



## **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - Review**

For

**Dean Moor Solar Farm**

Prepared for

**Cumberland Council**

Prepared by

**Galpin Landscape Architecture**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

- 1.1 Cumberland Council have requested an independent LVIA report to inform a Local Impact Report (LIR) regarding the Dean Moor Solar Farm (NSIP).
- 1.2 This independent LVIA report has been prepared by Galpin Landscape Architecture Ltd. Referred to in this report as 'the independent LVIA'.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Landscape and Visual Review is to provide an independent review of Landscape and Visual elements of the submission.

### The Proposed Development

- 1.4 The Proposed Development comprises the construction, operation, and decommissioning of a solar energy generating station comprising solar PV arrays, an on-site grid connection, associated infrastructure, and green infrastructure with a total capacity exceeding 50 megawatts (MW). Planning Inspectorate reference EN010155.
- 1.5 The location of the Proposed Development is adjacent to Branthwaite Edge, approximately 1.1km east of the Lillyhall Industrial Estate, 600m east of Gilgarran, approximately 900m west of Branthwaite, and approximately 5km southeast of Workington.
- 1.6 The LVIA submission is referred to in this report as 'the submitted report'.

### The Review and Methodology

- 1.7 This review has been undertaken following the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2013) and the Landscape Institute in their Technical Guidance Note 1/20 issued in January 2020 - Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs).
- 1.8 The review report has been completed following site visits in June 2025. The purpose of the site visit was to verify viewpoints and to check the actual findings of the assessment in relation to the site.

### References

- 1.9 Documents referred to include:
  - *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, The Landscape Institute, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2013) (GLVIA)

- *Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs)*, Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 1/20 (2020) (RLVIA)
- *Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit*, Cumbria County Council, (2011)
- *Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines*, Lake District National Park Authority (2021)
- *Dean Moor Solar Farm Environmental Statement, EIA Scoping Report* (August 2023)
- *Dean Moor Solar Farm Environmental Statement, Planning Statement* (March 2025)
- *Dean Moor Solar Farm Environmental Statement, Chapter 6 – Cultural Heritage* (March 2025)
- *Dean Moor Solar Farm Environmental Statement, Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual* (March 2025)
- *Dean Moor Solar Farm Environmental Statement, Various Figures* (March 2025)
- *Dean Moor Solar Farm Environmental Statement, Appendices 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 5.1, 5.2, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 8.8* (March 2025)
- *Dean Moor Solar Farm Environmental Statement, PEIR Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual*, (March 2024)
- *Dean Moor Solar Farm Environmental Statement, Cumulative Effects and Residual Effects Summary* (March 2025)



## 2 REVIEW OF SUBMITTED LVIA

### Review of Methodology, Criteria and Process

2.1 Current guidance from the Landscape Institute on reviewing LVIAs is *Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs) Technical Guidance Note 1/20*, Landscape Institute (Jan 2020). This guidance provides the following structure. The coloured highlighted italic questions are directly quoted from this guidance.

- This guidance states '*that the terms 'competent expert' and 'sufficient expertise' are not defined in the EIA Regulations. The Landscape Institute, in the absence of formal certification of specific competence, considers that a 'competent expert' would normally be a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute who, has substantive experience of undertaking and reviewing LVIAs. This may be evidenced by the assessor's CV, by reference to previous assessments, and by endorsement by other senior professionals.*' These details are included in the document, *Dean Moor Solar Farm – appendix 1.1 Statement of Expertise. Visual (March 2025)* although the names have been covered and therefore verification is not possible.

2.2 The structure for carrying out the review follows the guidance as per the following steps:

1. *Checking the methodology used to undertake the assessment, the criteria selected (including balance between), and the process followed.*
2. *Checking the baseline, content and findings of the assessment.*
3. *Checking the presentation of the assessment findings.*

### Step 1: Checking Methodology, Criteria and Process

2.3 This section provides a review of the methodology, scope and process used in the assessment and how these relate to GLVIA 3. This involves reviewing the following:

2.4 *Does the scope of the assessment meet the requirements set out in the Scoping Opinion and/ or as defined in the LVIA or LVA and if substantively different, are the reasons clearly set out and explained?*

The Scoping Opinion requested that the ES provides justification for the study area suggested (2.5km).

An initial 'wider search area' of 7.5km was used for the PEIR. Justification for the final study area of 2.5km is provided in paras 7.3.7-7.3.10 of the submitted LVIA. Following site visits for this review, the study area of 2.5km is considered acceptable, and it is unlikely that there would be any significant landscape or visual effects outside of this study area. The LDNP and WHS are correctly included within the assessment.

2.5 *What consultations have been carried out and have responses been acted upon?*

The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) submission has thoroughly examined the assessment needs. Some consultation responses have not been acted on – see table in step 2.

2.6 *Has the scope and methodology of the assessment been formally agreed with the determining authority? If not, why not?*

Yes this is evidenced in the PEIR and Planning Inspectorate response.

2.7 *As part of the methodology, has the terminology been clearly defined, have the criteria to form judgements including thresholds been clearly defined and have any deviations from good practice guidance (such as GLVIA3) been clearly explained?*

Yes. The included methodology appears in line with best practice guidance.

In para 4.4 of the Appendix 7.1 – Landscape and Visual Methodology, there is a misleading description of photography – 'Aside from the images captured from the ferry as it approached the island, the camera was fixed to a tripod...'

2.8 *Does the assessment demonstrate a clear understanding and provide a separate consideration of landscape and visual effects?*

Yes – The methodology states that 'Landscape and visual matters are separate issues, although closely related and interlinked, are dealt with as such throughout the LVA'. This is then demonstrated in the assessment where landscape receptors and visual receptors are assessed separately and according to the relevant methodology.

2.9 *Does the assessment demonstrate comprehensive identification of receptors and of all likely effects?*

2.10 The included identification of receptors is extensive and thoroughly examines the likely effects for both landscape and visual.

2.11 *Does the assessment display clarity and transparency in its reasoning, the basis for its findings and conclusions?*

2.12 Although the assessment is generally descriptive in its judgements, some processes and references are lost within the scale of submitted documents which can be confusing. For example the schedules of landscape and visual effects in Appendices

7.2 and 7.3 are very useful in identifying effects. Similar tables would have been useful throughout the assessment processes within the report.

## **Step 2: Review Baseline, Content, and Findings of the Assessment**

2.13 This section reviews the description of the baseline, the content and the findings of the assessment. This includes the following tests:

2.14 *What is the reviewer’s opinion of the scope, content and appropriateness (detail, geographic extent) of both the landscape and the visual baseline studies which form the basis for the assessment of effects (supported by appropriate graphic such as ZTVs etc as appropriate)?*

The scope, content and appropriateness are all addressed in the scoping stage and addressed in the Planning Inspectorate’s Scoping Opinion. Therefore, the following table shows how the submitted LVIA responded to the Scoping Report related to landscape and visual matters with reference to the Planning Inspectorate’s Scoping Opinion:

Scoping Report ID	Summary Description	Summary of Scoping Report Comments	How the Submitted LVIA responded to the Scoping Report
3.3.1	LDNP Assessment	<i>'The ES should include an assessment of the Proposed Development's impact on the setting of the WHS and Lake District National Park (LDNP), its Character Areas and Special Qualities'</i>	<p>There is an assessment of the LDNP and WHS, along with LDNP character areas in the submitted PEIR document (March 2024). This document shows that there would be no change to a number of these landscape receptors and have therefore been scoped out of the ES.</p> <p>The submitted LVIA does include a landscape assessment of several LDNP landscape character areas where potential landscape effects may be experienced.</p>
3.3.2	Listed Buildings (landscape setting)	<p>The ES should include an assessment of predicted effects on the setting of Listed Buildings within 1km of the Site.</p> <p>Furthermore, <i>'High Trees West Farmhouse and adjoining Byre Range and High Trees East Farmhouse and adjoining Cart Shed and Store (Grade II listed buildings)'</i> should be included in the assessment.</p>	Listed Buildings have been assessed within Chapter 6 – Cultural Heritage.



