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3rd May 2023

Land to the South of  
Warren Lane, North of  
Weston Road, Long  
Ashton

**Landscape Evidence**  
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**Volume 2:**  
**Appendices & Plans**

Between Long Ashton  
Company and North Somerset  
Council

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**Tyler**  
**Grange**

# Volume 2: Appendices & Plans

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# Appendices



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# **Appendix 1: Extract of the Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) & Tyler Grange Assessment Criteria**



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# Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Third edition

Landscape Institute and  
Institute of Environmental  
Management & Assessment

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**GUIDELINES**



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

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

1.16

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

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

1.17

## Who is this guidance for?

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

1.18

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

1.19



## Chapter overview

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

## What does landscape mean?

- 2.1 The UK has signed and ratified the European Landscape Convention (ELC) since 2002, when the last edition of this guidance was published. The recognition that government has thus given to landscape matters raises the profile of this important area and emphasises the role that landscape can play as an integrating framework for many areas of policy. The ELC is designed to achieve improved approaches to the planning, management and protection of landscapes throughout Europe and to put people at the heart of this process.
- 2.2 The ELC adopts a definition of landscape that is now being widely used in many different situations and is adopted in this guidance: ‘Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’ (Council of Europe, 2000). This definition reflects the thinking that emerged in the UK in the late 1980s and early 1990s and was summarised in the 2002 guidance on Landscape Character Assessment. The inclusive nature of landscape was captured there in a paragraph stating that:
- Landscape is about the relationship between people and place. It provides the setting for our day-to-day lives. The term does not mean just special or designated landscapes and it does not only apply to the countryside. Landscape can mean a small patch of urban wasteland as much as a mountain range, and an urban park as much as an expanse of lowland plain. It results from the way that different components of our environment – both natural (the influences of geology, soils, climate, flora and fauna) and cultural (the historical and current impact of land use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions) – interact together and are perceived by us. People’s perceptions turn land into the concept of landscape. (Swanwick and Land Use Consultants, 2002: 2)
- 2.3 This guidance embraces this broad interpretation of what landscape means and uses it throughout. It is not only concerned with landscapes that are recognised as being special or valuable, but is also about the ordinary and the everyday – the landscapes where people live and work, and spend their leisure time. The same approach can be taken in all these different landscape settings, provided that full attention is given to the particular characteristics of each place.
- 2.4 The importance of the ELC definition is that it moves beyond the idea that landscape is only a matter of aesthetics and visual amenity. Instead it encourages a focus on



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

## Views and visual amenity

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

Reflecting this distinction the two components of LVIA are: 2.21

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

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

## Professional judgement in LVIA

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

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

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

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

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

### Summary advice on good practice

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



**Table 3.1** continued

<i>Component of EIA process</i>	<i>Brief description of action in this part of the process</i>	<i>LVIA role in EIA</i>	<i>LVIA role in landscape 'appraisal'</i>
Assessing the significance of effects	Systematically and transparently assesses the likely significance of the effects identified.	Required	Not required
Mitigation	Makes proposals for measures designed to avoid/prevent, reduce or offset (or compensate for) any significant negative (adverse) effects.	Required	If required
Preparation of the Environmental Statement	Presentation of the findings of the assessment in written and graphic form.	Required	Appraisal Report
Monitoring and auditing	Monitors and audits the effects of the implementation of the proposal and of the mitigation measures proposed, especially where they are covered by conditions attached to any permission that may be given.	If required	If required

Further details of these components, and of the role that landscape and visual issues play in each, are summarised below.

## Site selection and consideration of alternatives

3.4 If alternatives are considered as part of a development that is subject to EIA, landscape and visual considerations may play a part in identifying opportunities and constraints relating to site selection and making comparative assessments of the options in order to identify those with least adverse (or indeed most beneficial) effects and greatest potential for possible mitigation and enhancement. It is then important to:

- demonstrate how landscape and visual effects have been taken into consideration;
- explain the reasoning behind any decisions to reject any of the sites selected and alternatives considered in terms of their landscape and visual effects.

## Screening

3.5 This step determines whether or not an EIA is required. The UK EIA Regulations set out the types of project for which an EIA is always required, known as Schedule 1





**Figure 5.4** Historic buildings often contribute to the character and quality of townscapes

The sharing of relevant baseline information should not be confused with the need for separate cultural heritage appraisals such as historic landscape characterisation and assessment or historic townscape appraisal, or there will be a danger of both double handling and inappropriate judgements by non-experts. It is particularly important that responsibilities are clear in considering any effects on the settings and views for historic buildings, Conservation Areas and other heritage assets.

5.11

### Using existing character assessments

Many parts of the UK are already covered by existing character assessments at different scales. There is a hierarchy of assessment, from broad-scale national or regional assessments, through to more detailed local authority assessments, to in some cases quite fine-grain local or community assessments. Although usually prepared for different original purposes, existing assessments can also contribute to LVIA. The first step in preparing the landscape baseline should be to review any relevant assessments that may be available at different levels in this hierarchy. Those published and adopted by competent authorities are usually the most robust and considered documents. Use should also be made of any existing historic characterisation studies to provide information on the time depth dimension of the landscape.

5.12

Existing assessments must be reviewed critically as their quality may vary, some may be dated and some may not be suited to the task in hand. Before deciding to rely on information from an existing assessment a judgement should be made as to the degree to which it will be useful in informing the LVIA process.

5.13



It should be reviewed in terms of:

- when it was carried out and the extent to which the landscape may have changed since then;
- its status, and whether or not it has been formally adopted, for example, as supplementary planning guidance;
- the scale and level of detail of the assessment and therefore its suitability for use in the LVIA, while noting that larger-scale assessments can often provide valuable context;
- any other matters which might limit the reliability or usefulness of the information.

Justification should be provided for any departure from the findings of an existing, established LCA.

It is essential to decide at the outset what scale of character assessment information is needed to provide a basis for the LVIA and then to judge the value of existing assessments against this. Broad-scale assessments at national or regional level can be helpful in setting the landscape context, but are unlikely to be helpful on their own as the basis for LVIA – they may be too generalised to be appropriate for the particular purpose. Local authority assessments will provide more useful information about the landscape types that occur in the study area. Ideally both should be used together in the following ways:

5.14

- Broad-scale assessments set the scene and reference can be made to the descriptions of relevant character types or areas to indicate the key characteristics that may be apparent in the study area.
- Local authority assessments provide more detail on the types of landscape that occur in the study area. They can be mapped to show how the proposals relate to them and the descriptions and definition of key characteristics can be used to inform the description of the landscapes that may be affected by the proposal.

Existing assessments may need to be reviewed and interpreted to adapt them for use in LVIA – for example by drawing out more clearly the key characteristics that are most relevant to the proposal. Fieldwork will also be required to check the applicability of the assessment throughout the study area and to refine it where necessary, for example by identifying variations in character at a more detailed scale. Completely new supplementary Landscape Character Assessment work covering the whole study area will only be required when there are no existing assessments or when they are available but either have serious limitations that restrict their value or do not provide information at an appropriate level of detail.

5.15

Even where there are useful and relevant existing Landscape Character Assessments and historic landscape characterisations, it is still likely that it will be necessary to carry out specific and more detailed surveys of the site itself and perhaps its immediate setting or surroundings. This provides the opportunity to record the specific characteristics of this more limited area, but also to analyse to what extent the site and its immediate surroundings conform to or are different from the wider Landscape Character Assessments that exist, and to pick up other characteristics that may be important in considering the effects of the proposal.

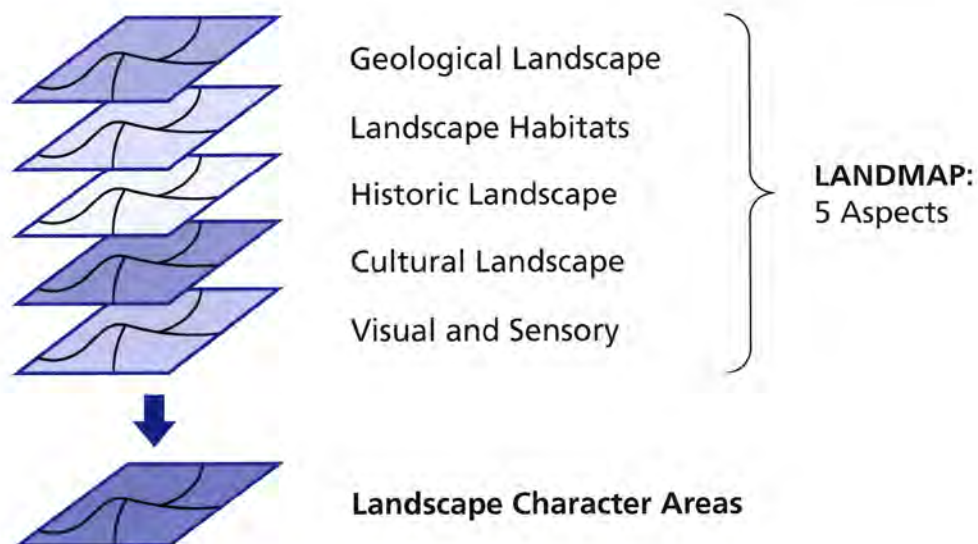
5.16



- 5.17 Where new landscape surveys are required, either of the whole study area or of the site and its immediate surroundings, they should follow recommended methods and up-to-date guidance. Survey information may be recorded in a variety of ways but good records are essential. This is especially so in LVIA as the landscape baseline may eventually be used in a public inquiry where other parties could request access to field records.
- 5.18 Evidence about change in the landscape, including in its condition, is an important part of the baseline. The condition of the different landscape types and/or areas and their constituent parts should be recorded, and any evidence of current pressures causing change in the landscape documented, drawing on previous reports and data sources as well as field records.

### Establishing the value of the landscape

- 5.19 As part of the baseline description the value of the potentially affected landscape should be established. This means 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. Considering value at the baseline stage will inform later judgements about the significance of effects. Value can apply to areas of landscape as a whole, or to the individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions which contribute to the character of the landscape. LANDMAP in Wales, for example, evaluates each area for each of its five aspects or layers. Landscapes or their component parts may be valued at the community, local, national or international levels. A review of existing landscape designations is usually the starting point in understanding landscape value, but the value attached to undesignated landscapes also needs to be carefully considered and individual elements of the landscape – such as trees, buildings or hedgerows – may also have value. All need to be considered where relevant.



