the non-prescriptive Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition, 2013 (GLVIA3). The GLVIA3 sets out the principles that underpin landscape and visual assessment but does not provide a strict formula to reach judgements about level of effect and significance. Such judgements instead rely on reasoned argument and experienced professional judgement.

1.1.2 The following additional guidance has also informed detailed aspects of the approach taken to the assessment of the Scheme:

- Natural England (2014) *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*.
- The Landscape Institute (2016) *Technical Guidance Note 08/15: Landscape Character Assessment*.
- The Landscape Institute (2017) *Technical Information Note 01/2017: Tranquillity – An Overview*.
- The Landscape Institute (2019) *Technical Guidance Note 02/19: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA)*.
- The Landscape Institute (2019) *Technical Guidance Note 06/19: Visual Representation of Development Proposals*.
- The Landscape Institute (2020) *Technical Guidance Note 04/2020: Infrastructure*.
- The Landscape Institute (2021) *Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations*.

1.1.3 The methodology used for this assessment has been tailored to the specific requirements of the project and its location to ensure proportionate assessment and a focus on its likely most significant landscape and visual effects. The adopted assessment methodology has specifically focused on

providing appropriate environmental information regarding the following potential landscape and visual implications of the Scheme:

- The landscape and visual effects of installing solar array infrastructure within an area of predominantly rural countryside.
- The temporary effects of constructing the Scheme, including sections of underground cabling.
- The potential cumulative effects with other associated changes in the area such as other consented solar development.

## 2.0 THE PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT

2.1.1 The purpose of the landscape and visual assessment is to identify the effects of the Scheme, including those which are judged to be significant, to inform decision making.

2.1.2 The following table provides an overview of the factors that contribute to an assessment of landscape and visual effects. It identifies the six principal considerations that are combined to reach a conclusion on level of effect. The weighting attributed to each of these six considerations requires the application of experienced professional judgement and may vary depending on the landscape or visual receptor or effect being assessed.

**Table 1: Considerations in the overall assessment of level of landscape and visual effect**

Sensitivity (Nature of the Receptor)		Magnitude of Effect (Nature of the Effect)			
Susceptibility	Value	Scale of Effect	Extent of the Effect	Duration of the Effect	Reversibility of the Effect
High	High	High	Extensive	Permanent	Irreversible
Medium	Medium	Medium	Limited	Long-term	Partially Reversible
Low	Low	Low	Localised	Medium-term	Reversible
		Negligible	Not Applicable	Short-term/Temporary	
		No Change			

2.1.3 Detailed criteria are provided subsequently for the six main landscape and visual considerations listed in the middle row of this table along with an explanation of how these varied considerations are combined to reach an overall professional judgement on level of effect and significance. Separate criteria are provided for landscape and for visual effects.

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## 3.0 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT RECEPTORS AND CRITERIA

### 3.1 Landscape Receptors

- 3.1.1 Landscape receptors in this assessment comprise landscape character areas. Consideration has been given to landscape elements, principally landform, watercourses, woodlands, trees and hedgerows, as landscape receptors. However, while any notable change to landscape elements has been documented in the assessment, this provides a consideration within the narrative of the assessment of effects on landscape character. For example, the potential loss of hedgerow within the Site has been documented and the potential influence of that loss on the character area within which it falls has been described.
- 3.1.2 There are no designated landscapes within the study area and therefore designations do not form part of the identification of landscape receptors.

### 3.2 Landscape Sensitivity Criteria

- 3.2.1 Landscape receptors are assessed 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. Landscape sensitivity in LVIA is specific to the particular project or development that is being proposed and the location, in this instance a solar development in a rural setting.

