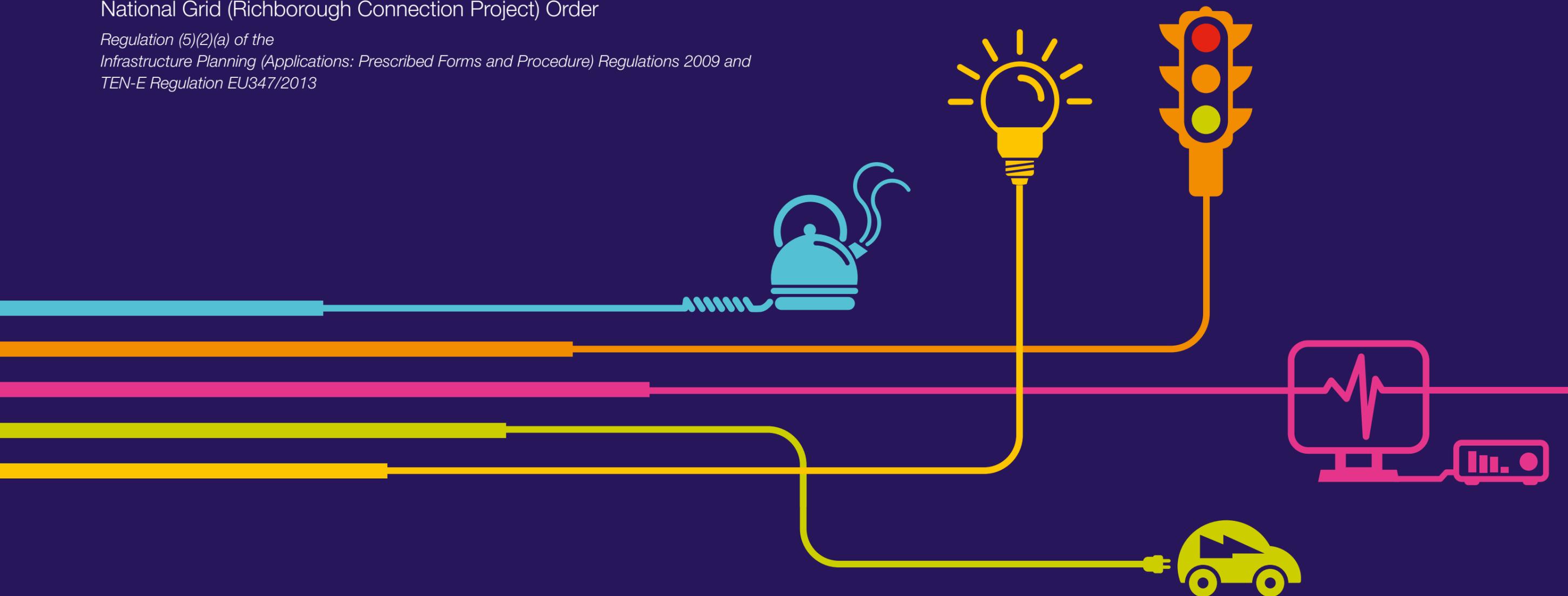


## 7A Visual Methodology

National Grid (Richborough Connection Project) Order

*Regulation (5)(2)(a) of the  
Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 and  
TEN-E Regulation EU347/2013*



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# **Richborough Connection Project**

## **Volume 5**

### **5.4 Environmental Statement Appendices**

#### **5.4.7A Visual Methodology**

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## 7 VISUAL METHODOLOGY

### 7.1 Assessment Method

7.1.1 This appendix sets out the approach and method used to provide an assessment of effects of the proposed development on views during operation, construction and life-time effects.

7.1.2 Operational effects are assessed on completion of the proposed development (during the ‘opening year’ and to year 15) and residual operational effects are assessed as those which would occur from the proposed development fifteen years after completion, taking account of the establishment of guaranteed embedded environmental measures comprising; planting replacement trees, tree groups and hedges ‘in-situ’; and new planting of trees, tree groups and hedges with new site-specific infrastructure (following construction). Details of the proposed embedded environmental measures are defined in **Appendix 3B within Volume 5, Document 5.4.3B**.