Scoping Report ID	Summary Description	Summary of Scoping Report Comments	How the Submitted LVIA responded to the Scoping Report
3.3.3	Scheduled Monuments (landscape setting)	The impact of the Proposed Development on the setting of the Scheduled Monument within the southwestern part of the Site should be assessed.	Scheduled Monuments have been assessed within Chapter 6 – Cultural Heritage.
3.3.4	National Character Areas (NCA)	It is agreed that NCA7 can be scoped out if adequate justification is provided.	NCAs not assessed within the LVIA.
3.3.5	Recreational routes / Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) – landscape effects	Include an assessment of the potential landscape effects on the local PRoW network, National Cycle Network.	Viewpoint locations located on PRoW within the study area confirm that recreational routes have been considered within the submitted LVIA (see viewpoints 1, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14). Recreational routes are typically assessed within the visual assessment.

Scoping Report ID	Summary Description	Summary of Scoping Report Comments	How the Submitted LVIA responded to the Scoping Report
3.3.6	Open Access Land – landscape effects	Include an assessment of the potential landscape effects on CRoW access land, including High Park to the south of the Site.	CRoW access land appears to be considered with the inclusion of viewpoints 13 and 14 which are from within CRoW access land within the LDNP. Open Access Land is typically assessed within the visual assessment.
3.3.7	Other views and visual amenity beyond the 2.5km study area	Include an assessment of the impacts on views and visual amenity of receptors beyond the 2.5km study area.	Four viewpoints (Viewpoints 11-14) are located outside of 2.5km of the Proposed Development. The LDNP and the WHS have been included in the assessment and is evidenced with LDNP landscape character areas being included in the landscape assessment. These areas are outside 2.5km have also been assessed.  Following site visits for this review, the study area of 2.5km is considered acceptable, and it is unlikely that there would be any significant landscape or visual effects outside of this study area. The LDNP and WHS are correctly included within the assessment.

Scoping Report ID	Summary Description	Summary of Scoping Report Comments	How the Submitted LVIA responded to the Scoping Report
3.3.8	Lighting	<p><i>'The ES should assess the lighting effects on landscape and visual receptors.'</i></p> <p><i>'The ES should include a detailed description of the lighting design.'</i></p>	<p>Effects due to lighting were not included in the submitted LVIA.</p> <p>The proposed lighting is described in ES Chapter 3 - Site and Proposed Development Description.</p> <p>NB: <i>'The Council agreed to the effects of lighting being scoped out of the ES in their Scoping consultation response the LVIA.'</i> (Table 7.1).</p>
3.3.9	View Locations	Highlights the need for consideration of viewpoint locations, including request for additional viewpoints in the LDNP (Blake Fell & Fellbarrow).	Viewpoints from within the LDNP have been included in the LVIA.

Scoping Report ID	Summary Description	Summary of Scoping Report Comments	How the Submitted LVIA responded to the Scoping Report
3.3.10	ZTV	<i>'The final ZTV, and subsequently the LVIA, should ensure that a worst-case scenario is assessed based on the maximum parameters of the Proposed Development, including any auxiliary infrastructure such as security camera poles, fences, or construction compounds.'</i>	Figures 7.4a-b provide an overall ZTV with descriptions of the heights of components of the Proposed Development. Figures 7.5 a-c provide a breakdown of the ZTV showing the theoretical viewsheds of individual components of the Proposed Development. While the inclusion of the auxiliary infrastructure mentioned is not specifically stated, it is accepted that the ZTVs provided are representative of the worst-case scenario of theoretical visibility.
3.3.11	Study Area	<i>'The ES should justify the extent of the study area/s with reference to recognised professional guidance and the extent of the likely impacts, informed by fieldwork and relevant models or approaches such as the ZTV.'</i>	Justification for the study area is provided in paras 7.3.7-7.3.10 of the submitted LVIA. Following site visits for this review, the study area of 2.5km is considered acceptable, and it is unlikely that there would be any significant landscape or visual effects outside of this study area. The LDNP and WHS are correctly included within the assessment.

Scoping Report ID	Summary Description	Summary of Scoping Report Comments	How the Submitted LVIA responded to the Scoping Report
3.3.12	Heritage Assets (Landscape Setting)	Landscape setting of heritage assets to be scoped out over 1km – justification for this required	The setting of heritage assets is assessed within Chapter 6 – Cultural Heritage.
3.3.13	Mitigation	<i>'Where the avoidance of a likely significant effect is reliant on mitigation measures, these should be described within the ES along with the proposed methods by which they will be secured through the DCO, assisted by a plan or figures where appropriate.'</i>	Mitigation proposals are included in the Landscape Strategy Plan shown in Figures 7.6.1–5. The Landscape and Visual assessments provide assessment at various phases of development including construction, operation (year 1), operation (after 15 years) and decommissioning. This therefore assesses the Proposed Development first without mitigation measures (year 1) and with mitigation measures (year 15).
3.3.14	LVIA – Assumptions	<i>'The ES should clearly set out the heights and dimensions of all infrastructure on which the LVIA assessment is based.'</i>	Heights and dimensions of components of the Proposed Development are set out in ES Chapter 3 – Site and Proposed Development Description (Table 3.2). The heights correspond to the heights stated on relevant ZTV plans (Figures 7.4a-b & 7.5a-c).

Scoping Report ID	Summary Description	Summary of Scoping Report Comments	How the Submitted LVIA responded to the Scoping Report
3.3.15	LVIA – assessment of significance	<i>'The ES should fully justify how significance of effects has been established. Where professional judgement is used in the assessment of likely significant effects this should be made clear in the ES.'</i>	<p>A thorough methodology is provided in Appendix 7.1 - Landscape and Visual Methodology. Para 3.9.2 within that appendix determines what effects are assessed as 'significant'.</p> <p>There are generally good descriptions where judgements have been made, particularly in Appendices 7.2 and 7.3, the schedules of landscape and visual effects respectively.</p>
3.3.16	Embedded mitigation – landscaping and planting	<i>'Any assumptions made with regards to the height that proposed mitigation planting would have reached by the assessment years should be clearly presented and justified for the purposes of generating photomontages and reaching the assessment conclusions.'</i>	<p>Information about the height of mitigation planting included in the visualisations at Year 15 is not obvious within the report. There does not appear to be an explanation.</p>

Scoping Report ID	Summary Description	Summary of Scoping Report Comments	How the Submitted LVIA responded to the Scoping Report
3.3.17	Visual Receptors	<i>'The ES should demonstrate how relevant consultation bodies have influenced the choice of receptors and the level of sensitivity assigned to those receptors.'</i>	There is evidence within Table 2.1 of Appendix 7.1 that viewpoints were added following consultation with the relevant consultation bodies.  The judgement of the sensitivity of receptors appears to follow relevant guidance.

