APPENDIX 1

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL EFFECTS METHODOLOGY

APPENDIX 1.1

The process has been guided by the third edition of the document 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', published by Landscape Institute with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment [1].

'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity.' Para 1.1 P4

The two distinct components of LVIA are:

'1. assessment of landscape effects: assess 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.' Para 2.21 P21 [1]

This report separates these elements into two distinct sections so that the differences can be clearly appreciated. In order to satisfy the objective of this study, each section has been set out as follows:

Baseline Analysis - This is an analysis of the existing situation within and surrounding the site. It draws upon information gathered during a desk study and field survey work. In relation to the visual amenity section, the area of study (extent of visibility) is also identified, and visual receptors are selected and visited. Planning designations intended to protect landscape and visual amenity are also recorded.

Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects - This part of the study describes the likely nature and scale of changes to landscape character and visual amenity. The proposed development is studied and then compared against the baseline information to ascertain potential effects upon the landscape and visual amenity.
To accompany the description of baseline and assessment information, a series of classifications have been applied to the landscape character of the site and each visual receptor. These act as a summary and place a defined value on; the
sensitivity of the character area/visual receptor, the magnitude of change and the subsequent significance of the effect of the development.

1.1.1 Sensitivity of Existing Landscape Character/ Visual Receptors

The sensitivity of the landscape to change is the degree to which a particular landscape can accommodate changes, or new features without significant detrimental effects to its essential characteristics.

The sensitivity of visual receptors will depend on three key factors:

- The receptor's activity whilst exposed to the view (work, recreational activities, resident);
- Degree of exposure to view; and,
- Period of exposure to view.

The sensitivity of landscape character or a visual receptor is defined as being High/Medium/Low, where High is the most sensitive.

General criteria for establishing the sensitivity of visual receptors and landscape character are set out in the following table.

Where viewpoint locations have more than one receptor, the impacts for those of greatest anticipated sensitivity will be used to determine the anticipated overall impact magnitude; thus ensuring the worst case scenario is reported.

Sensitivity	Landscape Character	Visual Receptors
High	Strong landscape structure. Strong positive character. Good condition. Strong sense of place. Visually distinctive. Aesthetically pleasing/occasional detracting features. Distinct features worthy of conservation. Designated landscapes such as National Parks, Registered Parks and Gardens or designated buildings/structures where landscape character contributes to its designation.	Residential properties with predominantly open views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from principal living rooms and from windows of rooms in use during the day. Users of Public Rights of Way with predominantly open views and of recreational use. Non-motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside. Visitors to recognised viewpoints or beauty spots, or to designated buildings or landscapes where the wider landscape setting contributes to or adds value to the experience. Users of outdoor recreational facilities with predominantly open views where the purpose of that recreation is enjoyment of the countryside – e.g. Country Parks, National Trust sites etc
Medium	Recognisable landscape structure. Positive character. Moderate condition. Reasonable sense of place. Visually notable. Aesthetically satisfactory or uninspiring/some detracting features. Some features worthy of conservation.	Residential properties with views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views from ground floor windows will be oblique or partially obscured by garden and/or other intervening vegetation. Users of Public Rights of Way with restricted views, in less sensitive areas or where there are significant existing intrusive features. Schools and other institutional buildings, and their outdoor areas. Motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside. Where attention is focussed upon often narrow and winding routes.
Low	Weak or degraded landscape structure. Weak or negative character. Poor condition. Poor sense of place. Visually poor. Aesthetically unsatisfactory or unpleasant. Many detracting features, which are likely to be dominant. Few or no features worthy of conservation. Scope for positive enhancement.	People in their place of work. Users of main roads or passengers on public transport on main routes. Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views and where the activity is focussed within the area. Occupants of industrial premises.

1.1.2 Magnitude of Change

The magnitude of change is the 'combination of the scale, extent and duration' [1] of the development and its impact on landscape character and visual receptors.
In the case of landscape impacts this relates to:

- The size, extent or degree of change to landscape character or individual landscape features;
- Whether there is a direct impact resulting in the loss of landscape features or a change beyond the land take of the scheme having an impact on the character of the area; and,
- Whether the impact is permanent or temporary.

For visual impact this relates to:

- Degree of change to existing views;
- Distance of the receptor from the application site; and,
- Whether the impact is permanent or temporary.