7.1.3 The method for this visual assessment is based on Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment) (GLVIA3) which as stated in paragraph 1.20 of GLVIA3:

*“concentrates on principles while also seeking to steer specific approaches where there is a general consensus on methods and techniques. It is not intended to be prescriptive, in that it does not provide a detailed ‘recipe’ that can be followed in every situation. It is always the primary responsibility of any landscape professional carrying out an assessment to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the particular circumstances.”*

7.1.4 There are five stages to the method of assessment of visual effects as detailed in GLVIA3, Chapter 6. These comprise:

- Scope;
- establishing the visual baseline;
- predicting and describing visual effects;
- assessing the significance of visual effects; and
- judging the overall significance of visual effects.

#### **Scope**

7.1.5 In accordance with paragraph 6.2 of GLVIA3 “scoping should identify the area that needs to be covered in assessing visual effects, the range of people who may be affected by these effects and the related viewpoints in the study area that will need to be examined”.

7.1.6 The physical scope of this visual assessment (and the landscape assessment in **Chapter 6** of the ES) has been informed by field assessment of existing 400kV overhead lines to consider their visibility at increased distances. Zone of Theoretical Visual Influence (ZTVI) mapping (discussed in **Chapter 7** of the ES)

was also produced when determining the area over which the proposed 400kV overhead line theoretically could be seen.

- 7.1.7 Field assessment and site appraisal work has determined that a typical standard steel lattice 400kV overhead line pylon approximately 50m high can be discerned at distances up to 10km. However from distances of over 3km whilst it may be possible to discern an overhead line on a clear day it would be barely perceptible in that view.
- 7.1.8 Field assessment and site appraisal work also determined that where visible at distances between 1 and 3km a typical standard steel lattice 400kV overhead line can typically be seen in a small proportion of views, often above trees, landform and vegetation. Where visible within 1km a typical standard steel lattice 400kV overhead line can typically be seen in a greater proportion of the view depending on filtering, screening or backgrounding which may reduce the extent visible.
- 7.1.9 Visual assessment of the proposed development presented in **Chapter 7** of the ES was undertaken during 2014 and summer 2015 in accordance with the parameters identified in the visual assessment method provided below.
- 7.1.10 The visual assessment considers all receptors within 1km of proposed 400kV overhead line, where the proposed development is anticipated to be seen in a greater proportion of the view/s and visual receptors would potentially experience the greatest effects. ‘Representative views’ between 1 and 3km of the proposed 400kV overhead line have been assessed, along with valued views beyond 3km including some on elevated land within the Kent Downs AONB. These representative views have been subject to consultation and agreement with all stakeholders with the Landscape Consultees in February 2015.
- 7.1.11 The 1km and 3km ‘offsets’ are illustrated on **Figure 7.5 within Volume 5, Document 5.3.7.**

## **Establishing the Visual Baseline**

### ***Desk Based Assessment***

- 7.1.12 A review of relevant information, guidance and planning policy relating to electricity transmission and landscape and views has been undertaken including:
- The Holford Rules – Guidelines for the Routeing of New High Voltage Overhead Transmission Lines;
  - The Horlock Rules – Guidelines on the Siting and Design of National Grid Substations;
  - National Grid’s Approach to the Design and Routeing of New Electricity Transmission Lines;
  - NPS (EN-1 and EN-5);
  - NPPF;
  - Local Planning Policy including:
    - Canterbury City Council’s Local Plan (adopted July 2006);
    - Canterbury City Council’s Local Plan (saved policies 2009);
    - Canterbury City Council’s Draft Local Plan (published June 2013);

- Thanet District Council Local Plan (adopted 2006);
- Thanet District Council Local Plan (saved policies 2009);
- Thanet Local Plan Issues and Options document (2014);
- Dover District Council Local Plan (saved policies 2002 Local Plan); and
- Dover District Council Local Plan (policies within the adopted Core Strategy 2010).