**Figure 5.6** In Wales, landscape information is found in LANDMAP, providing data on five aspects of the landscape which can be combined (with other information) to define Landscape Character Areas



Landscape Designations within Study Area

10km Study Area  
SWS Project as a Whole

Local Landscape Designation

- Sensitive Landscape Area (East Ayrshire Local Plan)
- 1 River Ayr Lugar Water (Unnamed SLA 1)
- 2 Loch Doon Valley (Unnamed SLA2)
- 3 Afton (Unnamed SLA3)

Regional Scenic Area (RSA)

- (South Ayrshire Local Plan)
- 1 Lower River Ayr (Unnamed SA1)
- 3 Tairlaw (Unnamed SA2)

Regional Scenic Area (RSA)

- Galloway Hills (Stewartry Local Plan)
- Thornhill Uplands (Finnhills Local Plan)

South West Scotland Project Component Parts:

- Part A
- Part B Study Area 10km
- Part C Study Area 10km
- Part D1 Study Area 10km
- Part D2 Study Area 10km
- Part D3 Study Area 10km
- Part D4 Study Area 2km
- Part D4 Study Area 2km

Substation Location

- 1 Coylton Extension
- 2 Black Hill
- 3 Black Hill
- 4 Glen Hills
- 5 Dun Hill

Proposed Wind Farm Substation Location (NOT PART OF SWS PROJECT)



Figure 9.3



Figure 5.7 A review of existing landscape designations is usually the starting point in understanding landscape value



5.20 Information that will contribute to understanding value might include:

- information about areas recognised by statute such as (depending on jurisdiction) National Parks, National Scenic Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- information about Heritage Coasts, where relevant;
- local planning documents which may show the extent of and policies for local landscape designations;
- information on the status of individual or groups of features such as, for example, Conservation Areas, listed buildings, Tree Preservation Orders, important hedgerows, cultural heritage elements such as historic landscapes of various forms, archaeological sites of importance and other special historical or cultural heritage sites such as battlefields or historic gardens;
- art and literature, including tourism literature and promotional material such as postcards, which may indicate the value attached to the identity of particular areas (for example ‘Constable Country’ or specially promoted views);
- material on landscapes of local or community interest, such as local green spaces, village greens or allotments.

*International and national designations*

5.21 Internationally acclaimed landscapes may be recognised, for example as World Heritage Sites, and particular planning policies may apply to them. Nationally valued landscapes are recognised by designation, which have a formal statutory basis that varies in different parts of the UK. They include:

- **National Parks** in England, Wales and Scotland;
- **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty** in England, Wales and Northern Ireland<sup>2</sup>;
- **National Scenic Areas** in Scotland.



**Figure 5.8** A listed building within a historic designed landscape



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

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

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

#### *Local landscape designations*

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

#### *Undesignated landscapes*

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

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



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

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

### Box 5.1

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

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

Based on Swanwick and Land Use Consultants (2002)



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

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

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

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

### A role for consultation

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



## Reporting on the baseline situation

5.33 When review of existing assessments and any new surveys are complete, and evidence about landscape value has been assembled, a landscape baseline report should be prepared. It should be a clear, well-structured, accessible report supported by illustrations where necessary and should:

- map, describe and illustrate the **character of the landscape** at an appropriate level of detail, covering both the wider study area and the site and its immediate surroundings, dividing it into Landscape Character Types and Areas as appropriate;
- identify and describe the **individual elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape**, particularly emphasising those that are key characteristics contributing to the distinctive character of the landscape;
- indicate the **condition of the landscape**, including the condition of elements or features such as buildings, hedgerows or woodland.

The aim should be to describe the landscape as it is at the time but also to consider *what it may be like in the future* in the absence of the proposal. This means projecting forward any trends in change and considering how they may affect the landscape over time, accepting that this involves a degree of speculation and uncertainty.

## Predicting and describing landscape effects

5.34 Once the baseline information about the landscape is available this can be combined with understanding of the details of the proposed change or development that is to be introduced into the landscape to identify and describe the landscape effects.

- The first step is to identify the components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the scheme, often referred to as the **landscape receptors**, such as overall character and key characteristics, individual elements or features, and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects.
- The second step is to identify interactions between these landscape receptors and the different components of the development at all its different stages, including construction, operation and, where relevant, decommissioning and restoration/reinstatement.

5.35 The effects identified at the scoping stage should all be reviewed and amended, if necessary, in the light of any additional information available. New ones may also be identified as a result of the additional information obtained through consultation, baseline study and iterative development of the scheme design. The effects on landscape should embrace all the different types identified by the Regulations, namely the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short-, medium- and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development (as described in Paragraph 3.22). They are likely to include:

- change in and/or partial or complete loss of elements, features or aesthetic or perceptual aspects that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the landscape;
- addition of new elements or features that will influence the character and distinctiveness of the landscape;
- combined effects of these changes on overall character.





**Figure 5.9** Plan illustrating the effects of a proposed flood wall, showing partial and complete loss of trees and the location of the proposed development alongside visual receptors and designations



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

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

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

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

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

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

## Assessing the significance of landscape effects

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

### Sensitivity of the landscape receptors

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

### *Susceptibility to change*

5.40 This means the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element



and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

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

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

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

#### *Value of the landscape receptor*

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

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

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

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



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

- 5.46 There can be complex relationships between the value attached to landscape receptors and their susceptibility to change which are especially important when considering change within or close to designated landscapes. For example:
- An internationally, nationally or locally valued landscape does not automatically, or by definition, have high susceptibility to all types of change.
  - It is possible for an internationally, nationally or locally important landscape to have relatively low susceptibility to change resulting from the particular type of development in question, by virtue of both the characteristics of the landscape and the nature of the proposal.
  - The particular type of change or development proposed may not compromise the specific basis for the value attached to the landscape.
- 5.47 Landscapes that are nationally designated (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England and Wales and their equivalents in Scotland and Northern Ireland) will be accorded the highest value in the assessment. If the area affected by the proposal is on the margin of or adjacent to such a designated area, thought may be given to the extent to which it demonstrates the characteristics and qualities that led to the designation of the area. Boundaries are very important in defining the extent of designated areas, but they often follow convenient physical features and as a result there may be land outside the boundary that meets the designation criteria and land inside that does not. Similar principles apply to locally designated landscapes but here the difficulty may be that the characteristics or qualities that provided the basis for their designation are not always clearly set down.

### Magnitude of landscape effects

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

#### *Size or scale*

- 5.49 Judgements are needed about the size or scale of change in the landscape that is likely to be experienced as a result of each effect. This should be described, and also categorised on a verbal scale that distinguishes the amount of change but is not overly complex. For example, the effect of both loss and addition of new features may be judged as major, moderate, minor or none, or other equivalent words. The judgements should, for example, take account of:
- the extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape – in some cases this may be quantified;
  - the degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by addition of new ones – for example, removal of hedges may change a small-scale, intimate landscape into a large-scale, open one, or introduction of new buildings or tall structures may alter open skylines;



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

### *Geographical extent*

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

5.50

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

### *Duration and reversibility of the landscape effects*

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

5.51

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

5.52

## **Judging the overall significance of landscape effects**

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

5.53

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

5.54



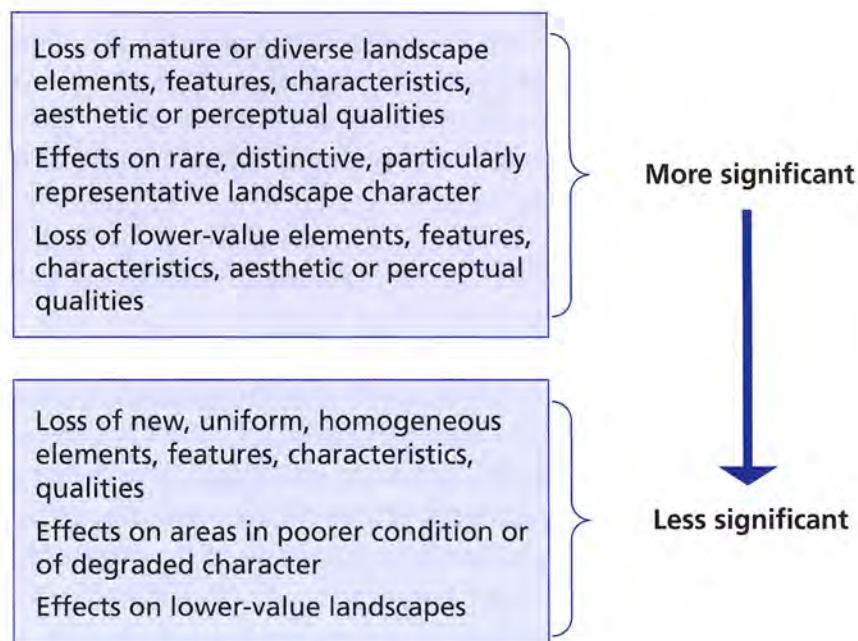
explain how the conclusions have been derived. There may also be a need to adopt a consistent approach across all the EIA topic areas and the EIA co-ordinator will need to be involved in the decisions on suitable approaches.

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

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

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

- major loss or irreversible negative effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes are likely to be of the greatest significance;
- reversible negative effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key



**Figure 5.10** Scale of significance

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

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

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

5.57

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

### Summary advice on good practice

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





**Figure 6.6** View over the South Wales valley town of Rhymney, showing the contrast of urban lighting in the valley and the darkness of the enclosing ridges