Scoping Report ID	Summary Description	Summary of Scoping Report Comments	How the Submitted LVIA responded to the Scoping Report
3.3.18	Photomontages	<p><i>'Photomontages, based on relevant Landscape Institute guidance, should present the likely visual impact at the selected view locations, particularly with the effects of glint and glare without mitigation.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant should justify the location and number of photomontages, ensuring these capture a worst-case scenario of impacts from the Proposed Development and are representative of visual receptors. The Applicant should seek agreement from relevant consultation bodies regarding the appropriateness of selected photomontages and evidence of this agreement should be provided within the DCO application.</i></p> <p><i>The photomontages should show all components of the Proposed Development, including security fencing, any closed-circuit television (CCTV) poles, battery storage system, substations etc., and demonstrate the Proposed Development before and after mitigation. This is in order to enable the decision maker to understand the implications of the worst-case scenario and the effectiveness of proposed mitigation.'</i></p>	<p>Para 2.5.14 and 2.5.15 within Appendix 7.1 outline the viewpoints chosen to be taken to photomontage stage and explains that they will be produced as per the guidelines - Landscape Institute TGN 06/19 Type 3. It appears that these were agreed following consultation.</p> <p>The visualisations provided in Appendix 7.6 – Visualisations appear to be produced in line with best practice guidelines and contain the components described in the scoping response.</p>



- 2.15 *General comments on the suitability of the scope of the submitted LVIA are as follows:*

The submitted LVIA identifies the landscape and visual baseline conditions and is supported by good graphical information. This includes numerous ZTV's which show the theoretical visibility of the different elements of the proposed development (i.e. Solar PV Infrastructure, Grid Connection, and POC Mast Siting Area) which helps to identify the likely visual receptors. It would be useful to see multiple ZTVs showing the visibility of the different Areas (Area A, B & C) which were identified. This would be particularly useful due to the size and topography of the site and the surrounding landforms. These ZTVs would quickly show which Areas of the site are visible from the surrounding landscape.

- 2.16 Views from local roads and footpaths are, in some cases, covered by representative viewpoints, however, the sequential views do not seem to be assessed. For example, VL2b is representative of views from the unclassified road east of Gilgarran, but it is not representative of the worst-case scenario views from this route which would be further east when driving through the Site. Similarly, VL3c on Dean Cross Road does not consider the worst-case views which are to the east of the viewpoint. VL6a and VL7 give a good representation of views from Branthwaite Edge Road which runs along the eastern edge of the Site.

- 2.17 Overall, the scope of the assessment is proportionate to the scale of the proposed development.

- 2.18 *Has the value of landscape and visual resources been appropriately addressed (including but not necessarily limited to) considerations of: local, regional and national designations; rarity, tranquillity, wild-land and valued landscape?)*

The submitted LVIA provides judgements of value and susceptibility for both landscape and visual receptors. There is minimal description of how the judgements of value were reached, although some baseline description of the views and receptors is provided in Appendix 7.2 and 7.3.

- 2.19 *Have the criteria to inform levels of sensitivity (both landscape and visual) and magnitude of change been clearly and objectively defined, avoiding scales which may distort reported results?*

The susceptibility and value for each receptor are clearly stated. How these are combined to form the sensitivity of both landscape and visual receptors is described within Appendix 7.1 (para 3.6.12 and Table 3.13).

- 2.20 *How well is the cross-over with other topics, such as heritage or ecology, addressed?*

The submitted LVA considers heritage assets for their contribution to the landscape and visual baseline. Heritage assets have been assessed separately in ES Chapter 6 – Cultural Heritage.

2.21 *Is there evidence of an iterative assessment-design process?*

Yes. Chapter 4 - Alternatives and Design Evolution provides information on the stages of the design process. It is suggested that some changes have been made to the layout due to proximity to properties, such as in the southeast corner of the site.

2.22 *Is it clear how the methodology was applied in the assessment, e.g.: consistent process, use of terms, clarity in reaching judgements and transparency of decision-making?*

A clear process for the assessment of landscape and visual effects is set out in the methodology. The assessment of potential effects on both landscape and visual receptors has been clearly described and follows the methodology set out.

2.23 *How appropriate are the viewpoints that have been used?*

Generally, it is found that the chosen viewpoint locations cover a variety of potential visual receptors and are from varied directions around the site. It is considered that the viewpoints provided cover an appropriate range of potential views of the Proposed Development.

2.24 Comments and issues with regarding the siting and micro-siting of viewpoint locations are addressed in the following table. The orange highlights indicate the VPs with photomontages.

<b>VP</b>	<b>Receptors</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1a	Scoped Out – Not Assessed	
1b	Recreational	Viewpoint gives a general impression of the character of the PRoW near to Lillyhall. As the view is within woodland, there would not be views to the proposed development from this location.
1c	Recreational	The viewpoint selected appears to be slightly off the line of the PRoW, however, it is considered representative of views towards the Site from the route.

<b>VP</b>	<b>Receptors</b>	<b>Notes</b>
2a	Road Users	<p>Generally, viewpoints 2a, 2b and 2c cover the typical nature of views in the area around Gilgarran. There are very limited views from within the village itself, so these viewpoints are deemed adequate in judging the impact on residents and recreational users in the vicinity of the village.</p> <p>It is worth noting that the worst-case scenario views from the road east of Gilgarran towards the Site would be from the section of road which passes through the Site itself.</p>
2b	Residential, Road Users	<p>Photomontage provided.</p> <p>Although there is an opening in the hedge opposite the dwelling of Colingate, the proposed development is likely screened from views by trees. The viewpoint provided does offer views to the Proposed solar array.</p> <p>This viewpoint is not representative of the worst-case scenario views along this road which would be found a few hundred metres further east where there would be solar panels located on both sides of the road.</p>
2c	Residential, Road Users	<p>Photomontage provided.</p> <p>This viewpoint is confirmed to be representative of views from the eastern side of Gilgarran.</p>
3a	Scoped Out – Not Assessed	
3b	Scoped Out – Not Assessed	

<b>VP</b>	<b>Receptors</b>	<b>Notes</b>
3c	Road Users, Recreational	<p>Not the worst-case scenario viewpoint along this road route.</p> <p>There would be a direct view across the Proposed Development from near the entrance of the Motocross Track which would be worst-case scenario views.</p> <p>The view chosen is representative of typical views from the road near the edge of the CRoW open access land. The submitted report suggests this viewpoint is on an elevated plateau with 360-degree views, with views to the LDNP fells, which is true. Views to the Site, however, are mostly screened by intervening landform.</p> <p>This viewpoint is therefore potentially misleading as there would certainly be a higher magnitude of effect further east along the same road.</p>
4	Scoped Out – Not Assessed	
5	Scoped Out – Not Assessed	
6a	Residential, Commercial and Road Users	<p>Photomontage provided.</p> <p>This view is confirmed to be representative of views from the road for road users and is situated to the north of the commercial units and the dwelling.</p>
6b	Residential, Commercial and Road Users	<p>This view is confirmed to be representative of views to the west of the commercial units and the residential dwelling. It is also representative of the views of road users along this stretch of Dean Cross Road.</p>
7	Residential, Road Users	<p>Photomontage provided.</p> <p>Confirmed as representative of views along Branthwaite Edge Road along the site's eastern boundary.</p>
8a	Recreational	<p>This view is confirmed as being representative of recreational users of the footpath between Branthwaite and Branthwaite row (travelling in a southeasterly direction).</p>

<b>VP</b>	<b>Receptors</b>	<b>Notes</b>
8b	Recreational	This view is confirmed as being representative of recreational users of the footpath between Branthwaite and Branthwaite row (travelling in a southeasterly direction).
9	Road Users, Residential	Photomontage provided.  This view is representative of road users travelling east along Branthwaite Road. This view is experienced for a short duration and the viewpoint chosen represents the most likely worst-case scenario views.
10	Recreational, Residential	The location chosen for the viewpoint represents the most open views towards the site along this short PRow.
11	Recreational	The view accurately represents views attained from the PRow to the south of the settlement of Dean.
12	Recreational	This viewpoint location is confirmed as representative of the views of users of the PRow between Cogra Moss and Felldyke (travelling northwest). The location chosen represents the worst-case views experienced from the route.
13a	Recreational	Viewpoint location provides a good impression of views obtained to the northwest from the high elevation routes above Cogra Moss.
13b	Recreational	Viewpoint location provides a good impression of views obtained to the northwest from the high elevation routes above Cogra Moss.

