



Appendix 3 Stage 3 Landscape Methodology

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

September 2017

Methodology

- 1.1 This methodology is based on:
 - 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (Natural England, 2014)
 - Topic Paper 6 'Techniques and Criteria for Judging Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity' (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2004).
- 1.2 It also draws on the method used in:
 - 'Landscape Capacity Assessment for Sites on the Edge of Larger Villages in South Oxfordshire' by Kirkham Landscape Planning LTD.
 - 'Landscape Assessment of Strategic Sites' (WDC, 2014)
- 1.3 The methodology is based on similar studies for other local authorities and has been tested at both examination in public and through the LDF public consultation process.
- 1.4 As in current best practice, sensitivity and capacity should be assessed against a specific change, and for this study, all of the sites have been assessed for their sensitivity and capacity to residential development except for SSC0043 which is assessed for employment use.
- 1.5 Best practice guidance also recognises that a landscape with a high sensitivity does not automatically mean that landscape has a low capacity for change, but that '*capacity is all a question of the interaction between the sensitivity of the landscape, the type and amount of change and the way that the landscape is valued*' (Topic Paper 6, 2006, p12). Proposals for any development would need to include appropriate, detailed and specialist input into siting, layout and design. A full landscape and visual impact assessment should accompany further site-specific proposals. Other studies including ecology, archaeology, arboriculture, traffic, flooding may also be required to accompany specific proposals.

Appraisal process

- 1.6 Following a desk and field study where information about the site is collected, each site is assessed for its sensitivity and capacity by following the following steps. The matrices and scoring results are used as a guide after which professional judgement is applied.

Step 1: Identify boundary of area to be assessed

Step 2: Assessment of visual sensitivity (using matrix 1, notes in Table 1)

Step 3: Assessment of landscape sensitivity (using matrix 2, notes in Table 2)

Step 4: Determination of resulting landscape character sensitivity (combining steps 2 & 3 using matrix 3)

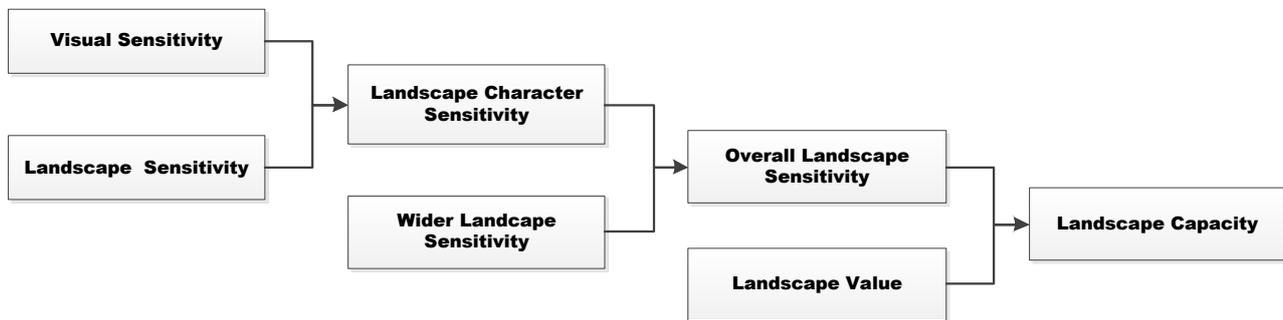
Step 5: Assessment of wider sensitivity (using criteria in para 1.10)

Step 6: Determination of resulting landscape sensitivity (combining steps 4 & 5 using matrix 4)

Step 7: Assessment of landscape value (using table 3)

Step 8: Determination of resulting landscape capacity (combining steps 6 & 7 using matrix 5)

Figure 1: Summary of Steps 2-7 of assessment process.



Determination of Visual Sensitivity (Step 2)

1.7 The assessment considers the types of views (general visibility), the nature of the viewers (population) and the potential to mitigate visual impact on the identified viewpoints (mitigation). The level of visual sensitivity is influenced by the number of viewpoints, the level of exposure, the sensitivity of the viewers and the opportunities to mitigate the impact without harm to the landscape and visual attributes of the area. At this stage each level has been given a score from low = 1 to high = 5 and the scores are added up to help guide the final assessment which is guided by professional judgement.

Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity

General visibility	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Population	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Mitigation	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Visual Sensitivity	3-4 = low; 5-7 = med/low; 8-10 = med; 11-13 = med/high; 14-15 = high				

Table 1: Notes on Visual Sensitivity Assessment

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Lower sensitivity
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views	Fleeting and limited views
	Most of site area visible	Little of site area visible
	Site is a key focus in available wider	Site is an incidental part of wider views
	Site includes prominent and key	No landmarks
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out	Unimportant vistas or panoramas
	Prominent skyline	Not part of skyline
	Strong intervisibility from adjacent landscapes or sensitive viewpoints	Limited intervisibility from adjacent landscapes or sensitive viewpoints
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive	Lack of sensitive receptors
	Large number of people see site	Few can see site

	Key view from a sensitive receptor	Views of site are unimportant
	Site is part of valued view	Site does not form a part of a valued view
	Site in key views to/across/out of	Not part of setting of settlement view
Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	Mitigation possible
	Mitigation would interrupt key views	Would not obscure key views
	Mitigation would damage local	Mitigation would not harm local character

Determination of Landscape Sensitivity (Step 3)

The assessment considers the natural physical factors which make up the landscape character of the site, the cultural and built-form and the perceptual features. The level of sensitivity is influenced by existing landscape interest and diversity, the presence of historically important features and cultural associations, level of access, perceptions of tranquility and strong landscape pattern. At this stage each level has been given a score from low = 1 to high = 5 and the scores are added up to help guide the final assessment which is guided by professional judgement.

Matrix 2: Landscape sensitivity

Natural factors	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Cultural factors	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Perceptual features	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Landscape Sensitivity	3-4 = low; 5-7 = med/low; 8-10 = med; 11-13 = med/high; 14-15 = high				

Table 2: Notes on Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Lower sensitivity
Natural	Varied landform and distinctive features of the area	Uniform landform and lack of topographical features
	Significant water feature(s)	No water feature(s)
	Significant tree or vegetation cover	Significant tree or vegetation cover
	Strong hedgerow structure with or without hedgerow trees	Weak hedgerow structure
	Presence of valued wildlife habitats and/or designated sites	Absence of valued wildlife habitats and/or designated sites
	Diverse mosaic of habitats	Little ecological diversity
	High potential to support protected/notable species and habitats	Low potential to support protected/notable species and habitats
	Positive contribution to wider landscape	Limited contribution to wider landscape
	Rare or valuable landscape resource	Widespread or well catered landscape resource
	Pronounced Geology	Lack of geological features

	Soils significantly contribute to landscape features	Soils are not an important feature
	Area in floodplain or prone to flooding	Area not in floodplain
Cultural	Evidence of surviving part of an historic landscape	No evidence of historic landscape
	Complex historic landscape pattern with good time depth	Simple modern landscape
	Conservation area and/or listed buildings present or their setting	Conservation area and/or listed buildings or their setting not present
	Scheduled Ancient Monument present	Scheduled Ancient Monument not present
	Locally distinctive built form and pattern	Generic built form
	Evidence of visible social cultural associations	Lack of social cultural associations
	Open access land or common land present	No open access land or common land present
Perceptual	Area well used or appreciated by the public	Area inaccessible by the public
	Important PRow present	No PRow present
	Peaceful and tranquil	Visible and audible signs of human activity
	Quiet area	Noisy area
	Absence of detracting features and/or intrusive elements	Detracting features and/or intrusive elements present
	Dark skies	High levels of light pollution
	Open / large scale landscape	Enclosed visually contained landscape
	Unified landscape with strong landscape structure	Fragmented and/or featureless landscape

Determination of Landscape Character Sensitivity (Step 4)

1.8 The landscape sensitivity and visual sensitivity are combined, as shown in matrix 3, to give the landscape character sensitivity.

Matrix 3: Landscape character sensitivity

Visual Sensitivity	High	M	M/H	M/H	H	H
	Med/High	M/L	M	M/H	M/H	H
	Med	M/L	M/L	M	M/H	M/H
	Med/Low	L	M/L	M/L	M	M/H
	Low	L	L	M/L	M/L	M
	Low	Med/Low	Med	Med/High	High	
	Landscape Sensitivity					

Determination of Wider Sensitivity (Step 5)

1.9 Steps 2 to 4 have led to a comprehensive assessment of the intrinsic landscape sensitivity of the individual sites. However the sensitivity of each of these to development is also affected by its importance and contribution to the adjacent wider landscape as well as the influence of patterns and uses within the settlement edge. In addition, the wider sensitivity is informed by existing landscape character assessments. The assessment of the wider sensitivity of each site is aided by the following criteria:

- **Low wider sensitivity** – The site is heavily influenced by the built form of the adjacent urban settlement and not an important part of the adjacent wider landscape
- **Medium/Low wider sensitivity** – The site is heavily influenced by urban fringe uses and has views of the some parts of the adjacent urban settlement but shares some of the characteristics of the adjacent wider landscape
- **Medium wider sensitivity** – The site is partly influenced by urban fringe uses but shares many of the characteristics of the wider landscape, with good physical and visual links to the wider landscape
- **Medium/High wider sensitivity** – The site has strong physical and visual links to the wider landscape and these outweigh any minor impacts from the adjacent urban settlement
- **High wider sensitivity** – The site is an important part of the wider landscape with which it has strong visual and landscape links. The nearby settlement has little impact on the site.

