

### APPENDIX 6/1 – METHOD USED IN ASSESSING LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

## INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of the effects of development on “landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity” (GLVIA31, paragraph 1.1). Although it refers to landscape, GLVIA3 (paragraphs 2.6 - 2.8) also makes clear that the same principles apply to townscapes and seascapes. GLVIA3 is the main source of guidance on the principles and processes of LVIA and recognises that, having signed and ratified the European Landscape Convention, the United Kingdom government has obligations to deal with such matters. The guidance also takes into account the formal requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment in response to European Union Directives.
- 1.2 Landscape is a definable set of characteristics resulting from the interaction of natural, physical and human factors: it is a resource in its own right. Its assessment is distinct from visual assessment, which deals specifically with effects on the views and visual amenity of different groups of people at particular locations. GLVIA3 (paragraph 2.22) makes clear that these two elements, although inter-related, should be assessed separately and that the assessment should clearly demonstrate the difference between them.
- 1.3 As GLVIA3 (paragraph 2.23) states, professional judgement is an important part of the LVIA process: whilst there may be some scope for objective measurement of landscape and visual changes, much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements. It is critical that these judgements are based upon a clear and transparent method so that the reasoning can be followed and examined by others.
- 1.4 GLVIA3 sets out a framework for making judgements about the level of effects that may result from change or development. It describes a step by step approach in which: judgements about the value and susceptibility of the receptor are combined into a judgement about sensitivity; judgements about the size/scale of the effect, its geographical extent and its duration and reversibility are combined into a judgement about the magnitude of the effect; and finally, the judgements about sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the effect are combined to judge the level of the effect. If the assessment forms part of an EIA, a threshold may then be identified to show which effects are considered to be significant and which are not. In non-EIA appraisals this step is not required though levels of effect may be described in terms of their relative importance.
- 1.5 GLVIA3 is not prescriptive about exactly how the various judgments required in this framework should be made. This is a matter for individual practitioners to decide and explain. This document therefore sets out the criteria and definitions used by SLR, in both EIA and non-EIA landscape and visual assessments, to make judgements about levels of effects and their importance or significance.
- 1.6 Impacts can be defined as the action being taken, whereas effects are the changes result from that action. This method of assessment assesses landscape and visual effects.

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<sup>1</sup> Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ (Third Edition, April 2013)

- 1.7 Landscape and visual effects can be positive, negative or neutral in nature. Positive effects are those which enhance and/or reinforce the characteristics which are valued. Negative effects are those which remove and/or undermine the characteristics which are valued. Neutral effects are changes which are consistent with the characteristics of the landscape or view.
- 1.8 In LVIA's which form part of an EIA, it is necessary to identify significant and non-significant effects. In non-EIA LVIA's, also known as appraisals, the same principles and process as LVIA may be applied but, in so doing, it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are or are not significant given that the exercise is not being undertaken for EIA purposes (see GLVIA3 statement of clarification 1/13 10-06-13, Landscape Institute).

### Landscape Effects

- 1.9 Landscape, as defined in the European Landscape Convention, is "an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors", (Council of Europe, 2000). Landscape does not apply only to special or designated places, nor is it limited to countryside.
- 1.10 GLVIA3 (paragraph 5.34) recommends that the effect of the development on landscape receptors is assessed. Landscape receptors are the components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the proposed development, and can include individual elements (such as hedges or buildings), aesthetic and perceptual aspects (for example sense of naturalness, tranquillity or openness), or, at a larger scale, the character of a defined character area or landscape type. Designated landscapes, such as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), may also be treated as landscape receptors, in which case attention is also given to effects on their special qualities.
- 1.11 This assessment is being undertaken because the proposed development has the potential to remove or add elements to the landscape, to alter aesthetic or perceptual aspects, and to add, remove or alter characteristics and thus potentially change overall character.
- 1.12 Judging landscape effects requires a methodical assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors to the proposed development and the magnitude of effect which would be experienced by each receptor. The criteria and definitions used in making these judgements are set out below.

### Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.13 The sensitivity of landscape receptors is assessed by combining assessments of the value attached to each receptor and the susceptibility of each receptor to the type of change which is proposed. (GLVIA3, paragraph 5.39).

### Value Attached to Landscape Receptors

- 1.14 Landscape value is generally assessed as part of the baseline and is not influenced by the nature of the project, whereas susceptibility and overall landscape sensitivity form part of the detailed assessment of the effects and are specific to the particular project and its landscape context.

- 1.15 Landscape receptors may be valued at community, local, national or international level. Existing landscape designations provide the starting point for this assessment, as set out in Table 1 below.
- 1.16 The table sets out the interpretation of landscape designations in terms of the value attached to different landscape receptors. As GLVIA3 (paragraph 5.24) notes, at the local scale of an LVIA study area it may be found that the landscape value of a specific area may sometimes be different to that suggested by the presence or absence of a formal designation.