### **Mapping Visibility**

- 7.1.13 Land that may potentially be visually connected with the proposed development has been identified and mapped at the outset in accordance with paragraph 6.6 of GLVIA3. ZTVI mapping has been produced to determine the area over which the proposed 400kV overhead line theoretically could be seen. ZTVI maps have been generated by computer from a Digital Terrain Model (DTM) representing the bare ground topography overlaid on a map base with significant areas of woodland vegetation and settlements included to understand how this affects visibility.
- 7.1.14 ZTVI mapping has been generated up to 10km from the route of the proposed 400kV overhead line. This followed field assessment in 2014 of existing 400kV overhead lines to consider their visibility at increased distances. Visual baseline survey work carried out in the field during 2013 (required as part of identifying a draft alignment for the proposed connection) has also been used as the basis for defining the area from where the proposed 400kV overhead line would potentially be visible.

### **Site Assessment**

- 7.1.15 In accordance with paragraph 6.13 of GLVIA3 *“the ZTVI identifies land that, theoretically, is visually connected with the proposal and this is refined by site survey to confirm the extent of visibility”*.
- 7.1.16 Throughout 2014 and until July 2015 field studies were undertaken to gather landscape and visual baseline information to inform and assess potential connection options within the preferred route corridor.
- 7.1.17 Desk study and field survey work undertaken has also been used as the basis for defining the area from where the proposed 400kV overhead line would potentially be visible and in identifying visual receptors.
- 7.1.18 In summer 2015 further detailed visual assessment work was undertaken.
- 7.1.19 Visual assessment of the proposed development has involved visits to the area by car and on foot and views have been considered from publicly accessible locations. Where views from private properties have been considered, the assessment has been based on the nearest publicly accessible viewpoint. In some instances access has been arranged with property owners to gain access to undertake a visual assessment where nearby public access is not possible.
- 7.1.20 The viewpoints from which the proposed development would actually be seen by visual receptors were identified. These include:
- public viewpoints, including public rights of way (PRoW) and other recreation routes, users of public open space, attractions and outdoor recreation facilities;

- private viewpoints, including residential properties and places where people work; and
- transport routes where there are views from private vehicles and forms of public transport.

7.1.21 In accordance with guidance at paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19 of GLVIA3 parameters for selecting viewpoints for inclusion in the assessment and for illustration of the visual effects were identified through discussions with the Landscape Consultees. The selection of viewpoints was also informed by the ZTVI analysis, by field assessment and by desk based assessment. These parameters are detailed below and have been used as the basis for undertaking detailed field assessment during 2015 to assess the effects of the proposed development on views.

***Within 1km from the proposed 400kv overhead line alignment***

7.1.22 All potential visual receptors within 1km of the proposed overhead line have been considered in the visual assessment. From this distance visual receptors would have a variety of views of the proposed development and some would experience the greatest effects on views. Visual receptors have been divided into public and private to assist with categorising receptor types and selecting viewpoints, in accordance with paragraphs 6.16 and 6.17 of GLVIA3. Settlements have been assessed from representative viewpoints, in accordance with paragraph 6.19 of GLVIA3, usually on the edge of settlements nearest the proposed development from where views would be greatest with views from within the settlements further from the proposed development generally obscured by built form. Exceptions to this are noted and assessed. Sequential views are views recorded along the length of public routes identified for assessment. A description records changes to views as the receptor travels along the identified route. In this visual assessment views along PRoW and roads have been assessed sequentially.

***Representative views between 1 and 3km from the proposed 400kv overhead line alignment***

7.1.23 Between 1 and 3km from the proposed overhead line many visual receptors would have similar views of the proposed development and the baseline visual surveys have been analysed to identify representative views. Representative views, in accordance with paragraph 6.19 of GLVIA3 have been selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptor, where larger numbers of viewpoints cannot all be included individually and where the significant effects are unlikely to differ.

***Valued views over 3km from the proposed 400kV overhead line alignment***

7.1.24 Views over 3km from the order limits for the proposed 400kV overhead line have also been assessed. These views are considered as valued or important and are typically from elevated ground, from designated landscapes and from outdoor attractions and popular viewpoints.