#### Susceptibility

- 3.2.2 The susceptibility of the character of different landscape areas to the potential change due to the Scheme is categorised as High, Medium or Low.
- 3.2.3 The characteristics of different landscape areas have been considered in relation to the following indicators of higher susceptibility to the changes likely to be associated with the introduction of the Proposed:

- Scale: A larger scale landscape (relative to the development proposed) will typically be less susceptible to change than a smaller scale landscape.
- Openness: A landscape which is more enclosed may be more susceptible to change than a more open landscape.
- Pattern/Complexity: The susceptibility of a receiving landscape to change will be influenced by the specific pattern of features and elements present and by the complexity of this pattern. A simpler landscape pattern will typically be more susceptible than a complex one. With specific reference to a solar array, the nature of the landscape pattern relative to the horizontal array may be an important factor e.g. whether the predominant pattern is horizontal or vertical, with a horizontal pattern less susceptible to the introduction of a largely horizontal development form.
- Development/Human Influence: A landscape that includes obvious alterations to natural ground levels, includes many contemporary development elements or structures, or that is clearly functional/utilitarian in its land use will typically be less susceptible to change that introduces contemporary structures, as opposed to a landscape where development is either absent or more traditional in style, or where natural influences and natural or long-established landforms are predominant.
- Connections with adjacent areas: A landscape which has a clear relationship with other surrounding landscapes, for example in relation to views in and out, will typically be more susceptible to change than one that is more enclosed where such intervisibility not present.
- Visual Interruption: A landscape where views are frequently interrupted by screening features, for example vegetation cover or variations in landform, will typically be less susceptible to change than one where there are few screening features.

3.2.4 A particular landscape may have different characteristics that are more or less susceptible to change. As such, the overall susceptibility to change is allocated using professional judgement based upon consideration of the various factors outlined above and the relative weight attached to these



(which will vary from landscape to landscape). The assessment of susceptibility is expressed using a three point verbal scale of High, Medium or Low. Where appropriate, intermediate levels such as medium/high or low/medium are used to refine the assessment. The rationale in support of the assessment of susceptibility is set out for each receptor in the assessment, so that it is clear how each judgement has been made.

## Value

3.2.5 The value (or importance) of different landscape areas to people is categorised as High, Medium or Low. The value of the landscape receptor is independent of any development proposal. The absence of a formal landscape designation does not necessarily imply that a landscape is of lower value. Value is defined in the GLVIA as:

*[5.19] "...the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons...Landscapes or their component parts may be valued at the community, local, national or international levels...":*

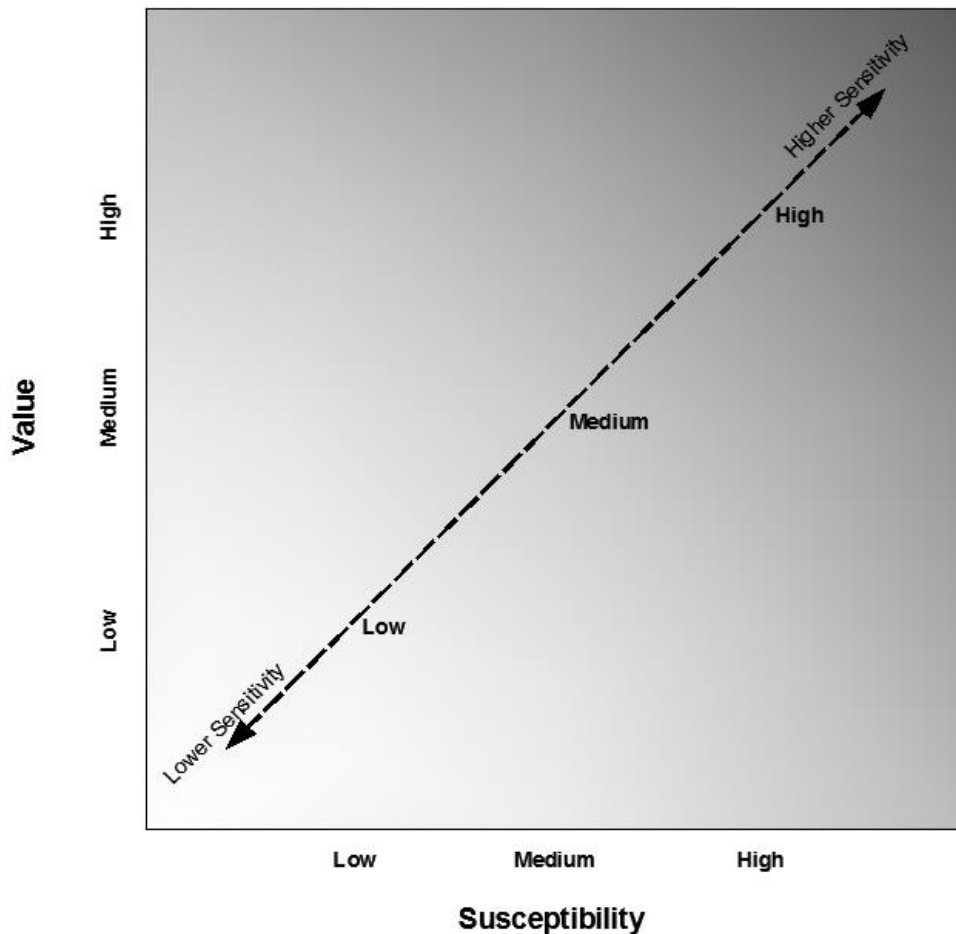
3.2.6 Factors that can help in identifying valued landscapes include:

- Presence/absence of statutory landscape designations;
- Presence/absence of local landscape designations and associated policies;
- Landscape quality/condition;
- Scenic quality;
- Rarity of particular elements/features;
- Representativeness;
- Conservation interest;
- Recreation value;
- Perceptual aspects; and
- Cultural associations.

## Combined Judgement Regarding Sensitivity

3.2.7 Susceptibility to change and value are considered together to determine the sensitivity of the receptor. It should be noted that the relationship between susceptibility to change and value can be complex and is not linear. For example, a highly-valued landscape (such as a National Park) may have a low susceptibility to change, due both to the characteristics of the landscape and the nature of the change proposed. Figure 1 subsequently provides a guide as to how susceptibility and value can be combined to assess sensitivity (with the grey shading indicative of the increasing sensitivity of receptors with increasing susceptibility and / or value). However, the final assessment of sensitivity is one of professional judgement based on consideration of the susceptibility and value assessments.

**Figure 1: Indicative Sensitivity Assessment**



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## 3.3 Magnitude of Landscape Effect

### Introduction

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

### Scale of Landscape Effect Criteria

3.3.2 The scale of landscape effect likely to arise as a result of the Scheme within different landscape areas is categorised as High, Medium, Low, Negligible or No Change.

3.3.3 The assessment of landscape change takes account of: elements that are taken away from the landscape; elements that are added to the landscape; and the degree to which this would result in a change to landscape character. The assessment therefore reflects the level of ‘consistency’ or ‘fit’ between the existing baseline characteristics of the landscape and anything introduced into it by the Scheme. This assessment has adopted the following terminology and criteria:

- High scale of landscape effect: the Scheme would form a dominant or highly prominent landscape element and/or would result in substantial alteration to, or inconsistency with, an area’s key landscape characteristics.
- Medium scale of landscape effect: the Scheme would form a reasonably conspicuous landscape element and/or would result in some alteration to, or inconsistency with, an area’s key landscape characteristics.
- Low scale of landscape effect: the Scheme would form a reasonably inconspicuous landscape element and/or would result in only minor alteration to, or inconsistency with, an area’s key landscape characteristics.
- Negligible: The Scheme would comprise a barely perceptible landscape element and/or would not change an area’s key landscape characteristics.

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## Extent of Landscape Effect Criteria

- 3.3.4 Consideration of the geographical extent of landscape effect can either relate to the quantification of the change to existing landscape elements (e.g. an area of tree cover to be removed) or to the extent of the geographical area over which a change in landscape character might be experienced.
- 3.3.5 The extent of landscape effect is likely to arise as a result of the Scheme upon either landscape elements or within different landscape areas is categorised as extensive, limited or localised. It is not possible to provide consistent criteria for these descriptive terms that apply in every instance (i.e. to different types of landscape receptors), however the extent of landscape effect will therefore be described and explained within the assessment.