**Table 1: Interpretation of Landscape Designations**

Designation	Description	Value
World Heritage Sites, candidate World Heritage Site	Unique sites, features or areas identified as being of international importance according to UNESCO criteria. Consideration should be given to their settings especially where these contribute to the attributes of outstanding universal value for which such an area of landscape is valued.	International
National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Scenic Areas (in Scotland)	Areas of landscape identified as being of national importance. Consideration should be given to their settings especially where these contribute to the special qualities for which the landscape is valued.	National
Parks, gardens and designed landscapes	Gardens and designed landscapes included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest as Grade I, II* or II or included in Historic Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland	National
Local Landscape Designations (such as Special Landscape Areas, Areas of Great Landscape Value and similar) included in local planning documents; or other landscapes of identified value	Areas of landscape identified as having value, which are either recognised at the local authority level by a local designation or other equivalent recognition of value OR are landscapes considered to have elevated value, having regard to the criteria in Table 2 below and/or by virtue of demonstrable physical attributes.	Local Authority
Undesignated landscapes	Landscapes which do not have any formal designation and which are not considered to have demonstrable physical attributes that elevate their value but which may be valued by local communities.	Community
Undesignated landscapes with negative attributes	Landscapes with no designations or demonstrable physical attributes that elevate their value, which are in poor condition or are degraded or fundamentally altered by presence of man-made structures judged to be intrusive.	Low

- 1.17 Where landscapes are not designated and where no other local authority guidance on value is available, an assessment is made by reference to criteria in the Table A2 below. This is based on

Table 1 of Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2/21. These factors are not fixed and should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. When assessing landscape value of a site it is important to consider not only the site itself but also its context.

- 1.18 Landscapes may be judged to be of local authority or community value on the basis of one or more of these factors. There may also be occasional circumstances where an undesignated landscape may be judged to be of national value, for example where it has a clear connection with a nationally designated landscape or is otherwise considered to be of equivalent value to a national designation. Similarly, on occasions there may be areas within designated landscapes that do not meet the designation criteria or demonstrate the key characteristics/special qualities in a way that is consistent with the rest of the designated area.
- 1.19 An overall assessment is made for each landscape receptor, based on an overview of the above criteria, to determine its value - whether for example it is comparable to a local authority landscape designation or similar, or whether it is of value to local people and communities. For example, an intact landscape in good condition, where scenic quality, tranquillity, and/or conservation interests make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important cultural or historical associations, might be of equivalent value to a local landscape designation. Conversely, a degraded landscape in poor condition, with no particular scenic qualities or natural or cultural heritage interest is likely to be considered of limited landscape value.

**Table 2: Factors Considered in Assessing the Value of Non-Designated Landscapes**

Factor	Definition (with Examples for Clarification)
<b>Natural Heritage</b>	Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest. Presence of wildlife and habitats that contribute to the sense of place. Landscape which contains valued natural capital assets that contribute to ecosystem services.
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest. Landscape which contributes to the significance of heritage assets. Landscape which offers a dimension of time depth.
<b>Landscape Condition</b>	Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure. Absence of detracting/incongruous features.
<b>Associations</b>	Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts.
<b>Distinctiveness</b>	Landscape that has a strong sense of identity or place. Presence of distinctive features that are characteristic of a place, or presence of rare/unusual features that confer a strong sense of place. Includes landscape that makes an important contribution to the character or identity of a settlement.
<b>Recreational</b>	Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important. Includes open access areas, common land and rights of way where appreciation of the landscape is an important element of the experience. Landscape that forms part of a view that that is important to the enjoyment of a recreational activity.

Factor	Definition (with Examples for Clarification)
<b>Perceptual (Scenic)</b>	Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense. Distinctive features, or distinctive combinations of features. Strong aesthetic qualities. Visual diversity or contrasts. Memorable/distinctive views or landmarks, or landscape that contributes to these.
<b>Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)</b>	Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably remoteness, wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies.
<b>Functional</b>	Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape. Natural hydrological systems, important parts of the green infrastructure network, pollinator rich habitats. Landscapes that have strong physical or functional links with an adjacent national landscape designation or are important to the appreciation of the designated landscape and its special qualities.

1.20 An overall assessment is made for each receptor, based on an overview of the above criteria, to determine its value - whether for example it is comparable to a local authority landscape designation or similar, or whether it is of value to local people and communities. For example, an intact landscape in good condition, where scenic quality, tranquillity, and/or conservation interests make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important cultural or historical associations, might be of equivalent value to a local landscape designation. Conversely, a degraded landscape in poor condition, with no particular scenic qualities or natural or cultural heritage interest is likely to be considered of limited landscape value.

### Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors to Change

1.21 As set out in GLVIA3, susceptibility refers to the ability of the landscape receptor to “*accommodate the proposed development without undue adverse consequences for the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies*”. Judgement of susceptibility is particular to the specific characteristics of the proposed development and the ability of a particular landscape or feature to accommodate the type of change proposed and makes reference to the criteria set out in Table 3 below. Aspects of the character of the landscape that may be affected by a particular type of development include landform, skylines, land cover, enclosure, human influences including settlement pattern and aesthetic and perceptual aspects such as the scale of the landscape, its form, line, texture, pattern and grain, complexity, and its sense of movement, remoteness, wildness or tranquillity. They will vary with the type of development in question.

**Table 3: Landscape Receptor Susceptibility to Change**

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	The landscape receptor is highly susceptible to the proposed development because the key characteristics of the landscape have no or very limited ability to accommodate it without transformational adverse effects, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape.

