

Landscape and Visual Appraisal for new lodges at Ribble Valley View

Ribble Valley View, Old Langho Rd, Blackburn, BB6 8AW

Date: 13th November 2020

Revision: A

Issued: for planning

Written and prepared by: Emma Reed CMLI



Keelham Cottage
Keelham Lane
Todmorden
OL14 8RX

Tel: 07887 747393

Email: emma@reedstudio.co.uk
www.reedstudio.co.uk

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Policy review
3. Baseline landscape assessment
4. Baseline visual assessment
5. The proposed development and mitigation
6. Assessment of effects
7. Comparison of proposals
8. Conclusion

Appendices

Appendix 1 Glossary of LVA Terms

Appendix 2 Assessment Methodology

Appendix 3 Viewpoints

Appendix 4 Supporting Plans

Plan 1 - Site Context

Plan 2 - Proposed Site Plan

Plan 3 - Landscape Planning Context

Plan 4 - Landscape Character

Plan 5 - Aerial View

Plan 6 - Site Photographs

Plan 7 - Setting Photographs

Plan 8 - Visual Envelope and Viewpoint Locations

Plan 9 - Landscape and Visual Mitigation Plan

Plan 10 – Original Refused Application Plan

1 Introduction

Reed Studio Limited has been commissioned by Ribble Valley View to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of the proposals for new lodges at Ribble Valley View, Old Langho, Lancashire. The proposals in association with this report are a resubmission of an original planning application submitted to Ribble Valley Borough Council in December 2019.

The previous planning application was made for 29 lodges (App no.3/2019/0851), but was refused by the Local Planning Authority. The client has taken a proactive approach and redesigned the proposals with significant mitigation which recognises local distinctiveness, landscape character, historic field patterns and built form in the local vicinity, in order to appease any concerns regarding harm to the landscape. A comparison of the proposals is discussed in section 8 of this report.

Plan 1 – Site Context illustrates the location of the site and its boundaries. The site is located to the south of Brockhall Village, close to Blackburn in Lancashire and is accessed from Old Langho Road. The land associated with the application is currently laid to pasture and grazed by sheep.

As illustrated on Plan 2 – Proposed Site Plan, the proposed development consists of:

- 16 single storey timber lodges with external timber decking and balustrade, and parking bays.
- Access track made up of tarmac.
- Extension southwards of the existing outcrop plateau, to produce a naturalistic hillside to the south of the lodges.
- Provision of areas of structural landscape proposals to provide landscape mitigation which include:
 - Protection of existing trees on site
 - Reinstatement of a historic hedgerow field boundary within the site
 - Tree planting across site in groups in the open landscape and scattered between the lodges
 - Woody shrub buffer planting to the north of the lodges
 - Reinstatement of hedgerow on western boundary
 - A woodland corridor along the western boundary
 - A wildlife pond

This report sets out the findings of the LVA for the proposed scheme. Specifically, this work has included the following key items:

- A review of the planning documentary context for the site;
- a desktop study and web search of relevant background documents and maps;
- a field assessment of local site circumstances;
- development of landscape and visual mitigation proposals;
- a comparison between the refused application and the current application; and
- an analysis of the likely landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed scheme as set out in Plan 9 - Landscape and Visual Mitigation Plan, combined with informed professional judgements about the effects arising, based on their nature (beneficial, adverse or neutral), magnitude and the sensitivity of the receiving environment.

A 2km study area has been adopted. This context enables the geographical scope of the assessment to be defined and understood. The study area is illustrated on Plan 1 – Site Context.

The full methodology used for the purposes of this appraisal is provided in Appendix 2.

The format of this LVA is based on the principles set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition (LI/IEMA, 2013) as well as guidance issued by Natural England, 'An approach to landscape Character Assessment', published 2014

2 Policy review

An appreciation of the ‘weight’ to be attributed to any landscape or visual effects arising from development starts with an understanding of the planning context within which any such development is to be tested for its acceptability. Planning policy relevant to both the site and the proposals and any potential effect on landscape character and visual amenity is outlined within this section.