<b>VP</b>	<b>Receptors</b>	<b>Notes</b>
13c	Recreational	<p>Photomontage provided.</p> <p>Viewpoint location confirmed as Blake Fell and is representative of recreational users at the summit. The viewpoint chosen is useful as the closest large fell within the LDNP which overlooks the site, offering a worst-case scenario view from the National Park.</p> <p>The photomontage has been verified and is accurately presented.</p>
14	Recreational	<p>The viewpoint selected is confirmed as representative of views on the footpath on Darling Fell.</p> <p>The view is incorrectly described as from Fellbarrow in the submitted LVIA and Appendix 7.3 Schedule of Visual Effects. Fellbarrow is over 1.5km to the north of Darling Fell. While the view would be at a different angle from the peak of Fellbarrow, the view provided is at a similar elevation and is considered to be representative of views from the range of fells north of Loweswater (including Fellbarrow and Loweswater Fell).</p> <p>Additionally the quality of the photographs is unclear due to visibility on the day of taking the photos.</p>
15	Residential, Road Users	<p>This view is confirmed as the view from the northern edge of the settlement at Pica and can be considered representative of views of residents in Pica.</p>

A general note that the grid references provided on the Photosheets and Visualisations are not always accurate. This makes verification of the viewpoints on site more difficult. Further to this, the 'Photograph taken' dates show inconsistencies (e.g. VL14 Winter View & Summer View both shown as taken on 4.10.2023 in some instances).

2.25 *How appropriate is the proposed mitigation, both measures incorporated into the scheme design and those identified to mitigate further the effects of the scheme, and mechanisms for delivering the mitigation?*

Mitigations proposals are shown in the Landscape Strategy Plan (Figures 7.6.15) and described in para 7.5.3 of the submitted LVIA.

The mitigation measures proposed seek to strengthen the existing landscape features where possible. This includes the infilling and enhancement of existing, enhancing existing woodland and scrub areas as well new woodland planting (along road edges (in the north) and watercourses in the southern area. There is also some hedgerow tree planting along Branthwaite Edge Road on the eastern boundary. These measures would, over time, help to reduce the visibility of the Proposed Development by screening views from the roads which run adjacent to the Site. Further planting of extra woodland and/or hedgerow trees would be suitable along the west of Branthwaite Edge Road.

2.26 *What is the reviewer's opinion of the consistency and objectivity in application of the criteria and thresholds set out in the methodology for assessing the sensitivity of receptors, the magnitude of changes arising from the project, the degree/nature of effects, and the approach to judging the significance of the effects identified, in the case of EIA projects?*

Generally, there is consistency in the assessments, and a good level of description is provided in the schedule of landscape and the schedule of visual effects (Appendices 7.2 & 7.3).

There appears to be some inconsistency in the following assessments:

- Visual Assessment: VL2b & VL2c are close to one another, and both seem to represent views of road users and residential receptors, yet VL2b is assessed a High sensitivity and VL2c a Medium sensitivity. Further to this, the assessment of the magnitude of effect is found to be Negligible for VL2b and Slight for VL2c. Although the judgement for the overall level of significance remains the same, the difference in sensitivity is questionable. This inconsistency may lead to inaccurate assessment or become confusing when presenting a transparent process of assessment.
- The magnitude of effect assessment for some viewpoints and landscape character areas is higher for 'during construction' and is reduced for 'operation (year 1)'. While there may be a greater level of movement on site during construction which would be reduced during operation, the short-term, temporary nature of construction activities can mitigate the effects. By raising the magnitude of effect for construction activities, and reducing for operation, it is potentially misleading the reader as to the actual potential effects of the Proposed Development during operation. (VP7 is an example).
- 'Indistinct' has been used in the assessment of LDNP Distinctive Character Area 8: Loweswater. This wording is not provided in methodology.

- 2.27 *What is the opinion on the volume, relevance and completeness of the information provided about the development or project including, where relevant, detail about various development stages such as construction, operation, decommissioning, restoration, etc.?*

A description of the potential visual and landscape effects of the Proposed Development at various development stages has not been found.

- 2.28 *Does the document clearly identify landscape and visual effects which need to be considered in the assessment?*

The submitted LVA describes potential effects within the schedules of landscape and visual effects.

- 2.29 *Have levels of effect been clearly defined and, in the case of LVIA, have thresholds for significance been clearly defined and have cumulative landscape and visual effects been addressed?*

Yes. The submitted LVIA methodology clearly identifies the thresholds for significance and a separate document considers potential cumulative effects.

### **Step 3: Critique of the Presentation of the Findings of the Assessment**

- 2.30 This section involves the examination of the presentation of the assessment and checks the findings through the following questions:

- 2.31 *Does the LVIA/ LVA display transparency, objectivity and clarity of thinking, appropriate and proportionate communication of all aspects of the assessment of landscape and visual effects, including cumulative effects.*

The submitted LVIA provides clear descriptions of the baseline and descriptions of change. These help to give a transparency to the judgements made in the assessments of landscape and visual effects. While there are some inconsistencies (see 2.20 above), overall, a clear and transparent approach is demonstrated.

- 2.32 *Have the findings of the assessment been clearly set out and are they readily understood?*

Yes – The findings of the assessment are clearly stated. Summary tables showing the findings of the landscape and visual assessments would be useful way to quickly see where significant effects are assessed.

- 2.33 *Has there been clear and comprehensive communication of the assessment, in text, tables and illustrations?*

Yes – Although, as mentioned above, summary tables would be useful.



- 2.34 *Are the graphics and/or visualisations effective in communicating the characteristics of the receiving landscape and visual effects of the proposals at agreed representative viewpoints?*

Yes – The plans provided, including the viewpoint location plans, ZTVs, viewpoints and photomontage visualisations are effective in communicating the baseline and potential effects.

Generally, the photography is clear and showing winter and summer baseline views shows a thorough approach, highlighting the worst-case winter scenario effectively. In some instances, the quality of photographs provided is compromised by weather conditions (e.g. VL14).

- 2.35 *Are the graphics and/or visualisations fit for purpose and compliant with other relevant guidance and standards?*

Yes – The visualisations of the Proposed Development show the relevant components of the Proposed Development in a clear way. It appears as though they have been produced according to best-practice guidance.

- 2.36 *Is there a clear and concise summation of the effects of the proposals?*

While 'Table 7.7: Table of Significance – Landscape and Visual' of the submitted LVIA provides a summary of significant effects, it is not easy to determine which landscape and visual receptors are significantly affected. A summary table showing the sensitivities, magnitude of effect and level of significance for each landscape and visual receptor would be a clearer way to present the information.

