



MARINE ENERGY WALES

MARINE ENERGY TEST AREA (META)

Environmental Impact Assessment

Appendix 14.1. – Criteria for the Assessment  
of Significance

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## 14.1 Appraisal of Landscape Effects Methodology

This Appraisal of Landscape Effect has been undertaken with reference to best practice, as outlined in the following published guidance:

- a. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) - Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013);
- b. GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13;
- c. Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland - (2002) Countryside Agency / Scottish Natural Heritage; and
- d. Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual assessment (2011) - Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11.

GLVIA3 states within paragraph 1.1 that “Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity GLVIA3 also states within paragraph 1.17 that when identifying landscape and visual effects there is a “need for an approach that is in proportion to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of the likely effects. Judgement needs to be exercised at all stages in terms of the scale of investigation that is appropriate and proportional.”

GLVIA3 recognises within paragraph 2.23 that “professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA. While there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements”<sup>3</sup> undertaken by a landscape consultant or a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI).

The effects on cultural heritage and ecology are not considered within this chapter.

### Study Area

The study area for the report was taken to be a 5 km radius from each site. However, the main focus of the assessment was taken as a radius of 2 km from each site as in 1 Para 1.1, Page 4, GLVIA, 3rd Edition 2 Para 1.17, Page 9, GLVIA, 3rd Edition 3 Para 2.23, Page 21, GLVIA, 3rd Edition 2 it is considered that beyond this distance, even with good visibility, the project would not generally be perceptible in the landscape.

### Effects Assessed

Landscape and visual effects are assessed through professional judgements on the sensitivity of landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors and representative viewpoints combined with the predicted magnitude of change arising from the proposals.

The landscape and visual effects have been assessed in the following sections:

- Effects on landscape elements;
- Effects on landscape character; and
- Effects on visual amenity.

Sensitivity is defined in GLVIA3 as “a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgments of susceptibility of the receptor to a specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor.”

Various factors in relation to the susceptibility and value of landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors or representative viewpoints are considered below and are cross referenced to determine the overall sensitivity as shown in Table 1:

**Table 1: Overall sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors**

SUSCEPTIBILITY	VALUE			
	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	
HIGH	High	High	Medium	
MEDIUM	High	Medium	Medium	
LOW	Medium	Medium	Low	

Magnitude of change is defined in GLVIA3 as “a term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration.” Various factors contribute to the magnitude of change on landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors and representative viewpoints.

The sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptor and the magnitude of change resulting from the Proposed Development are cross referenced in Table 1 to determine the degree of landscape and visual effects.

### Effects on Landscape Elements

The effects on landscape elements are limited to the site and include the direct physical change to the fabric of the land, such as the removal of woodland, hedgerows or grassland to allow for the proposed development.

### Sensitivity of Landscape Elements

Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a landscape element and the susceptibility of the landscape element to changes that would arise as a result of the proposed development – see pages 88-90 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

The criteria for assessing the value of landscape elements and landscape character is shown in Table 2:

**Table 2: Criteria for assessing 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. 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>
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<b>MEDIUM</b>	<p>No formal designation but (typically) rural landscapes, important to the setting of towns and villages and also 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 of allotments) and also 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. 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>

The criteria for assessing the susceptibility of landscape elements and landscape character is shown in Table 3:

**Table 3: Criteria for assessing landscape susceptibility**

<b>HIGH</b>	<p>Scale of enclosure – 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>Nature of land use – landscapes with no or little existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p> <p>Nature of existing elements – 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>Scale of enclosure – 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>Nature of land use – landscapes with some existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p>

<b>LOW</b>	<p>Nature of existing elements – 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> <p>Scale of enclosure – 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>Nature of land use – landscapes with extensive existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p> <p>Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features or major infrastructure is present and has a dominating influence on the landscape.</p>
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Various factors in relation to the susceptibility and value of landscape elements are assessed and cross referenced to determine the overall sensitivity as shown in Table 1.