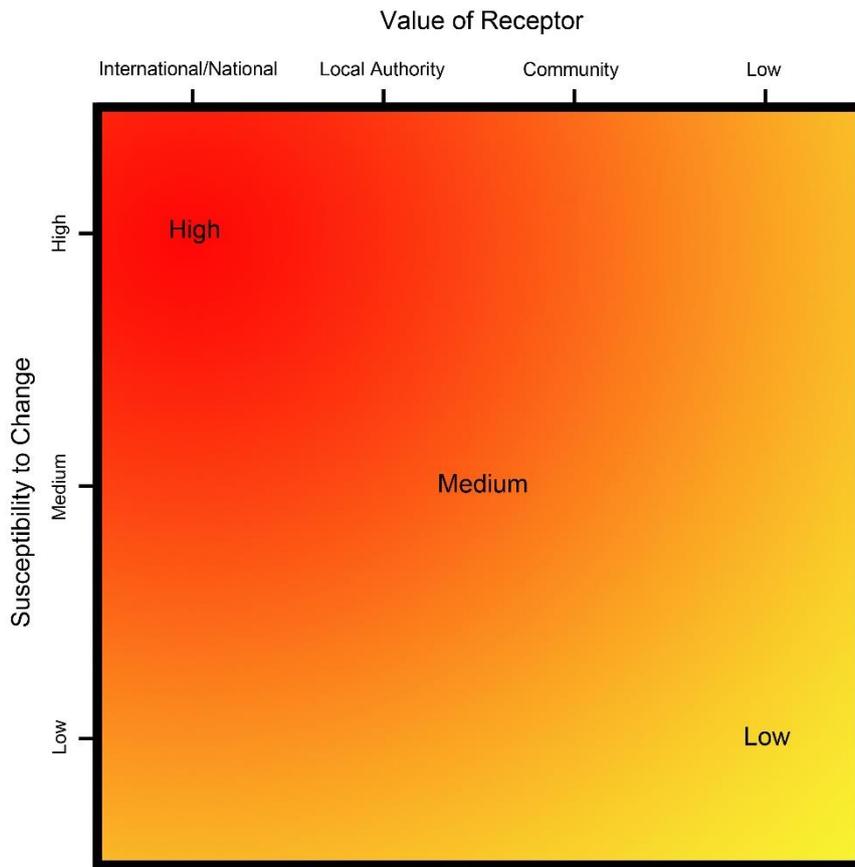
Susceptibility	Criteria
Medium	The landscape receptor is moderately susceptible to the proposed development because the relevant characteristics of the landscape have some ability to accommodate it without transformational adverse effects, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape.
Low	The landscape receptor has low susceptibility to the proposed development because the relevant characteristics of the landscape are generally able to accommodate it without transformational adverse effects, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape.

- 1.22 For example, an urban landscape which contains a number of industrial buildings may have a low susceptibility to buildings of a similar scale and character. Conversely a rural landscape containing only remote farmsteads is likely to have a high susceptibility to large scale built development.

### Defining Sensitivity

- 1.23 As noted above, the sensitivity of landscape receptors is defined in terms of the relationship between value and susceptibility to the proposed change, as indicated in Figure 1 and Table 4. These summarise the general nature of the relationship but the combination of the two factors is not formulaic. Table 4 provides examples of common combinations but is not comprehensive and other combinations may be judged appropriate. Professional judgement is applied on a case by case basis in determining the sensitivity of individual receptors with the diagram and table only serving as a guide.
- 1.24 Where, taking into account the component judgements about the value and susceptibility of the landscape receptor, sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment of high/medium or medium/low may be adopted. In a few limited cases a category of less than low (very low) may be used where the landscape is of low value and susceptibility is particularly low.

**Figure 1: Example Levels of Sensitivity defined by Value and Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors**



**Table 4: Example Levels of Sensitivity defined by Value and Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors**

Sensitivity	Criteria
High	<p>The landscape receptor is of international or national value and is considered to have high susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The landscape receptor is of national value and is considered to have medium susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The landscape receptor is of local authority value and is considered to have high susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development</p>
Medium	<p>The landscape receptor is of international or national value and is considered to have low susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The landscape receptor is of local authority value and is considered to have medium susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The landscape receptor is of community value and is considered to have high susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development</p>
Low	<p>The landscape receptor is of local authority value and is considered to have low susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The landscape receptor is of community value and is considered to have medium susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The landscape receptor is of community value and is considered to have low susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development</p>

### *Magnitude of Landscape Change*

1.25 The magnitude of landscape change is established by assessing the size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration and potential reversibility of the change.

### **Size and Scale of Change**

1.26 The size and/or scale of change in the landscape takes into consideration the following factors:

- the loss or addition of landscape elements; and/or
- the degree to which aesthetic/perceptual aspects are altered; and
- whether this is likely to change the key characteristics of the landscape.

1.27 The criteria used to assess the size and scale of landscape change are based upon the amount of change that will occur as a result of the proposed development, as described in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Size/Scale of Change**

Category	Description
Large level of landscape change	<p>There would be a large level of change in landscape character, and especially to the key characteristics if, for example, the proposed development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• becomes a dominant feature in the landscape, changing the balance of landscape characteristics; and/or</li> <li>• would dominate important visual connections with other landscape types, where this is a key characteristic of the area.</li> </ul>
Medium level of landscape change	<p>There would be a medium level of change in landscape character, and especially to the key characteristics if, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proposed development would be more prominent but would not change the overall balance or composition of the landscape; and/or</li> <li>• key visual connections to other landscape types may be interrupted intermittently by the proposed development, but these connections would not be dominated by them.</li> </ul>
Small level of landscape change	<p>There would be a small level of change in landscape character, and especially to the key characteristics if, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there would be no introduction of new elements into the landscape and the proposed development would not significantly change the composition/balance of the landscape.</li> </ul>
Negligible level of landscape change/ No change	<p>There would be a negligible level of change in landscape character, and especially to the key characteristics if, for example, the proposed development would be a small element and/or would be a considerable distance from the landscape receptor/ the proposed development will cause no change to the landscape.</p>

## Geographical Extent of Change

1.28 The geographical extent of landscape change is assessed by determining the area over which the changes will influence the landscape, as set out in Table 6. For example, this could be at the site level, in the immediate setting of the site, or over some or all of the landscape character types or areas affected.

**Table 6: Geographical Extent**

Category	Description
Large extent of landscape change	The change will affect all or the majority of the landscape receptor under consideration.
Medium extent of landscape change	The change will affect approximately half of the landscape receptor under consideration.
Small extent of landscape change	The change will affect a small extent of the landscape receptor under consideration.
Negligible extent of landscape change	The change will affect only a limited or negligible extent of the landscape receptor under consideration.