### Further Comments on the Submitted LVA

- 2.37 In paragraph 4.2.3 of the LVIA methodology, it reads: 'Aside from the images captured from the ferry as it approached the island, the camera was fixed to a tripod...' A little wary of cut and paste, as the site is not an island ! This rings alarm bells if potentially may lead to errors of judgment.
- 2.38 There is not clear inter relationship between chapters of different topics. For example, Cultural Heritage contains landscape related assessments for the settings of historic assets.

### Additional Details

- 4.1 Additional information that would be useful include:
- Multiple ZTVs showing the visibility of the different Areas (Area A, B & C)
  - View from top of Dean Cross Road

- High quality and clear photography (particularly from the LDNP)
  - Sequential views from Branthwaite Road and Dean Cross Road
  - Inter relationship with Cultural Heritage.
- 4.2 Some data for VP unclear – dates (summer or winter), grid references and quality.
- 4.3 More mitigation measures are recommended with more hedgerow tree / woodland along Branthwaite Edge Road.
- 4.4 There is not clear inter relationship between chapters of different topics. For example, Cultural Heritage contains landscape related assessments for the settings of historic assets.

## Conclusions

- 2.39 The scope of the assessment meets the requirements set out in the Scoping Opinion.
- 2.40 The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) submission has thoroughly examined the consultation responses with some exceptions.
- 2.41 A summary of the findings of the review of the assessment methodology identified these were carried out according to guidance.
- 4.5 A summary of findings of the review of the assessment of effects shows that judgements of effects are correct.
- 4.6 Some of the assessment is not clear and transparent as the assessment is generally descriptive in its judgements, some processes and references are lost within the scale of submitted documents.

### 3 INDEPENDENT LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

#### The Proposal

- 3.1 See Paras 1.4 to 1.7.

#### Independent Landscape Character Assessment

- 3.2 The following is a summary of the findings of an independent Landscape Assessment for the Proposed Development.
- 3.3 The Landscape Value, Magnitude of Change and Degree of Significance have been assessed following the GLA methodology (see appendix).
- 3.4 The assessments of the submitted LVA have been included alongside the findings of the GLA independent assessment for comparison.

Dean Moor Solar Farm – LVIA Review

		Independent LVA	Submitted LVA	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA
Landscape Character Assessment	Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity		Magnitude of Impact/Effect - at Operation (Year 1)		Degree of Significance	Level of Significance
Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit	LCT 9: Intermediate Moorland and Plateau <b>Sub-type 9a: Open Moorlands</b>	Medium	Medium	Locally: High & Direct Overall: Low & Indirect	Moderate Direct	Locally: Major ( <b>Significant</b> ) & Direct Overall: Minor & Indirect	Minor Not Significant
	LCT 9: Intermediate Moorland and Plateau <b>Sub-type 9d: Ridges</b>	Medium	Medium	Locally: Low & Direct Overall: Negligible & Indirect	Negligible Direct	Locally: Minor & Direct Overall: Negligible & Indirect	Negligible Not Significant
	LCT 5: Lowlands <b>Sub-type 5a: Ridge and Valley</b>	Medium	Medium	Locally: High & Direct Overall: Low & Indirect	Negligible Direct	Locally: Moderate ( <b>Significant</b> ) & Direct Overall: Minor & Indirect	Negligible Not Significant
Lake District National Park authority Landscape Character Assessment	<b>Distinctive Character Area 8: Loweswater</b>	High	High	Negligible & Indirect	Indistinct Indirect	Minor & Indirect	Negligible Not Significant
	<b>LCT G: Rugged Angular Slate High Fell</b>	High	High	Negligible & Indirect	No Change n/a	Minor & Indirect	No change Not Significant
	<b>LCT I: Upland Limestone Farmland</b> (overlaps with Cumbria LCT 12b: Rolling Fringe)	High	High	No Change & Indirect	No Change n/a	No Change	No change Not Significant

Dean Moor Solar Farm – LVIA Review

		Independent LVA	Submitted LVA	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA
Landscape Character Assessment	Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity		Magnitude of Impact/Effect - at Operation (Year 1)		Degree of Significance	Level of Significance
The Site	<b>Landscape Character of the Site</b>	Medium	Medium	High & Direct	Moderate Direct	Major ( <b>Significant</b> ) & Direct	Moderate <b>Significant</b>
	<b>Landscape Features:</b> Topography and Site Landform	Medium	Medium	Negligible & Direct	Negligible Direct	Negligible & Direct	Negligible Not Significant
	<b>Green Infrastructure Network</b>	Medium	Medium	Negligible & Direct	Negligible Direct	Negligible & Direct	Negligible Not Significant
	<b>Landscape Features:</b> Trees, woodland and hedgerows within the Site	Medium	Medium	Negligible & Direct	Negligible Direct	Negligible & Direct	Negligible Not Significant

- 3.5 The reasoning behind the judgments for the Magnitudes of Effect in the above table are as follows:
- 3.6 The Proposed Development would have a direct effect on the landscape on which it resides. There would be a change from the existing pasture fields to pasture fields with solar panels and associated infrastructure.
- 3.7 There would be an indirect change over the localised area surrounding the Proposed Development. There would be a perceptible change, with the introduction of a solar energy development to the landscape. This would have a further urbanising influence on the landscape which currently has general rural character with detractors associated with nearby urban areas (pylons, industrial buildings, wind turbines, etc.).
- 3.8 With increasing separation distance, the landscape effects would diminish rapidly. This is due to a lack of intervisibility with the Proposed Development and the presence of existing detracting elements in the wider landscape.
- 3.9 There would be a Negligible magnitude of impact on the landscape character of the Distinctive Character Area 8: Loweswater and LCT G: Rugged Angular Slate High Fell within the Lake District National Park. This would result in a Negligible, not significant degree of significance. The separation distance between the Proposed Development and these character areas is a contributing mitigating factor in the judgement.
- 3.10 The GLA independent assessment judgements align closely to the submitted LVIA judgements and it is therefore considered that the submitted LVIA is appropriate.

### **Independent Visual Amenity Assessment**

- 3.11 The following is a summary of the findings of an independent Visual Assessment for the Proposed Development.
- 3.12 The assessments of the submitted LVA have been included alongside the findings of the GLA independent assessment for comparison.
- 3.13 The key elements and characteristics of the Proposed Development which may give rise to visual effects are:
- Solar Panels and solar PV infrastructure including security fencing, CCTV cameras on poles, etc. up to a height of 3.3m;
  - Grid connection infrastructure elements up to a height of 9m;
  - Point of Connection Mast at a height of up to 30m.

- 3.14 The following table provides an outline assessment for the Proposed Development of the potential visual effects from the identified viewpoints at Operation (Year 1).
- 3.15 Operation (Year 1) has been chosen for this review as it represents the worst-case scenario, i.e. the whole Proposed Development constructed without the effects of mitigation planting.