Planning policy relevant to the site and the proposals includes The National Planning Policy Framework and documentation issued by the Local Planning Authority. The site and study area sit wholly within Ribble Valley Borough Council Local Planning Authority. Local Authority policies within the study area relevant to the site are illustrated on Plan 3 – Landscape Planning Context and are described in the following pages.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The February 2019 version of the NPPF is most current. The national documentation aims to protect the environment and to promote sustainable growth. There is an overarching presumption in favour of sustainable development that should be the basis of every plan and every decision.

The following paragraphs/policies are considered relevant to this assessment:

- The NPPF states that ‘*Strategic policies should (...) make sufficient provision for conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment including landscapes and green infrastructure*’. (Section 3, Para 20, Page 9);
- When adopting planning policies and making decisions LPA’s should ‘*ensure that developments (...) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change*’. (Section 12, Para 127, Page 38); and
- Section 15 states that the planning system should aim to conserve and enhance the natural and local environment in part through the protection of valued landscapes. Local Planning Authorities (LPA’s) ‘*Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) [on] the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development*’. (Section 15, Para 180, Page 52).

Ribble Valley Borough Council

The Core Strategy for Ribble Valley Borough was adopted on 14 December 2014. Statements and policies from the Core Strategy relevant to the landscape character and visual amenity of the site and the proposals include:

- Key Statement EN2: Landscape (...) ‘*The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and conserved and wherever possible enhanced.*
As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials.’

Within the description of this statement it adds:

'The Council will also seek to ensure that the open countryside is protected from inappropriate development. Developers should adopt a non-standardised approach to design which recognises and enhances local distinctiveness, landscape character, the quality of the built fabric, historic patterns and landscape tranquillity.' (Page 4)

- Key Statement EN3: Visitor Economy *'Proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged, including the creation of new accommodation and tourism facilities through the conversion of existing buildings or associated with existing attractions. Significant new attractions will be supported, in circumstances where they would deliver overall improvements to the environment and benefits to local communities and employment opportunities.'* (Page 69)
- Policy DMG2: Strategic considerations (...) *'outside the defined settlement areas development must meet at least one of the following considerations:*
 - 1. The development should be essential to the local economy or social well being of the area. (...)*
 - 4. The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.*
 - 5. The development is for small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated. (...)*

Within the description of this policy it adds:

'Within the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting. (...) the most important consideration in the assessment of any development proposals will be the protection, development proposals will be the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area avoiding where possible habitat fragmentation.' (Page 88-89).

- Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection *'Development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important landscape or landscape. Features including:*
 - 1. Traditional stone walls.*
 - 2. Ponds.*
 - 3. Characteristic herb rich meadows and pastures.*
 - 4. Woodlands.*
 - 5. Copses.*
 - 6. Hedgerows and individual trees (other than in exceptional circumstances where satisfactory works of mitigation or enhancement would be achieved, including rebuilding, replanting and landscape management).*
 - 7. Townscape elements such as the scale, form, and materials that contribute to the characteristic townscapes of the area.*
 - 8. Upland landscapes and associated habitats such as blanket bog.*
 - 9. Botanically rich roadside verges (that are worthy of protection).*

The Council will seek, wherever possible, to enhance the local landscape in line with its key statements and development strategy. In applying this policy reference will be made to a variety of guidance including the Lancashire County Council Landscape

Character Assessment, (...). Also the Council will take into account the potential cumulative impacts of development in areas where development has already taken place. By proactively considering these important features through the development management process the Council will deliver the Core Strategy vision and support the delivery of sustainable development.' (Page 94-95)

