

**APPENDIX 1: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment -
Methodology**

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A 1.0 Introduction

- A 1.1 The format and methodology for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been carried out in general accordance with the recommendations contained within the
- 'The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact' (GLVIA) 3rd Edition published jointly in 2013 by The Landscape Institute and The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and
 - Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/2009. Use of photography and photomontage in landscape and visual assessment.

The baseline condition of the site has therefore been established and an assessment of the positive and negative impacts in terms of landscape, visual effects and landscape character has been made. Where deviance is made from the Guidelines, this will be clearly stated within the text of the report.

- A 1.2 LVIA can be carried out either as part of a broader Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or as a stand alone appraisal of the possible landscape and visual effects of a proposed development. The overall principles are the same but there are specific and clearly defined procedures in EIA which LVIA must fit within. In standalone assessments the process is informal and there is more flexibility. The guidelines are not prescriptive but adherence to the approach is considered best practice within the industry and professional peers.
- A 1.3 Effects on landscape and visual receptors are assessed separately following the steps set out in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**. The assessment seeks not to place over reliance on matrices and tables to establish significance of effects but to balance this with a clear and accessible narrative and explanation. The assessment seeks to distinguish between significant effects that are likely to influence the eventual decision making process and those of lesser concern.
- A 1.4 The assessment processes detailed are carried out for construction effects and for operational effects including the residual effects after mitigation. In some cases, particularly for EIA, the possible links between landscape and visual effects and effects identified in other topics i.e. noise effects, hydrology effects etc., may need to be considered. Special consideration may also apply in respect of cumulative effects that may result from an individual project that is being assessed interacting with the effects of other proposed development in the area.
- A 1.5 Through both desktop study and site visits the landscape resource of a site and the surrounding area are assessed and principle features and characteristics identified. Desktop study is carried out to identify existing character assessments for the region or district, to locate existing designations within the development plan, to establish relevant planning policy which may influence the proposal and to any other literature which references the site and features of the surrounding locality.
- A 1.6 Field work is used to confirm the physical components, structure and constraints and opportunities that give rise to patterns that are distinctive in the landscape and which may

serve to limit views to and from the site. For the purposes of this report the 'surrounding area' is defined as the landscape within 1.5 - 2.0 kilometers of the LVIA study area, beyond which the site is deemed to be indistinguishable in the landscape with insignificant effects.

Figure 1: Assessment of Landscape Effects

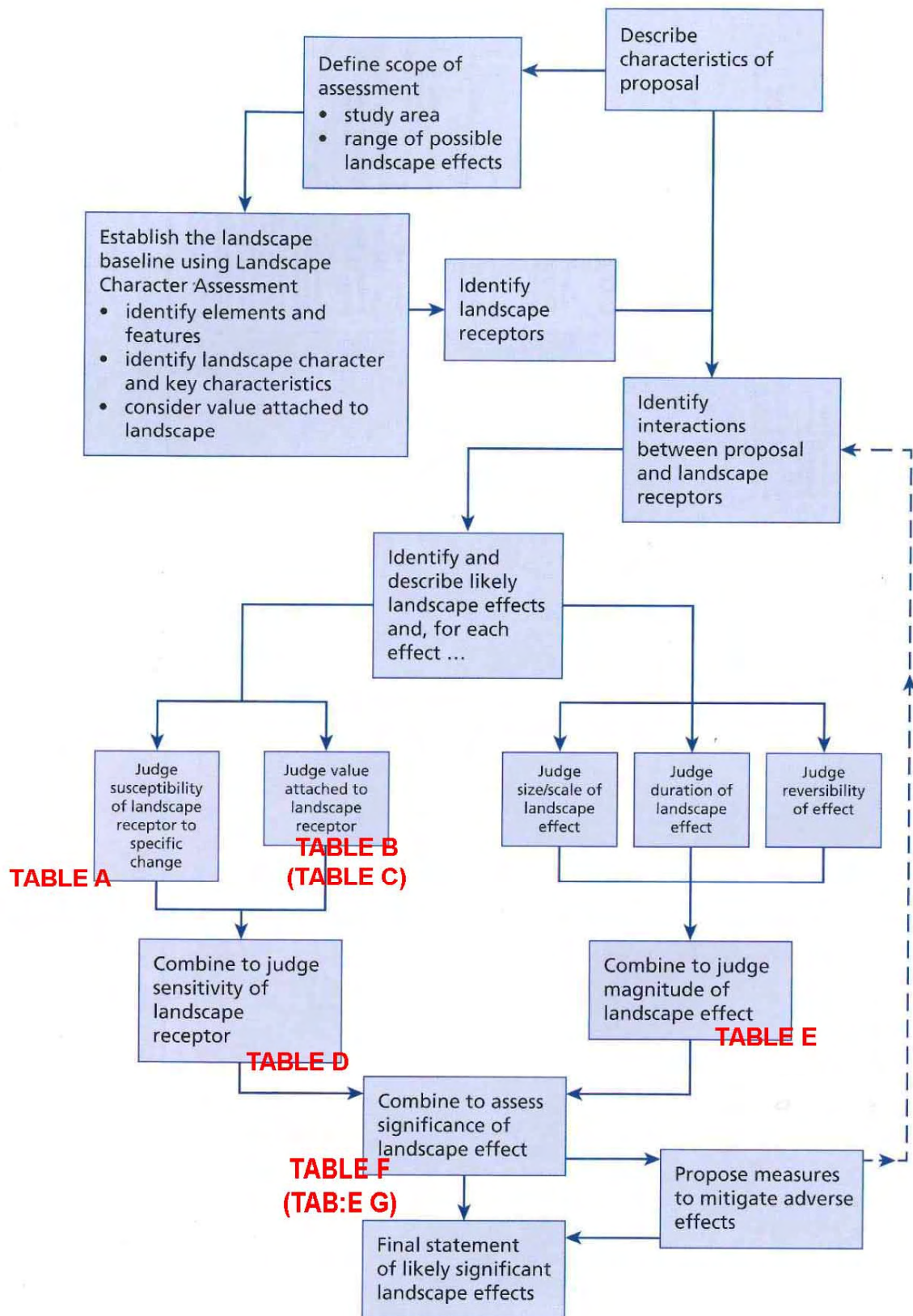
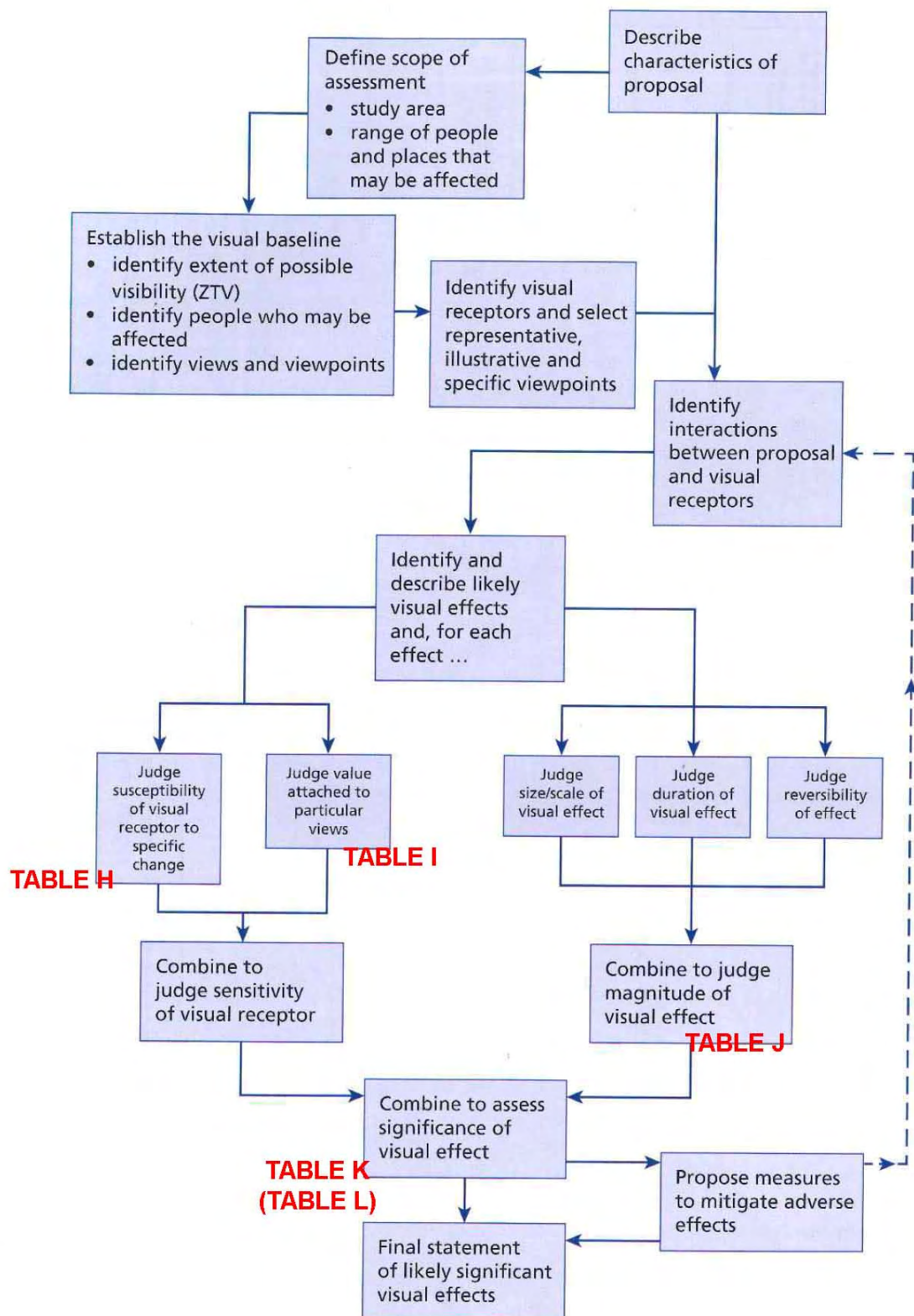


Figure 2: Assessment of Visual Effects



A 2.0 Description of the development proposals

- A 2.1 The basic characteristics of the proposals are understood by means of assessing plans, contours and levels, structure and form of the development. Sections/cross sections are studied or generated. Where appropriate 3D modelling with on and off site landscape structure planting incorporated, and photomontages generated to reflect form, planting, materials and colours to assist in the assessment. Once the development is finalized it is described in appropriate detail and life cycle stages extrapolated.