## Duration of Landscape Effect Criteria

- 3.3.6 The duration of the landscape effect likely to arise as a result of the Scheme on landscape elements or within different landscape areas is categorised as Long-term, Medium-term or Short-term. This consideration is used to qualify and contextualise the assessment of scale of landscape effect and therefore informs the overall judgement regarding level of effect. The following definitions have been adopted within this assessment:
- Long-term landscape effect: a change typically lasting 10 or more years.
  - Medium-term landscape effect: a change typically likely to persist for more than three years but less than ten years.
  - Short-term landscape effect: a change unlikely to persist for more than three years.
- 3.3.7 Long-term effects are of sufficient length that they may be considered in some instances to have the same influence as a Permanent effect on the consideration of overall level of landscape effect. However, it is important that a distinction is made between a truly permanent effect and one which is long-term to ensure there is clarity when subsequently considering Reversibility of the effect. Duration and Reversibility of effect are separate but interlinked

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considerations and so it is important that clarity on terminology used supports their different influence on the overall effect.

### Reversibility of Landscape Effect Criteria

3.3.8 The reversibility of a landscape effect relates to the prospects and practicality of an effect being able to be wholly or partially reversed, or whether the change cannot realistically be reversed, i.e. it is permanent.

3.3.9 Whatever the expected duration of a landscape effect, consideration of reversibility relates to whether a landscape effect could be reversed rather than whether it will be reversed. This enables a distinction to be made between a new landscape element which is expected to be permanent but could nevertheless be removed without residual effect should it become unexpectedly obsolete or it involves a pre-planned decommissioning phase, and landscape effect that is practicably irreversible. The following criteria have been adopted within this assessment:

- Irreversible: For example major changes in landform or the removal or landscape elements, such as veteran trees, that could not be easily replicated.
- Partially reversible: Effects that could be largely reversed within approximately twenty years, for example the recreation of semi-mature woodland of similar species mix and character.
- Reversible: Effects that do not require the fundamental alteration of landform or the removal of landscape elements, such as trees, and any changes that could be reversed within a reasonably short duration for example the recreation of juvenile woodland. Reversibility in terms of built development considers whether there is fundamental alteration to the underlying landscape, such as through the introduction of impermeable surfaces, concrete and masonry. In the case of solar arrays, the lightweight nature of their construction is such that they are inherently simple to remove such that little trace would be left behind.

## Combined Judgement Regarding Magnitude of Effect

3.3.10 These four factors are then considered together to derive an overall magnitude of effect for each receptor, which is determined by use of professional judgement. The assessment of the magnitude of effect is expressed using a four point scale of large, medium, small or negligible. Where appropriate, intermediate levels such as medium / large or small / medium are used to refine the assessment. Table 2.2 (below) indicates how the above factors have been used to inform magnitude of change. As the circumstances of each specific receptor will vary, a reasoned narrative is set out in the LVIA in order to justify the particular magnitude of change allocated to each receptor.

**Table 2: Magnitude of Landscape Change Criteria (indicative)**

<b>Magnitude of Effect (Nature of the Effect)</b>	<b>Description</b>
Large	A substantial change in landscape characteristics and/or change over an extensive geographical area and/or which may result in an irreversible impact
Medium	A moderate change in landscape characteristics and/or which may occur over a large geographical area and/or which may be reversible over a long duration of time
Small	A small change in landscape characteristics and/or which may be over a relatively localised geographical and/or which may be reversible over a short duration of time
Negligible	A barely perceptible change in landscape characteristics and/or which is focussed on a small geographical area and/or which is almost or completely reversible

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## 4.0 VISUAL ASSESSMENT RECEPTORS AND CRITERIA

### 4.1 Visual Receptors

4.1.1 The assessment of visual effects considers how changes in the landscape affects views experienced by people. Visual receptors in this assessment comprise the following categories:

- People in residential properties.
- Users of public rights of way.
- Users of community facilities.
- People using roads.
- People in their places of work, i.e. employment sites.