Dean Moor Solar Farm – LVIA Review

	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA
VP	Sensitivity		Magnitude of Impact/Effect - at Operation (Year 1)		Degree of Significance	Level of Significance
1a	Scoped Out - Not Assessed					
1b	Medium	Medium	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible Not significant	Negligible Not Significant
1c	Medium	Medium	Low	Slight	Minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant
2a	Medium	Medium	Low	Slight	Minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant
2b	High	High	Low	Negligible	Minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant
2c	High	Medium	Low	Slight	Minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant
3a	Scoped Out - Not Assessed					
3b	Scoped Out - Not Assessed					



Dean Moor Solar Farm – LVIA Review

	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA
VP	Sensitivity		Magnitude of Impact/Effect - at Operation (Year 1)		Degree of Significance	Level of Significance
3c	Medium	High	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible Not Significant	Minor Not Significant
4	Scoped Out - Not Assessed					
5	Scoped Out - Not Assessed					
6a	High	High	Medium	Moderate	Major Significant	Major Significant
6b	High	High	High	Moderate	Major Significant	Major Significant
7	High	High	High	Moderate	Major Significant	Major Significant
8a	High	Medium	Negligible	Negligible	Minor Not Significant	Negligible Not Significant
8b	High	Medium	Low	Slight	Minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant

Dean Moor Solar Farm – LVIA Review

	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA
VP	Sensitivity		Magnitude of Impact/Effect - at Operation (Year 1)		Degree of Significance	Level of Significance
9	High	High	High	Moderate	Major Significant	Major Significant
10	High	Medium	Low	Slight	Minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant
11	High	Medium	Low	Slight	Minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant
12	High	High	Negligible	Negligible	Minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant
13a	High	Very High	Low	Negligible	Moderate Significant	Moderate Significant
13b	High	Very High	Low	Negligible	Moderate Significant	Moderate Significant
13c	High	Very High	Low	Negligible	Moderate Significant	Moderate Significant
14	High	Very High	Negligible	Negligible	Minor Not Significant	Moderate Significant

Dean Moor Solar Farm – LVIA Review

	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA	Independent LVA	Submitted LVA
VP	Sensitivity		Magnitude of Impact/Effect - at Operation (Year 1)		Degree of Significance	Level of Significance
15	High	High	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change

- 3.16 There are some minor differences between the judgements in the GLA independent assessment and the submitted LVIA, however, the level of significance would remain the same for all viewpoints except VL14 for which the GLA independent assessment assessed the degree of significance to be Minor and therefore Not Significant. The difference for VL14 is owing to the difference in methodology and wording.

### Proposed Additional Viewpoints

- 3.17 The addition of the following viewpoint would help to provide a full picture of the impacts of the Proposed Development.
- 3.18 The existing VL3c viewpoint does not represent the worst-case scenario. The proposed viewpoint, further east along Dean Cross Road would offer more open views across the site and is close to potential visual receptors at the Motorcross Park.
- 3.19 Additional viewpoints have been considered and tabled below:

Additional Viewpoints		Independent LVA	
Description	Grid Reference / type (Approximate)	Sensitivity	Anticipated Magnitude of Impact
3c – Further East along Dean Cross Road (near Motorcross Park)	305083, 522360 Visual Receptor	Medium	Medium
Branthwaite Edge Road	Sequential Views	Medium	High to Low
Dean Cross Road	Sequential Views	Medium	High to Low

## Cumulative Effects

3.20 The following table is a summary of the cumulative effects showing independent LVIA and comparison of submitted LVIA.

		Independent LVIA	Submitted LVIA
		Magnitude of Impact / Effect	
Landscape Character	LCT 9: Intermediate Moorland and Plateau <b>Sub-type 9a: Open Moorlands</b>	Moderate adverse (significant)	Moderate adverse (significant)
Visual	<b>VLC1, VLC3, VLC4, VLC5 and VLSC5</b>	Moderate adverse (significant)	*Significant adverse
	<b>Branthwaite Road users</b>	Moderate adverse (significant)	Moderate adverse (significant)

3.21 *\*Significant adverse is included in the submitted assessment which is not in the methodology.*

3.22 The independent LVIA concurs that the main cumulative consideration would be Lost Rigg where the cumulative effect would be Moderate adverse (significant).

## 4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### The Proposed Development

- 4.7 The Proposed Development comprises the construction of solar PV arrays, an on-site grid connection, associated infrastructure, and green infrastructure.
- 4.8 The location of the Proposed Development is adjacent to Branthwaite Edge, east of the Lillyhall Industrial Estate and Gilgarran, west of Branthwaite, and southeast of Workington.

### Review of Submitted LVIA Summary

- 4.9 This review has been undertaken following the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition (2013) and the Landscape Institute in their Technical Guidance Note 1/20 issued in January 2020 - Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs).
- 4.10 The scope of the assessment meets the requirements set out in the Scoping Opinion.
- 4.11 The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) submission has thoroughly examined the consultation responses and have been provided, except:
- landscape assessment of several LDNP landscape character areas where potential landscape effects may be experienced.
  - Information about the height of mitigation planting included in the visualisations at Year 15.
- 4.12 A summary of the findings of the review of the assessment methodology identified these were carried out according to guidance.
- 4.13 A summary of findings of the review of the assessment of effects shows that judgements of effects are correct.
- 4.14 Some of the assessment is not clear and transparent as the assessment is generally descriptive in its judgements, some processes and references are lost within the scale of submitted documents.
- 4.15 The chosen locations for VPs 2b and 3c are not worst case scenario which is not best practice.
- 4.16 Photography for VP 14 is unclear.
- 4.17 Additional information that would be useful include:
- Multiple ZTVs showing the visibility of the different Areas (Area A, B & C)
  - View from top of Dean Cross Road

- High quality and clear photography (particularly from the LDNP)
  - Sequential views from Branthwaite Road and Dean Cross Road
  - Inter relationship with Cultural Heritage.
- 4.18 Some data for VP unclear – dates (summer or winter), grid references and quality.
- 4.19 More mitigation measures are recommended with more hedgerow tree / woodland along Branthwaite Edge Road.
- 4.20 There is not clear inter relationship between chapters of different topics. For example Cultural Heritage contains landscape related assessments for the settings of historic assets.

### **Independent Landscape and Visual Summary**

- 4.21 The comparison of the independent LVIA and the submitted LVIA are mostly similarly.
- 4.22 The GLA independent assessment judgements for landscape align closely to the submitted LVIA judgements.
- 4.23 For visual, there are some minor differences between the judgements in the GLA independent assessment and the submitted LVIA, however, the level of significance would remain the same for all viewpoints except VL14.
- 4.24 The cumulative effects would be Moderate adverse (significant) with Lost Rigg and the independent LVIA concurs with the submitted LVIA.

### **Conclusions**

- 4.25 The submitted LVA was prepared in accordance with guidance and is generally acceptable.
- 4.26 The proposed solar park would be acceptable in the residing landscape and generally acceptable in terms of visual amenity with some major adverse (significant) effects on landscape and visual.
- 4.27 Some recommendations for further details are suggested.

## APPENDIX

### Independent LVA - Landscape and Visual Methodology

- A.1. This assessment has been prepared with reference to current recommended guidelines notably the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment in 2013. The GLVIA relies on an appreciation of the existing landscape, a thorough understanding of the development proposals, evaluation of the magnitude of impact predicted to result from the proposed development, the sensitivity of the existing landscape to change and the potential to mitigate effects.

### Landscape Character Methodology

- A.2. The aim of the landscape character assessment is to identify, predict and evaluate potential key effects arising from the development. The assessment of predicted effects involves:
- An appreciation of the nature, form and features of the development in the context of the baseline landscape character. Landscape character is a composite of physical, biological and cultural elements. Landform, hydrology, vegetation, land use pattern and associations combine to create a common 'sense of place' and identity which can be used to categorise the landscape into definable units (character areas). The level of detail and size of unit can be varied to reflect the scale of definition required. It can be applied at national, regional and local levels;
  - A review of the sensitivity to change of designated sites and landscape character in relation to changes proposed. This is arrived at by a review of landscape value and scenic quality;
  - An evaluation of the predicted magnitude of impact experienced by designated sites and landscape character, assuming implementation of the development. This is in the form of quantification and description of the loss of, or indirect impact on, specific landscape components that make up the character of the various local landscape areas within the study area. Further, it includes explanation of the predicted change in the composite quality of the various areas related to such loss and influence in combination with the compatibility of the proposed forms within or neighbouring the various areas; and



- Assessment of the degree of significance of the effects of the development on the designated site or landscape character under consideration by relating the magnitude of impact to the sensitivity to change.