A 3.0 Scope of Study Area and Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- A 3.1 The geographical study area is defined and an outline of the extent of landscape character and/or extent/disposition of visual receptors likely to be significantly affected either directly or indirectly. In order to identify land resources and visual receptors that may be affected by development, a 7.5 kilometres radius Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) to include the site and the surrounding landscape, can be produced to illustrate the worst case extent of the potential visibility of the proposed development. Where the built development is particularly tall, or where receptors or viewpoints or landscapes of value exist the scope may be extended according. The ZTV is usually produced using Digital Terrain Models (DTM), which is based on Ordnance Survey (OS) data at 1:50,000 scale with contours at 10 metres intervals with a viewer height of 1.6 metres. Alternatively, a manual process of drawing radiating sections through the landscape away from the proposals may be used in certain cases where a rough estimation of the ZTV is deemed sufficient. The ZTV identifies the maximum area over which it is theoretically possible to see some part of the proposed development, but does not take account of screening that may result from vegetation, localized variation in topography and built form.

A 4.0 Zone of Visual Influence

- A 4.1 It should be noted that the ZTV cannot indicate the potential visual impacts of a development, nor show the likely significance of effects. They are used as a working tool to inform assessment and do not convey the nature or magnitude of visual impacts. The actual visual effects of the proposed development are assessed through a more detailed analysis of specific viewpoints, based on field survey work. In combination with site visits, this information enables the identification of a provisional list of viewpoints and allows the determining authority to judge how representative these are and whether they include particularly sensitive vantage points. The range of landscape and the range of people and viewpoints is summarized and agreed with the Local Planning Authority (LPA). At this time the ZTV is refined and a Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) is determined and plotted. For certain assessments a ZVI is prepared without the production of a ZTV.

A 5.0 Site survey and field work

- A 5.1 The surrounding road network driven and local public rights of way are walked. Positive and detracting elements in the landscape are recorded, including the general land use and susceptibility and value/quality of the site and surrounding area. Viewpoints are identified based on public viewpoints (public rights of way) and best effort made to establish where potential sensitive, partial and open views of the site can be observed. Private viewpoints (residential properties) and their orientation and occupancy are also considered, key distant viewpoints identified to determine the wider impact on the landscape and where development has the potential to affect the value and character of existing views.

Photographs

- A 5.2 Photographic surveys of the site and photographic viewpoints are made using a prime lens (AF-S NIKKOR 35mm 1:1.8G) on a digital SLR camera (Nikon D3100) which allows for images to be reproduced as close to that which is generally equivalent to the focal length of the human eye. The height of the surveyor, data relating to the weather conditions, grid references and other relevant data are recorded.

A 6.0 Baseline and Character Assessment

- A 6.1 Landscape character assessment is a tool for understanding the landscape and can be used to inform baseline studies and guidance documents. The Landscape Character Assessment Guidance defines landscape character as:

“A distinct, recognizable and distinct pattern of elements in the landscape and which makes landscapes different from one another, rather than better or worse.”

They are used to identify and describe:

- the elements that make up the landscape including:
 - physical influences which are quantifiable and include features such as hills, valleys, trees, hedges, ponds, geology, soils, land;
 - land cover, including different types of vegetation and patterns and types of tree cover;
 - the influence of human activity, including land use and management, the character of settlements and buildings, and pattern and type of fields and enclosure.
- the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape – such as, for example, its scale, complexity, openness, tranquility or wilderness;
- the overall character of the landscape in the appraisal area, including any distinctive Landscape Character Types or areas that can be identified, and the particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. This includes the elements, aesthetics and perceptual aspects that make each landscape distinctive, usually by identification as a key characteristic of the landscape.

- A 6.2 Landscape Character Assessments that are published and adopted by Local 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 as the relationship between landscape and historic landscape matters is close.

A 7.0 Predicting, describing, assessing Landscape Effects

Susceptibility to change

- A 7.1 Susceptibility to change needs to be considered. This is the ability of the landscape to accommodate or absorb change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and the achievement of planning policies or future strategies.
- A 7.2 Susceptibility of the landscape to change is usually judged from **Very high to low** depending on the likelihood of change to occur and be perceptible based on the type of development that is proposed. Development can potentially bring about:
- A change in and/or partial or complete loss of elements, features, or aesthetic or perceptual characteristics, that have been identified as contributing to the character and distinctiveness of the landscape;
 - The addition of new elements or features that could influence the character and distinctiveness of the landscape;
 - A combination effect of these that could bring about changes in overall character.

The susceptibility can be assessed using the judgment criteria in **Table A**.

Establishing value of the landscape

- A 7.3 As part of the baseline, description of the value of the potentially affected landscape needs to be established. The 'relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society' is considered. To ascertain this value landscape designations such as National Parks, National Scenic Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are used as a starting point alongside other evidence such as designations on TPOs, listed buildings or registered landscapes, Village Design Statements, Conservation appraisals, recognised special historical or cultural or artistic sites or associations, tourism, promoted routes (routes, public rights of way, bridleways, cycleways) or other promotional literature, individual elements and/or aesthetic/perceptual aspects, and/or statements relating to landscape conservation or strategic management noted in Landscape Character Assessments are taken as indicators of value. However, it should be noted that the fact that an area is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have value. Condition of the landscape is also one determinant of value. The condition of the different landscape types or areas including evidence for change in that condition is also assessed.

- A 7.4 Factors that influence value may include:

Landscape quality (condition) including the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas and the intactness of the landscape;

Scenic quality and the appeal to the senses;

Rarity of features or elements;

Representativeness and whether the landscape contains particular characters of the wider area which are considered important examples;

Conservation interests such as ecological interest, archaeological or historical interest etc. which have value or protection in their own right;

Recreational value where the experience of the landscape is important;

Perceptual aspects such as wildness or tranquility

Associations as with artists or events in history etc.

- A 7.5 Landscape value and quality is usually judged from **Very high to low** depending on the degree of value criteria which holds true or represented on the appraisal site and can be assessed using the judgment criteria in both **Table B and Table C**.

Landscape sensitivity

- A 7.6 An appraisal of sensitivity is made regarding a landscape in which judgments on the susceptibility of the landscape (to the particular type of change or development proposed) and the value attached to the landscape are combined. This is usually expressed in a narrative form on a scale ranging from low, through medium, to high. The basis for the judgment shall be clear and linked back to the baseline study but information contained in **Table D** can assist in this judgment.

Landscape Effects

- A. 7.7 Landscape effects may include:
- The degree of change in and/or partial or complete loss of elements, features, or aesthetic or perceptual characteristics that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the existing landscape resource;
 - The addition of new elements or features that will influence the character and distinctiveness of the landscape;
 - The combined effect of these to changes in overall character.
- A 7.8 Effects may be beneficial, neutral or adverse and a judgment is made taking account of:
- the degree to which the proposals fit with existing character;
 - the contribution to the landscape the development may make in its own right, even if in contrast to that character.

Magnitude of change

A 7.9 Size or Scale

Judgements are made about the size and scale of change as a result on each effect:

The extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this area represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape;

- The degree to which the aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of the existing components of the landscape or by the addition of new ones;
- Whether the effect changes the key characteristic of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctiveness character.

A 7.10 Geographical Factors

Judgements are made in respect of extent of *geographical effect* (as distinct from the size and scale) which may occur:

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

A 7.11 *Duration and Reversibility of the Landscape Effects*

An assessment is made as to *duration* i.e. short term (e.g. 0-5 years), medium term e.g. 5-10 years) or long term (e.g. 10-25 years). Reversibility is a judgement on the prospects and practicality of the effect(s) being reversed. Some development, like housing, is considered permanent, whereas others, of a limited life and could eventually be removed and/or land re-instated.

A 7.12 Indirect effects are considered, being effects that are a consequence of direct effects often occurring away from the site.

Magnitude of landscape effect

A 7.13 The magnitude of change is assessed in accordance with the criteria in **Table E**.

Significance of landscape effect

A 7.14 The correlation between sensitivity and magnitude of effect is determined to give the significance of landscape impact in accordance with **Table F**. Where the overall effect is considered neutral the reasons for that assessment are stated.

A 7.15 Descriptors of the significance of landscape effects which assist in the overall analysis are stated in **Table G**.

A 8.0 Predicting, describing, assessing Visual Effects

Baseline Visual Assessment

- A 8.1 The ZTV and/or the ZVI established at the scoping stage is reviewed and defined in more detail where information is available and/or the design has changed. The types of viewers (receptors) and likely numbers affected are considered together with the places where viewers would be affected. These are principally various forms of public access including public rights of way (PRoW) and highway transport routes. Work places are also considered and, subject to consultation with the LPA, residential receptors may also be considered although they do not have a right to a view in planning terms. The nature, composition and characteristics of the viewpoints, including the direction of the view are established together with visual characteristics such as the nature and extent of the skyline, aspects of visual scale and proportion and key foci. Elements such as land form, buildings and vegetation which may interrupt, filter or influence the setting of a view are considered. Field and desk top work will also identify particularly important views and vantage points.

Identifying visual receptors and interactions between the proposals and the visual receptors

- A 8.2 The viewpoints from which the a proposed development will actually be seen is about assessing the responses to changes in views and visual amenity depending on the context (location, time of day, season, degree of exposure to views) and the purpose for being in a particular place (for example recreation, residence or employment, or passing through on roads or 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 public footpaths, bridleways., cycleways, long distance trails, tourist or scenic routes and associated viewpoints.
- A 8.3 Viewpoints selected for the assessment fall broadly into three categories:
Representative viewpoints which represent a larger number of viewpoints which cannot practically be included;
Specific viewpoints which illustrate a promoted view, vantage point or a viewpoint with particular cultural landscape associations;
Illustrative viewpoints which demonstrates a particular effect or specific issue, for example, the restricted visibility at certain locations.
Sequential views along routes are also considered where appropriate.
- A 8.4 The potential range of visual effects are considered including:
- Nature of the view of the development partial/full/glimpsed;
 - Proportion of the development visible;
 - Distance to development;
 - Whether stationary or transient or sequential;
 - Nature of changes;
 - Seasonal effects.