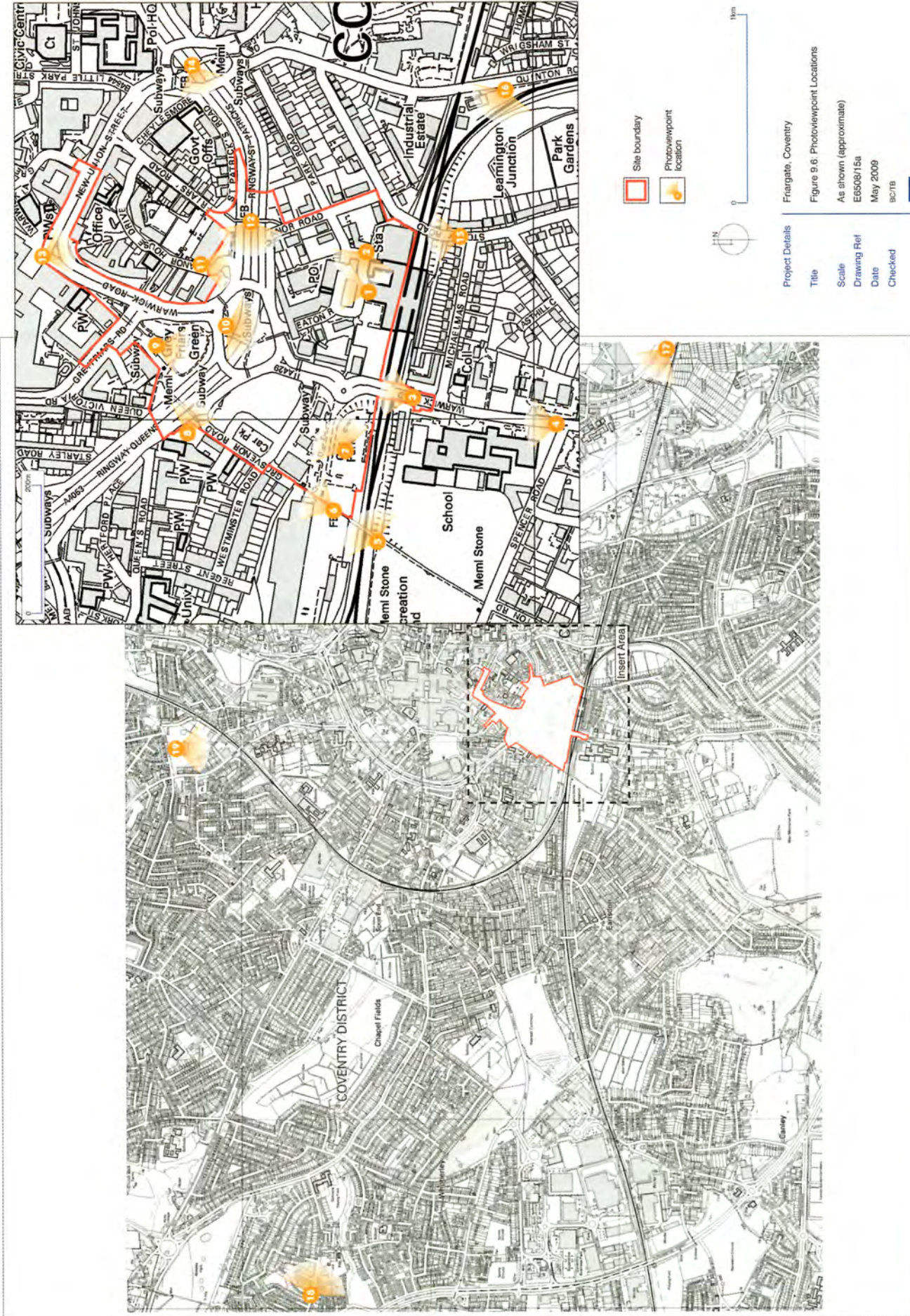
### Receptors of visual effects

- 6.13 The ZTV identifies land that, theoretically, is visually connected with the proposal and this is refined by site survey to confirm the extent of visibility. But in parts of this area there will be relatively few people to experience the effects of the proposal on views. The baseline studies must therefore identify the people within the area who will be affected by the changes in views and visual amenity – usually referred to as ‘visual receptors’. They may include people living in the area, people who work there, people passing through on road, rail or other forms of transport, people visiting promoted landscapes or attractions, and people engaged in recreation of different types.
- 6.14 People generally have differing responses to changes in views and visual amenity depending on the context (location, time of day, season, degree of exposure to views) and purpose for being in a particular place (for example recreation, residence or employment, or passing through on roads or by other modes of transport). During passage through the landscape, certain activities or locations may be specifically associated with the experience and enjoyment of the landscape, such as the use of paths, tourist or scenic routes and associated viewpoints.
- 6.15 The types of viewers who will be affected and the places where they will be affected should be identified. Where possible an estimate should also be made of the numbers of the different types of people who might be affected in each case. Where no firm data are available this may simply need to be a relative judgement, for example noting comparatively few people in one place compared with many in another.









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Project Details  
 Title: Friargate, Coventry  
 Scale: As shown (approximate)  
 Drawing Ref: E65508/15a  
 Date: May 2009  
 Checked: BC/TB

Figure 9.6: Photoviewpoint Locations

Waterman  
 Energy, Environment & Design

**Figure 6.8** Plan showing a range of viewpoints around a proposed urban development to be used for photographs of existing views



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

## Predicting and describing visual effects

- 6.26 Preparation of the visual baseline is followed by the systematic identification of likely effects on the potential visual receptors. Considering the different sources of visual effects alongside the principal visual receptors that might be affected, perhaps by means of a table, will assist in the initial identification of likely significant effects for further study. Changes in views and visual amenity may arise from built or engineered forms and/or from soft landscape elements of the development. Increasingly, attention is being paid to the visual effects of offshore developments on what may be perceived to be valued coastal views.
- 6.27 In order to assist in description and comparison of the effects on views it can be helpful to consider a range of issues, which might include, but are not restricted to:
- the nature of the view of the development, for example a full or partial view or only a glimpse;
  - the proportion of the development or particular features that would be visible (such as full, most, small part, none);
  - the distance of the viewpoint from the development and whether the viewer would focus on the development due to its scale and proximity or whether the development would be only a small, minor element in a panoramic view;
  - whether the view is stationary or transient or one of a sequence of views, as from a footpath or moving vehicle;
  - the nature of the changes, which must be judged individually for each project, but may include, for example, changes in the existing skyline profile, creation of a new visual focus in the view, introduction of new man-made objects, changes in visual simplicity or complexity, alteration of visual scale, and change to the degree of visual enclosure.
- 6.28 Consideration should be given to the seasonal differences in effects arising from the varying degree of screening and/or filtering of views by vegetation that will apply in summer and winter. Assessments may need to be provided for both the winter season, with least leaf cover and therefore minimum screening, and for fuller screening in summer conditions. Discussion with the competent authority will help to determine whether the emphasis should be on the maximum visibility scenario of the winter condition of vegetation, or whether both summer and winter conditions should be used. The timing of the assessment work and the project programme will also influence the practicality of covering more than one season.



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

6.29

Methods of communicating visual effects are covered in Chapter 8.

## Assessing the significance of visual effects

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

6.30

### Sensitivity of visual receptors

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

6.31

### *Susceptibility of visual receptors to change*

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

6.32

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

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

6.33

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### *Value attached to views*

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

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



## Magnitude of the visual effects

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

### *Size or scale*

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

- the scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;
- the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture;
- the nature of the view of the proposed development, in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses.

### *Geographical extent*

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

- the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
- the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development;
- the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.

### *Duration and reversibility of visual effects*

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

## Judging the overall significance of visual effects

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

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

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



to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place.

**Land cover** The surface cover of the land, usually expressed in terms of vegetation cover or lack of it. Related to but not the same as land use.

**Land use** What land is used for, based on broad categories of functional land cover, such as urban and industrial use and the different types of agriculture and forestry.

**Landform** The shape and form of the land surface which has resulted from combinations of geology, geomorphology, slope, elevation and physical processes.

**Landscape** An area, as perceived by people, the character of which is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

**Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)** A tool used to identify and assess the likely significance of the effects of change resulting from development both on the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity.

**Landscape character** A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

**Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)** These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type.

**Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)** The process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape, and using this information to assist in managing change in the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive. The process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment.

**Landscape Character Types (LCTs)** 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 classification** A process of sorting the landscape into different types using selected criteria but without attaching relative values to different sorts of landscape.

**Landscape effects** Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right.

**Landscape quality (condition)** A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.

**Landscape receptors** Defined aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.

**Landscape strategy** The overall vision and objectives for what the landscape should be like in the future, and what is thought to be desirable for a particular landscape type or area as a whole, usually expressed in formally adopted plans and programmes or related documents.

**Landscape value** The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons.

# Appendix 2: Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)



Land to the South of Warren Lane, North of Weston Road, Long Ashton  
Volume 2 - Landscape Evidence (Appendices & Plans) of Mr. Jonathan Berry

1478\_R08a\_3rd May 2023\_JB\_CW



# Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment



Land South of Warren Lane, Long Ashton  
2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021



Tyler  
Grange

TG Report No. 1478\_R06d\_LS\_CW



Report No:	Date	Revision	Author	Checked
1478_R06d	2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2021	D	Louis Spencer BA (Hons) MLA LMLI TechArborA	Colin Pill CMLI, BA (Hons), Dip (Hons) LA

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Appendix 2:	Pre-application Illustrative Site Layout (13097_SK_021 Revision A)
Appendix 3:	Email from NSC confirming viewpoints and scope
Appendix 4:	Tyler Grange LVIA Assessment Criteria
Appendix 5:	Proposed Landscape Strategy Plan (1478/P18b)
Appendix 6:	Illustrative Site Plan (21077-NP-XX-XX-DR-A-1003-1)

## Plans & Photoviewpoints

Plan 1: Landscape Planning Context  
1478/P20a August 2021 JS/CP

Plan 2: Published Landscape Character  
1478/P21a August 2021 JS/CP

Plan 3: Local Landscape Character  
1478/P24a August 2021 JS/CP

Plan 4: Topography  
1478/P13a August 2021 JS/CP

Plan 5: Zone of Theoretical Visibility  
1478/P14a August 2021 JS/CP

Plan 6: Photoviewpoint Locations and Extent of Views  
1478/P22a August 2021 JS/CP

Photosheets 1-12  
1478/P23a August 2021 JS/CP





## Section 1: Introduction and Scope

- 1.1. Tyler Grange (TG) Group Limited has been appointed by the Long Ashton Land Company to undertake an assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects associated with residential development comprising of 35 dwellings on land adjacent to the western settlement boundary of Long Ashton (hereby referred to as the 'site'). This is an outline planning application.
- 1.2. The assessment contained within this report has been prepared by a Chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and has been reviewed by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI). It was prepared between August 2019 and March 2020. It was revised to facilitate an updated layout in August 2021

### Pre-Application Consultation

- 1.3. Pre-application consultation with North Somerset Council (NSC) has taken place (**Appendix 1**). This concluded that planning permission would likely be refused for the draft Illustrative Site Layout submitted (**Appendix 2**). The landscape and visual matters highlighted in the response are summarised as follows:
  - Consideration to be given to local Landscape Character Assessments. Including the North Somerset Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (March 2018) and Landscape Character Assessment (September 2018);
  - The interaction between the site and the existing settlement edge. The response states that *'the proposal is detached in nature from the village to the east'*. It also highlights there being no proposed connections between the site and Warren Lane;
  - Consideration will need to be given to perimeter landscape proposals and the provision of green spaces within the site; and
  - The sites location within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) will need to be considered. It is important to note that all heritage matters will be considered by heritage consultants at Cotswold Archaeology within their technical reporting that accompanies this application. Matters relating to views will be assessed within this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).

### LVIA Scoping

- 1.4. Prior to undertaking any assessment work, Tyler Grange scoped the proposed photoviewpoints locations and scope of the assessment with North Somerset Council (NSC) in August 2019. The proposed photoviewpoint locations were overlaid on a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). The locations have been chosen following a review of the ZTV which was produced on a bare earth assumption with GIS Terrain 5 data. All the viewpoints are on publicly accessible land except for the site-specific ones that occupy the clients land holding.
- 1.5. The proposed study area is restricted to a 2km area shown on the Proposed Photoviewpoint Locations overlaid on a ZTV (Drawing No. 1478/P15). Tyler Grange deem the extent of the study area to be appropriate given the scale of the proposal and the loss of detail in any view over a greater distance. The photoviewpoint locations have been chosen to be representative of a range of visual receptors including local residents, users of public rights of way, workers and road users. Distant





viewpoints have also been included so the wider landscape characteristics can be recorded within the assessment. The local viewpoints allow for views from a range of orientations and parts of the study area to be considered, this is to ensure a balanced and considered assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects arising from development on the site. Exact locations of the photoviewpoints will be verified in the field.

- 1.6. A written response was received from NSC at the beginning of September confirming that the Council were happy with the proposed photoviewpoints and the 2km study area. A copy of the LVIA Scoping and written response is provided at **Appendix 3**.

### **Undertaking the Landscape & Visual Assessment**

- 1.7. To assist the reader in understanding the purpose for undertaking landscape assessment work, the definition of 'landscape' as defined by the European Landscape Convention (ELC, 2000) is set out below.