4.1.2 An understanding of how these receptors are likely to be visually affected is informed by a detailed assessment of the visual effects at representative viewpoints provided in **PEIR Volume 2 Appendix 5-4**. These viewpoints often represent effects on more than one category of visual receptor (e.g. both residential properties and a road). Further explanation of how the representative viewpoints have been used in this assessment is provided towards the end of this methodology (Section 4.6).

### 4.2 Visual Sensitivity Criteria

4.2.1 Each visual receptor identified in the visual assessment is assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to change in their view and the value attributed to that view.

#### Susceptibility

4.2.2 The susceptibility of a visual receptor to the potential visual effects of the Scheme relates to the expectations of people in different locations and engaged in different activities. This is largely determined by the category of visual receptor, e.g. resident, footpath user, road user or other.

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4.2.3 Levels of visual susceptibility, value and overall sensitivity are each categorised as High, Medium or Low. Within this assessment the following categories of visual receptor are generally regarded to display the following levels of visual susceptibility:

4.2.4 Higher visual susceptibility:

- Residents, including standalone properties in open rural locations and properties known to be used as holiday lets.
- Public right of way and designated trail users, including pedestrians, cyclists and some horse riders. Open countryside is generally agreed to be associated with recreational or tourist use and users are of higher level of susceptibility to change, albeit some routes are evidently more functional, as is discussed subsequently.
- Promoted viewpoints, whether pedestrian or vehicular.
- Other tourist or recreational locations where visual amenity is likely to be highly valued (possibly including publicly accessible locations of historic interest).
- Publicly accessible ornamental parks and gardens which are designed for their views.

4.2.5 Medium visual susceptibility:

- Residents in built up locations with lower levels of visual amenity.
- Incidental footpath users of routes that are: more functional, i.e. used to travel between two locations, in contrast to a scenic route used purely for recreation; in less scenic areas of countryside, perhaps such as large-scale arable landscapes; or in built up areas.
- Routes well used by cyclists and horse riders, where the clear focus is on sport/activity or transport rather than visual amenity.

4.2.6 Lower visual susceptibility:

- People in their places of employment.
- Open spaces principally used for sport.



- Road users in cars using routes that are not generally associated with recreational or tourist use.

## Value

4.2.7 In accordance with paragraph 6.37 of the GLVIA judgements regarding value attached to the views experienced by visual receptors 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 and references to them in literature or art.

4.2.8 For this reason, whilst not specifically referenced in the current edition of GLVIA, the number of people likely to be affected can influence the value assigned to a particular view.

4.2.9 The assessment of value is made on the same basis as the assessment of susceptibility to change.

## Combined Judgement Regarding Sensitivity

4.2.10 Susceptibility to change and value are considered together as discussed above for landscape sensitivity and illustrated above in Figure 1. Again, professional judgement determines the final judgement of sensitivity, due to the non-linear and complex relationship between susceptibility and value. A reasoned narrative is set out in the LVIA in order to justify the particular sensitivity assessed for each receptor, so that it is clear how each judgement has been made.

## 4.3 Magnitude of Visual Effect

4.3.1 The nature of the visual effect that is likely to occur, i.e. its magnitude, is determined by considering four separate factors, namely:

- Size/scale;
- Geographical extent;
- Duration; and
- Reversibility.

### Scale of Visual Effect Criteria

4.3.2 The scale of visual effect likely to arise as a result of the Scheme for different visual receptors is categorised as High, Medium, Low, Negligible or No Change and is determined by considering the following:

- The scale of change in view, in respect of the loss of or addition of features, and change in composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the development;
- The degree of contrast or integration of new features or other changes; and
- The nature of the view, namely the relative amount of time it would be experienced for and whether the views would be full, partial or glimpsed.

4.3.3 This assessment has adopted the following terminology and criteria:

- High scale of visual effect: The visual changes associated with the Scheme would form a dominant or highly prominent element within the view and/or result in substantial change to the quality and character of the available view.
- Medium scale of visual effect: The visual changes associated with the Scheme would form a reasonably conspicuous element within the view and/or result in some noticeable change to the quality and character of the available view.
- Low scale of visual effect: The visual changes associated with the Scheme would form a visible but only very minor element within the view, without materially affecting the overall quality and/or character of the available view.