Susceptibility of visual receptors to change

- A 8.4 The susceptibility of different receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:
- A 8.5 The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at a particular location;
The extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at a particular location.
- A 8.6 The visual receptors most susceptible to change area generally likely to include:
- Residents at home (subject to agreement regarding the value of private views and the combined effect on a number of residents in one area);
 - People engaged in outdoor recreation, including using public rights of way, bridleways and long distance promoted paths/trails whose attention may be focused on the landscape or particular views;
 - Visitors to heritage asset or attractions where views are an important contributor to the experience;
 - Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area;
- A 8.7 Travellers on road, rail or other modes of transport tend to fall into an immediate category of moderate susceptibility to change. Where travel involves recognised scenic routes awareness of views is likely to be particularly high.
- A 8.9 Visual receptors likely to be less sensitive to change include:
- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve an appreciation of the views of the landscape;
 - People at work whose attention is not focused on their surroundings and where views are not important to the quality of their working life.
- A 8.10 Susceptibility of Visual Receptors is usually judged from ***Very high to very low*** depending on the location and activity of the receptor and can be assessed using the judgment criteria in **Table H**.

Value attached to views

- A 8.11 Judgments are made about the value attached to the views experienced taking into account factors which can include:
- Views recognised with heritage assets;
 - Inclusion within planning documents and designations (e.g. Landscape Character assessments or Village Design Statements, Neighbourhood Plans or Management Strategies);
 - Views available to visitors and signified by appearance in guide books, tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment (i.e. parking places, sign boards), interpretative material;
 - Views referenced in literature or art.
- A 8.12 Visual amenity value is usually judged from ***Very high to low*** depending on the degree of value criteria which is represented or evidenced on the appraisal site and can be assessed using the judgment criteria in **Table I**.

Visual sensitivity

- A 8.13 An appraisal of sensitivity for each receptor is made in which judgments on the susceptibility of the receptor and the value attached to the views are combined. This is usually expressed in a narrative form on a scale ranging from low, through medium, high to very high. Receptor types may be grouped together to assess their relative sensitivity to the proposals.

Magnitude of Effects

- A 8.14 Effects are assessed and described for each receptor with reference to representative and/or specific viewpoints. The size of scale, geographical extent and duration and reversibility of the change in the view are assessed. Consideration of the scale and geographical extent of change takes into account:

- The scale in change of view;
- Degree in contrast or integration within the view;
- Amount of time visible,
- Angle of view; and distance from receptor
- Extent of area over which changes visible;
- The potential for weather conditions to restrict views;
- The principle aspect of the viewpoints/viewers;
- The potential for the development to attract the eye or to become a focal point in the view.

- A 8.15 Duration and reversibility of Visual Effects are considered where:

- Duration- can be judged on a scale of short (e.g. 0-5 years), medium term (e.g. 5-10 years) or long term (e.g. 10-25 years) although there is no fixed rule.
- Reversibility - a judgement is made on the prospects and practicality of the particular effect being reversed.

- A 8.16 The distance from the closest visible part the proposed development has been defined as follows:

- Close distance views - less than 250m;
- Middle distance views - 250-1000 m; and
- Long distance views - over 1000m.

- A 8.17 These factors are combined in order to judge the magnitude of visual effect for each individual or group of receptors. The magnitude is then categorised as Substantial to Negligible in accordance with the criteria in **Table J**.

Significance of landscape effect

- A 8.18 The correlation between sensitivity and magnitude of effects (impact) is determined to arrive at a judgment of the overall significance of landscape effect in accordance with **Table K**. Where the overall effect is considered neutral the reasons for that assessment are stated.

- A 8.19 Descriptors of the significance of visual effects categories which assist in the overall analysis are stated in **Table L**.

A 10.0 Mitigation

A 10.1 Proposed mitigation measures may help to reduce potentially negative landscape and visual effects. All of the adverse landscape and visual effects that are considered likely to occur throughout the project life cycle, including its construction and operation) may be considered for mitigation where this is possible. Mitigating a significant adverse effect may reduce its severity or alter its nature. Where visual effects are judged significant and adverse the mitigation proposals and their management for the future as contained within the development proposals for preventing/avoiding, reducing, or offsetting or compensating for them in terms of mitigation are described. The significant visual effects remaining after mitigation are summarized.

A 11.0 Cumulative Effect

A 11.1 Cumulative effects are the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments. Cumulative landscape effects can impact on either the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or any special values attached to it. Cumulative visual effects can be caused by *combined visibility* which occurs where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint and/or sequential effects which occur when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see different developments. The baseline, timescale and types of developments to consider are agreed early within the assessment process with the LPA and the effects are judged in the same way as for the assessment on the landscape and visual effects of the project itself.

A 12.0 Residual Effects

A 12.1 The residual effect is the end result relating to environmental effect following mitigation at the operational stage in both landscape and visual terms.

A 13.0 Use of the Tables

A 13.1 The series of **Tables** are compiled to guide the assessment of the landscape and visual receptors, the value, quality and susceptibility of the landscape and to assist the assessment of change on the landscape resource and for receptors which in turn provides a scale of *Significance of Effect*. The tables have been compiled through the experience of the company over several years of completing LVIA's within the context of current landscape policy and guidance from the Landscape Institute and from review of such assessments by peers within the profession. Attendance at masterclass workshops provided by the Landscape Institute has also assisted in the compilation of the criteria. The tables provide baseline criteria against which 'values or judgments' can be derived and to provide a consistent assessment of significance. The tables, however, should not necessarily provide a definitive scale of significance and are intended to support the narrative text of the report when assessing both landscape and visual impact.

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

TABLE A - CRITERIA FOR SUSCEPTIBILITY OF LANDSCAPE TO CHANGE

Landscape Susceptibility	Judgement criteria	Possible Definition	Typical Example
Very High Change very likely to occur and be perceptible to a very high degree.	• This type of development would potentially bring about;	An iconic landscape or element(s) held in high regard both nationally, regionally and by the majority of the local community; A landscape or element(s) widely used by both the local community and a broader visiting community; Features of particular historical protected significance; Landscape or space which defines or is closely associated with a community and its life and livelihood.	Nationally, regionally recognised e.g. parts of National Park, National Scenic Area, Special Landscape Area; Conservation or Listed status; Registered Historic Garden and Designed Landscape.
High Change very likely to occur and be perceptible to a high degree.	• A change in and/or partial or complete loss of elements, features, or aesthetic or perceptual characteristics, that have been identified as contributing to the characteristic and the distinctiveness of the landscape;	A landscape or element(s) recognised regionally and locally as important; A landscape widely used by the local community; Features or elements widely used or visited and held in association with the area or community.	Part of an AGLV/AONB.
Medium Change very likely to occur and be perceptible to a moderate degree.	• The addition of new elements of features that could influence the character and distinctiveness of the landscape; • A combined effect of these that could bring about changes in overall character.	A landscape of local importance ; A landscape widely used by the local community; A sense of place recognisable and associated with the local area.	Area of local landscape importance.
Low Change very likely to occur and be perceptible to a low degree.		A landscape without particular noted significance; A landscape or elements infrequently used by the local community; A landscape which is not distinct and does not add to the overall context of the area.	-

TABLE B - CRITERIA FOR DESCRIBING LANDSCAPE VALUE

Landscape Value	Judgement criteria	Possible Definition	Typical Example
Very High All or most criteria hold true and/or are strongly represented and are reflected by national landscape designation	• Landscape condition is good/intact; • High scenic value; • Landscape characteristics, features or elements (including valued views) are important and valued examples representative of that identified in LCA/other document and/or representative of a Landscape Character Type that is particularly rare; • Elements of conservation/historical/cultural interest are present or strongly represented; • Recreation value evidenced e.g. promoted route; • Valuable perceptual aspects e.g. wildness and/or tranquillity and/or remote.	An iconic landscape or element(s) held in high regard both nationally, regionally and by the majority of the local community; A landscape or element(s) widely used by both the local community and a broader visiting community; Features of particular historical protected significance; Landscape or space which defines or is closely associated with a community and its life and livelihood.	Nationally, regionally recognised e.g. parts of National Park, National Scenic Area, Special Landscape Area; Conservation or Listed status; Registered Historic Garden and Designed Landscape.
Good All or most criteria hold true and/or are strongly represented.		A landscape or element(s) recognised regionally and locally as important; A landscape widely used by the local community; Features or elements widely used or visited and held in association with the area or community.	Part of an AGLV/AONB.
Moderate Some or most criteria hold true and/or are strongly represented.		A landscape of local importance ; A landscape widely used by the local community; A sense of place recognisable and associated with the local area.	Area of local landscape importance.
Low Few criteria hold true and/or are weakly represented.		A landscape without particular noted significance; A landscape or elements infrequently used by the local community; A landscape which is not distinct and does not add to the overall context of the area.	Gap land within/cities/towns/villages. Brown field site. Urban fringe land of mixed use.
Very Low Single criterion represented to a limited degree.		A landscape without particular noted significance; A landscape or elements not used or used by the local community; A landscape which is degraded and in poor condition.	Derelict site.

TABLE C - CRITERIA FOR DESCRIBING LANDSCAPE QUALITY AND CONDITION

Landscape Quality	Definition	Typical Example
Exceptional/Very High	Strong landscape structure, characteristics, patterns, and/or clear urban grain identifiable with a historic period or event; Appropriate management for land use and land cover and/or a well maintained urban environment of distinction; Distinct features worthy of conservation, historic architectural grain; Sense of place exceptional local distinctiveness; No detracting features.	Internationally or nationally recognised. World Heritage Sites, National Parks, National Scenic Area, Special Landscape Area.
High	Strong landscape structure, characteristic patterns and/or clear urban grain; Appropriate management for land use and land cover, but potentially scope to improve; Distinct features worthy conservation; Sense of place; Occasional detracting features.	Nationally, regionally recognised e.g. parts of National Scenic Area, Conservation Area or Listed status; Registered Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes
Good/Medium	Recognisable landscape structure and/or urban grain; Scope to improve management for land use and land cover; Some features worthy of conservation; Sense of place; Some detracting features.	Regionally recognised e.g. localised areas within National Park, National Scenic Area, ANOB.
Ordinary	Distinguishable landscape structure, characteristics, patterns of landform and land cover often masked by land use; Fractured urban grain with patterns of use difficult to distinguish; Scope to improve management of vegetation; Some features worthy of conservation; Some detracting features and diminishing condition of features.	Locally recognised landscape without specific designation. Landscape often a settlement with no other designation
Weak	Weak landscape structure, characteristic patterns of landform and land cover are missing, little or no recognisable urban grain; Mixed land use evident; Lack of management and intervention has resulted in degradation; Frequent detracting features; Poor condition.	A landscape without note or one singled out as being degraded or requiring improvement.
Very Weak	Degraded landscape structure, characteristic patterns and/or urban grain missing; Mixed land use or dereliction dominates; Lack of management/ intervention has resulted in degradation; Extensive detracting features; Condition considered irreversible resulting in lost features.	A landscape likely to be singled out as needing intervention or regeneration.