*"Landscape" means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.*

- 1.8. This definition applies to all urban, peri-urban landscapes, towns, villages and rural areas. It applies to ordinary or degraded landscape as well as those that are outstanding or protected.

- 1.9. In the context of this definition the assessment process seeks to consider the effects in an objective and systematic manner whilst recognising the perceptual and therefore subjective response to the landscape. Whilst subjectivity can never be removed from the assessment process, by following a systematic and structured framework of assessment, a more robust assessment can be performed, and more rational and transparent conclusions drawn.

- 1.10. Furthermore, the LVIA process deals with the separate but interlinked issues of:

- **Landscape Character:** The effects of the proposed development upon discrete character areas and/or character types comprising features possessing a particular quality or merit; and
- **Visual Context:** The effects of the proposed development on views from visual receptors, and upon the amenity value of the views.

- 1.11. Landscape character is defined in the Landscape Institute's guidance ('Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) 2013) as:

*"A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse".*

- 1.12. Changes to the landscape character can arise as a result of:

- Changes to the fabric of the landscape including either the loss of key elements or introduction of new features which alter the distinct character of the landscape; and
- Changes which alter the way in which the landscape is perceived or appreciated.



- 1.13. Changes to views will occur where there is:
- Alteration of the view in terms of elements present and the overall composition;
  - A change to the skyline; and/or
  - There is a change to the distribution or dominance of features.
- 1.14. Such changes may or may not have a significant effect on the visual amenity of identified visual receptors.

### **Methodology**

- 1.15. The methodology and guidelines used in the preparation of this assessment have been developed from the following:
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England, 2014; and
  - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), Third Edition, LI and IEMA, 2013.
- 1.16. The assessment process is set out in further detail below but involves the following steps:
- Baseline Appraisal
  - Classification of Resources
  - Assessment of Effects

### **Baseline Appraisal**

- 1.17. The baseline appraisal process is a crucial part of any assessment and includes:
- An overview of statutory plans and other data regarding relevant designations and landscape and visual related planning policies for the area;
  - An assessment of the landscape character of the site and surroundings with reference to published works and checked and verified through fieldwork. This includes the classification of the landscape into units of distinct and recognisable character and land use at a site-specific level;
  - Field work to determine the extent to which the site can be seen from the wider area, taking into account any significant vegetation or built form which restricts or limits the extent of visibility; and
  - Identification of representative viewpoints and determination of likely visual receptors.

## Classification of Resources

- 1.18. **Appendix 4** contains the threshold and definitions of the terms used in this process.
- 1.19. This stage seeks to classify the landscape resources in terms of their individual or collective sensitivity to change. This is dependent on:
- The susceptibility of the landscape;
  - The type of change proposed; and
  - The value placed on the landscape.
- 1.20. As a general rule those landscape resources which make a notable contribution to the character and cannot be replaced or substituted will be of high sensitivity, those resources which are replaceable or contribute little to the overall character of the landscape will be of low sensitivity.
- 1.21. The classification of the representative viewpoints in terms of their sensitivity to change and the sensitivity of the visual receptors will be dependent on:
- The location and context of the viewpoint;
  - The expectations and occupation or activity of the receptors; and
  - The importance of the view.
- 1.22. Those receptors that are classified as being of high sensitivity to change may include users of public rights of way or nearby residents, those of low sensitivity to change may include people in their place of work or travelling through the landscape in cars, trains or other modes of transport.
- 1.23. In order to assist in understanding the application of sensitivity to landscape and visual receptors, the tables at **Appendix 4** set out a number of Assessment Criteria. These allow for the separate consideration of both value and susceptibility factors in order to establish a balanced assessment.

## Assessment of Effects

- 1.24. The assessment of effects is undertaken in the knowledge of the scheme proposals and the existing baseline situation.
- 1.25. The importance of any landscape and visual effect is a function of the sensitivity of the affected landscape resources and visual receptors (see above) against the magnitude of change that they would experience.
- 1.26. The magnitude of effect lies along a continuum from high, where there is a prominent and notable change to the landscape character or view, to low where the change is barely perceptible.
- 1.27. The consideration of further mitigation with the aim where possible, of avoiding, reducing or offsetting important adverse landscape or visual effects is determined during the course of the assessment where this can be addressed through a suitably worded condition.



- 1.28. The evaluation of landscape and visual effects following mitigation, are known as residual impacts.
- 1.29. The assessment of the nature of the landscape and visual effects depends on the degree to which the development:
- Complements, respects and fits into the existing scale, landform and pattern of the landscape context;
  - Enables enhancement, restoration or retention of the landscape character and visual amenity and delivers policy aspirations; and
  - Affects strategic and important views in addition to the visual context of receptors.
- 1.30. For the purposes of this report, the term 'impact' refers to the causation of change and 'effects' are the results of the changes on the landscape and visual context.

*Level of Effect Criteria*

- 1.31. Best practice guidelines stipulate that the level of any landscape related impact should be evaluated, both during the construction works and following completion of the development. As such, the assessment of potential and residual effects is based upon the thresholds as contained at **Appendix 4**.
- 1.32. It is also important to note that the latest GLVIA (3rd Edition) places greater emphasis on professional judgement and the supporting narrative and less emphasis on a formulaic, mechanistic approach; a transparent assessment process should be evident.

## Section 2: Baseline Appraisal

### Landscape Policy Context

- 2.1. This subsection should be read in conjunction with **Plan 1: Landscape Planning Context**.

*National Planning Policy Framework 2021*

- 2.2. The National Planning Policy Framework<sup>2F</sup> (NPPF) was published on 24th July 2018 and updated on the February 2019 and July 2021. It outlines the Government's planning policies for England, setting out how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions and any development would need to accord with the following planning provisions.
- 2.3. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph 11). For decision-taking, a development that accords with a current development plan should be approved without delay; and, where the development plan is absent, silent, or relevant policies are out of date, permission should be granted unless:
- "i. The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*  
*ii. Any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."*
- 2.4. Footnote 7 provides examples of the protected areas or assets of particular importance that the NPPF policies refer to, these include land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 2.5. Paragraph 20 refers to strategic policies that should set out a strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development and make sufficient provision for housing, infrastructure for transport, community facilities and conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes, and green infrastructure and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 2.6. The importance of promoting healthy and safe communities is also considered within the Revised NPPF. In support of this, it states that access to *"a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities"*. To facilitate this Paragraph 98 considers the importance of public rights of way, stating that *"planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails."*
- 2.7. Paragraph 119 states that policies and decisions should *"promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions"*.
- 2.8. In addition to this, Paragraph 120(a) states that planning policies and decisions should *"encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed-use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside."*



- 2.9. Chapter 12: Achieving Well-Designed Places sets out the criteria needed within a Local Plan to enable good design, which is a “key aspect of sustainable development” that *“creates better places in which to live and work and helps make the development acceptable to communities”*. Paragraph 130(a-f) states that planning policies and decisions *“should ensure that developments...are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation...”*
- 2.10. Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment specifies how planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.
- 2.11. Paragraph 176 states that *“great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty”* in landscapes with the highest status of protection, National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

#### *Planning Practice Guidance*

- 2.12. Whilst National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is to be updated, it does not preclude development. It considers that the creation of new residential neighbourhoods can, through sensitive design, be deemed acceptable even where it results in a loss of open countryside. Those categories within the NPPG that are of relevance to landscape and visual matters in relation to this site are set out below.

#### **Design: Process and Tools (October 2019)**

- 2.13. The NPPG states that well-designed places can be achieved by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process. The guidance sets out processes and tools that can be used through the planning system. The guidance is to be read alongside the National Design Guide with landscape forming an integral part of the design process.
- 2.14. Hard and soft landscape are identified as key components of good design. In considering context, it is necessary for development to understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context which includes landscape character and can include public open spaces.

#### **Natural Environment**

- 2.15. This section of the NPPG was most recently updated in July 2019, particularly in relation to Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity Net Gain and how the built environment can be enhanced by landscape features as well as Green Infrastructure.
- 2.16. Paragraph 036 of the NPPG relates to how planning policies can conserve and enhance landscapes and states as follows

*“The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside. Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such*



*as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully."*

#### *Local Planning Context*

#### **North Somerset Core Strategy (updated January 2017)**

- 2.17. The North Somerset Core Strategy Key Diagram shows that the site is located at Long Ashton, a defined Service Village within North Somerset's Green Belt.
- 2.18. Policies relevant to landscape and visual issues are summarised below.

#### *Policy CS5 - Landscape and the Historic Environment:*

- 2.19. This policy states the following relevant to landscape; *'the character, distinctiveness, diversity and quality of North Somerset's landscape and townscape will be protected and enhanced by the careful, sensitive management and design of development. Close regard will be paid to the character of National Character Areas in North Somerset and particularly that of the 11 landscape types and 31 landscape character areas identified in the North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment.'*
- 2.20. This policy also states the following in respect of the historic environment *'the council will conserve the historic environment of North Somerset, having regard to the significance of heritage assets such as conservation areas, listed buildings, buildings of local significance, scheduled monuments, other archaeological sites, registered and other historic parks and gardens.'*

#### *Policy CS6 - North Somerset's Green Belt:*

This policy states that *'within North Somerset the boundaries of the Bristol-Bath Green Belt will remain unchanged during the plan period'*.

#### *Policy CS9 - Green Infrastructure:*

- 2.21. This policy states the following (as relevant); *'the existing network of green infrastructure will be safeguarded, improved and enhanced by further provision, linking in to existing provision where appropriate, ensuring it is a multi-functional, accessible network which promotes healthy lifestyles, maintains and improves biodiversity and landscape character and contributes to climate change objectives. Priority will be given to:*
- *The protection and planting of trees in woodlands and urban areas, particularly native trees, for public amenity and climate change mitigation and benefits to biodiversity, health and recreation;*
  - *The protection and enhancement of biodiversity;*
  - *The continued development of a network of green spaces, water bodies, paths and cycleways and bridleways in and around the urban areas, recognising the value of sustainable drainage systems for green infrastructure; and*
  - *The management, maintenance, upgrading and extension of the public rights of way network including improved connectivity to areas of green infrastructure within and outside North Somerset.*



*Policy CS12 – Achieving High Quality Design and Place-Making:*

- 2.22. This policy states that *‘North Somerset Council is committed to achieving high quality buildings and places across all of North Somerset. High quality architecture and urban design will be sought from development demonstrating a robust design process to generate solutions that have clearly considered the existing context, and contribute to social, economic and environmental sustainability. As part of a comprehensive place-making strategy new development should function well, supporting sustainable land uses and seek to improve the image of the area. Poor design standards in individual buildings and larger schemes are not acceptable. Proposals of all scales will be required to demonstrate sensitivity to the existing local character already established in an area and should take the opportunity to enhance the sense of place and local identity through a well thought out design. Where the existing design characteristics are not considered of a high quality, new development should actively aim to enhance the area through good design. Schemes must be based on a thorough site appraisal’.*

*Policy CS32 – Service Villages*

- 2.23. The policy clarifies that new development within or adjoining the settlement boundaries of Service Villages, including Long Ashton, which enhances the overall sustainability of the settlement will be supported where it addresses a series of criteria including:

- *It results in a form, design and scale of development which is high quality, respects and enhances the local character, contributes to place making and the reinforcement of local distinctiveness, and can be readily assimilated into the village, and*
- *It results in high quality sustainable schemes which is appropriate to its context and makes a positive contribution to the local environment and landscape setting;*

- 2.24. The policy also states that sites outside the settlement boundaries in excess of about 25 dwellings must be brought forward as allocations through Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans.