### Landscape Sensitivity to Change

- A.3. The sensitivity of the landscape receptors is a combined judgement of the value of the landscape receptor and the susceptibility of the landscape receptor. See the following table for the Landscape Sensitivity matrix.
- A.4. Landscape Value is with reference to landscape designations. The criteria for assessing landscape value is shown in the following table:

#### Landscape Value

<b>HIGH</b>	<p>Designated areas at an International, National or Local scale (including but not limited to World Heritage Sites, National Parks, AONBs, SLAs, etc.) considered to be an important component of the country's character experienced by a high number of people.</p> <p>Landscape condition is good and components are generally maintained to a high standard.</p> <p>In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence/absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has an elevated level of tranquillity.</p> <p>Rare or distinctive landscape elements and features are key components that contribute to the landscape character of the area.</p>
<b>MEDIUM</b>	<p>No formal designation but (typically) rural landscapes, important to the setting of towns and villages and considered to be a distinctive component of the national or local landscape character experienced by a large proportion of its population.</p> <p>Landscape condition is fair and components are generally well maintained.</p> <p>In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence/absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has a moderate level of tranquillity.</p> <p>Rare or distinctive landscape elements and features are notable components that contribute to the character of the area.</p>

<b>LOW</b>	<p>No formal designations but a landscape of local relevance (including but not limited to public or semi-public open spaces, village greens or allotments) and green infrastructure and open spaces within residential areas likely to be visited and valued by the local community.</p> <p>Landscape condition may be poor and components poorly maintained or damaged.</p> <p>In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence/absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has limited levels of tranquillity.</p> <p>Rare or distinctive elements and features are not notable components that contribute to the landscape character of the area.</p>
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- A.5. Susceptibility is the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the change. The criteria for assessing landscape susceptibility is shown in the following table:

#### Landscape Susceptibility

<b>HIGH</b>	<p><b>Scale of enclosure</b> – landscapes with a low capacity to accommodate the type of development being proposed owing to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover, built form, etc.</p> <p><b>Nature of land use</b> – landscapes with no or little existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p> <p><b>Nature of existing elements</b> – landscapes with components that are not easily replaced or substituted (e.g. ancient woodland, mature trees, historic parkland, etc.). Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features, major infrastructure or industry is not present or where present has a limited influence on landscape character.</p>
<b>MEDIUM</b>	<p><b>Scale of enclosure</b> – landscapes with a medium capacity to accommodate the type of development being proposed owing to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover, built form, etc.</p> <p><b>Nature of land use</b> – landscapes with some existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p> <p><b>Nature of existing elements</b> – landscapes with components that are easily replaced or substituted. Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features, major infrastructure or industry is present and has a noticeable influence on landscape character.</p>
<b>LOW</b>	<p><b>Scale of enclosure</b> – landscapes with a high capacity to accommodate the type of development being proposed owing to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover, built form, etc.</p> <p><b>Nature of land use</b> – landscapes with extensive existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p>

**Nature of existing features** – landscapes where detracting features or major infrastructure is present and has a dominating influence on the landscape.

### Landscape Sensitivity

<i>Value</i>	<b><i>Landscape Sensitivity</i></b>		
<b>High</b>	Medium	High	High
<b>Medium</b>	Medium	Medium	High
<b>Low</b>	Low	Medium	Medium
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
	<i>Susceptibility to Change</i>		

### Magnitude of Impact

A.6. Magnitude of impact has been assessed on a four-point scale of high, medium, low or negligible. These criteria are described as follows:

- **High:** very noticeable indirect change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area, or direct change to landscape components/character over a less extensive area;
- **Medium:** noticeable indirect change in landscape characteristics over less extensive area, or direct change to landscape components/character over a localised area;
- **Low:** perceptible indirect change in landscape characteristics over a localised area, or direct change to landscape components/character over a very localised area; and
- **Negligible:** virtually imperceptible or no indirect change in landscape characteristics over a very localised area, or virtually imperceptible, or no, direct change to landscape components/character.

A.7. The visibility of the development in the landscape would vary according to the weather conditions. The assessment has been carried out, as is best practice, by assuming the 'worst case' scenario, i.e. on a clear, bright day.

### Degree of Significance Assessment

A.8. Using professional judgement and assisted by tools such as ZTVs, photomontages and wireline diagrams, the assessment of effects compares the magnitude of impact

experienced by a designated site or landscape character area to its sensitivity to change of the type proposed. It also takes into account direct impacts upon existing landscape elements, features and key characteristics and assesses whether these would be lost or their relationships modified, in the context of their importance in determining the existing sensitivity of the character area in question.

- A.9. Anticipated magnitude of impact is reported in terms of a descriptive scale ranging from Major – Moderate – Minor adverse through Negligible to an ascending scale of Minor – Moderate – Major beneficial.
- A.10. The criteria adopted for the assessment of landscape effects are as follows:
- **Major** adverse (or beneficial) degree of significance: very noticeable deterioration/improvement in the existing landscape.
  - **Moderate** adverse (or beneficial) degree of significance: noticeable deterioration/improvement in the existing landscape.
  - **Minor** adverse (or beneficial) degree of significance: perceptible deterioration/improvement in the existing landscape.
  - **Negligible** degree of significance: virtually imperceptible deterioration/improvement in the existing landscape.
- A.11. For the purposes of this appraisal, degree of significance of Moderate and above are considered to be significant.
- A.12. Degree of Significance as a visual guide to understanding how the magnitude of impact relates to the degree of significance over different sensitivities of landscape character.
- A.13. The predicted effects have been considered in the light of primary mitigation measures associated with site planning, culminating in a statement of the predicted effects and their overall degree of significance to the landscape resource of the study area.

#### Degree of Significance for Landscape Assessment

<i>Magnitude of Impact</i>	<b><i>Degree of Significance</i></b>		
<b>High</b>	Minor or moderate	Moderate or major	Major
<b>Medium</b>	Minor	Moderate	Moderate or major
<b>Low</b>	Negligible or minor	Minor	Minor or moderate
<b>Negligible</b>	Negligible or minor	Negligible or minor	Minor
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>

*Landscape Receptor Sensitivity*

### **Visual Assessment Methodology**

- A.14. The assessment of visual impact has been based on the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) Third Edition 2013. The guidelines suggest that visual effects are assessed from a clear understanding of the development proposed and any related landscape mitigation measures. It calls for an understanding of the visual form of the existing landscape, its quality and sensitivity to change taking into account the nature of the development.
- A.15. The assessment has involved three key stages:
- Determination of the main areas where effects would occur as a result of the location and orientation of the development, and establishment of the baseline conditions relating to the visual context of the study area and the location and sensitivity of potential visual receptors.
  - Evaluation of the potential effects anticipated to result from the introduction of the development into the baseline context. The susceptibility of visual receptors to change in views and how they contribute to the sensitivity. Next the scale, extent and duration and how they contribute to the magnitude of impacts are assessed.
  - Finally, the effects of the anticipated development are assessed by an evaluation of the magnitude of impact on the sensitivity to change. The resulting judgments about sensitivity and magnitude inform the judgement of the overall degree of degree of significance.