***Views from long distance and published routes within 3km from the proposed 400kV overhead line alignment***

7.1.25 These views are of national and regional value due to their designation and are recorded sequentially along the length of public routes identified for assessment. For long distance and published routes, a description records changes to views as the receptor travels along the identified route.

**Assessment of the effects of the removal of the 132kV overhead lines**

7.1.26 The assessment of the effects on views resulting from the removal of the existing 132kV overhead lines has followed the same approach described above for the new 400kV overhead line connection.

**7.2 Predicting and describing visual effects**

7.2.1 In accordance with paragraphs 6.26 to 6.29 of GLVIA3, preparation of the visual baseline is followed by the systematic identification of likely effects on potential visual receptors. Site survey tables and desk based assessment are used to consider the different sources of visual effects alongside visual receptors that would be affected. This assists with the initial identification of likely significant effects for further study. In order to assist in description and comparison of the effects on views, site survey tables include:

- the nature of the view of the proposed development based on; angle of the view (direct or oblique); proportion of filtering or screening by vegetation, landform or built form; topography (looking down to, level or up to); and backgrounding by vegetation, landform or built form;
- the proportion or extent of the view affected by the proposed development (less than a quarter, quarter to half, half to three quarters, all);
- the distance of the receptor or viewpoint from the proposed development;
- description of the baseline view and the value attached to the view; and
- degree of change from the baseline view including scale and proximity, distance and extent of view affected, creation of a new visual focus in the view, introduction of new man-made objects, changes in visual simplicity or complexity, alteration of visual scale, and change to the degree of visual enclosure.

7.2.3 Consideration is given to the seasonal differences in effects arising from the varying degree of screening and/or filtering of views by vegetation that will apply in summer and winter.

7.2.4 An informed professional judgement is then made as to whether the visual effects are positive or negative (or in some cases negligible or no change) in their consequences for views and visual amenity. This is based on a judgement about whether the changes will affect the quality of the view given the nature of existing views.

**7.3 Assessing the significance of visual effects**

7.3.1 The following method for the assessment of the likely significant visual effects of the proposed development is in accordance with the guidelines at paragraph 6.30 to 6.45 of GLVIA3, and considers receptor sensitivity (determined by susceptibility to change and value of the view), the magnitude of the effect (size or scale; geographical extent; adverse or beneficial nature of the effect and its duration and reversibility) resulting from the proposed change to the view and the significance of the effect.

**Receptor sensitivity**

7.3.2 Visual receptors are people who potentially would have a view of the proposed development. The sensitivity of a visual receptor depends on the susceptibility of the visual receptor to change and the value of the view.

**Susceptibility to change**

7.3.3 The susceptibility of different visual receptors to potential changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:

- the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and
- the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.

7.3.4 The land use planning system generally gives greater weight to effects on public views than to effects on views from private property. Both private and public receptors are included in this assessment.

7.3.5 Views from public viewpoints, including areas of land and buildings providing public access, open access land, National Trails (The North Downs Way), coastal paths, transport routes and places where people work have been assessed. In accordance with paragraph 6.33 of GLVIA3 the visual receptors most susceptible to change are generally likely to include:

- residents at home;
- people, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of PRow, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views;
- visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience; and
- communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area.

7.3.6 Travellers on roads, rail or other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate category of medium susceptibility to change. Where travel involves recognised scenic routes such as rural lanes and tourist routes, awareness of views is likely to be higher. Where travel involves main roads or motorways awareness of views is likely to be lower.

7.3.7 In accordance with paragraph 6.34 of GLVIA3, visual receptors likely to be less sensitive to change include:

- people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape; and
- people at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings, and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life (although there may on occasion be cases where views are an important contributor to the setting and to the quality of working life).

7.3.8 In visual assessment, lower storey views from residential properties are generally considered to be of greater susceptibility to change than upper storey views, as these are the rooms in which residents spend more time experiencing the view.

There are exceptions to this as some residences have living rooms on upper storeys and this has been taken into consideration if evident.