### Duration and Reversibility of Change

1.29 The duration of the landscape change is categorised in Table 7 below, which considers whether the change will be permanent and irreversible or temporary and reversible.

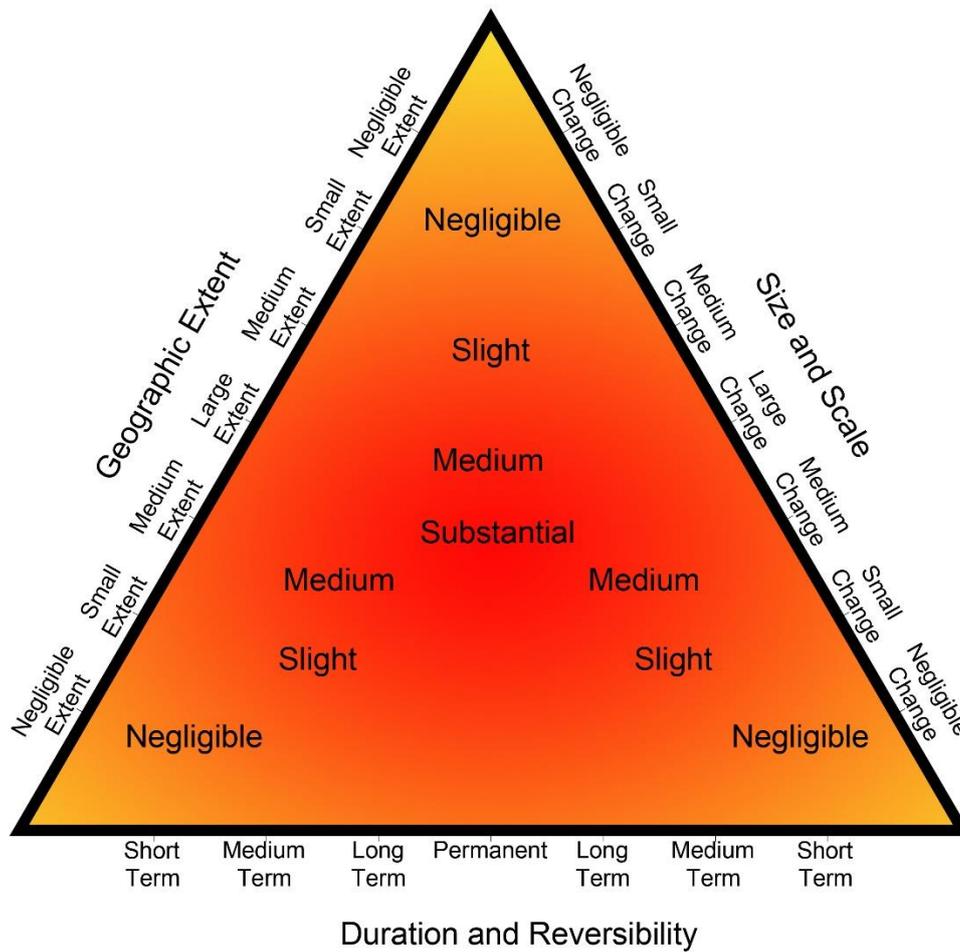
**Table 7: Duration and Reversibility**

Category	Description
Permanent/ Irreversible	Change that will last for over 25 years and is deemed permanent or irreversible.
Long term reversible	Change that will endure for between 10 and 25 years and is potentially, or theoretically reversible.
Medium term reversible	Change that will last for up to 10 years and is wholly or partially reversible.
Temporary/ Short term reversible	Change that will last from 0 to 5 years and is reversible - includes construction effects.

### Deciding on Overall Magnitude of Landscape Change

1.30 The relationships between the three factors that contribute to assessment of the magnitude of landscape effects are illustrated graphically, as a guide, in Figure 2 below. Various combinations are possible and the overall magnitude of each effect is determined using professional judgement rather than by formulaic application of the relationships in the diagram.

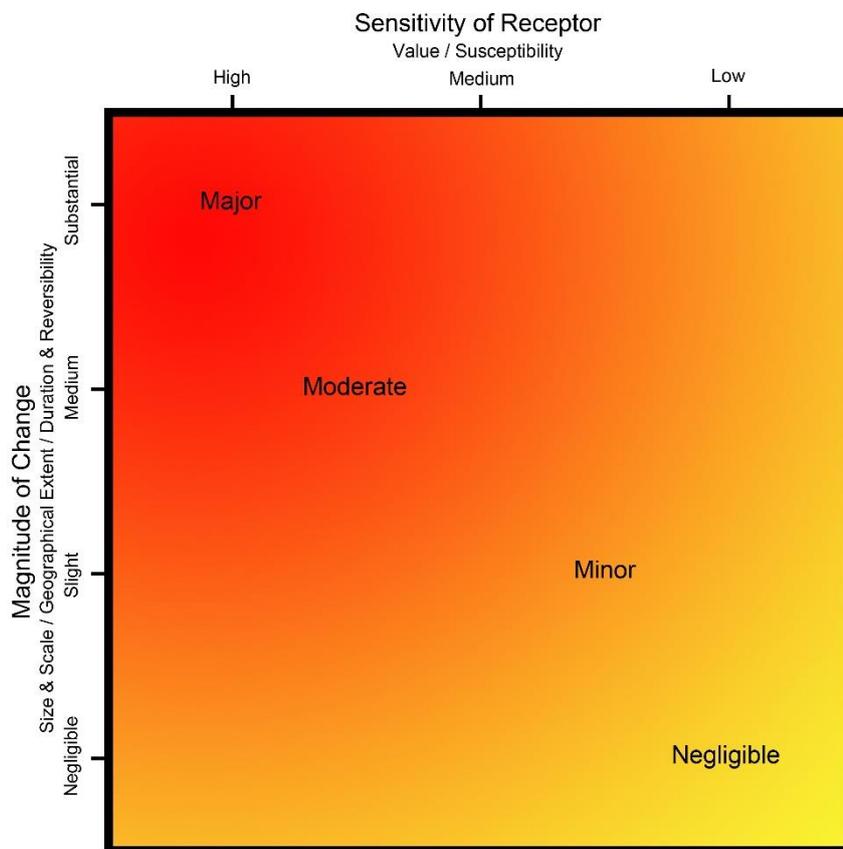
Figure 2: Determining the Magnitude of Landscape Change