Determination of Overall Landscape Sensitivity (Step 6)

1.10 The overall landscape sensitivity is determined by combining the landscape character sensitivity with the wider sensitivity as shown in matrix 4. This includes the contribution of the site to the wider landscape and settlement edge pattern.

Matrix 4: Overall Landscape sensitivity

Landscape Character Sensitivity	High	M	M/H	M/H	H	H
	Med/High	M/L	M	M/H	M/H	H
	Med	M/L	M/L	M	M/H	M/H
	Med/Low	L	M/L	M/L	M	M/H
	Low	L	L	M/L	M/L	M
	Low	Med/Low	Med	Med/High	High	
	Wider Sensitivity					

Determination of Landscape Value (Step 7)

Table 3: Landscape Value Criteria

Value	Typical criteria	Typical scale	Typical examples
High	High importance (or quality) and rarity. No or limited potential for substitution	International National	World Heritage Site National Park/ AONB SSSI EH Register of Parks and Gardens Grade I and II* listed buildings and their settings National recreational route or area e.g. Thames Path/Open Access
Medium/High	High importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	National Regional Local	National Park/AONB AGLV/other local landscape designation Landscape value identified in SPD SINC/Conservation Areas Grade II listed buildings and their setting Local Wildlife sites Regional recreational route/area e.g. Wayfarer's Route/Country Park
Medium	Medium importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Regional Local	Undesignated but value expressed through publications, VDS Local buildings of historic interest and their settings Local recreational facilities of landscape value
Medium/Low	Low importance (or quality) or rarity	Local	Site has some value (redeeming feature/benefit to the community)

Low	Low importance (or quality) or rarity	Local	Area of little value and identified for improvement
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- 1.11 The location of the site within a designated area, or the presence of a designated area within the site, is an important measure of the value society gives to the landscape of the site. These include landscape, historic and ecological designations and recreational routes at a national/international level, regional or district level, or at the local level.
- 1.12 However, the lack of a designation does not mean a site is not valued and consideration is given to areas, which are known to be of great value to the community.

Determination of Landscape Capacity (Step 8)

- 1.13 Landscape capacity is the ability, or otherwise, of the site to accommodate areas of the development. The landscape capacity is determined by combining the overall landscape sensitivity with the landscape value as shown in Matrix 5.

Matrix 5: Landscape Capacity

Overall Landscape Sensitivity	High	M	M/L	L	L	L
	Med/High	M/H	M	M/L	L	L
	Med	H	M/H	M	M/L	L
	Med/Low	H	H	M/H	M	M/L
	Low	H	H	H	M/H	M
	Low	Med/Low	Med	Med/High	High	
	Landscape Value					

- 1.14 The results from the matrix are subsequently tested against the following classifications for each level of landscape capacity.
- **Low capacity** – The site could not accommodate areas of new development without a significant and adverse impact on the landscape character. Occasional, very small scale development may be possible, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.
 - **Low/ Medium capacity** – The site may be able to accommodate some development but it will be severely constrained by the need to avoid any adverse impact on the landscape character and providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas. There are

significant landscape constraints and therefore the key landscape and visual characteristics must be retained and enhanced.

- **Medium capacity** - The site could be able to accommodate areas of new development in some parts, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas. There are landscape constraints and therefore the key landscape and visual characteristics must be retained and enhanced.
- **Medium/ High capacity** – The area is able to accommodate development, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas. Certain landscape and visual features in the area may require protection.
- **High capacity** – Much of the area is able accommodate significant areas of development, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

1.15 Conclusions of the main landscape issues and influences affecting each site is provided at the end of each site assessment followed by a list of Landscape Guidelines for Development on sites which are considered have some development capacity. These guidelines are intended to guide any future development proposals on the site to ensure landscape sensitivities and constraints are taken into account.

Constraints and Limitations of the study

1.16 The sites have been assessed from a conservative range of publicly accessible viewpoints on the local road network and local public rights of way. Views from private houses and from private land have not been assessed. General intervisibility between the sites and surrounding countryside and settlement has also been considered, but a full landscape and visual impact appraisal should accompany any further site-specific proposals and inform the final capacity of each site and the layout of any development.