**North Somerset Development Management Policies Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 (adopted July 2016)**

*Policy DM9 – Trees and Woodlands:*

- 2.25. This policy states the following (as relevant) *‘development proposals affecting trees should:*
- *Demonstrate that the retention, protection and enhancement of tree canopy cover has been considered throughout the design and development process;*
  - *Achieve high quality design by demonstrating that the long-term retention of appropriate trees is realistic, and that the trees are viewed as an asset by new occupants rather than as an issue of conflict. The future growth of the tree canopy and roots should be fully accounted for when designing:*
    - *The location, spacing and orientation of buildings, gardens and green spaces;*
    - *The location of underground services;*
    - *The relative positions of trees and windows for light;*
    - *Specific issues relating to tree species e.g. Aphid honey dew, fruit drop, density of canopy, leaves and needles; and*
    - *Future management requirements and accessibility*





- *Provide high quality physical protection of retained trees, which includes working methods that will be clearly communicated and understood by all site staff;*
- *Include, where practical, the introduction of appropriate new tree planting and woodland creation as an integral part of the design and landscaping of new developments, using native species of local origin wherever possible; and*
- *Ensure the engineering requirements to accommodate tree planting and future tree growth in relation to building foundation design are complied with'*

*Policy DM10 – Landscape:*

2.26. This policy states the following (as relevant); *'all development proposals should:*

- *Be carefully integrated into the natural, built and historic environment, aiming to establish a strong sense of place, respond to local character, and reflect the identity of local surroundings, whilst minimising landscape impact;*
- *Respect the tranquillity of an area;*
- *Include appropriate landscaping and boundary treatments in the scheme;*
- *Conserve and enhance natural or semi-natural vegetation characteristic of the area;*
- *Respect the character of the historic landscape including features such as field patterns, watercourses, drainage ditches, stone walls and hedgerows; and*
- *Where outdoor lighting is proposed adopt a lighting scheme which minimises obtrusive light and where dark skies are an important feature of the area.*

2.27. *Where some harm to the local landscape character is unavoidable, but a development is otherwise deemed beneficial, then positive mitigation measures should be secured by a landscape condition or planning agreement (section 106), involving works on or off-site as necessary.'*

*DM12 – Development within the Green Belt:*

2.28. This policy states that *'the extent of the North Somerset Green Belt is shown on the Policies Map. Inappropriate development is, by definition harmful to the green belt and will not be approved except in very special circumstances'*.

*DM19 – Green Infrastructure:*

2.29. This policy states as follows *'large-scale proposals in locations where there is a lack of green infrastructure or opportunities to create or improve green networks, will be required to contribute to the quality of the environment, through the creation of high quality well designed and accessible green infrastructure. Proposals will, where appropriate, ensure that green infrastructure is:*

- *Multi-functional;*
- *Part of a connected green infrastructure network;*
- *Able to maximise the opportunity to respond to climate change;*
- *Designed to enable the community to actively use green infrastructure for sports and play, and as an outdoor education resource, as well as passive recreation;*
- *Able to promote community cohesion; and*
- *Designed to promote and enhance local diversity and distinctiveness.*

2.30. *Green infrastructure should be provided in line with the phasing and scale of development. Where it is not possible, practical or desirable for green infrastructure provision to be made on site then*



*financial contributions will be sought. Contributions will vary depending on the existing provisions in the locality and whether the requirement is for new provision or for upgrades to existing provision. Provision for maintenance will also be required, likely to involve commuted sums if the green infrastructure is to be adopted by North Somerset Council proposals should seek to incorporate important sites and linkages in the layout and design of the development.'*

*DM32 – High Quality Design and Place-Making:*

2.31. This policy states the following (as relevant); *'the design of new development should contribute to the creation of high quality, distinctive, functional and sustainable places where opportunities for physical activity and recreation are maximised. The design and planning of development proposals should demonstrate sensitivity to the local character, and the setting, and enhance the area taking into consideration the existing context. Design solutions should seek to enhance local distinctiveness and contribute to the creation of a sense of place and identity. Proposals which cause unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the area will not be permitted. In determining whether the design is acceptable account will be taken of whether:*

- The siting, soft and hard landscaping, levels, Density, form, scale, height, massing, detailing, colour, and materials are appropriate and respect the characteristics of the site and surroundings and are appropriate to its use and position within the landscape and/or town-scape; and*
- Where relevant, recommendations of a Design Review Panel have been taken into consideration.*

2.32. The following will also apply as appropriate:

- Proposals for lighting schemes should not be obtrusive. They should not have a demonstrably harmful impact on the living conditions of neighbours, significantly increase sky glow, cause glare or light trespass or impact on biodiversity.*

*Where relevant development proposals should have regard to the design and other related features set out in Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance.'*

### **Long Ashton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2013-2033 (May 2015)**

2.33. The site lies within the area covered by the plan.

2.34. The vision for Long Ashton states as follows *'Long Ashton develops as a sustainable community retaining its semi-rural, separate, village character while promoting local business, community facilities and sustainable energy. The parish, including Leigh Woods, will continue to contribute to the leisure and recreation of local people and the wider area of Bristol and North Somerset.'*

*Policy LC6 – Allotments*

2.35. Any new development of 10 or more dwellings shall provide space for allotments to serve the development on the same site or on easily accessible land within the parish. The allotments area shall be 250m<sup>2</sup> for each 10 dwellings.





### *Policy ENV2 – Protection of Trees and Woodland*

- 2.36. This policy states that *‘development that damages or results in the loss of ancient trees or trees of good arboricultural and amenity value will not normally be permitted. Development proposals must be designed to retain trees and ancient trees or trees of good arboricultural and amenity value. Development proposals for sites including mature trees (i.e. 600mm girth or greater) should be accompanied by a tree survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees and a long-term maintenance plan.’*

### *Policy ENV3 – Maintain and Enhance Public Rights of Way (PRoW)*

- 2.37. This policy states that *‘the current footpath and bridle way network is to be retained and maintained. Where practicable, and without loss of character, enhanced to provide access for all. Opportunities to enhance the network will be investigated in any relevant development. Any development proposals will be required to retain existing rights of way and where appropriate to the scale and location of the development, improvements will be required to enhance the PRoW network.’*

### *Policy ENV5: Areas of Value to Nature or Landscape*

- 2.38. Whilst this policy is focussed on development conserving and enhancing the wildlife, biodiversity and historic assets of the village, Map 7 shows that Ashton Hill Plantation (including Cooks Wood, Shipley Brake George’s Hill Plantation) and Fenn’s Wood to the north of the site along the top of the valley are identified areas of local ecological or landscape value.
- 2.39. The justification of this policy is complementary to Policy ENV2 which identifies that wooded ridge is a defining feature of the village and should be retained. Trees form an important and valued feature in the village and should be retained. The justification of Policy ENV5 aims to ensure that the landscape character is maintained. The woods lie on a ridge to the north and west of the settlement and provide a visual backdrop to the village.

### *Policy LHN2 – Sympathetic Village Design*

2.40. This policy states *‘all new development in the parish will be expected to comply with principles set out in the Village Design Statement’*. New buildings should be in a compatible style to the immediate surrounding area and reflect the varied nature of properties in Long Ashton.

### **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)**

#### *Landscape Character Assessment (September 2018)*

- 2.41. This SPD replaced the preceding Landscape Character Assessment that was adopted in 2005.
- 2.42. The document is considered in more detail in the Landscape Character section, when assessing the landscape character of the site and its context.

#### *Biodiversity and Trees (December 2005)*

- 2.43. This SPD supplements local policies and proposals relating to biodiversity. replaced the preceding Landscape Character Assessment that was adopted in 2005.



- 2.44. Of relevance to this report are the aspirations for the protection and retention of existing vegetation and trees within sites. This is for biodiversity, landscape and visual gain.

#### *Emerging Local Planning Context*

- 2.45. It is understood that the Council withdraw from the sub regional West of England Joint Spatial Plan (WoE JSP) on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and now intend to prepare a new Local Plan to cover the period 2023 – 2038. The Council are in the early stages of preparation with a current consultation period on the pre-commencement document which is an initiation document setting out the proposed scope and programme for the new Local Plan.
- 2.46. Based on the current timescales, an Issues and Options consultation document is proposed for May – June 2020, a draft plan in January 2021 followed by a pre-submission plan in September 2021 and intended submission to the Secretary of State in December 2021. It is unlikely that adoption of the new Local Plan will be until January 2023.

#### **Designations**

- 2.47. No landscape related designations exist within the site or within the local study area.

#### *Green Belt*

- 2.48. The site is located within the Green Belt. The designation of an area as Green Belt is not based on any landscape quality or value criteria and is used as a spatial planning tool. The appropriateness of the sites removal from the Green Belt will be considered within the planning statement and is not considered any further within this LVIA.

#### *Scheduled Ancient Monument*

- 2.49. The site is identified as a SAM due to its location near Roman archaeological interests. The site is a recent addition to the SAM and it not included within the SAM map shown within the Long Ashton Neighbourhood Plan, May 2015 version.
- 2.50. The accompanying heritage report by Cotswold Archaeology will assess the impact on this heritage designation.

#### *Public Rights of Way*

- 2.51. As shown on Plan 1, there are no PRow within the site. The nearest is to the north of the site and is referenced as LA12/29/10.

#### *Interim Conclusion: Planning Policy*

- 2.52. The site is located in a protected area, in this case Green Belt and a Scheduled Ancient Monument, as defined in national policy and reflected in the local policy. The site is not located in a designated landscape of international, national or of local importance. It is adjacent to the western settlement edge of Long Ashton, a defined Service Village, where new development will be supported where it enhances the overall sustainability of the settlements as outlined by Policy CS32.



- 2.53. It is clear, that the proposal will need to have regard to the existing landscape character and respect the historic environment as required by both national policy and guidance and local development plan policies CS5 and DM10. Policies CS9 and DM19 seek to safeguard, improve and enhance Green Infrastructure as part of the proposal. This also includes protection and planting of trees in urban areas and in areas of public amenity which is reflected in Policy DM9 and Policy ENV2 which look to retain, protect and enhance tree canopy cover where possible but also encourages the introduction of appropriate tree planting as part of the design and landscaping of new proposals.
- 2.54. High quality design is a key theme which runs through national and local planning policy. The design and planning of development proposals should take account of local character, and the setting, and enhance the area within this context. Details of soft and hard landscaping together with their surroundings and whether they are appropriate will be considered as part of the design process as outlined in policies CS12, DM32 and be sympathetic to village design as required by neighbourhood plan policy LHN2.
- 2.55. In addition, where practicable neighbourhood plan policy ENV3 seeks to enhance the PRoW network and neighbourhood plan policy LC6 requires new developments for 10 or more dwellings to include space of allotments.