### Assessment of Landscape Effects and Significance

1.31 The assessment of landscape effects, and whether these are significant or not significant, is defined in terms of the relationship between the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the change. The diagram below (Figure 3) summarises the nature of the relationship but it is not formulaic. Judgements are made about each landscape effect using this diagram as a guide.

**Figure 3: Assessment of Landscape Effects and Overall Significance**



- 1.32 Effects that fall in the red (darker) section of the diagram, that is those which are considered to be **major** and **major/moderate** effects by virtue of the more sensitive receptors and the greater magnitude of effects, are generally considered to be the **significant landscape effects**. Those effects falling outside the major or major/moderate categories are generally considered to be not significant. However, it should be noted that GLVIA3 states *“there are no hard and fast rules about what effects should be deemed significant”* and in some cases professional judgement may determine that a moderate effect is significant. Moderate effects are considered individually on a case by case basis, to determine whether each effect is considered to be significant or not significant. In determining whether moderate effects are or are not significant, particular attention is given to the constituent judgements leading to the assessment of a moderate effect and particularly to value, susceptibility and size/scale of effect, and in addition whether the effect is found across a number of receptors or in a pattern that intensifies the overall impact.

## Visual Effects

- 1.33 Visual effects are the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity. Visual receptors are the people whose views may be affected by the proposed development. They may include:
- Communities within settlements (i.e. towns, villages and hamlets);
  - Residents of individual properties and clusters of properties outside settlements;
  - People using nationally designated or regionally promoted footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways and others using areas of Open Access Land agreed under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;
  - Users of the local public rights of way (PRoW) network;
  - Visitors at publicly accessible sites including, for example, gardens and designed landscapes, historic sites, and other visitor attractions or outdoor recreational facilities where the landscape or seascape is an important part of the experience;
  - Users of outdoor sport and recreation facilities;
  - Visitors staying at caravan parks or camp sites;
  - Road users on recognised scenic or promoted tourist routes;
  - Travellers using other roads who may pass through the study area because they are visiting, living or working there;
  - Rail passengers;
  - People at their place of work.
- 1.34 Judging visual effects requires a methodical assessment of the sensitivity of the visual receptors to the proposed development and the magnitude of effect which would be experienced by each receptor.
- 1.35 Viewpoints are chosen, in discussion with the competent authority and other stakeholders and interested parties, for a variety of reasons but most commonly because they represent views experienced by relevant groups of people although they may also include specific promoted or otherwise important viewpoints.

## Visual Sensitivity

- 1.36 Sensitivity of visual receptors is assessed by combining an assessment of the susceptibility of visual receptors to the type of change which is proposed with the value attached to the views. (GLVIA3, paragraph 6.30).

## Value Attached to Views

- 1.37 Different levels of value are attached to the views experienced by particular groups of people at particular viewpoints. Assessment of value takes account of a number of factors, including:
- Recognition of the view through some form of planning designation or by its association with particular heritage assets; and
  - The popularity of the viewpoint, in part denoted by its appearance in guidebooks, literature or art, or on tourist maps, by information from stakeholders and by the evidence of use including facilities provided for its enjoyment (seating, signage, parking places, etc.); and
  - Other evidence of the value attached to views by people including consultation with local planning authorities, some of whom have carried out assessments of valued views, and professional assessment of the quality of views.
- 1.38 The assessment of the value of views is summarised in Table 8 below. These criteria are provided for guidance only.

**Table 8: Examples of Factors Considered in assessing the Value Attached to Views**

Value	Criteria
High	<p>Views from nationally (and in some cases internationally) known viewpoints, which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have some form of planning designation; or</li> <li>• are associated with internationally or nationally designated landscapes or important heritage assets; or</li> <li>• are promoted in sources such as maps and tourist literature; or</li> <li>• are linked with important and popular visitor attractions where the view forms a recognised part of the visitor experience; or</li> <li>• have important cultural associations.</li> </ul> <p>Also, may include views judged by assessors to be of high value.</p>
Medium	<p>Views from viewpoints of some importance at regional or local levels, which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have some form of local planning designation associated with locally designated landscapes or areas of equivalent landscape quality; or</li> <li>• are promoted in local sources; or</li> <li>• are linked with locally important and popular visitor attractions where the view forms a recognised part of the visitor experience; or</li> <li>• have important local cultural associations.</li> </ul>

Value	Criteria
	Also, may include views judged by the assessors to be of medium value.
Low	<p>Views from viewpoints which, although they may have value to local people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have no formal planning status; or</li> <li>• are not associated with designated or otherwise high-quality landscapes; or</li> <li>• are not linked with popular visitor attractions; or</li> <li>• have no known cultural associations.</li> </ul> <p>Also, may include views judged by the assessors to be of low value.</p>

1.39 Where judgements are made about the value attached to views experienced by residential receptors, the following considerations also apply:

- Views in a rural or designed context (e.g. an avenue of trees or designed view from a parkland), especially if associated with landscapes of national or local authority value, where residential receptors are positioned to take advantage of the views, will generally be considered to be of high value;
- Views in a semi-rural or general townscape context, and/or where locations of residential receptors are not positioned to take full advantage of views, will generally be considered of medium value; and
- Views in an urban/industrial context, and/or where locations of residential receptors are not positioned to take advantage of views, will generally be considered of low value.