TABLE D - CRITERIA FOR DESCRIBING LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (NATURE)

Landscape Type	High	Medium	Low
Landscape designation	A landscape of distinctive character susceptible to relatively small changes. Includes national or regionally designated landscapes e.g. Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), National Scenic Area. Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes on the National Register	A landscape of moderately valued characteristics, including local landscape designations.	A landscape of relative unimportance, the nature of which is tolerant to substantial change. No landscape designation.
Landscape resource	Important landscape resources or landscapes of particularly distinctive character and therefore likely to be subject to national designation or otherwise with high values to the public. Is vulnerable to minor changes.	Moderately valued characteristics reasonably tolerant of change with a gradation between High and Low	Relatively unimportant/ immature or damaged landscapes tolerant of substantial change.
Scale and enclosure	Small intimate landscape.	Medium scale landscape.	Large scale open landscape.
Landform and topography	Mountainous or large dominating hills and valleys. Intimate small scale landscapes defined through easily identifiable elements in the immediate landscape.	Rolling landform with small hills and valleys. Some intimacy and human scale through landscape elements such as hedgerows and woodland copses.	Large scale open landscape. Little intimacy or human scale, few character elements or features.
Settlement	Organic land cover pattern	A gradation between High and Low	Grid like linear land cover pattern
Landmarks and visible built structures	Landscape with symbolic or important features	A gradation between High and Low	Landscape with no recognised individual features or elements
Remoteness and tranquillity	Remote location, little evidence of human activity	A gradation between High and Low	Highly developed countryside areas with continuous evidence of human activity
Landscape Quality and Value	A landscape of exceptional or high quality and/or high value.	A landscape of good or ordinary quality and /or good or moderate value	A landscape of low or poor quality and value

TABLE E – MAGNITUDE (NATURE OF EFFECT) OF CHANGE/IMPACT AND TYPICAL DESCRIPTORS (LANDSCAPE)

Magnitude of Change	Judgment criteria
Very large/Substantial adverse	The development would result in a prominent and wholesale change in the balance of the landscape character (degrade) over the area in question. Major alteration to significant elements or features or the removal/introduction of substantial elements that cannot be replaced within a time scale of 25 years. The alteration of a landscape to substantially increase/decrease both the landscape value and quality.
Large adverse	The development would result in an obvious and/or perceptible change to the landscape character (degrade). Alteration to elements or features or partial removal/introduction. The alteration of a landscape to decrease both the landscape value and quality. Medium changes to the localised area which whilst perceptible do not fundamentally change local character.
Medium adverse	The development would result in a slight change to the landscape character (or degrade). Change that is only just perceptible/few components of the wider landscape changed or modest/unremarkable changes in a localised area. Alteration to minor elements or features or the removal/introduction. The alteration of a landscape to increase/decrease both the landscape value and quality.
Small	A very minor change which is not uncharacteristic and maintains the quality and value of the landscape or features can be readily replaced..
Very small adverse/Negligible	No noticeable loss, damage or alteration to features or elements.
Small beneficial	Barely noticeable improvement of character by the restoration of existing features and elements, and/or the removal of uncharacteristic features and elements, or by the addition of new characteristics that are deemed acceptable to the overall character.
Medium beneficial	Slight improvement of character by the restoration of existing features and elements, and/or the removal of uncharacteristic features and elements, or by the addition of new characteristics that are deemed acceptable to the overall character.
Large beneficial	Partial or noticeable improvement of character by the restoration of existing features and elements, and/or the removal of uncharacteristic features and elements, or by the addition of new characteristics that are deemed acceptable and an enhancement to the overall character.
Major beneficial	Large scale improvement of character by the restoration of existing features and elements, and/or the removal of uncharacteristic features and elements, or by the addition of new characteristics that are deemed acceptable and provides enhancement which is far reaching within the overall character of the area and surrounding landscape in question.

TABLE F - SUMMARY TABLE TO DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Landscape Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect				
	Substantial	Large	Medium	Small	Very small/Negligible
Very High	Major	Major	Moderate- Major	Moderate	Negligible
High	Major	Major	Moderate- Major	Moderate	Negligible
Medium	Moderate- Major	Moderate- Major	Moderate	Minor-Moderate	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate	Minor-Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Very Low	Minor	Negligible-Minor	Negligible-Minor	Negligible	Negligible to Non

The summary of effects on landscape can be expressed as an adverse or beneficial effect depending on the assessor's view regarding the nature and quality of the existing resource and how this has been changed. In some circumstances the change may be described as a neutral change if the expectation of the viewer or the fundamental nature and characteristics of a landscape appear unaffected.

Negligible is the accepted terminology for effects that cannot be seen or distinguished.

TABLE G – DESCRIPTORS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS CATEGORIES

Significance Category	Typical Descriptors of Effect
Major beneficial (positive) effect	The project would provide an opportunity to enhance the landscape because: • It fits very well with the scale, landform, pattern and appearance of the landscape. • There is potential, through mitigation or design, to create or enable the restoration of characteristic features and elements partially lost or diminished as the result of changes resulting from inappropriate management or development. • It enables a sense of place to be enhanced through good design and/or well designed mitigation measures. • It facilitates national and local policy objectives to regenerate degraded countryside or urban areas.
Moderate beneficial (positive) effect	The project would provide an opportunity to enhance the landscape because: • It fits very well with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape. • There is potential, through mitigation, to enable the restoration of characteristic features and elements, partially lost or diminished as the result of changes resulting from intensive farming or inappropriate development. • It will enable a sense of place to be restored or enhanced through beneficial mitigation and sensitive design. • It furthers national and local policy objectives to regenerate degraded countryside or urban areas.
Minor beneficial (positive) effect	The project would: • Fit well with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape by maintaining or enhancing the existing character. • Enable some sense of place to be restored through well designed mitigation measure. • Maintain or enhance existing landscape character. • Avoid conflict with national and local policy towards protection of the countryside or protection/enhancement of urban areas.
Neutral effect	The project would: • Complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape. • Incorporate measure for mitigation to ensure that the project will blend in well with surrounding landscape features and elements. • Avoid having an adverse effect on the current level of tranquillity of the landscape. • Maintain existing landscape character and enable a sense of place to be retained through beneficial and sensitive design. • Avoid conflict with national and local policy towards protection of the countryside or protection/enhancement of urban areas.
Minor adverse (negative) effect	The project would: • Not quite fit the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape. • Be unable to be completely mitigated because of the nature of the project itself or the character of the landscape. • Affect an area of recognized landscape quality. • Conflict with local authority policies for protecting the local character of the countryside of the protection/enhancement of urban environments.
Moderate adverse (negative) effect	The project would: • Be out of scale with the landscape or conflict with the local pattern and landform. • Be unable to be fully mitigated (i.e. mitigation will not prevent the scheme from damaging the landscape in the longer term). • Have an adverse impact on a landscape of recognized quality or on vulnerable and important character feature or elements. • Be in conflict with national and local policies to protect open land and nationally recognized countryside, or to protect/enhance the urban environment.
Major adverse (negative) effect	The project would be very damaging to the landscape because it: • Is at considerable variance with the landform, scale, pattern and appearance of the landscape. • Is likely to degrade, diminish or even destroy the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements. • Will be substantially damaging to a high quality or highly valued landscape, causing it to change and be considerably diminished in quality. • Cannot be adequately mitigated. • Is in serious conflict with national and local policy for the protection of nationally recognized countryside or for the protection/enhancement of the urban environment.
Very large adverse (negative) effect	The project would result in exceptionally severe adverse impact on the landscape because it: • Is at complete variance with the landform, scale, pattern and appearance of the landscape. • Would permanently damage or degrade, badly diminish or even destroy the integrity of characteristic feature and elements. • Would cause a very high quality or highly valued landscape to be permanently changed and its quality very considerably diminished. • Cannot be mitigated (i.e. there are no measure that would protect or replace the loss of a nationally important landscape). • Cannot be reconciled with national and local policy for the protection of nationally recognized countryside or for the protection/enhancement of the urban environment.

TABLE H – CRITERIA FOR SUSCEPTIBILITY OF VISUAL RECEPTORS TO CHANGE

Susceptibility	Place	Receptor
Very High 	Observers whose attention or interest may be focused on the landscape and recognised views in particular e.g. heritage assets/attractions/special landscapes.	Visitors to a promoted/recognised/designated viewpoint from where notable and recorded views are available.
	Private residential dwelling.	Residents at home and in gardens where their views are likely to be focused on the landscape.
	Public rights of way (PRoW). Bridleways Open Access land. National Trust Land.	Pedestrians of footpaths/horse riders/cyclists on promoted national/regional/purpose built recreational routes.
High 	Tourist spots, Country Parks, documented viewpoint locations.	Visitors to heritage, tourist assets and other attractions where views of the landscape setting are important.
	Private residential dwelling.	Residents at home.
	Public rights of way (PRoW). Open Access land. National Trust Land.	Recreational users of footpaths/bridleways and land where their interest is likely to be focused on the landscape.
	Public road network/highway/water courses.	Walkers/horse riders/cyclists/boat users using roads and lanes where their interest is likely to be focused on the landscape.
	Public road network/highways.	Motor borne users of highways where their attention may be particularly focused on the special or high scenic quality of the route or with clear open views across the landscape.
Medium 	Highway footpaths.	Pedestrian users of pavements where attention may only be partially focused on the scenic quality of the route.
	Highways	Users of highways where their attention may only partially be focused on views/the scenic quality of the route.
	Private residential dwelling.	Residents without direct views.
Low 	Fast speed transport/highway routes generally.	Drivers and passengers of motor borne vehicles, trains where the focus of attention is on driving, traffic conditions and the road rather than the scenic quality or landscape.
	Private residential dwelling.	Residents not generally at home in daylight hours.
	Public rights of way (PRoW). Open Access land. National Trust Land.	Infrequently occupied.
	Places of employment including hospitals and schools.	Workers, pupils, teachers, staff where attention is not readily focused on views.
	Highways and paths.	Pedestrians and cyclists whose attention is not likely to be focused on the scenic quality of the route.
	Sports and recreational facilities.	People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation and not dependant on view or focus of attention solely on activity.
  Very Low	Public rights of way (PRoW). Open Access land. National Trust Land.	Walkers/horse riders/cyclists/boat users using roads and lanes where their interest is likely not to be focused on the landscape.
	Workplace	People at their place of work whose attention is not focused on their surroundings.
	Agricultural and farming land.	Agricultural workers whose activity is of a nature which is potentially tolerant of visual change.
	Motorways and rapid transit trainlines/routes	Motor borne users of highways where their attention is not focused on the quality of the route and views.