- Policy DMB3: Recreation and Tourism Development *'Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that extend the range of tourism and visitor facilities in the Borough. This is subject to the following criteria being met:*
 - 1. The proposal must not conflict with other policies of this plan;*
 - 2. The proposal must be physically well related to an existing main settlement or village or to an existing group of buildings, except where the proposed facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available;*
 - 3. The development should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or design;*
 - 4. The proposals should be well related to the existing highway network. It should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance. Where possible the proposals should be well related to the public transport network;*
 - 5. The site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas; and*
 - 6. The proposal must take into account any nature conservation impacts using suitable survey information and where possible seek to incorporate any important existing associations within the development. Failing this then adequate mitigation will be sought.'*

Within the description of this policy it adds that:

'Recreation and tourism development are often well suited to rural areas and there is a need to have in place effective measures to ensure that facilities and infrastructure can be enhanced in a sustainable way.' (Page 110-111)

- Policy DMB5: Footpaths and Bridleways *'The borough council will seek to ensure the retention, maintenance and improvement of by-ways and un-surfaced/unclassified roads as part of the public rights of way network. In situations where a Public Right of Way will inevitably become less attractive (due to adjacent/surrounding development), the policy should require compensatory enhancements such that there is a net improvement to the Public Right of Way network. The borough council will, unless suitable mitigation measures are made, protect from the development footpaths which:*
 - 1. Provide a link between towns/villages and attractive open land;*
 - 2. Link with the Ribble Way footpath;*
 - 3. Are associated to the local nature reserves; and*
 - 4. Are heavily used.*

The Council considers the protection and enhancement of the footpath and bridleways network to be important given the character of the area and the contribution such networks can be made to leisure, health and tourism.' (Page 112-113)

Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies just over 2km to the north of site. Views from the AONB have been scoped out as the development is unlikely to be discernible from over 2km.

Ecology

Ecological designations have not been assessed within this document as this LVA's focus is landscape and visual effects. However it is noted that there are no ecological designations within close proximity to the site.

History

Historic designations have not been assessed within this document as this LVA's focus is landscape and visual effects. However it is noted that the Chapel of St Leonard, which sits closely adjacent to the entrance to site, is Grade 1 listed. As the church is separated from the site by mature trees and the existing Ribble Valley View park it is expected that the setting will not be affected. Elsewhere in the study area there is the course of a Roman Road (to the north of site) and a tumulus (a mound of earth and stones raised over a grave or graves) to the north of the Ribble River. These elements are a significant distance from the site and therefore their setting is not expected to be affected.

3 Baseline landscape assessment

The baseline conditions in respect of landscape character have been summarised from the study of published landscape character assessments, and by desk and field-based assessment of the character of the site itself. Published landscape character assessments have been referenced at a national and county level; these are described in turn below and the extent of their character areas identified on Plan 4 – Landscape Character.

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Within the study area there are two National Character Areas (NCA) as classified within the Natural England's National Landscape Character Area study. The majority of the study area (including the site) are set within Character Area 35 Lancashire Valleys and a small part of the northern part of the study area is set within Character Area 33 Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill.

The site is located within the Lancashire Valleys NCA. The key characteristics of this character area which are pertinent to the study area include:

- *'Broad valleys of the rivers Calder and Ribble and their tributaries run northeast to south-west between the uplands of Pendle Hill and the Southern Pennines.*
- *A Millstone Grit ridge extends between the Ribble and Calder catchments (including the Mellor Ridge and part of Pendle Hill).*
- *Field boundaries are regular to the west (...). They are formed by hedges with few hedgerow trees (...)*
- *Agricultural land is fragmented by towns, villages and hamlets, industry and scattered development, with pockets of farmed land limited to along the Ribble Valley, the fringes of Pendle Hill, (...)*
- *Farmed land is predominantly pasture for grazing livestock, with areas of acid and neutral grassland, flushes and mires. (...)*
- *Small, often ancient, broadleaved woodlands of oak, alder and sycamore extend along narrow, steep-sided cloughs on the valley sides (...)*
- *There are numerous large country houses with associated parklands, particularly on the northern valley sides away from major urban areas. (...)*
- *The many towns, including Blackburn, Accrington and Burnley, which developed as a result of the Industrial Revolution give the area a strong urban character.'*