- Negligible: The visual changes to the existing available view associated with the Scheme would be barely discernible.
- No change: The Scheme would not be visible from this receptor.

### Extent of Visual Effect

4.3.4 The geographical extent of an effect will vary from viewpoint to viewpoint and will reflect the following:

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

4.3.5 Where relevant, the extent of visual effect likely to arise as a result of the Scheme is categorised as Extensive, Limited or Localised. It is not possible to provide consistent criteria for these descriptive terms that apply in every instance. Instead, the terms are used in the assessment of visual effects as qualifiers that contextualise the assessment of individual viewpoints and receptors and provide reasoning within the combined assessment of significance.

### Duration of Visual Effect Criteria

4.3.6 The duration of the visual effect likely to arise as a result of the Scheme on visual receptors is categorised as Long-term, Medium-term or Short-term. This consideration is used to qualify and contextualise the assessment of scale of visual effect and therefore informs the overall judgement regarding level of effect. The following definitions have been adopted within this assessment:

- Long-term visual effect: a change typically lasting 10 or more years.
- Medium-term visual effect: a change typically likely to persist for more than three years but less than ten years.
- Short-term visual effect: a change unlikely to persist for more than three years.

4.3.7 Long-term effects are of sufficient length that they may be considered in some instances to have the same influence as a Permanent effect on the consideration of overall level of visual effect. However, it is important that a distinction is made between a truly permanent effect and one which is long-term to ensure there is clarity when subsequently considering Reversibility of the effect. Duration and Reversibility of effect are separate but interlinked considerations and so it is important that clarity on terminology used supports their different influence on the overall effect.

### Reversibility of Visual Effect Criteria

4.3.8 The reversibility of a visual effect relates to the prospects and practicality of an effect being able to be wholly or partially reversed, or whether the change cannot realistically be reversed, i.e. it is permanent.

4.3.9 Whatever the expected duration of a visual effect, consideration of reversibility relates to whether a visual effect could be reversed. This enables a distinction to be made between changes associated with the introduction of something which is expected to be permanent, but could nevertheless be removed without residual effect should it become unexpectedly obsolete or it involves a pre-planned decommissioning phase, and visual change that is practicably irreversible. The following criteria have been adopted within this assessment:

- Irreversible: For example visual effects associated with major changes in landform or the removal of landscape elements, such as veteran trees, that could not be easily replicated.
- Partially reversible: Visual effects that could be largely reversed within approximately twenty years, for example the recreation of mature woodland areas in a view.
- Reversible: Visual effects that could be reversed within a reasonably short duration, for example the recreation of juvenile woodland. Reversible visual changes also include the removal of built features from a view which

do not require fundamental alteration to the underlying landscape, such as some wind turbines or solar arrays.

## Combined Judgement Regarding Magnitude of Effect

4.3.10 These four factors are then considered together to derive an overall magnitude of visual effect for each receptor, which is determined by use of professional judgement. The assessment of the magnitude of effect is expressed using a four point scale of large, medium, small or negligible. Where appropriate, intermediate levels such as medium / large or small / medium are used to refine the assessment. Table 2.2 (below) indicates how the above factors have been used to inform magnitude of change. As the circumstances of each specific receptor will vary, a reasoned narrative is set out in the LVIA in order to justify the particular magnitude of change allocated to each receptor.

**Table 3: Indicative Magnitude of Visual Change Criteria**

<b>Magnitude of Effect (Nature of the Effect)</b>	<b>Description</b>
Large	A change affecting a large proportion of a view, which may be seen across an extensive area or experienced from a long section of a route, and/or a longer-term effect, and/or contrasting with the existing view.
Medium	A change affecting a moderate proportion of a view, which may be seen across a wider area or experienced from a section of a route, and/or a medium-term effect, and/or broadly compatible with the existing view.
Small	A change affecting a smaller proportion of a view, which may be seen from a limited area or experienced from a short section of a route, and/or a shorter-term effect, and/or compatible with the existing view.
Negligible	A change which is barely perceptible in the view, and/or which is only glimpsed from a route.