### Susceptibility of Visual Receptors to Change

1.40 The susceptibility of different types of people to changes in views is mainly a function of:

- The occupation or activity of the viewer at a given viewpoint; and
- The extent to which the viewer's attention or interest be focussed on a particular view and the visual amenity experienced at a given view.

**Table 9: Visual Receptor Susceptibility to Change**

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	Residents; People engaged in outdoor recreation where their attention is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views; Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where views of the surroundings are an important part of the experience; Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by the residents.
Medium	Travellers on scenic routes where the attention of drivers and passengers is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views. People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which may involve appreciation of views e.g. users of golf courses.
Low	People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which does not involve appreciation of views; People at their place of work whose attention is focused on their work; where the setting is not important to quality of working life; Travellers, where the view is incidental to the journey.

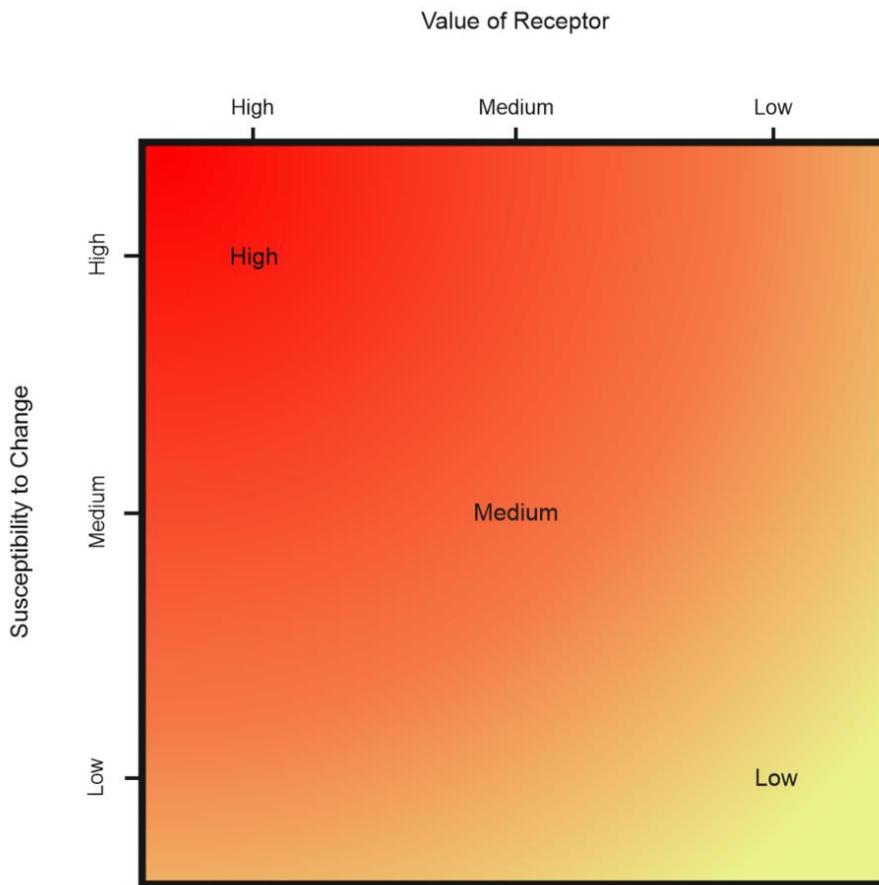
1.41 The susceptibility of different groups of viewers is assessed with reference to the guidance in Table 9 below. However, as noted in GLVIA3 *“this division is not black and white and, in reality, there will be a gradation in susceptibility to change”*. Therefore, the susceptibility of each group of people affected is considered for each project and assessments are included in the relevant text in the report.

### Defining Sensitivity

1.42 As noted above, the sensitivity of visual receptors is defined in terms of the relationship between the value of views and the susceptibility of the different receptors to the proposed change, as indicated in Figure 4 and Table 10. These summarise the general nature of the relationship but the combination of the two factors is not formulaic. Table 10 provides examples of common combinations but is not comprehensive and other combinations may be judged appropriate. Professional judgement is applied on a case by case basis in determining the sensitivity of individual receptors with the diagram and table only serving as a guide.

1.43 Where, taking into account the component judgements about the value and susceptibility of the visual receptor, sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment of high/medium or medium/low may be adopted. In a few limited cases a category of less than low (very low) may be used where the visual receptor is of low value and susceptibility is particularly low.

**Figure 4: Levels of Sensitivity Defined by Value and Susceptibility of Visual Receptor Groups**



**Table 10: Example Levels of Sensitivity defined by Value and Susceptibility of Visual Receptors**

Sensitivity	Criteria
High	<p>The visual receptor group is highly susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of high value</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The visual receptor group has a medium level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of high value</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The visual receptor group is highly susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the medium level.</p>

Sensitivity	Criteria
Medium	<p>The visual receptor group is highly susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the low level</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The visual receptor group has a medium level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the medium level</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The visual receptor group has a low level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the high level.</p>
Low	<p>The visual receptor group has a medium level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the low level</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The visual receptor group has a low level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the medium level</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The visual receptor group has a low level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the low level.</p>

### *Magnitude of Visual Change*

1.44 The magnitude of visual change is established by assessing the size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration and potential reversibility of the change. Representative viewpoints are used as “*sample*” points to assess the typical change experienced by different groups of visual receptors at different distances and directions from the proposed development.