The key characteristics pertinent to the study area of the NCA Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill which lies north of the study area include:

- *'an undulating, rolling landscape, with local variation created by numerous river valleys and by the moorland outliers (...)*
- *Semi-natural woodland, much of which is ancient, occurs in the main valley bottoms, side valleys and ridges, and is dominated by oak, ash and alder.*
- *Small- to medium-sized fields are defined by hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees. (...)*
- *Land use is mainly permanent, improved pasture for livestock and dairy farming.*
- *There are also many brooks (...)*
- *A network of winding, hedge-lined lanes connect small, often linear, villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads, mostly in local stone. (...)*

COUNTY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

At the county level, A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire Landscape Character Assessment published 2000 is the most recent and detailed landscape description for the study area. The study area for this report lies wholly within the Undulating Lowland Farmland Landscape Character Type and the Lower Ribblesdale Landscape Character Area.

The Undulating Lowland Farmland landscape character type is described as:

'Generally below 150m, the Undulating Lowland Farmland lies between the major valleys and the moorland fringes. The underlying geology is largely masked by heavy boulder clays and hedgerows predominate over stone walls. This lowland landscape is traversed by deeply incised, wooded cloughs and gorges. There are also many mixed farm woodlands, copses and hedgerow trees, creating an impression of a well wooded landscape from ground level and a patchwork of wood and pasture from raised viewpoints on the fells. Some of the most picturesque stone villages of the county occur within this well settled landscape type. The towns of Longridge and Clitheroe also occur within this type, but are not typical of the settlement pattern. The area also has many country houses whose boundary walls and designed landscapes add to the species diversity and visual appeal. There is a high density of farms and scattered cottages outside the clustered settlements, linked by a network of minor roads.'

The Lower Ribblesdale landscape character area is described as:

'a particularly well settled area and provides a corridor for communication routes along the Ribble Valley. The A59(T) runs the length of the area. The railway links the valley to Blackburn and Yorkshire. This communication structure has encouraged built development and industry; (...). This character area is underlain by limestone (...).'

AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Although the Forest of Bowland AONB boundary lies north of the study area of this report, the study area of the AONB Landscape Character Area has a buffer zone. The character areas within this buffer zone are situated north of the Ribble River in the northern part of the study area of this report. Although there is no intervisibility between the character areas of the AONB Landscape Character Assessment understanding the character of these areas furthers our understanding of the study area and therefore the key descriptions of the areas and types are outlined below.

Landscape character type F: Undulating lowland farmland with wooded brooks

Key Characteristics:

- *'A patchwork of pasture fields which are deeply incised by wooded troughs and gorges*
- *A network of hedgerows and stone walls delineate field boundaries.*
- *Several scattered cottages and clustered villages'*

Landscape Character Area F3: New Row

- *'This small area extends outside the southern edge of the AONB and encompasses several patches of mature mixed woodland, which contribute to an intermittent sense of enclosure within views across the landscape;*
- *Matured deciduous woodland lining the corridor of Duddel Brook is also a feature of this landscape, which contributes to recognisable sense of place within views;*
- *The sound of fast-flowing water within the brooks contributes to recognisable sense of place.'*

Landscape character type G: Undulating lowland farmland with Parkland

Key Characteristics:

- *‘Mature parkland trees and other ornamental designed landscape features contribute to the ‘designed’ estate character.*
- *Gently undulating topography.*
- *Remnant boundaries of former parkland are also visible features.’*

Landscape Character Area G4: Hurst Green

- *‘The avenue of trees associated with Stonyhurst College is a key landscape feature of this area and channels views across the landscape;*
- *Stonyhurst College is a key landmark within views across the parkland;*
- *Woodland clumps, often surrounded by intact stone walls also contribute to recognisable sense of place;*
- *Stonyhurst Park was once a larger area of ornamental parkland, but now houses a golf course which introduces a man-made character into the surrounding landscape;*
- *The dramatic rising mass of Longridge Fell contribute to recognisable sense of place;*
- *Framed views southwards across the wide valley corridor of the River Ribble.’*

It appears from these descriptions that the landscape of the AONB buffer within the north of the study area has a more intimate feel, with woodland, hedgerows, stone walls and incised cloughs and a strong influence of parkland landscape.