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## 4.4 Level of Effect and Significance

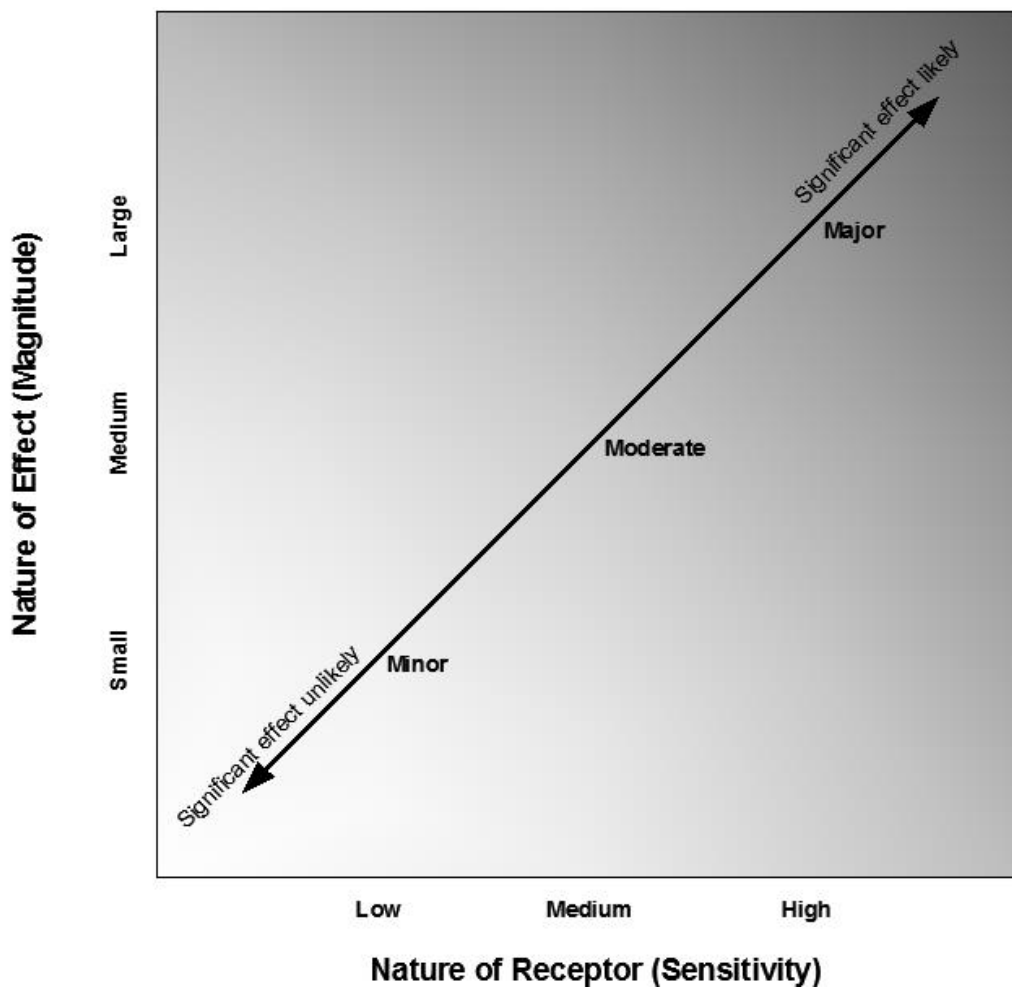
- 4.4.1 The purpose of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is to determine the likely significant effects of a development proposal. Not all landscape and visual effects arising as a result of a particular proposal will be significant. Furthermore, a significant effect does not necessarily mean that such an effect is unacceptable to decision-makers. This is a matter to be weighed in the planning balance alongside other factors. What is important is that the likely effects of any proposal are transparently assessed and described in order that the relevant determining authority can bring a balanced and well-informed judgement to bear as part of the decision making process.
- 4.4.2 Referring to *State of Environmental Impact Assessment Practice in the UK* (Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment 2011), this guidance identifies a range of different factors that should be considered when evaluating the significance of an effect, including:
- Knowledge and experience of significance from previous assessments;
  - Details of the development proposal, such as construction and operational activities, and the nature of the effect associated with such activity;
  - Details about the environmental sensitivity of the area that will be affected;
  - Feedback from scoping and consultation; and
  - The wider legal and policy context, which offers protection to the environment and community.
- 4.4.3 The level of effect can only be defined in relation to each particular development and its specific location. It is for each LVIA to determine how judgements about receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of change should be combined to derive the level of effect and to clearly explain how this assessment has been made, and if the level of effect is considered significant.
- 4.4.4 Figure 2 subsequently provides a guide as to how sensitivity and magnitude can be combined to identify the level of effect upon a receptor (with the grey shading indicative of the increasing level of effect with increasing sensitivity