TABLE I - CRITERIA FOR VALUE ATTACHED TO A VIEW

Landscape Value	Judgement criteria	Possible Definition	Typical Example
Very High Criteria very strongly represented and evidenced.	Value of views recognised through: - Relationship with heritage asset;; - Inclusion within or protected by planning documents e.g. including Landscape Character Assessments, Village design Statements, Neighbourhood Plans or Management plans.	An iconic landscape or element(s) held in high regard both nationally, regionally and by the majority of the local community; A landscape or element(s) widely used by both the local community and a broader visiting community; Features of particular historical protected significance or distinctiveness; Landscape or space which defines or is closely associated with a community and its life and livelihood. Views which are not interrupted and in full view.	Nationally, regionally recognised e.g. parts of National Park, National Scenic Area, Special Landscape Area; Conservation or Listed status; Registered Historic Garden and Designed Landscape.
High Criteria strongly represented and evidenced.	Value attached to views available to visitors signified by: - Iconic views or skylines; - Spectacular panoramic views over far distances; - Appearance in guidebooks; - Provision of facilities for enjoyment e.g. parking places, sign boards; - Interpretive material, promotional material.	A landscape or element(s) recognised regionally and locally as important; A landscape widely used by the local community; Features or elements widely used or visited and held in association with the area or community. Views which are sometimes interrupted but where full views can be gained.	Part of an AGLV/AONB.
Moderate Criteria represented and evidenced.	Value attached to views through reference to art or literature.	A landscape of local importance ; A landscape widely used by the local community; A sense of place recognisable and associated with the local area. Views which are partially interrupted	Area of local landscape importance.
Low No criteria represented.		A landscape without particular noted significance; A landscape or elements infrequently used by the local community; A landscape which is not distinct and does not add to the overall context of the area. Views which are restricted.	-

TABLE J – MAGNITUDE (NATURE OF EFFECT) OF CHANGE/IMPACT (VISUAL)

Magnitude	Justification
Very large/Substantial adverse	▪ Total loss or major alteration to key or primary elements/features/characteristics of the baseline existing landscape or view, and/or the introduction of totally uncharacteristic elements with the receiving landscape. ▪ Development will dominate view or directly faces viewpoint. ▪ Development fills whole of site or a substantial proportion of it. ▪ Site is within an open view with few or no intervening factors. ▪ Very close proximity to view – less than 0.5 kilometres. ▪ 24 hour use of lighting. ▪ Change directly visible, over a long duration and/or particularly noticeable on account of being in very near distance. ▪ Development at construction phase, and of a temporary but lengthy duration, i.e. over 5 years.
Large adverse	▪ Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape or view and/or the introduction of elements that may be prominent but not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape. ▪ Development is moderately close to views – 0.5 to 1.5 kilometres away. ▪ Site is a notable component of the view. ▪ View in general direction of development. ▪ Approximately 50-75% of development can be viewed. ▪ View is limited by intervening factors. ▪ Use of lighting for part of the night. ▪ Change directly visible, over a long duration and/or particularly noticeable on account of being in near distance. ▪ Development at construction phase, therefore of a moderate temporary duration, i.e. between 2-5 years.
Medium adverse	▪ Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape or view and/or the introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape. ▪ The development is a small part of a wider or panoramic view. ▪ Development is over 1.5 kilometres away. ▪ Development fills half to a small proportion of the site. ▪ Change visible in oblique views and/or of limited duration. ▪ View of development is largely obscured by intervening factors. ▪ Development blends well with its surroundings. ▪ Occasional use of lighting.
Small	▪ Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape or view and/or the introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic within the receiving or adjacent landscape – approximating to 'no change' situation. ▪ Site is over 3-4 kilometres away. ▪ Development is only identified by one or two of its components. ▪ Intervening and screening factors/intervening vegetation detract from seeing or noticing development – view severely restricted. ▪ Change of very limited duration. ▪ Development will be indistinguishable from its surroundings or adjacent land uses. ▪ No use of lighting.
Very small/Negligible	▪ Site is barely visible to views. ▪ Virtually imperceptible ▪ Changes to composition and balance of elements within view9S0.

TABLE K - SUMMARY TABLE TO DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE OF VISUAL EFFECTS

Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect				
	Substantial	Large	Medium	Small	Very small/Negligible
Very High	Major	Major	Moderate- Major	Moderate	Negligible
High	Major	Major	Moderate- Major	Moderate	Negligible
Medium	Moderate- Major	Moderate- Major	Moderate	Minor-Moderate	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate	Minor-Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Very Low	Minor	Negligible-Minor	Negligible-Minor	Negligible	Negligible to Non

The summary of effects can be expressed as an adverse or beneficial effect depending on the assessor's view regarding the nature and quality of the existing resource and how this has been changed. In some circumstances the change may be described as a neutral change if the expectation of the viewer or the fundamental nature and characteristics of a view appear unaffected.

Negligible is the accepted terminology for effects that cannot be seen or distinguished.

TABLE L - DESCRIPTORS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VISUAL EFFECT CATEGORIES

Significance	Typical Criteria
Major Beneficial	The project would lead to a major improvement in a view from a highly sensitive receptor.
Moderate Beneficial	The proposals would cause obvious improvement to a view from a moderately sensitive receptor, or perceptible improvement to a view from a more sensitive receptor.
Minor Beneficial	The project would cause limited improvement to a view from a receptor of medium sensitivity, but would still be a noticeable element within the view, or would cause greater improvement to a view from a receptor of low sensitivity.
Negligible Beneficial	The project would not significantly change the view but would still be discernible, and the effect would be beneficial.
Neutral/Non	No change in the view.
Negligible Adverse	The project would not significantly change the view but would still be discernible, and the effect would be adverse.
Minor Adverse	The project would cause limited deterioration to a view from a receptor of medium sensitivity, or cause greater deterioration to a view from a receptor of low sensitivity, and would be a noticeable element in the view.
Moderate Adverse	The project would cause obvious deterioration to a view from a moderately sensitive receptor, or perceptible damage to a view from a more sensitive receptor.
Major Adverse	The project would cause major deterioration to a view from a highly sensitive receptor, and would constitute a major discordant or dominant element in the view.

APPENDIX 2: Indicative Masterplan Version D

EXISTING WOODLAND AREAS & MITIGATION PLANTING

- Area of UK BAP priority habitat (woodland) present on site = **approx 0.97 hectares**
- Retention of UK BAP priority habitat (woodland) on site = **approx 0.4 hectares** (including TPO Woodland W1 and all other TPO trees)
- Loss of young/ semi mature regenerating Birch & Hawthorn scrub UK BAP priority habitat (compartments B, H & I) = **approx 0.57 hectares**
- Mitigating woodland planting within open space, around Woodland W1, Compartment E and edge of brook on southern boundary = **approx 0.62 hectares**
- Total of UK BAP priority habitat on site (existing and proposed) following mitigation planting = **approx 1.02 hectares**



Key:

- Rear gardens
- Front gardens curtilage
- Proposed Dwellings
- Proposed woodland mitigation planting
- Proposed shrub planting
- Proposed avenue tree planting
- Existing tree planting
- Existing ponds
- New proposed ponds
- Proposed amenity grass areas
- Proposed LEAP area
- Proposed roads/ footpaths
- Existing Highway verge
- Existing grassland retained
- Damp grassland and scrub habitat
- Log pile hibernacula average of 10m wide
- Existing public right of way (rerouted at bridge)
- Existing public right of way
- Proposed public footpaths
- T.P.O Area
- Alignment of stream

Land Adjacent to The Plough Inn, Crewe Road, Alsager

Indicative Masterplan (70 Units)

Indicative Masterplan Version D
1:750@A1
(See scale bar)

**APPENDIX 3: Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment, 2008:
Extract Type 10 – Lower Farms and Woods**

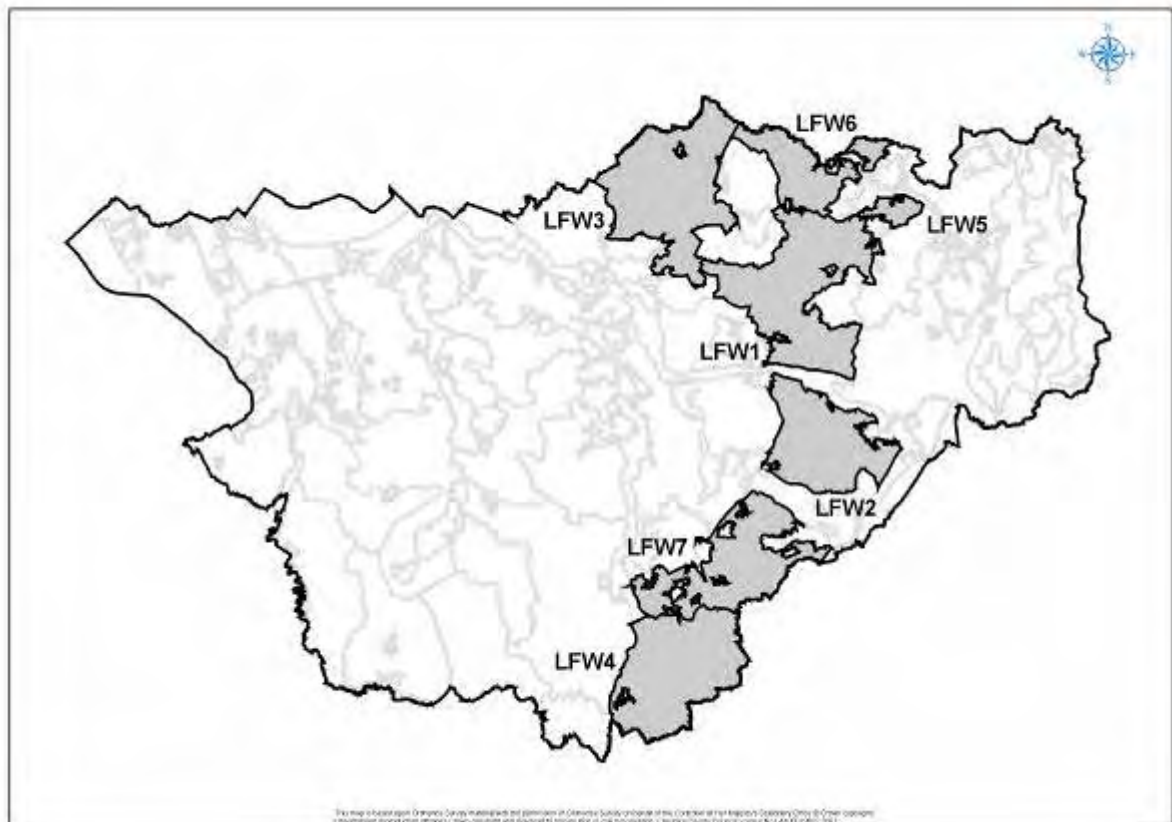
Landscape Character Type 10:

Lower Farms and Woods



LANDSCAPE TYPE 10: LOWER FARMS AND WOODS

Lower undulating farms and woodland



LFW1: Marthall LFW2: Brereton Heath LFW3: Arley LFW4: Audlem
LFW5: Chonar LFW6: Ashley LFW7: Barthomley

Key Characteristics:

- ❖ Low lying gently rolling topography
- ❖ Hedgerow boundaries and standard trees in a mix of medieval and post-medieval reorganised fields (irregular, semi-regular and regular up to 8ha) but with a loss of boundaries leading to formation of large fields and a large proportion of fences adding to this impression.
- ❖ Horsiculture – fenced horse paddocks.
- ❖ High density of woodland – blocks, coverts and riparian
- ❖ Medium settlement density - mix of dispersed farms and nucleated hamlets/ villages
- ❖ Mosses and some meres resulting from glacial deposits
- ❖ Large number of water bodies

General Description:

This character type extends from High Leigh and Arley in the north, east to Poynton and Congleton and as far south as Audlem. It has been divided into seven character areas.

This very gently rolling landscape type has many similarities with the *Lowland Plain*, yet it has a greater concentration of woodland and a slightly higher settlement density with a greater occurrence of nucleated hamlets and villages.

Land use is a mix of arable and pasture, while settlement largely retains its dispersed pattern but with an increase from low to medium density. Intensive reorganisation during the post-medieval period saw the break up of medieval field patterns. Small surviving mosses are typical for most areas as are ponds.

Visual Character:

This type is characterised by a medium scale landscape, with local variations dependant upon the presence of woodland and the condition of the hedgerows. Local increases in vegetation are often associated with larger brooks or minor watercourses. The better drained parts tend to favour arable farming. Many areas appear to be well wooded, with an intact hedgerow system and frequent woodland blocks, some of a relatively large size compared to the rest of the county. There is a great variety in the range of available views but these are often limited in extent due to the lack of elevated vantage points. Many views are partly blocked or filtered by high hedgerows or woodland. To the west there are no obvious landmarks but where views are available to the east the Pennine Hills are visible in the distance.

Many locations have a very rural character with small, winding country lanes and traditional farm buildings still in active use.

In a limited number of localities there is evidence of field boundary rationalization. The removal of hedgerows has created a larger-scale landscape with more extensive views. In such areas the larger blocks of woodland can appear as prominent features in an open, low lying landscape.

Physical Influences:

This character type has gently undulating topography, in some areas appearing to be almost flat e.g. Brereton Heath. Overall elevation ranges from c 10 – 130 m AOD.

The underlying geology of this type is predominantly made up of one or more forms of halite (rock salt) and mudstone e.g. Bollin Mudstone and Northwich Halite. This is overlain by till, interspersed with glacio-fluvial sand and gravel,

river terrace sand and gravel, alluvium and pockets of peat that have accumulated in depressions in the drift deposits.

Soils are predominantly typical argillic stagnogleys, and in the Marthall and Brereton Heath areas this is combined with typical brown sands and typical humo-ferric podzols.

There is a light scatter of meres and mosses across this type, albeit reduced in scale due to drainage in the modern period. The meres and mosses of Cheshire form part of a nationally important series of open water and peatland sites. They developed in the natural depressions in the glacial drift following the retreat of the ice sheets some 15,000 years ago. There are more than 30 meres or pools in Cheshire ranging in depth from 1-27m and 2-70ha in area. Associated fringing habitats such as reedswamp, fen and damp pasture add to the value of meres. The development of these habitats is associated with peat accumulation which in some cases leads to in-filling, becoming nutrient poor thus leading to the formation of bog or mossland. Cheshire was formerly dotted with small scale mosses and mires, in some cases only a few metres across but each individually named and known to local inhabitants. Many of these have been lost and drained and surviving examples are increasingly valuable and many are designated as SSSIs for example at Brookhouse Moss where nationally rare species such as bog rosemary, sundew and crowberry are present. Mosses are explored in greater detail in the *Mossland* character type.

Secondary calcium carbonate deposits are common at a depth of 1-2m in the till, and before cheap lime was made available in the 19th century this was dug and spread on the surrounding fields to reduce acidity. On sandy soils this practice of marling also increases fertility and moisture holding capacity. The digging of these marl pits led to the creation of ponds as the pits filled with water and were colonised by a rich variety of plants and animals from other wetland habitats of greater antiquity, for example, meres and mosses. Clay pits were also dug for use in daub in the construction of vernacular structures and later to make bricks.

The natural processes of vegetation succession have reduced many ponds to small, shallow features, over shaded with trees and with little open water. Nevertheless, it is estimated that Cheshire's 16,000 ponds represent some 10% of all farm ponds in England and Wales, and still provide an important wildlife resource. Characteristic plant species include bur marigold, water plantain, tubular water-dropwort, reedmace, branched bur-reed, water horsetail, common spike-rush, purple loosestrife, water milfoil, various water lilies and pondweeds. A wide range of invertebrates are associated with marl pits as well as all five species of amphibian found in Cheshire, including the European protected great crested newt.

There are scattered small patches of semi-improved and unimproved grassland, which provide valuable habitats for other botanical species. Acid grassland is rare in lowland Cheshire.

Much like the *Rolling Farmland* and *Sandy Woods* types this was once an area where heath was common – in the 18th century there was a large heath at West Heath to the west of Congleton, which is now a suburb of the town; Swettenham and Peover Heaths survive as place names only; while just a small fragment of the former Brereton Heath survives.

While small wooded copses and coverts are relatively common, there are larger blocks of broad leaves and conifer plantations, as well as riparian woodland on steep slopes alongside streams and in the grounds of estates e.g. shelter belts and visual screens. A small proportion of this is ancient woodland – for example Bongs Wood on the slopes of Arley Brook where the ground flora includes ancient woodland indicator species such as dog's mercury and wood anemone. Woodland also occurs in association with moss areas – alder and willow are typical of the damper areas, progressing to oak and sycamore where the ground becomes better drained.

Cultural Influences:

Overall settlement has a medium density – predominantly this is dispersed but with some small nucleated hamlets and villages and very occasionally larger villages. This is to be expected given the proximity of this type to some large urban areas as well as some of the highly desirable residential settlements in Cheshire e.g. Knutsford and Alderley Edge and the motorway infrastructure which makes commuting possible.

Field patterns are a mix of medieval enclosure with post medieval improvements and modern adaptation. The overall pattern is therefore a combination of regular, irregular and semi-regular form, varying from small to medium (up to 8ha) in size, with some larger fields. The survival of medieval field systems is fragmentary, resulting from the extensive post medieval agricultural changes and programmes of enhancement that occurred in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Heathland and mosses were also enclosed and drained at this time to maximise productivity. Today the land is used for arable as well as pastoral farming.

Boundaries are a mix of patchy hawthorn hedges with standard trees and fences. There has been substantial boundary loss, which has led to the formation of larger fields and the fencing exacerbates impression of larger fields. Horsiculture also has made an impact on this area e.g. stables and modern fenced horse paddocks.

Typical architectural materials used are red brick, some cottages and houses with a white render. There are also some black and white timber framed cottages as well as examples with brick noggin.

Human activity in this type can be traced back to prehistory, with a number of Bronze Age barrows e.g. the Jodrell Bank barrow cemetery. A possible Roman army camp is located at Bent Farm. Moats are typical features in this type and are indicative of affluence in the medieval period, when they were constructed to provide ornamentation and to declare a certain level of status

rather than to act as defensive features. Fishponds are often associated with moats, which provided a valuable source of food. Moats are found at Hough Hall and in the grounds of Belmont Hall. There are some historic estates e.g. Arley and Peover but far fewer than in the *Estate Wood and Mere* landscape type, which otherwise shares a small number of background characteristics with this type.

Key arterial routes such as the M6 and M56 pass through the character areas but more typical are the network of minor roads. A major landmark located in this type is the Jodrell Bank Observatory.

Issues affecting the Lower Farms and Woods landscape character type

1. **Increase in demand for equestrian facilities** riding schools etc. including enclosed exercise areas and associated large-scale buildings.
2. **Continued pressure for mineral extraction:** current and future operations can present a threat to habitats but also provide opportunities for habitat creation
3. **Changes in farming** including pressure to diversify and changing patterns of land ownership. The purchase of agricultural holdings by non-farmers is becoming a significant force for change, resulting in conversion of farm houses and farm buildings and changes in farm use.
4. **Changes in farm crops.** Increase in areas under arable or fodder crops and a trend towards silage production. Possible move towards bio-energy crops such as miscanthus
5. **On-going decline in traditional woodland management practices** leading to under management of farm woodlands, coverts and copses leading to general deterioration. Many hedgerow trees over-mature and in decline.
6. **Reduction, fragmentation and deterioration of habitats:** Loss of ponds through drainage and in-fill plus nutrient run-off from surrounding farmland. Decline in species-rich hedgerows at some locations. Intensification of grassland management leading to loss of species-rich acid grassland. Loss of ancient woodland through inappropriate management, grazing, encroachment and erosion through informal recreation.
7. **Loss of historic field pattern** due to decline in hedgerow management, with resulting increase in use of fencing.