### **Baseline Assessment**

- A.16. The following specific desk-based tasks have been undertaken:
- Within the detailed study area consider methodology, key views and viewpoint locations.
  - Identification of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (visual envelope) for the proposed development.
  - Identification and field assessment of potential receptors within the visual envelope.
  - Appreciation of the nature and importance of existing views experienced by the identified receptors.
  - A site appraisal of potential impacts upon visual amenity was carried out. Site recording involved the completion of standardised recording forms and annotation of survey plans, supported by a photographic record of views from key receptor locations and using wireline projections.

### **Identification of Visual Receptors**

- A.17. For there to be a visual effect there is the need of a viewer (or visual receptor). Visual receptors include users of residential properties, recreational facilities and other outdoor sites used by the public such as roads, railways and footpaths, which would be likely to experience a change in existing views as a result of the construction and operation of the proposed development.
- A.18. Views from nearby key viewpoints are illustrated by photomontage and wireline diagrams and views from those potential viewpoints with limited visibility of the proposed development proposals are assessed but not illustrated with either wirelines or photomontages.

### **Appreciation of Existing Views**

- A.19. The visual assessment involved an initial desk-based review of OS mapping to establish the wider context, followed by site surveys to establish the form and nature of specific views and the role of the proposed development area in such views.
- A.20. Site survey notes were recorded using a standardised spreadsheet that included receptor type and number, the nature of the existing view, the distance, angle and extent of the view of the proposed development, etc.
- A.21. The evaluation involved the following tasks:
- A.22. Analysis of the sensitivity of the viewpoint receptors to the anticipated change in their view; and
- A.23. Identification of the anticipated magnitude of impact in existing views at these locations.

### **Visual Receptor Sensitivity**

The sensitivity of a receptor to the proposed development has been considered in relation to the susceptibility of the receptor, for example, the inhabitants of a residential dwelling are generally considered more sensitive to change than occupiers of a factory unit.

The susceptibility of visual receptors to change in views and visual amenity depends on the activity or occupation of people. The people are the visual receptors who may be residents, recreational users, visitors and commuters. The judgement of susceptibility to change and value are assessed and how they contribute to the sensitivity of the visual receptor. The importance of the changed view to the receptor also contributes to an understanding of sensitivity to change. Therefore, orientation, nature of use, scenic quality and receptors' expectations of the changed view in respect of existing context are all considered as a part of this evaluation. For example, a front-on changed view from the main habitable rooms of a dwelling would result in higher sensitivity to change than a side-on or rear changed view from the same receptor.

The sensitivity of visual receptors is therefore a combined judgement of the value of the view and the susceptibility of the visual receptor. See Table 5.7 for the Visual Sensitivity matrix.

The criteria for assessing the Value of Views is shown in the following table:

**Value of Views**

<b>HIGH</b>	Views with high scenic value within designated landscapes (including but not limited to World Heritage Sites, National Parks, AONBs, SLAs, etc.)  Likely to include key viewpoints on OS maps or reference within guidebooks, provision of facilities, presence of interpretation boards, etc.
<b>MEDIUM</b>	Views with moderate scenic value within mostly undesignated landscape including urban fringe and rural countryside.
<b>LOW</b>	Views with unremarkable scenic value within undesignated landscape with partly degraded visual quality and detractors.

A.24. The criteria for assessing the Susceptibility of Visual Receptors is shown in following table:

**Susceptibility of Visual Receptors**

<b>HIGH</b>	Includes occupiers of residential properties and people engaged in recreational activities in the countryside using public rights of way (PROW).
<b>MEDIUM</b>	Includes people engaged in outdoor sporting activities and people travelling through the landscape on minor roads and trains.
<b>LOW</b>	Includes people at places of work e.g. industrial and commercial premises and people travelling through the landscape on major roads and motorways.

A.25. The criteria for judging the combined value of views and the susceptibility of Visual Receptors to ascertain the sensitivity is shown in the following table:

**Visual Receptor Sensitivity**

<i>Value</i>	<b><i>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</i></b>		
<b><i>High</i></b>	Medium	High	High
<b><i>Medium</i></b>	Medium	Medium	High
<b><i>Low</i></b>	Low	Medium	Medium
	<b><i>Low</i></b>	<b><i>Medium</i></b>	<b><i>High</i></b>
	<i>Susceptibility to Change</i>		

### **Magnitude of Impact**

- A.26. The magnitude of impact considers the extent of the proposed development visible, the extent of the existing view that would be occupied by the proposed development, the influence of the proposed development within the view and the viewing distance from the receptor to the proposed development. This has involved a combination of site, and desk-based analysis. On site, the elements of the proposed development potentially visible were recorded on the survey sheets. The analysis also involved the use of wireline projections and draft photomontages to assist the assessors with the evaluation.
- A.27. In the assessment of visual effects, the magnitude of impact is considered in terms of the type of effect taking place in a view from a receptor and the degree of change which would take place in that view.
- A.28. Magnitude of impact is measured on the following scale, which has been adapted from GLVIA methodology:
- **High** magnitude: where the proposed development would cause a very noticeable change in the existing view.
  - **Medium** magnitude: where the proposed development would cause a noticeable change in the existing view.
  - **Low** magnitude: where the proposed development would cause a perceptible change in the existing view.
  - **Negligible**: where the proposed development would cause a largely imperceptible change in the existing view.

### **Assessment of Effects**

- A.29. The main criteria used to evaluate the visual impact are centred on the extent to which the proposed development would modify established views. The assessment



of effects is based on consideration of both sensitivity to change and magnitude of impact.

- A.30. The determination of the effects is derived from the assessment of sensitivity to change and the magnitude of impact combined with professional judgement.
- The final assessment adopts the following categories to illustrate the level of visual effects:
  - **Major** adverse (or beneficial) degree of significance: very noticeable deterioration/ improvement in the existing view.
  - **Moderate** adverse (or beneficial) degree of significance: noticeable deterioration/improvement in the existing view.
  - **Minor** adverse (or beneficial) degree of significance: perceptible deterioration/ improvement in the existing view.
  - **Negligible** degree of significance: largely imperceptible deterioration or improvement in the existing view.
- A.31. For the purposes of this appraisal, degree of significance of Moderate and above are considered to be significant and are applicable for landscape and visual assessments that require an EIA.
- A.32. See Table – Degree of Significance as a visual guide to understanding how the magnitude of impact relates to the degree of significance over different sensitivities of visual receptors.
- A.33. An assessment has been made of the visual effects upon receptors which would occur as a result of the proposed development at the viewpoint locations. However, the visual prominence of the development would vary according to weather conditions. The assessment has therefore been carried out in accordance with best practice, by assuming the “worst case” scenario; that is, on a clear, bright day in winter. The assessment also takes into account changes in vehicle movement patterns and other proposal-related operations.

**Degree of Significance for Visual Assessment**

<i>Magnitude of Impact</i>	<b><i>Degree of Significance</i></b>		
<b><i>High</i></b>	Minor or moderate	Moderate or major	Major
<b><i>Medium</i></b>	Minor	Moderate	Moderate or major
<b><i>Low</i></b>	Negligible or minor	Minor	Minor or moderate
<b><i>Negligible</i></b>	Negligible or minor	Negligible or minor	Minor
	<b><i>Low</i></b>	<b><i>Medium</i></b>	<b><i>High</i></b>
	<i>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</i>		