and/or magnitude). However, the final assessment of the level of effect and conclusion as to whether this is significant for decision makers is one of professional judgement.

4.4.5 Where magnitude of change is identified as ‘negligible,’ effects are automatically considered not to be significant due to the minimal level of change from baseline (which would often not be perceptible).

4.4.6 Greater than ‘moderate’ effects are more likely to be significant. This is because they would generally result from larger magnitudes of change on higher sensitivity receptors. This does not preclude a ‘moderate’ effect or lower being significant or a greater than ‘moderate’ effect not being significant. This judgement will depend on the specific circumstances being considered.

Figure 2: Indicative Guide to Judgements Regarding Level of Effect



#### 4.4.7 The GLVIA identifies that:

*[3.32] “The Regulations require that a final judgement is made about whether or not each effect is likely to be significant. There are no hard and fast rules about what effects should be deemed ‘significant’ but LVIA’s should always distinguish clearly between what are considered to be significant and non-significant effects...”*

*[3.33] It is not essential to establish a series of thresholds for different levels of significance of landscape and visual effects, provided that it is made clear whether or not they are considered significant. The final overall judgement of the likely significance of the predicted landscape and visual effects is however, often summarised in a series of categories of significance reflecting combinations of sensitivity and magnitude. These tend to vary from project to project but they should be appropriate to the nature, size and location of the proposed development and should as far as possible be consistent across the different topic areas of the EIA.”*

*[5.56] & [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 [landscape]1 context and with the type of proposal”.*

4.4.8 It should be noted that effects may be either adverse (negative) or beneficial (positive). An effect can be significant and adverse, or significant and beneficial. If change occurs, with no obvious deterioration or improvement resulting, this can be said to be Neutral.

## 4.5 The Iterative Assessment and Design Process

4.5.1 **PEIR Volume 1 Chapter 3** sets out the overall approach to the iterative assessment and design of the Scheme and explains the sequence of iterative stages that have been followed across all environmental parameters to identify the preferred technology and preferred layout. It explains the



relationship between the initial stages of assessment, design refinement, mitigation and assessment of the significance of residual effects.

- 4.5.2 The iterative design and assessment process for the project has been such that the potential landscape and visual effects of achieving the Scheme objectives has informed its design and routeing. The scheme parameters contain substantial embedded landscape and visual mitigation. Given that landscape and visual mitigation is embedded within the design being assessed, the landscape and visual assessment largely focuses on residual effects in the first instance followed by a concise summary of the embedded mitigation measures that had been incorporated to reach the assessed design.

## 4.6 The Use of Representative Viewpoints

- 4.6.1 The assessment of the effects on specific visual receptors is underpinned by a detailed assessment of the visual effects of the Scheme at selected representative viewpoints. These representative viewpoints and their associated visualisations provide a detailed insight into the anticipated appearance of the visual effects likely to occur as a result of the Scheme in specific locations. The Scheme has adopted an approach to include a relatively high number of representative viewpoints to ensure that the visual assessment is supported by a thorough set of graphic information (i.e. photographic plates and photomontages) and detailed assessments.
- 4.6.2 The detailed assessment of the visual effects at representative viewpoints is contained in ***PEIR Volume 2 Appendix 5-4***.