### **Landscape Character**

- 2.56. The characterisation process is a non-value judgement process; therefore, classifying landscapes into distinct areas does not suggest that one character is more sensitive than another or valued by people more or less.
- 2.57. The landscape character appraisal process reviews the wider landscape character type at a national level and then explores more detail character features at a district/local level, before analysing site-specific land use that informs local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- 2.58. This subsection should be read in conjunction with **Plan 2: Published Landscape Character** and **Plan 3: Local Landscape Character**.
- 2.59. This LVIA considers the local, site specific character, features and context as identified by TG through fieldwork, and informed by a review of published assessments and designations to inform an understanding of the value and susceptibility of the landscape to accommodate change associated with residential development when identifying the sensitivity of the site and associated features to the proposals. This sets out the context at a scale appropriate to the proposals.

### *National Character*

- 2.60. For the purpose of assessing the effects of development, National Character Areas (NCAs) are relevant; however, they are very broad and set out the key characteristics of large geographical areas. Whilst NCAs do not provide an appreciation of the site-specific issues which need to be taken into account in the determination process, a number of the identified characteristics are discernible in relation to the wider landscape surrounding the site, however they lack detail at a local level.
- 2.61. The site lies within **NCA 118: Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges** published by Natural England. A full list of the key characteristics is set out below, those of relevance to the site and study area are highlighted:



- **Low-lying, shallow vales that contrast sharply with high, open downland ridges as the varied landform reflects the complex underlying geology, comprised of Carboniferous limestones with sandstones, silts and conglomerates, together with muds, clays and alluvium. Coal Measures are also present;**
- *The River Avon cuts a steep-sided valley through the area from the east, forming the 2.5km long, c.100m high gorge at Bristol. It is joined by the Frome at the centre of Bristol and Chew near Keynsham. Other streams and rivers in the south-east flow eastwards to join the Avon outside the NCA, and the Yeo on the south-western edge flows directly to the sea;*
- *Water supply for Bristol and the surrounding area provided by Chew Valley Lake, Blagdon Lake, and the smaller Chew Magna Reservoir and the reservoirs at Barrow Gurney. These reservoirs also impound river flow, while releasing a set minimum flow downstream at all times;*
- *A wide range of soil types, from brown earths on Limestone outcrops to poorly draining gleys on clays, which reflects the underlying influence of the complex geology;*
- *The most extensive areas of woodland lie between Congresbury and the Avon Gorge and on the Failand Ridge. These are internationally significant, containing rare endemic white-beam species. **Elsewhere, woodlands are smaller and fragmented and mainly confined to steeper land; the majority are broadleaf;***
- **Agriculture is predominantly livestock rearing, with arable in the flatter land to the north-east, with larger field sizes and infrequent hedgerow trees. Valleys and steeper slopes in the south-east tend to have irregular fields and overgrown, species-rich hedges;**
- *A diverse landscape important for greater and lesser horseshoe bats. Grasslands of high conservation interest remain on the wetter valley bottoms and dry downland slopes. Chew Valley Lake Special Protection Area (SPA) and Blagdon Lake SSSI support large numbers of wildfowl, plants and invertebrates, and are surrounded by species-rich lowland meadow;*
- *A long, historic timeline, with important fossil features visible in geological exposures, Neolithic long barrows and stone circles, iron-age hill forts and historic associations with Bristol's port and parkland and creating important landscape features;*
- **Settlements dating from the medieval period, clustered around springheads of the Cotswold scarp or along the springline of the Mendips. In the vales they are scattered, linked by a complex network of lanes, with linear mining villages superimposed. Settlement becomes especially dense in the south-east, with many villages enlarged as commuter settlements;**
- *Older village buildings, gentry houses and mansions of local ashlar, which includes pale yellow Jurassic oolitic limestones and grey Carboniferous and Lias limestones. Red or brown sandstone is used in the north, and Pennant Sandstone at Nailsea 'Flats' in the south-west;*
- *Bristol and its commercial, industrial and residential areas; major roads (M4 and M5 motorways); the airfields (Filton and Bristol); and reservoirs, which occupy a substantial area around Bristol. There is considerable commercial development around Cribbs Causeway, Aztec West and Abbey Wood; and*



- *The City of Bristol itself, which is a popular destination for overseas and domestic visitors and is one of the most affluent cities in the UK, providing employment for settlements in the NCA and beyond.*

### County Landscape Character

#### North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment (adopted September 2018)

- 2.64. At district scale NSC has prepared the 'North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment' (NSLCA) Adopted September 2018. The landscape associated with the site lies within Landscape Character Types (LCT) E: Limestone Ridges and Combes and J: Rolling Valley Farmland. The key characteristics of these broad character types are set out below, those of relevance to the site are highlighted in **bold**.
- 2.65. LCT E: Limestone Ridges and Combes
- Elevated ridges of carboniferous limestone, with lower flanks of Mercia Mudstone;
  - **Steep escarpment slopes forming a distinctive and visible topographic feature rising above, and creating the backdrop to, the low-lying areas of the district;**
  - Outstanding collection of historic monuments, earthworks (hillforts) along the scarp top plus local legends associated with the gorges/cleaves;
  - **Wooded, with large-scale mixed and deciduous plantations plus extensive areas of ancient woodland;**
  - Spring line settlement concentrated along roads following the foot of the escarpment ridge;
  - Hidden, deep wooded coombes/gorges extend into the scarp providing important historic routeways, and now steep, winding rural lanes;
  - Intimate, enclosed wooded landscape counterbalanced by occasional dramatic and surprising views out;
  - Small limestone quarries and workings – some now used as tip sites;
  - Archaeological landscapes comprise earthwork remains of later prehistoric sites; and
  - The field pattern is a mosaic of medieval and post medieval enclosure.
- 2.66. LCT J: Rolling Valley Farmland:
- Underlying Mercia Mudstone geology;
  - **Small to medium scale peaceful landscape, with a feeling of partial enclosure from the surrounding ridges;**
  - **Rolling landform formed by numerous rivers and tributaries;**
  - Presence of a variety of water bodies including rivers, streams, ponds, drainage ditches and reservoirs;
  - **Pastoral landscape with views to wooded ridges;**
  - **Fields bounded by thick hedges with hedgerow trees;**
  - Occasional belts and clumps of ancient woodland and more recent plantations;
  - Complex network of winding rural roads and deep sunken lanes;
  - Nucleated villages on higher ground and numerous isolated traditional stone and render farmsteads; and
  - An area of essentially early medieval and medieval settlement and enclosure.
- 2.67. A series of 'Landscape Guidelines' are provided for LCT E and J, several of which are of relevance to the site and potential future development implications, the published guidelines are as follows:



2.68. LCT E:

- *Conserve the peaceful and secluded nature of the wooded landscape;*
- *Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows;*
- *Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness and minimise damage through wear and tear by careful design of routes and infrastructure;*
- *Maintain key local landscape features such as drystone walls;*
- *Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management;*
- *Encourage traditional methods of land management of pasture (sheep grazing) and woodland (coppice);*
- *There should be a presumption against arable in areas of archaeological sites and landscapes defined by earthworks; and*
- *To prevent poaching of earthworks light grazing management is recommended.*

2.69. LCT J:

- *Conserve the remote and rural nature of the pastoral landscape;*
- *Promote sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of ditches and hedgerows;*
- *Encourage traditional methods of land management;*
- *Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management;*
- *There should be a presumption against arable in areas of archaeological landscapes defined by earthworks; and*
- *To prevent poaching of earthworks light grazing management is recommended.*

2.70. At a more local scale the character assessment has subdivided the landscape types into smaller more detailed Landscape Character Areas (LCA). The site is identified within area E5: Tickenham Ridges and Combes and J5: Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley Farmland. The key characteristics of these areas are listed below, those of most relevance to the landscape and visual elements of the site are in bold:

2.71. LCA E5: Tickenham Ridges and Combes:

- *Elevated ridges of Carboniferous Limestone and Mercia Mudstone;*
- ***Steep slopes forming a distinctive backdrop to the Land Yeo and Kenn Valleys and moors to the south;***
- *Intricate enclosed wooded slopes with contrasting wide views out to the open lowlands;*
- *Extensive areas of ancient broad-leaved woodland;*
- *Historic parklands with woodlands and parkland trees including ancient oak pollards at Ashton Court;*
- ***Settlement concentrated along roads following the foot of the escarpment ridge with some suburban interfill and ribbon development;***
- *Hidden combes with steep, winding rural lanes;*
- *Historic monuments and earthworks along the scarp top; and*
- *Small limestone quarries and workings.*

2.72. The character of the E5 area is described as 'strong' and its condition is considered to be 'good' due to the 'well maintained estates, farmland and woodland. A few elements of the historic estates



show signs of neglect, e.g. management of the stone walls'. The Landscape Guidelines' provided for this character area are as follows:

- *Conserve the peaceful and secluded nature of the wooded landscape;*
- *Encourage public access but retain sense of remoteness and minimise damage through wear and track by careful design of routes and infrastructure;*
- *Maintain key local landscape features including the estate walls, lodges, parkland trees and avenues;*
- *Seek appropriate management of marginal non-agricultural land use such as horse paddocks;*
- *Conserve the rural character of the winding lanes and limit upgrading by widening kerbing;*
- *Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design guidance and appropriate land management;*
- *Encourage traditional methods of land management;*
- *There should be presumption against arable in areas of archaeological sites and landscape defined by earthworks; and*
- *To prevent poaching of earthworks consider light grazing management.*

2.73. LCA J5: Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley Farmland:

- **Gently undulating landform** based on Mercia Mudstone with Head and Alluvium;
- **Rural pastoral landscape set in a wide valley framed by wooded ridges;**
- **Intact hedgerow network with hedgerow trees of oak;**
- *Areas of historic parkland with mature parkland trees rising up to the lower slopes of the ridges;*
- **Frequent large villages such as Long Ashton, Backwell and Claverham with historic stone buildings at centre and modern infill;**
- *Network of winding rural roads with major road and railway passing along the valley floor edge; and*
- *Scattered stone farmsteads with stone outbuildings and walls.*

2.74. The character of the J5 area is described as 'moderate' and its condition is considered to be 'good' due to the 'large areas of intact pasture with thick hedgerows and hedgerow trees and small winding rural roads. Some elements of the landscape are declining such as the small farm orchards.' The Landscape Guidelines' provided for this character area are as follows:

- *Conserve the rural nature of the pastoral landscape;*
- *Continue with sensitive, cyclical/rotational management of hedgerows;*
- *Nurture new and existing hedgerow trees;*
- *Encourage traditional methods of land management;*
- *Promote active management and replanting of orchards using local fruit varieties;*
- *Minimise the impact of the urban edge and the encroachment of visually intrusive land uses through design and appropriate land management;*
- *There should be a presumption against arable in areas of archaeological landscape defined by earthworks and areas of historic parkland; and*
- *To prevent poaching of earthworks, light grazing management is recommended.*



## North Somerset Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (March 2018)

2.75. Wardell Armstrong was commissioned by NSC to undertake a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of the area surrounding selected settlements within the district. The purpose of this assessment was to inform the site selection process for non-strategic growth and to ensure that the important characteristics of the North Somerset landscape are not unacceptably harmed.