- 7.3.9 In accordance with paragraph 6.35 of GLVIA3 “*each project needs to consider the nature of the groups of people who will be affected and the extent to which their attention is likely to be focused on views and visual amenity. Judgements about the susceptibility of visual receptors to change should be recorded on a scale (for example high, medium or low) but the basis for this must be clear, and linked back to evidence from the baseline study*”.
- 7.3.10 For this assessment Susceptibility to Change has generally been assigned to receptors as shown in **Table 7A.1**.

Table 7A.1 Susceptibility to change

Receptor	Susceptibility to change
Residential properties (lower storeys and gardens)	High
Residential properties (upper storeys)	Medium
Users of PRow and other recreation routes	High
Public Open Space/attractions where surroundings are important to the experience	High
Users of Sports Pitches	Low
Users of Golf Courses	Medium
Workers in their work place where setting not important to quality of working life	Low
Workers on the land and in other situations where setting is important	Medium
Motorists and passengers on main roads	Low
Motorists and passengers on rural lanes and tourist routes	Medium
Rail Passengers	Medium

#### *Value of the view*

- 7.3.11 Judgements about the value attached to the views experienced has been considered in the context of the value placed on a scene, alternatives available and the relative scenic quality of a view. Most views are appreciated by the person experiencing them as they are preferable to not having a view and they provide some interest. The judgement of the value of a view is subjective and in accordance with paragraph 6.37 of GLVIA3 takes account of:
- recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations; and
  - indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through reference to a view in a guidebook or on a tourist map, provision of facilities for their enjoyment (such as parking places, sign boards and interpretative material) and references to them in literature and art that indicates a highly valued view, which often can be experienced by many people.
- 7.3.12 The majority of the views assessed have local value, apart from views from within the Kent Downs AONB which have national value due to its designation. Views from national footpaths and cycleways have national value and regional cycle

routes and published walks have been assigned as having regional value due to their designation and appearance in literature and guide books.

*Receptor sensitivity*

- 7.3.13 As identified above, the sensitivity of visual receptors depends on the susceptibility of the view to change, and the value attached to the view experienced. Receptor sensitivity has been assigned to receptors in accordance with **Table 7A.2**.

*Table 7A.2 Receptor sensitivity*

Receptor Sensitivity	Typical criteria
High	The receptor view has a high susceptibility to change and has national or regional value; or The receptor view has a medium susceptibility to change and has national value.
Medium	The receptor view has a high susceptibility to change and has local value; or The receptor view has a medium susceptibility to change and has local or regional value.
Low	The receptor view has a low susceptibility to change and has local, regional or national value.

***Magnitude of effect***

- 7.3.14 In accordance with paragraphs 6.38 to 6.41 of GLVIA3 the magnitude of effect evaluates the visual effects identified in terms of the size or scale of each component of a development; the geographical extent of the area influenced; the nature of the effect (adverse or beneficial); and its duration and reversibility. More weight is usually given to effects that are greater in scale and long-term in duration. In assessing the duration of the effect, consideration is given to the effectiveness of guaranteed environmental measures, particularly where planting is proposed as part of the works which would change the scale of visual effect. The following aspects have been taken into consideration in determining the magnitude of visual effects on a receptor.

*Size or scale*

- 7.3.15 The scale of the change from the present view experienced has been considered with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of view occupied by the proposed development. For example the introduction of an overhead line into a view where similar structures are already present is more likely to result in a lower scale of change than the introduction of an overhead line into a view where there are no existing structures present.

*Nature of the view*

- 7.3.16 The relative amount of time over which views of the proposed development would be experienced on each occasion, for example along a short length of a PRow, and whether views would be full, partial or glimpsed. Any filtering or screening of a view by vegetation, landform or built form as the filtering or screening of even part

of a development can reduce the scale of change on the view. Consideration has also been given to the extent of filtering in ‘full leaf’ and during winter.

*Backgrounding*

- 7.3.17 Pylons and the conductors are more difficult to make out when viewed against a textured background than against an open sky background. Any backgrounding of a view by vegetation, landform or built form has been taken into consideration as backgrounding generally minimises the scale of change on the view as is acknowledged in The Holford Rules.