### Magnitude of Change on Landscape Elements

Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude of change on individual landscape elements within the site as shown in Table 4:

**Table 4: Criteria for assessing magnitude of change for landscape elements**

<b>HIGH</b>	Total loss of a landscape element.
<b>MEDIUM</b>	Partial loss or alteration to part of a landscape element.
<b>LOW</b>	Minor loss or alteration to part of a landscape element.
<b>NEGLIGIBLE</b>	No loss or very limited alteration to part of a landscape element.

### Effects on Landscape Character

Landscape character is defined as the “*distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.*” The assessment of effects on landscape character considers how the introduction of new landscape elements physically alters the landform, landcover, landscape pattern and perceptual attributes of the site or how visibility of the Proposed Development changes the way in which the landscape character is perceived.

### Sensitivity of Landscape Character

Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a landscape and the susceptibility of the landscape to changes that would arise as a result of the proposed development – see pages 88-90 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

The criteria for assessing landscape character value are shown in Table 2.

The criteria for assessing landscape character susceptibility are shown in Table 3.

The overall sensitivity of landscape character is determined through cross referencing the value and susceptibility of landscape character as shown in Table 1.

### Magnitude of Change on Landscape Character

Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude change on landscape character as shown in Table 5:

**Table 5: Criteria for magnitude of change for landscape character**

<b>HIGH</b>	Introduction of major elements into the landscape or some major change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of the landscape.
<b>MEDIUM</b>	Introduction of some notable elements into the landscape or some notable change to the scale, landform, landcover or pattern of the landscape.
<b>LOW</b>	Introduction of minor new elements into the landscape or some minor change to the scale, landform, landcover or pattern of the landscape.
<b>NEGLIGIBLE</b>	No notable or appreciable introduction of new elements into the landscape or change to the scale, landform, landcover or pattern of the landscape

### Effects on Visual Amenity

The effects on visual amenity consider the changes in views arising from the proposed development in relation to visual receptors including settlements, 18/09/2015 | A.0292 Page | seven residential properties, transport routes, recreational facilities and attractions; and on representative viewpoints or specific locations within the study area as agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a view and the susceptibility of the receptor to changes in that view that would arise as a result of the proposed development – see pages 113-114 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

The value attached to a view includes a recognition of value through landscape designations, indicators of value attached to views by visitors such as the inclusion on maps or reference within guidebooks, provision of facilities, presence of interpretation boards, etc.

The criteria for assessing visual susceptibility is shown in Table 6:

**Table 6: Criteria for assessing visual susceptibility**

<b>HIGH</b>	Includes occupiers of residential properties and people engaged in recreational activities in the countryside such as using public rights of way.
<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 place of work e.g. industrial and commercial premises and people travelling through the landscape on A roads and motorways.
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### Magnitude of Change on Visual Amenity

Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude change on landscape character as shown in Table 7:

**Table 7: Criteria for magnitude of change for visual receptors**

<b>HIGH</b>	Major change in the view that has a defining influence on the overall view with many visual receptors affected.
<b>MEDIUM</b>	Some change in the view that is clearly visible and forms an important but not defining element in the view.
<b>LOW</b>	Some change in the view that is not prominent with few visual receptors affected.
<b>NEGLIGIBLE</b>	No notable change in the view.

### Degree of Effect for Landscape and Visual Receptors

The degree of effects is a professional judgement based upon all the factors in terms of landscape and visual sensitivity and the magnitude of change arising from the proposed development. The cross referencing of landscape and visual sensitivity and the magnitude of change determines the overall degree of effects as shown in Table 8:

**Table 8: Degree of landscape and visual effects**

		Magnitude of Change			
		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
Sensitivity	HIGH	Substantial	Major	Moderate	Minor
	MEDIUM	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	LOW	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible

### Nature of Effects

GLVIA3 includes an entry that states “effects can be described as positive or negative (or in some cases neutral) in their consequences for views and visual amenity.” GLVIA3 does not, however, state how negative or positive effects should be assessed and therefore becomes a matter of subjective judgement rather than reasoned criteria. Due to inconsistencies with the assessment of negative or positive effects a precautionary approach is applied to this assessment that assumes all landscape and visual effects are considered to be negative or adverse unless otherwise stated.