2.76. Regarding land to the west of Long Ashton the following was recorded:

*'To the west of the village is a large SAM (Roman settlement, part of an associated field system and earlier Iron Age settlement remains at Gatcombe Farm'). The land in this location is also open and visually prominent, rising up to George's Hill Plantation. Owing to the above, this land is of high sensitivity'*

2.77. The sensitivity assessment concludes that all land to the west of Long Ashton is of high sensitivity. However, it is considered given the site is located on low lying land on the edge of Long Ashton and that it forms a small part of a wider land parcel considered to be of high sensitivity that the sensitivity of the site is less sensitive. In this instance, the sensitivity of the site is therefore considered be of medium sensitivity. This is considered further in Section 5 of this assessment.

### *Observations from Fieldwork – Site Specific Character*

2.78. Having identified the key characteristics of the published character area that comprise the site and its local context, a brief summary is given below of how the site relates to the local landscape context. This allows the identification of which key characteristics and factors are of particular relevance to the site. This has then enabled the proposals to respond to the key attributes and sensitivities of the receiving landscape.

2.79. **Plan 3** illustrates the variety in character and the presence of key landscape features in the vicinity of the site. This is based on field observations made during site visits in September 2019 and March 2020. **Plan 4: Topography** illustrates the topography of the site and the wider context.

2.80. The site is currently agricultural in nature, it is influenced by its surroundings and the neighbouring settlement edge. Existing residential development is present beyond the eastern boundary and partially to the southern boundary. These characteristics associate the site as part of the Long Ashton settlement edge, which itself has a linear settlement pattern aligned along the local road and rail network.

2.81. The sloping local topography and the sites position near the bottom of a shallow valley create a sense of enclosure within the site. Characteristic wooded ridges are seen on the surrounding high ground. These characteristics are highlighted within the published landscape character assessments.

2.82. The site occupies part of a larger arable field. The shape and scale of this field has evidently been influenced by modern farming techniques and has likely evolved over time. Evidence of this is seen in the uncharacteristic post and rail fence on the western boundary. Beyond the north of the site the wider field is bound by a characteristic hedgerow, which is also present on the eastern boundary. The southern boundary is bound by a stone wall, which is not listed as a characteristic boundary treatment within published material but is a pleasant feature none the less. Beyond the southern boundary is Weston Road, this busy road would provide access to the site and introduces visual and auditory disturbance to the local area. Beyond the hedgerow to the east of the site is



Warren Lane, this is a single-track road and is enclosed by a combination of hedgerow and built form within Long Ashton.

2.83. As the plans confirm, the characteristics of the local area and associated with the site reflect a number of those recorded in the North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment. The notable features recorded as being present during visits to the site are:

- The site forms part of a larger arable field and surrounding agricultural network on the edge of Long Ashton;
- Land that slopes from a high point beyond the north of the site to a low point beyond the site boundary to the south;
- Mature vegetation comprising of hedgerows and trees is present to the northern and eastern boundaries. A number of good quality tree specimens are present on these boundaries. Vegetation on the southern and western boundaries is limited in quantum and of low quality; and
- Settlement and built form is a prominent feature of this area with both old and new development present in the local area to the east.

2.84. In accordance with best practice TG has conducted a local scale analysis of the landscape character which is set out on **Plan 3**.

2.85. At a local scale, the landscape shows a degree of variation, albeit consistent with the overarching and prevailing landscape character where the site is located on the edge of an established residential area. The local landscape receptors are summarised as follows:

#### **Undeveloped Landscape:**

2.86. *Arable Farmland* – Ploughed arable land covers the site; the site is formed by a section of a larger arable field. A wider network of pasture farmland is present to the north and west of the site. No public access is permitted within the site.

2.87. *Hedgerow and Trees* – Hedgerows with trees are present to the northern and eastern site boundaries. Trees are present within the hedgerows with some mature and vertically prominent examples present. The presence of these largely deciduous hedgerows and trees is a key characteristic of the local LCA.

2.88. *Sloping Landform* – The site occupies an area of sloping land that rises further in elevation to the north of the site and lower in elevation beyond the southern boundary. The shallow valley the site occupies is highlighted within the district Landscape Character Assessment.

#### **Developed Landscape:**

2.89. *Long Ashton Settlement Edge* – Built form is present along Warren Lane to the east of the site and extends beyond the north and south of the site. The existing settlement edge also partially wraps around the southern boundary of the site. These features have an urbanising effect on the landscape. The roofscape and built form present in the local area give the impression of a peri-urban landscape.



2.90. *Weston Road* – This is the main road through Long Ashton and is located along part of the southern boundary of the site. The linear nature of the road is apparent, and it extends beyond the eastern and western boundaries of the site. Roads by their nature connect settlements and can be a source of disturbance within the landscape.

#### *Interim conclusion – Landscape Character*

2.91. It is evident from field work that the character of the site is influenced by the open and sloping pastoral landscape to the north and west, as well as the arrangement of mature hedgerow boundaries and adjoining residential context of early to late 20<sup>th</sup> Century largely two storey dwellings and their domestic curtilage. Whilst the site itself is undeveloped, this is demonstrably a settled landscape at the Long Ashton settlement fringe.

2.92. The site does reflect published local landscape characteristics. As **Plan 2: Published Landscape Character** demonstrates the majority of the site is located within J5 Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley Farmland LCA with the northern extremity of the site being located within E5 Tickenham Ridges and Combes LCA. In both instances, there are landscape guidelines which have been considered as part of the forthcoming proposal.

2.93. In respect of the site, the key landscape receptors are considered to include:

- Published Landscape Character Areas J5 Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley Farmland and E5 Tickenham Ridges and Combes, and
- The site-specific character, landscape features and elements (arable field, hedgerow and trees and sloping topography).

#### **Visual Context and Visual Receptors**

2.94. Chapter 6 of GLVIA3 sets out how the visual baseline is established. The baseline for visual effects should establish the area in which the proposed development may be visible, those people who may experience views of the development, the viewpoints where they will be affected and the nature of the views at the viewpoints. This section considers these factors, with reference to a number of representative viewpoints from within the local landscape.

#### *Visual Context*

2.95. In order to determine the extent of the area from which the development has the potential to be seen Geographic Information System (GIS) and Ordnance Survey Terrain data are modelled to create a topographical plan (refer to **Plan 4: Topography**) and this is followed by the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping (refer to **Plan 5: Zone of Theoretical Visibility**).

2.96. The computer generated ZTV is created using bare earth OS 3D modelling data and does not take into consideration the screening effect of built form, trees and vegetation and how this may influence the visibility of the site and development upon it. It does however record visibility at a ridge height of 8m. Areas of teal on the plan have the potential for visibility. This information provides a starting point for the fieldwork in terms of determining the extent of visibility and the likely receptors. Within the scoped 2km study area, the ZTV indicates that the site has potential to be visible from the north, east, south and west of the site. Field verification is essential in establishing the extent of the actual views to the development.



- 2.97. Aside from the indicative ZTV, a range of views has been considered which include local/intermediate viewpoint locations which range from 0-1km and distant viewpoint locations which in this case range from 1-2km from the site. Where there are no views from a viewpoint location within the scoped study area this is also clearly shown in a different colour on **Plan 6: Photoviewpoint Locations and Extent of Views**. The field verification process enables the assessor to view the site and define the extent of views, so it only includes those locations from which the site is evident in views, excluding those that are barely discernible and taking into account vegetation and built form.
- 2.98. The local Public Rights of Way (PRoW) vary in quantum of vegetative cover. The footpath to the north east of the site is flanked by mature vegetation and any view from here will be filtered as a result. In summary, the extent of views are limited in extent to the site and its immediate environs to the north, south and west, and also to filtered distant views from elevated landform.
- 2.99. **North.** Distant views are screened by a combination of intervening built form within Long Ashton, vegetation and landform. The presence of vegetated field boundaries and hill tops is characteristic of the Rolling Valley Farmland LCT and the site occupies part of a single field surrounded by vegetation on its northern and eastern boundaries.
- 2.100. Local views of the site are achieved from the footpath network to the north. The footpaths are situated within a network of pasture fields, bounded by mature hedgerows or in the case of footpath LA12/29/10 it is located on an agricultural lane flanked by mature hedgerows. Views into the site are filtered by the mature hedgerow and trees along the northern site boundary. In views from the north east, built form within Long Ashton screens all views of the site area. The site does not extend further to the north than the existing settlement edge to the north east (**Photoviewpoints 1, 2, 3 and 5**).
- 2.101. **East.** Distant views from the east are limited to vantage points located to the south east due to the intervening built form and vegetation within Long Ashton. The site is seen beyond the existing built form and is seen within this urban context. The elevated ridgeline to the north of the site forms the skyline and backdrop to the view. It is possible for the most elevated northern part of the site to be viewed from a distant viewpoint location (Photoviewpoint 9) and therefore keeping development off the most elevated parts of the site would limit inter visibility within the wider landscape. In local views the mature vegetation along Warren Lane filters views into the site. Some residents along Warren Lane will see the proposed change within the site (**Photoviewpoints 4**).
- 2.102. **South.** Distant views from the south are heavily filtered by intervening vegetation present on the elevated landform. The focus of these views is on the elevated skyline formed by the opposite side of the valley that the site is located within. From the site boundary the sloping nature of the site can be seen, as can the prominent boundary vegetation present beyond the main body of the site to the northern and eastern boundaries (**Photoviewpoints 6, 10 and 11**). As noted above, keeping development off the most elevated part of the site would limit inter visibility within wider landscape (particularly from Photoviewpoints 10 and 11).
- 2.103. **West.** Distant views from the west are focused along the valley with the elevated landform to north and south apparent in the view. Undulating terrain is present within the valley and the site is screened from view by this changing topography and intervening vegetation.
- 2.104. From the elevated north and south west, views are filtered by the characteristic vegetated hill tops. In local views the site is seen in the foreground of the view with the existing settlement edge of



Long Ashton forming the backdrop to the view. The lack of characteristic hedgerow on the western site boundary allows open views across the site from this orientation (**Photoviewpoints 7, 8 and 12**).