*Geographical extent*

- 7.3.18 The geographical extent of visual effects varies with different viewpoints and reflects:
- The angle of view has been considered with changes to direct views generally considered to be of greater importance than changes in oblique or indirect views.
  - The distance between the receptor and the proposed development is important with the magnitude generally decreasing with distance.
  - The proportion of view affected is an important consideration, with a change to a large proportion generally having a greater effect than a change to a small proportion.
  - Consideration has been given to whether the proposed development would be looked down to, looked up to or whether it would be viewed on a level. Views up to a development are generally considered to be of greater magnitude due to the enhanced verticality of the structures than views down to a development where the apparent height appears reduced.

*Duration and reversibility of visual effects*

- 7.3.19 These are separate but linked considerations. Duration has been judged on a scale of:
- short-term: 0 to 5 years including the construction period and on completion;
  - medium-term: 5 to 15 years including the establishment of replacement and proposed environmental measures; and
  - long-term: 15 years onwards for the life of the proposed development.

*Direct and indirect effects*

- 7.3.20 In the assessment of effects on views, all effects have been considered to be ‘direct’ effects.

**7.3.21 Table 7A.3** describes magnitude criteria for visual assessment, which can be adverse or beneficial.

*Table 7A.3 Criteria for Assessment of Magnitude of Effect on Views*

Magnitude of effect	Typical criteria
High	High alteration to the existing view and/or the introduction of elements considered totally uncharacteristic in the view. Typically this would be where a development would be seen in close proximity with a large proportion of the view affected with little or no filtering or backgrounding and there would be a great scale of change from the present situation for the long or medium-term.
Moderate	Partial alteration to the existing view and/or the introduction of prominent elements in the view. Typically this would be where a development would be seen in views for the long or medium-term where a moderate proportion of the view is affected. There may be some screening or backgrounding which minimise the scale of change from the present situation. This would also be where a development would be seen in close proximity with a large proportion of the view affected for the short-term.
Low	Low alteration to the existing view and/or the introduction of features which may already be present in views. Typically this would be where a moderate or low proportion of the view would be affected for the short-term or the development would be visible for the long-term in distant views; where only a small proportion of the view is affected in the medium-term or long-term; where the medium-term or long-term effect is reduced due to a high degree of filtering, screening or backgrounding or where there is a low scale of change from the existing view.
Negligible	Very low alteration to the existing view. Typically this would be where, in the short, medium or long-term, a development would be barely perceptible within a long distance panoramic view and/or where a very small proportion of the view is affected. The scale of change from the existing view would be barely perceptible.

## **7.4 Judging the overall significance of visual effects**

7.4.1 In accordance with paragraph 6.42 of GLVIA3 *“to draw final conclusions about significance the separate judgements about the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the magnitude of the visual effects need to be combined, to allow a final judgement about whether each different effect is significant or not”. “Significance of visual effects is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its specific location”*.

7.4.2 Large-scale changes which introduce new, discordant or intrusive elements into the view of a sensitive receptor are considered to be more likely to be more significant than small changes or changes involving features already present in the view or changes in the views of less sensitive receptors. Changes in views from

recognised and important viewpoints, such as scheduled monuments or outdoor tourist attractions, or from important amenity routes, such as long distance footpaths or national cycle routes, are likely to be most significant.

- 7.4.3 The significance of visual effects can be either adverse or beneficial and consider the typical criteria shown in **Table 7A.4**.

*Table 7A.4 Significance of visual effects*

Significance	Typical Criteria
Major	An effect of major significance is generally recorded where a high magnitude of effect occurs to a high or medium sensitivity receptor. For example where an unobstructed view of development would represent a large part of the view from a recreational footpath where views are presently open and of high scenic quality.
Moderate	An effect of moderate significance is generally recorded where a moderate magnitude of effect is experienced by a receptor of high or medium sensitivity. For example where part of a development is visible in a view from a private property for the long or medium-term, but where it does not comprise the whole view; or where an unobstructed view of development is visible for the short-term.
Minor	An effect of minor significance generally relates to a low magnitude of effect and often relates to a change in a view for the short-term; to a change in a distant view or a change in only a small part of a view, possibly because the view is already screened to a large extent.
Negligible	An effect of negligible significance is where the change to a view will be barely perceptible from the view presently experienced.