8. **Loss of historic parkland** to agriculture and recreational use e.g. golf courses.
9. **Erosion of built environment character through incremental development:** This may lead to loss of historic buildings and vernacular character; the suburbanisation of rural properties and their curtilage; pressure for expansion of existing settlement, ribbon development and in-fill.
10. **Standardisation of roads:** Upgrading of lanes and minor roads leading to increasingly suburban character of the countryside.

LFW7: Barthomley Character Area.

Including Crewe Hall, Slaughter Hill & Wheelock Heath

This gently undulating character area is located south of Sandbach and runs as far west as Nantwich and east as far as Alsager. It lies c 40 -110m AOD. Fields are small-large in size and regular- irregular in pattern. This reflects the re-use and adaptation of medieval and post-medieval fields in the modern period. Loss of boundaries and the introduction of fences in the landscape are more recent events.

This is a landscape of strong contrasts with many local variations, and in places the relatively dense settlement pattern is very obvious. The area around Crewe Hall is small scale and verdant due to the presence of large blocks of woodland which curtail many views. Elsewhere around the edge of Crewe the landscape is relatively open due to the combination of flat topography and low field boundaries and is especially susceptible to the visual intrusion of large man-made structures. Large warehouses and industrial buildings, highway over-bridges, tall lighting columns associated with both road and rail infrastructure and built development in general all dominate the surrounding landscape. The topography becomes more undulating towards the county boundary in the south, where there is a strong sense of rural tranquillity due to enclosing landforms and abundant trees and hedgerows.

The area is heavily influenced by its close proximity to Crewe and the development of this railway town, in particular the rapid expansion that it underwent in the 20th century. Accordingly the nucleated settlements on the fringes of Crewe - Haslington, Hough, Shavington, Weston and Wheelock have also undergone modern growth, as has Sandbach to the north. In recent years this area has experienced significant change to landscape character arising from the development of extensive new residential areas upon former agricultural land. The development at Wychwood Park near Weston which includes a hotel and housing is particularly noticeable, where a new road system serves substantial properties constructed adjacent to a new golf course and is surrounded by extensive landscaped areas. Another golf course is located to the north-east of Crewe Hall. There is a background pattern of dispersed settlement, which is typical of the area before the development of Crewe.

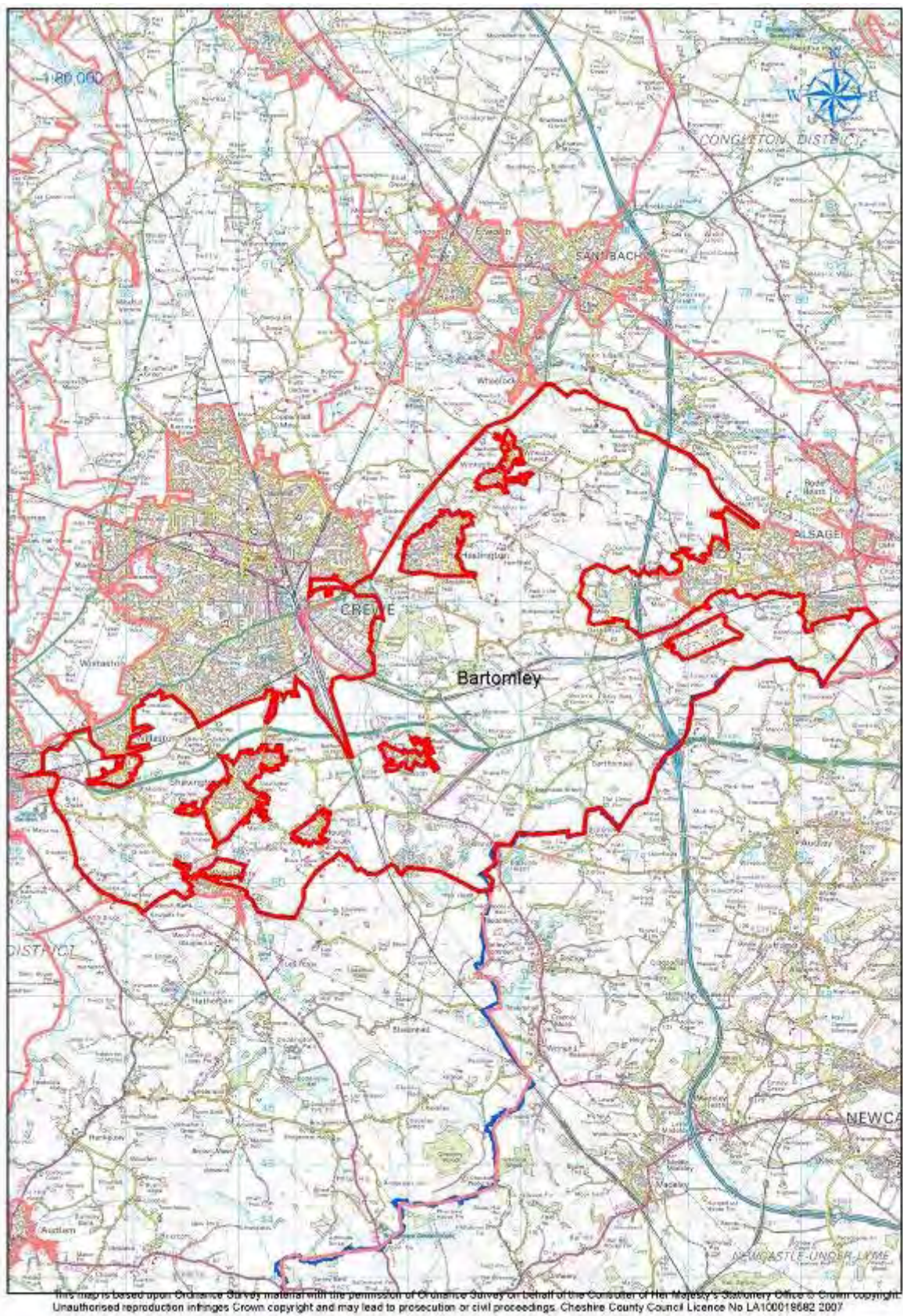
The communications network has had a massive impact on the character of this area – beginning with the introduction of railway lines (the first in 1837) and the subsequent development of the massive railway junction at Crewe. Numerous important highways traversing this area have a substantial impact upon landscape character. The A500 is particularly high where it bridges the main north-south rail line and moving traffic is visible over an extensive area. Elsewhere major highways pass through deep cuttings and the roadside planting schemes are very conspicuous within the original field pattern. The M6 is a very significant visual feature in the east as it traverses the gently undulating landform, progressing between cuttings and embankments with moving vehicles particularly noticeable upon the latter.

There are a number of industrial sites including a vast landfill site at Maw Green to the northeast of Crewe and a Royal Ordnance factory at Radway Green to the south of Alsager. Also in south-east Crewe at Crewe Gates Farm there is a large industrial estate, which has a visual impact upon the surrounding area.

A concentration of woodland occurs at Crewe Hall (listed Grade I) in the park and garden (listed on the English Heritage register as Grade II). Here woodland comprises broadleaves, conifers and a mix of both. Elsewhere woodland cover is limited. Broadleaves follow stretches of water courses such as Engelsea Brook, and Deans Rough and Riders Wood are two small areas of ancient woodland. The Henbury Lee and Monneley Mere areas are also mosslands, characterised in part by drainage ditches. SBIs include Haymoor Green Farm Meadow, Basford Brook and Townhouse Wood.

Finds such as a Neolithic (4000-2000 BC) hand axe and a possible Roman lead saltpan indicate early activity. Much more recent are the remains of a WWII Prisoner of War Camp at Snape Farm where Italian and German POWs were confined. There are a number of high status halls in the area – Willaston, Hough and Weston – all of which are Grade II* and Haslington, which is Grade I.





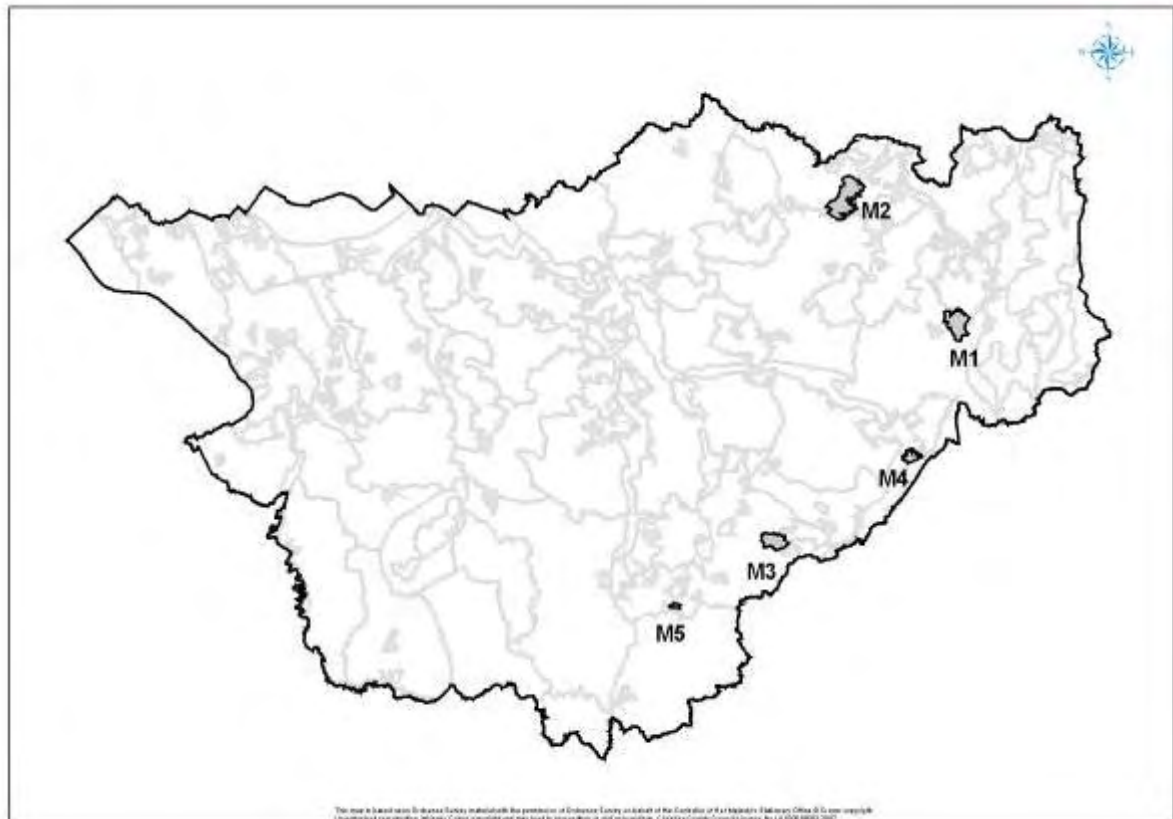
Landscape Character Type 12:

Mosslands



LANDSCAPE TYPE 12: MOSSLAND

The landscape of peat



M1. Danes Moss M2. Lindow Moss M3. Oakhanger Moss
M4. Congleton Moss M5. Wybunbury Moss

Key Characteristics

- An accumulation of peat in water-logged depressions and hollows associated with glacial deposition.
- Oligo-fibrous soils with a high suitability for horticulture when drained.
- A distinctive field pattern, typical of the enclosure of mosslands – long linear moss-rooms.
- Areas of broadleaved woodland – alder, birch and oak.
- Heathland with birch and scrub regeneration.
- Peripheral settlement that has encroached upon the former extent of the moss.
- Place names that are indicative of peat e.g. Moss Lane.
- Leisure facilities e.g. playing fields, cricket grounds.
- Landfill sites.

General Description

The Mosses character type relates to the surviving fragments of a Cheshire landscape that was once far more common in the county. Drainage in particular, as well as peat cutting has subsequently reduced the type to a handful of areas that are still of sufficient scale to identify as distinctive character areas.

Chance finds such as the discovery of the body of Lindow Man through commercial peat extraction are indicative of the value of the irreplaceable archaeological and palaeo-environmental resource this type represents. At the same time the decline in the areas of wet peat with active growth of *Sphagnum* moss with its associated flora and fauna represents the loss of what was once a widespread natural habitat in Cheshire.

Visual Character

The visual characteristics of this landscape type vary considerably depending upon the dominant land use and the extent of natural vegetation remaining. All character areas within this type are located on the edge of large settlements e.g. Wilmslow, Congleton etc. Where the ground has been drained and cleared of woodland, the lack of natural screening can allow surrounding properties and land use activities to dominate this flat, small-scale landscape. In such situations the prevailing landscape character is that of the urban fringe, but often with extensive views out to distant hills. Elsewhere the type is characterised by dense blocks of predominantly birch woodland providing a high degree of enclosure or open areas of wet grassland. At its most extreme this small scale, intimate landscape of dense almost impenetrable growth and small, dank pools can appear inhospitable or intimidating

Physical Influences

Mosses typically occur in areas of glacio-fluvial sand where the hummocky relief has depressions that reach the water table. The underlying geology is predominantly mudstone – Bollin and Eldersfield. Altitude varies across the type from 70m AOD at Lindow up to 160m at Danes Moss, which is to be expected given that the type occurs where there is a high water table or where drainage is restricted. Much of these areas still remain in a semi-natural condition of boggy peatland dominated by birch, sedges and grasses such as purple moor-grass.

Basin peat forms from the accumulation of partially decayed bog plants such as reeds, sedges and *Sphagnum* with woody remains of birch and alder under the influence of ground water which prevents oxidation and breakdown of the organic matter. The thickness of peat depends upon the depth of the depression and the length of time that it has been accumulating. Across Cheshire therefore this can vary from a thin peaty surface to about 10m in deep kettle holes. Most have an earthy surface and are classified as oligo-fibrous earthy peat soils. Almost the whole character type is under grassland or semi-natural boggy peatland. When adequately drained this type provides

valuable land ideally suited to arable and horticultural crops. Surface wetness and a high water table are the main limiting factors in undrained areas.

This character type supports a variety of fauna scarce species of damselfly and dragonfly and butterflies such as brimstone. Adder, a rare reptile in Cheshire, is found at Oakhanger Moss.

Cultural Influences

Cheshire was formerly dotted with small scale mosses and mires, in some cases only a few metres across but each individually named and known to local inhabitants. This landscape character type refers to the larger mosses that survive today despite intensive drainage and peat cutting. For example, Lindow Moss was originally c 600 ha and formed in a glacial hollow.

Human activity in the mosses can be traced back into prehistory and because of the anaerobic conditions provided by the water-logged peat; archaeological finds have been well preserved. The most famous of these finds is Lindow Man, a ritually deposited body dated to the Iron Age/Romano British period (c 700 BC – AD 500), who was recovered from the peat at Lindow Moss during extraction. A section of an undated timber causeway was also discovered at Lindow and it is likely that other trackways traverse the mosses elsewhere. These were treacherous places to cross and fatalities caused by people getting lost are well documented.

Peat has been extensively cut for fuel in the past, while it continues to be harvested for horticultural purposes e.g. at Lindow and White Mosses. In the medieval period people had 'rights of turbary' i.e. the right to cut peat for fuel. Mosses were therefore divided into long, thin strips known as moss rooms, from which turfs were cut. This pattern is fossilised in most of the larger mosses as hedgerows were introduced to enclose this former open area. Other fields in this character type are mainly large and regular in layout and relate to later phases of enclosure. For example, fertile soils for the growth of cereals, roots, *Brassicas* and horticultural crops can be achieved through the drainage and application of sand and fertilisers, while less well drained areas can support grass crops.

The boggy mire has historically provided an unappealing location for settlement. It is the drained periphery of the moss where settlement tends to accumulate e.g. Row of Trees near Wilmslow. Typical place names refer to peat e.g. Moss Farm. Nowadays both Danes Moss and Lindow Moss have landfill sites and other modern features include leisure facilities such as school playing fields and cricket grounds.

Issues affecting the Mossland landscape character type

- 1. Evidence of increase in horse grazing** with associated changes to field boundaries, use of informal animal shelters, sheds etc

2. **Loss of open character of field system** by inappropriate planting of hedgerows and trees.
3. **Loss and under management of historic drainage systems** threatens the historic character of the area.
4. **Eutrophication** due to nutrient run-off from surrounding agricultural areas,
5. **Drainage improvements in surrounding areas** leading to lower water table and reduction in extent and quality of mossland habitat. Drainage can accelerate the natural succession process towards woodland.
6. **Continued commercial extraction of peat** perpetuating loss of important natural and historical resource.
7. **Areas reduced in extent** through encroachment of surrounding industrial and residential areas

M3: Oakhanger Moss Character Area.

Relic wood-covered moss

Located west of Alsager this character area comprises Oakhanger and White Mosses, which are separated by the M6 motorway that runs north-south through the area. This is a flat landscape of mixed land use and varying scales. There are small-scale regular enclosures to the south, elsewhere enclosure is large-scale and reflects where boundaries of earlier small scale enclosure have been removed. This area does not have the typical moss room enclosure pattern, which potentially suggests a later phase of extraction than has taken place at other mossland character areas.

The character is strongly influenced by the M6 motorway, with moving traffic glimpsed through the mature roadside planting scheme, whilst the extensive block of woodland in the west forms another dominant element. Areas of pastoral farmland are defined by straight, generally intact field boundaries with locally abundant hedgerow trees filtering many views. This is a visually diverse agricultural landscape with subtle contrasts provided by the variation in woodland type and the difference in appearance of arable crops and pastureland. Woodland variation leads to changes in the visual character of the landscape, from the lighter greens of the deciduous woods to the darker green and dense shade of the conifer plantations. The extensive area of woodland creates a strong impression of visual enclosure where virtually all horizons appear wooded.

To the east of the M6 an extensive open area of peat and sand extraction at White Moss, a raised peat bog, is well screened from the public highway. The scale of this relatively large plot is not immediately obvious from the surrounding area. An overhead power line traverses the north of the area and forms a conspicuous element in such a flat landscape.

Oakhanger Moss is a SSSI covered with broad leaved woodland. This is one of the shallowest of a cluster of depressions in glacial sands. It is of greatest importance for the range of mire vegetation that it supports. Oakhanger Moss was known to be a mere at least until the 1600s sustained by a flow of water from Alsager Mill to the east. Since that time it has been completely infilled, first with sedge and reedswamp peat and latterly with peat derived from *Sphagnum* mosses. Birch, alder and willow predominate and adder is found here and just one other known site in Cheshire.

To the north of this is an area of mixed woodland and new planting. Bibby's Moss and White Moss are SBIs. Bibby's Moss is a large old mossland, consisting of dried out raised lowland peat bog. Most of the site is now covered with woodland – damp and quite diverse broadleaves in the south and mixed plantations in the north. There are open glades.

)Oakhanger Moss



Oakhanger Moss



Oakhanger Moss



M4: Congleton Moss Character Area.

Small dried out moss & historic moss rooms.

This is a very small character area on the southern edge of Congleton. Congleton Moss is a small area of moss surviving at just over 1km in width. This is a tiny remnant of a once huge mossland that extended well over 1000ha in area. It is now thoroughly dried out and experiencing rapid succession to birch scrub. Dominant species are purple moor grass and heather with cross-leaved heath in some ditches. The moss comprises a series of enclosed radiating moss-rooms which form a fan shaped field pattern.

This character area is not breached by any public highway and remains largely hidden from view. Water-filled ditches and areas of wet ground betray the mossland origins of this very flat, small to medium scale pastoral farmland with regular field boundaries and little woodland cover. There is a wide variation in the condition of the hedgerows. In some areas the hedgerow pattern is largely intact, with numerous hedgerow trees providing an element of enclosure and filtering views. Elsewhere the very flat topography, lack of tree cover and gappy hedges with post and wire fences, has led to an enlargement of scale allied with extensive views out of the area. These views extend to the ridge of high ground forming the county boundary in the east. The distinctive shape of the Cloud forms part of this elevated skyline.

To the south are large fields that were formerly unenclosed and a number of boundaries are drainage channels. A cricket ground and school field encroaches upon the mossland.

Congleton Moss



Congleton Moss



Congleton Moss