### *Representative Viewpoints*

- 2.105. Typically, representative views of the site from a variety of receptors in the local area are determined on the basis of the first sieve GIS mapping and subsequent fieldwork. The identification of views is carried out from external spaces within the public domain, and not from buildings or private spaces.
- 2.106. The photographs included in this report have been taken using an SLR digital camera using a focal length equivalent to 50mm, they are intended to provide an indication of the composition of the view and extent of visibility, it is recognised that such views are best experienced in the field. The photographs were taken during March 2020 on a bright and cloudy day with moderate to good visibility. These photographs are shown in **Photosheets 1-12**. **As previously outlined**, the chosen viewpoints and extent of the study area (2km around the site) have been sent to the landscape department at NSC and have been confirmed as appropriate by Kevin Carlton (**Appendix 3**).
- 2.107. The 12 selected viewpoints are as follows:
- **Photoviewpoint 1:** Taken from footpath LA12/28/10 to the north west of the site, looking south west.
  - **Photoviewpoint 2:** Taken from footpath LA12/28/30 to the north of the site, looking south.
  - **Photoviewpoint 3:** Taken from the junction of footpath LA12/29/10 and Warren Lane to the north of the site, looking south west.
  - **Photoviewpoint 4:** Taken from Warren Lane to the east of the site, looking west.
  - **Photoviewpoint 5:** Taken from within a field to the north west of the site, this is a private view looking south east.
  - **Photoviewpoint 6:** Taken from Weston Road to the south of the site, looking north east.
  - **Photoviewpoint 7:** Taken from the car park of Gatcombe Farm Shop to the west of the site, looking east.
  - **Photoviewpoint 8:** Taken from Weston Road to the south west of the site, looking north east.
  - **Photoviewpoint 9:** Taken from footpath LA12/7/30 to the south east of the site, looking north west.
  - **Photoviewpoint 10:** Taken from footpath LA13/27/10 to the south of the site, looking north.
  - **Photoviewpoint 11:** Taken from footpath LA3/2/20 to the south west of the site, looking north east.
  - **Photoviewpoint 12:** Taken from footpath LA3/6/20 to the south west of the site, looking north east.



2.108. See **Photosheets 1-12** for full descriptions of the viewpoint compositions.

*Visual Receptors*

2.109. Having conducted the site visit and analysed the views from the 12 locations the following viewpoints and receptors (people) have been identified as having the potential to be affected by the proposed development on the land south of Warren Lane, Long Ashton, others have scoped out due to lack of visibility of the proposal. It is also important to note that the sensitivity of the receptor would be moderated by distance.

- Recreational users of footpaths to the north of the site along LA12/28/30 (Viewpoint 2)
- Recreational users of footpaths to the north of the site along LA12/29/10 (Viewpoint 3)
- Residents along the Long Ashton settlement edge, particularly along Warren Lane to the east
- Recreational users along Weston Road to the south (Viewpoints 6 and 8)
- Motorists along Weston Road to the south (indicative within Viewpoint 8)
- Recreational users of footpaths to the south of the site along LA12/7/30 (Viewpoint 9) and the Monarch's Way
- Recreational users of footpaths to the south of the site along LA13/27/10 (Viewpoint 10)
- Recreational users of footpaths to the south west of the site along LA3/6/20
- Recreational users of footpaths to the south west of the site along LA3/6/20
- Agricultural workers to the north, west and south of the site

*Interim Conclusion – Visual Context*

2.110. The site is visible in the context of the existing settlement edge to the west of Long Ashton. As demonstrated, the extent of views of the site is largely limited to local views from the south and west due to the effect of intervening vegetation, built form and topographical changes between the site and the viewer. The combination of adjacent built form in combination with vegetation in gardens and on the boundaries to the east together with different orientations effectively restrict views from this direction, albeit a low number of residents still have the potential for filtered views to the site.

2.111. Further afield views of the site are only achieved from elevated landform and are often filtered by the characteristic intervening vegetation and vegetation that is present on the elevated landform.



## Section 3: Classification of Resources

### Landscape Character and Landscape Resources

- 3.1. Understanding the landscape's sensitivity to change associated with the proposed development is an important consideration when addressing the suitability of development in relation to a receiving landscape.
- 3.2. The threshold and terminology referred to in this section is set out in **Appendix 4**. The classification of sensitivity of the landscape character and landscape resources is related to:
  - The susceptibility of the landscape;
  - The type of change proposed; and
  - The value placed on the landscape.

#### *Landscape Susceptibility*

- 3.3. This means the ability of the landscape type, in this locale to accommodate the development proposed without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. In relation to the susceptibility, based on our experience as professional landscape practitioners, we apply the levels of susceptibility as high, medium and low.
- 3.4. High susceptibility. The landscape is such that changes in terms of the development proposed would be entirely at odds with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.
- 3.5. Medium susceptibility. The proposed development has a degree of consistency with the existing scale, pattern, grain, land use of the prevailing character, although mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation.
- 3.6. Low susceptibility. The development proposed is entirely consistent with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.
- 3.7. Considering the character assessment in section 2, the susceptibility of the receiving landscape to accommodate the development is **Medium**. This reflects the context of the proposed development and the site's relationship to the existing settlement edge / built form present to varying degrees, on two sides of the site. Enhanced boundary planting, the sensitive placement of building heights and the use of appropriate materials all need to be considered and these matters are considered further below in relation to the proposed development and nature of change sections.

#### *Landscape Value*

- 3.8. The site is subject to a 'value' designation due to its position within a SAM. The site's overall landscape and visual value will be analysed in accordance with GLVIA3 Table 5.1. However, it should be noted that a valued landscape is not the same thing as a designated landscape. GLVIA 3, paragraph 5.26 states that:



*'the fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value'*

- 3.9. Having 'value' and being a 'valued landscape' are not inter-changeable terms. A landscape may have a degree of local value but that does not equate to possessing value sufficient to reach and surpass the necessary threshold to be 'valued' by a particular community at either a local or national scale.
- 3.10. A number of recent appeal court decisions and High Court Judgements have considered the issue of landscape value and it has been the case through these Appeals that in order for a landscape to be considered 'valued' it needs to be more than ordinary. This was explored in the 'Stroud' decision, in which they also recognise the use of Box 5.1 and subsequently upheld in the High Court by Mr Justice Ouseley. At the original appeal, it was recorded that:

*'I accept that, currently, there is no agreed definition of valued as used in this paragraph. In the absence of any formal guidance on this point, I consider that to be valued would require the site to show some demonstrable physical attribute rather than just popularity. In the absence of any such designation, I find that paragraph 109 is not applicable to the appeal site. Similarly, I have studied footnote 9 to the NPPF but again note that it refers to land designated as an AONB which the appeal site is not.'* (It is acknowledged that the NPPF reference has changed, but there is no evidence that in the revised NPPF Valued Landscapes are any different from those reflected in the original drafting of the national policy).

- 3.11. Mr Justice Ouseley has since summarised his views on the Stroud decision in CEG v SSCLG. Within this he makes clear that he was not seeking to set a principle whereby sites without 'demonstrably physical attributes' could not be valued landscapes. He stresses the need to look at the wider landscape, not just the red-line site boundary. It is also confirmed again that Box 5.1 in the GLVIA3 is a 'useful tool'.

- 3.12. In addition to this at the same hearing it was contested by Mr James Strachan QC and confirmed by Mr Justice Ouseley that:

*'Where the development plan landscape policies were as comprehensive as the framework required in (para 109), were consistent with it, and up to date, there was no scope for (para 109) to provide some additional policy of development control, beyond the role ascribed by (para 14), so as to mean that the harm that breached local plan policies could be added to the same harm described as a breach of the framework policy in (para 109). To do so would be illogical double-counting. This was because the purposes of paragraph 14 with 109 of the framework in relation to landscape had been fulfilled.'* (Again, it is acknowledged that the NPPF reference has changed, but there is no evidence that in the revised NPPF Valued Landscapes are any different from those reflected in the original drafting of the national policy).

- 3.13. More recently in August 2019, appeal Inspector V Louis in the case of Natland Mill Beck Lane, Kendal considered that in the terms of paragraph 170 of the Framework and whether the site can be considered a 'valued landscape', the term landscape necessarily implies something on a larger scale whereby a site would form a constituent and integral part of the wider panoramic landscape beyond. In this case the site does not form a constituent or integral part of the wider panoramic landscape.

- 3.14. In order to determine whether the landscape of the site itself and its immediate surroundings are valued, the GLVIA3 approach has been adopted within this LVIA. GLVIA3 Box 5.1 states that the



following factors are relevant in the assessment process when identifying the degree to which the landscape of the application site is valued:

**Landscape Quality (condition):** *A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements;*

**Scenic Quality:** *The term used to describe landscapes which appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses);*

**Rarity:** *The presence of rare features and elements in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type;*

**Representativeness:** *Whether the landscape contains a particular character, and/or features and elements, which are considered particularly important examples;*

**Conservation interests:** *The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of a landscape as well as having value in their own right;*

**Recreation value:** *Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important;*

**Perceptual aspects:** *A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities and/or tranquillity; and*

**Associations:** *Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or event in history that contribute to perceptions of natural beauty of the area."*

- 3.15. For each of these considerations there is a range from 'good' through 'ordinary' to 'poor' in terms of the landscape's performance against these criteria. In **Table TG1** below these issues are considered in relation to the site.

**Table TG1** Landscape Value

Criteria	Observations/Comments
<b>Landscape Quality</b>	<p>The site is influenced by residential built form to the south and east.</p> <p>The site is formed by part of a single arable field. Its location amongst numerous identified character features is unremarkable. There is a high quantum of boundary vegetation present to the north and east. The south and west boundaries are relatively open with little vegetation present, an uncharacteristic stone wall is also present to the southern boundary. The field is subject to standard agricultural management.</p> <p>Overall, the site is of <b>ordinary</b> quality due to the range and perceived value of identified features present.</p>
<b>Scenic Quality</b>	<p>The site has a distinct sense of place as being on the edge of settlement with development to the east and partially to the south. The field is ploughed as arable farmland. This is uncharacteristic of the pastoral agricultural landscape to the north, south and west. The rising topography to the north and south provide pleasant features and change in the landscape. The hedgerows to the north and east provide a soft edge to these orientations.</p> <p>Views out of the site are generally focused on the elevated landform to the north and south. Locally the Long Ashton settlement edge has an urbanising effect on views to the south and east while views to the north and west are of further agricultural fields.</p> <p>As a result of these matters the scenic quality is ordinary.</p>
<b>Rarity</b>	<p>The landscape of the site is consistent of the wider agricultural resource, although its use as arable land is at odds with the surrounding characteristic pastoral landscape. The features present are typical and not rare locally or at a broader scale.</p> <p>The landscape is <b>ordinary</b> in this respect.</p>
<b>Representativeness</b>	<p>Whilst the site possesses locally typical features such as sloping landform, hedgerow field boundaries and agricultural land use these are not considered to be especially important as features as they are well represented locally.</p> <p>The site is <b>ordinary</b> in this regard.</p>
<b>Conservation Interests</b>	<p>Refer to the Tyler Grange Ecological Appraisal. Bat habitat is of most importance and the retention of the existing boundary vegetation would accommodate this.</p> <p>Refer to the Cotswold Archaeology Heritage Report. The site is located within a SAM designation. The site was originally omitted from this area but was added sometime after 2015.</p> <p>Overall, the conservation interests of the site are <b>good</b>.</p>
<b>Recreational Value</b>	<p>There are no PRoW present on the site and there is no public access. A public footpath is present to the north east of the site and this provides connectivity to the wider network.</p> <p>The site is of <b>poor</b> recreational value to the local community.</p>