### **Significance thresholds**

- 7.4.4 The significance of the visual effects is a factor of the sensitivity of the view with the magnitude of change. For many of the predicted effects there are no simple rules or formulae which define the thresholds of significance and there is, therefore, a need for interpretation and judgment on the part of the assessor, backed-up by data or quantified information wherever possible.
- 7.4.5 These thresholds will be determined by combining sensitivity and magnitude as set out below. The significance of effects is described as major, moderate minor or negligible, and either beneficial or adverse. Numerical scoring is not recommended in GLVIA3. The EIA Regulations require that a final judgement is made about whether or not each effect is likely to be significant. GLVIA3 includes at paragraph 3.32 that LVIA's should always distinguish clearly between what are considered to be the significant and non-significant effects.

#### *Level of visual effect*

- 7.4.6 The level of effect is determined by consideration of the visual receptor sensitivity and magnitude of visual change, a process, which is assisted by the use of a matrix to guide the assessment, as detailed in **Table 7A.5** below.

Table 7A.5 Significance of visual effects

	<b>Magnitude of Change</b>			
<b>Sensitivity</b>	<i>Negligible</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>High</i>	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
<i>Medium</i>	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Moderate
<i>Low</i>	Negligible	Minor	Minor	Minor

The significance of the level of effect has been assessed as follows:

Not significant – Negligible or Minor effects

Significant – Moderate or Major effects

- 7.4.7 For this assessment, significant visual effects resulting from the development would be all those effects that result in a 'Major' or a 'Moderate' effect and any exceptions would be clearly explained. There may, for example, be exceptions in the case of lower magnitudes of change affecting receptors of higher visual sensitivity leading to a Major / Moderate effect.
- 7.4.8 With specific reference to significant visual effects resulting from the proposed development A 'Major' effect would:
- Cause the permanent loss of views from a high value / susceptibility to change receptor.
  - Constitute a dominant discordant feature in the view.
- 7.4.9 A Major effect is an effect that is very important in the planning decision making process.
- 7.4.10 A 'Moderate' effect would:
- Cause a substantial deterioration to a view from a high value / susceptible to change receptor.
  - Constitute a major discordant feature in the view.
- 7.4.11 A Moderate effect is an effect that can be, in itself, material in the planning decision making process.

## 7.5 Assessment Years

- 7.5.1 The assessment year (or years) for the assessment of construction effects on visual receptors is dependent on a number of factors; for example, the

geographical location of a visual receptor (or a group of visual receptors) and the specific proposed development component (or components) which are considered to give rise to a visual effect (or visual effects). Effects on visual receptors also have the potential to arise for a part of the construction phase or the entirety of the construction phase.

- 7.5.2 As detailed in **Chapter 7** it has been appropriate to assess the significance of potential visual effects when such effects would be at their peak, for example views towards both operation of the proposed 400kV overhead line and removal of the PX route occurring at the same time; and views of the proposed development on completion prior to establishment of environmental measures such as the tree planting. This complies with the general approach to the assessment of a reasonable worst case scenario.
- 7.5.3 The ‘opening year’ is used as the basis of assessment of operation effects on views. Visual effects of the proposed development are considered during operation at the opening year including implementation of the proposed planting as part of the embedded environmental measures. Residual visual effects of the proposed development are also considered when the proposed planting would have established fifteen years after the opening year.
- 7.5.4 The long-term residual visual effects of the proposed development fifteen years after completion and onwards (including the establishment of guaranteed embedded environmental measures) are also assessed and considered at **Section 7.6 of Chapter 7** and in **Appendix 3B, within Volume 5, Document 5.4.3B**.
- 7.5.5 Visual Assessment Tables are presented at **Appendix 7C, within Volume 5, Document 5.4.7C** and identify, for each visual receptor, the sensitivity of the view, the nature of the change in the view (magnitude of effect) and the judgement of the overall significance of the visual effect.