### **Size and Scale of Change**

1.45 The criteria used to assess the size/scale of visual change are as follows:

- the scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view, changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development and distance of view;
- the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of factors such as form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture; and
- the nature of the view of the proposed development, for example whether views will be full, partial or glimpses or sequential views while passing through the landscape.

1.46 The above criteria are summarised in the Table 11 below.

**Table 11: Size/Scale of Change**

Category	Criteria
Large visual change	The proposed development will cause a complete or large change in the view, resulting from the loss of important features in or the addition of important new ones, to the extent that this will substantially alter the composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers.
Medium visual change	The proposed development will cause a clearly noticeable change in the view, resulting from the loss of features or the addition of new ones, to the extent that this will alter to a moderate degree the composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers. Views may be partial/intermittent.
Small visual change	The proposed development will cause a perceptible change in the view, resulting from the loss of features or the addition of new ones, to the extent that this will partially alter the composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers. Views may be partial only.
Negligible visual change	The proposed development will cause a barely perceptible change in the view, resulting from the loss of features or the addition of new ones, to the extent that this will barely alter the composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers. Views may be glimpsed only.
No change	The proposed development will cause no change to the view.

### Geographical Extent of Change

- 1.47 The geographical extent of the visual change identified at representative viewpoints is assessed by reference to a combination of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), where this has been prepared, and field work. The way that geographical extent is assessed varies with circumstances.
- 1.48 Most commonly a number of representative viewpoints are used as “*sample*” points to assess the typical change experienced by a particular group of visual receptors in locations at different distances and directions from the proposed development. In such cases the geographical extent of the visual change is judged for each group of receptors (for example, people using a particular route or public amenity) drawing on the relevant viewpoint assessments, plus information about the approximate number and distribution of that particular group of people in the Study Area. For example, the geographical extent would be small if the change is experienced at only one or two locations and/or by a smaller number of viewers. Community views may, for example, be experienced from a small number of dwellings, or affect numerous properties in the community, or several different communities. Similarly, changes to a view from a public footpath may be visible from a single isolated viewpoint (small geographical extent), or over a prolonged stretch of the route (large geographical extent).
- 1.49 In the case of individual (rather than representative) viewpoints in a specific location, the following factors (as noted in GLVIA), are considered in judging geographical extent:
- the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
  - the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development; and
  - the extent of the area over which changes would be visible.

- 1.50 For example, from an elevated area of Open Access Land the proposed development may be widely visible from much or all of the accessible area, be close to it and so occupy a wide angle of the view, suggesting large geographical extent. Alternatively, the proposed development may be visible from only a small proportion of the area, be quite distant from it and so occupy a small proportion of the view, suggesting small geographical extent.
- 1.51 Table 12 describes the most common categories of geographical extent based on these two approaches.

**Table 12: Geographical Extent of Change**

Category	Description
Large extent of visual change	Either: The proposed development is seen by the group of receptors in many locations across the Study Area or from the majority, or a large proportion, of a linear route and/or by large numbers of viewers; Or: The proposed development is visible from much or all of a specific site is close to it and so occupies a wide angle of the view. .
Medium extent of visual change	Either: The proposed development is seen by the group of receptors in several locations across the Study Area or from a moderate proportion of a linear route and/or by moderate numbers of viewers; Or: The proposed development is visible from a moderate part of a specific site, is at a moderate distance from it and so occupies a moderate angle of the view.
Small extent of visual change	Either: The proposed development is seen by the group of receptors at a small number of locations across the Study Area or from limited sections of a linear route and/or by a small numbers of viewers; Or: The proposed development is visible from a small part of a specific site, is at some distance from it and so occupies a small angle of the view.
Negligible extent of visual change	Either: The proposed development is not visible in the Study Area or is seen by the group of receptors at only one or two locations or from a very short length of a linear route and/or by a very small number of viewers; OR: The proposed development is visible from only a very small part of a site, is at a considerable distance from it and so occupies a very small angle of the view.

### Duration and Reversibility of Change

- 1.52 The duration of the visual change at viewpoints is categorised in Table 13 below, which considers whether views will be permanent and irreversible or temporary and reversible.