Magnitude of Change	Landscape Character	Visual Amenity
High	High degree of loss or major alteration to one or more key elements/features/ characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements considered to be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape	Where the proposals become the only dominant feature in the scene or would form a significant and immediately apparent element which would affect the overall impression of the view.
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.	Where proposals would form a visible and recognisable new feature in the scene but may not be immediately apparent, or become the dominant feature in the view.
Low	Minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.	The proposals constitute only a minor component of the wider view and may not be immediately apparent to the casual observer. Awareness of the proposals would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the scene.
Negligible	Very minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the landscape character. Introduction of elements are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape.	The proposal is largely indiscernible and/or they are at such a distance that they are scarcely appreciated. Consequently they have little effect on the scene.
No change	No change to the landscape character is experienced.	No change to the view is experienced.

The magnitude of change may also be Negligible or No Change and in this instance the resulting Effect Significance would also be Negligible or No Change as the application development would hardly be seen or not seen at all or the loss to landscape features and the character of the area would experience very little or no change.

1.1.3 Scoring Matrix

The two principal criteria determining significance of effect are the magnitude of change and the environmental sensitivity of the location or receptor. 'A higher level of significance is generally attached to large-scale effects and effects on sensitive or high-value receptors; thus small effects on highly sensitive sites can be more important than large effects on less sensitive sites. It is therefore important that a balanced and well-reasoned judgement of these two criteria is achieved'[1].

The matrix shown below encourages transparency in the process of identifying the significance, but the experience and judgement of the landscape architect is also used.

		Magnitude of Change				
		High	**Medium**	**Low**	**Negligible**	**No Change**
Sensitivity	**High**	Major	Moderate/Major	Moderate	Minor	No change
	Medium	Moderate/Major	Moderate	Minor/Moderate	Minor/Neutral	No change
	Low	Moderate	Minor/Moderate	Minor	Neutral	No change

1.1.4 Nature of impact

Determination of the nature of an impact is a result of judging whether the introduction of a proposed development would be of benefit or detriment to the existing landscape character or view. Therefore, the impact of a proposed development can be adverse or beneficial.

The following system of categorisation is used for the nature of the impact:

	Nature of Impact
Adverse	The key characteristics of the existing landscape or view would be weakened by the introduction of the proposed development.
Neutral	The key characteristics would neither be weakened nor strengthened by the proposed development.
Beneficial	The key characteristics of the existing landscape or view would be strengthened by the introduction of the proposed development.

The following standards are used in assessing whether the impacts are short, medium or long term:

- Short term – < 12 months
- Medium term – one to five years
- Long term – + five years.

1.1.5 Effect Significance Table

Effects will be categorised using the terms Neutral, Minor, Moderate and Major effects, with both moderate and major categories being considered as comprising significant effects.

Effect Significance	Landscape Character	Visual Amenity
Major Adverse	The proposed scheme would result in effects that are at complete variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape. It would permanently degrade, diminish or destroy the integrity of valued characteristic features, elements and/or their setting. A high quality landscape would be permanently changed and its quality diminished.	The proposals would result in a large and obvious change to a view from a highly sensitive receptor and would constitute a discordant, dominant element in the view.
Moderate Adverse	The proposed scheme would be out of scale with the landscape or at odds with the local pattern and landform and it would leave an adverse impact on valued landscape features.	The proposals would cause some damage to a view from a more sensitive receptor and would be an obvious element in the view.
Minor Adverse	The proposed scheme would not entirely fit into the landform and scale of the landscape and it would affect an area of valued landscape features.	The proposals would cause limited damage to a view from a receptor of medium sensitivity, but would still be a noticeable element within the view, or greater damage to a view from a receptor of low sensitivity.
Neutral	The proposed scheme would complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and would maintain existing landscape quality.	No change in the view.
Minor Beneficial	The proposed scheme has the potential to improve landscape character. It would fit in with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and enable the incorporation of valued characteristic features.	The proposed development would result in visual effects that constitute a perceptible and temporary improvement in the existing view
Moderate Beneficial	The proposed scheme would have the potential to accord with landscape character and improve the quality of the landscape through removal of damage caused by existing land uses.	The proposed development would result in visual effects that constitute a conspicuous or temporary improvement in the existing view.
Major beneficial	The proposed scheme would have the potential to accord seamlessly with the landscape character and significantly improve the quality of the landscape through restoration and the removal of damage caused by existing land uses.	The proposed development would result in a substantial improvement to the existing view and positively influence the quality of the view.