#### **Inter-relationship of effects and inter-project effects**

- 7.5.6 Consideration has been given as an intrinsic part of this visual assessment to any inter-relationship of effects from the proposed development between different aspects of the environment. For example ecological environmental measures have the potential to affect both landscape and views.
- 7.5.7 The visual assessment also considers the potential inter-project cumulative visual effects from the interaction of the proposed development and other major development proposals in the vicinity, discussed in the cumulative assessment method provided below.
- 7.5.8 Cumulative effects have been defined in a broad generic sense as ‘impacts that result from incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together with the project’ (Hyder, 1997:7). Paragraph 7.3 of GLVIA3 considers the definition of cumulative effects as addressed by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) which are now widely used. This defines:
- **Cumulative effects** as ‘the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together’ (SNH, 2012:4);
  - **Cumulative visual effects** as effects that can be caused by combined visibility, which ‘occurs where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint’ and/or sequential effects which ‘occur

when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see different developments’ (SNH, 2012:11).

- 7.5.9 In considering inter-project cumulative visual effects any form of development can be relevant. In order to ensure a proportional response to the particular development proposal under consideration agreement should be reached in the scoping stage, through discussions with the competent authority and consultation bodies and judgement by the assessor on the scope of the cumulative effects assessment (GLVIA 7.9).
- 7.5.10 In most cases the focus of the cumulative assessment will be on the additional effects on the project in conjunction with the other developments of the same type. The assessment should consider other types of development proposed within the study area, including those that may arise as an indirect consequence of the main project under construction and in the case of large, complex projects, different scheme components or associated ancillary development that in some cases may require their own planning consent.
- 7.5.11 In consideration of the cumulative effects assessment ‘the proposed development’ is the main proposal that is being assessed, and existing schemes and those which are under construction are considered as part of the baseline for both landscape and visual effects. The baseline for assessing cumulative landscape and visual effects shall include potential schemes that are not yet present in the landscape but are at various stages in the development and consenting process:
- schemes with planning consent; and
  - schemes that are the subject of a valid planning application that has not yet been determined.
- 7.5.12 Schemes that are pre-planning and scoping stage are not to be considered as they are not ‘reasonably foreseeable’ (GLVIA3 7.14 page 123). Cumulative visual effects may result from adding new types of change or from increasing or extending the effects of the proposed development when it is considered in isolation. For example, the visual effects of the main project may be judged to be of relatively low significance when taken on their own, but when taken together with the effects of other schemes, usually of the same type, the cumulative visual effects may become more significant.
- 7.5.13 In establishing the baseline for cumulative visual effects the assessment shall consider the following factors:
- the people likely to be affected at each location, the activity they are involved in (and therefore their susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity) and if available, the number of people involved; and
  - the extent, nature and characteristics of the views and visual amenity enjoyed by those people at those viewpoints.
- 7.5.14 In identifying the visual effects and assessing their significance paragraph 7.35 of GLVIA 3 states that each view must be recorded and described at each selected viewpoint and also for the sequential views experienced on important linear routes, making clear the nature of the views of all the developments selected for inclusion in the assessment and the contribution if the project being assessed. The approach to assessing the most significant cumulative visual effects should be guided by the same principles as the approach to the initial project assessment. In

accordance with GLVIA 3 (para 7.37) the assessment has considered the following criteria:

- the susceptibility of the visual receptors that have been assessed to changes in views and visual amenity;
- the value attached to the views they experience;
- the size or scale of the cumulative effects identified;
- the geographical extent;
- the duration of the effects, including timescales relating to both the project being assessed and the other projects being considered, and the extent to which cumulative effects may be considered reversible.

7.5.15 A higher level of significance may arise from cumulative effects related to developments that are in close proximity to the main project and are clearly visible together in views from the selected viewpoints and developments that are highly inter-visible when viewed individually not particularly significant, the overall combined cumulative effect on a viewer at a particular viewpoint may be more significant.

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