**Table 13: Duration and Reversibility**

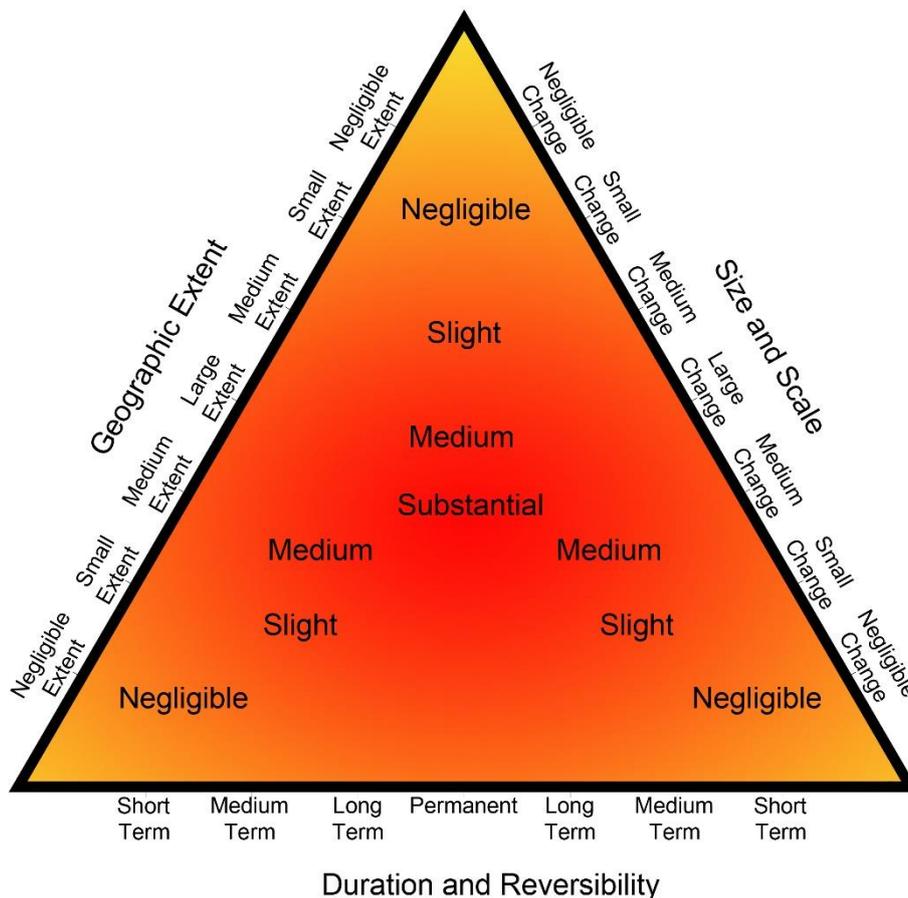
Category	Description
Permanent/ Irreversible	Change that will last for over 25 years and is deemed permanent or irreversible.
Long term reversible	Change that will endure for between 10 and 25 years and is potentially, or theoretically reversible.

Category	Description
Medium term reversible	Change that will last for up to 10 years and is wholly or partially reversible.
Temporary/ Short term reversible	Change that will last from 0 to 5 years and is reversible - includes construction effects.

### Deciding on Overall Magnitude of Visual Change

1.53 The relationships between the three factors that contribute to assessment of the magnitude of visual effects are illustrated graphically, as a guide, in Figure 5 below. Various combinations are possible and the overall magnitude of each effect is made using professional judgement rather than by formulaic application of the relationships in the diagram.

**Figure 5: Determining the Magnitude of Visual Change**

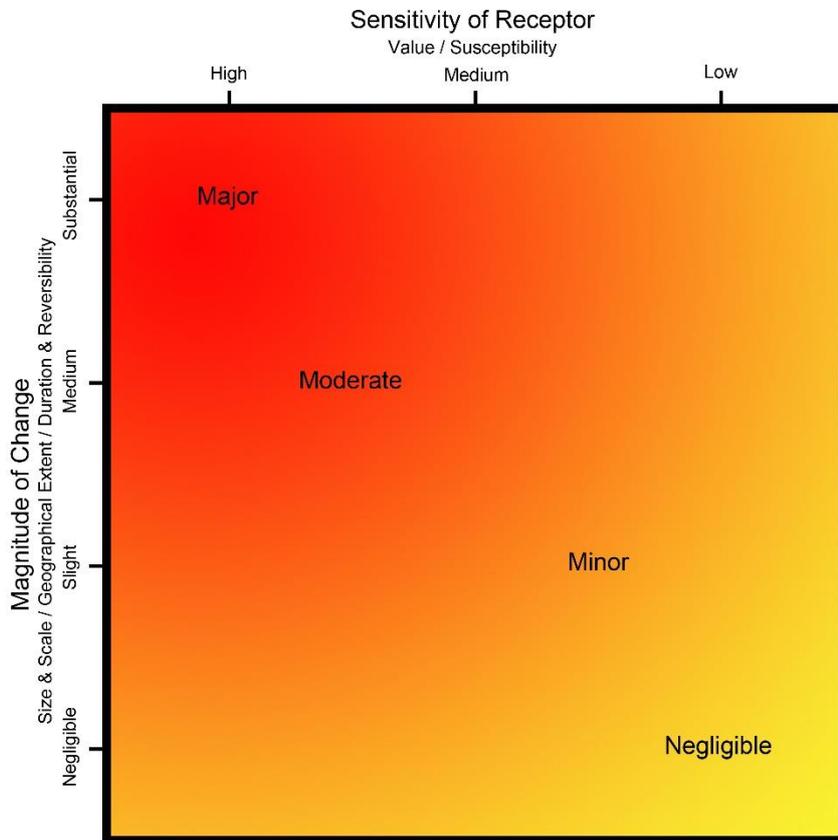


### Assessment of Visual Effects and Significance

1.54 The assessment of visual effects, and whether these are significant or not significant, is defined in terms of the relationship between the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the magnitude of the change. The diagram below (Figure 6) summarises the nature of the relationship but it is not

formulaic and only indicates broad levels of effect. Judgements are made about each visual effect using this diagram as a guide.

**Figure 6: Assessment of Visual Effects and Overall Significance**



- 1.55 Effects that fall in the red (darker) section of the diagram, that is those which are considered to be **major** and **major/moderate** effects by virtue of the more sensitive receptors and the greater magnitude of effects, are generally considered to be the **significant visual effects**. Those effects falling outside the major or major/moderate categories are generally considered to be not significant. However, it should be noted that GLVIA3 states *“there are no hard and fast rules about what effects should be deemed significant”* and in some cases professional judgement may determine that a moderate effect is significant. Moderate effects are considered individually on a case by case basis, to determine whether each effect is considered to be significant or not significant. In determining whether moderate effects are or are not significant, particular attention is given to the constituent judgements leading to the assessment of a moderate effect and particularly to value, susceptibility and size/scale of effect, and in addition whether the effect is found across a number of receptors or in a pattern that intensifies the overall impact.