THE SETTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

While published landscape character assessments provide a useful contextual understanding of the landscape and its inherent sensitivities, no such broad assessment can focus on the site-specific issues needed to form judgements about the effect of a particular proposal in a particular location. The below description of the site and its immediate setting is based on field study assessment.

The application site consists of an area of pasture with some remnant hedgerow and mature trees, an existing degraded track and an existing tarmac road.

The character of the site and setting is described in detail below. The setting is defined by the Visual Envelope which is described in the next section and illustrated in pale purple on Plan 8 – Visual Envelope and Viewpoint Location. Photographs on Plan 6 - Site Photographs and Plan 7 – Setting Photographs act as a visual aide.

- The setting consists of a steep sided valley which descends to the Dinckley Brook, with an undulating plateau landscape to the south of the setting and some outcrops to the north and south of the river (in keeping with Lancashire County LCA Undulating Lowland Farmland).
- The landuse consists of small-scale improved pastoral fields, namely for the grazing of sheep and cows.
- The Dinckley Brook has a winding nature, is fast flowing and moderately wide (up to 10 metres).
- A scattering of buildings within the setting, ties in with the county level landscape character description of a high density of farms, but with built form including the cluster of buildings and corrugated barns at Aspinalls Farm, Moorgate Lane, an expanse of existing timber lodges at Ribble Valley View park and the stone built, and partly rendered Black Bull Inn public house.
- Roads consists of unedged and unmarked tarmac lanes that are fairly narrow and enclosed by hedgerow.
- The Old Langho Road (minor road) and its roadside hedges forms the boundary to the setting to the south east and creates some movement and activity with passing traffic.

- There is a Public Right of Way footpath which is partly made up of unmade track and partly grassed which runs northwest to southeast through the setting, with a small wooden bridge across the Dinckley Brook.
- Field boundaries consist of mostly post and wire with some timber post and rail fencing dividing the fields. Hedgerows are a feature of the area, but within the setting they are often remnant - overgrown, open towards the bottom with large gaps in between. Alongside the Old Langho Road a more consistent, well maintained hedgerow is present that is maintained at a low height towards Ribchester Road and a greater height level towards the Old Langho.
- Vegetation consists of scattered mature trees of Oak and Sycamore within higher fields and mixed species alongside the river including alder, birch and sycamore. Hedgerows as described above are mainly overgrown hawthorne. Alongside the Old Langho Road hedgerow includes additional species such as elder and hazel.
- A mature line of trees follows the route of the Dinckley Brook, providing a thick green winding corridor through the setting, although as the height of the river and trees is set around 30mAOD. much lower than the valley tops, the trees are hidden from view until within close proximity. Elsewhere in the setting tree cover is scattered, appearing to follow historic field boundaries and perhaps historic gardens and includes a woodland belt alongside the Ribchester Road.
- Within the setting there is human activity focussed around the expanse of lodges, the public house, and Old Langho Road elsewhere the setting is quiet and free from human activity.

THE SOUTHERN APPROACH TO OLD LANGHO / BROCKHALL VILLAGE

Whilst this assessment focuses on the effect upon the open countryside it is worth noting the proximity to Old Langho and Brockhall Village settlement. The settlement and approach are described below.

Old Langho and Brockhall Village have almost become merged over time. The Grade I listed Church of St Leonards (which dates back to 1557), the Black Bull Inn public house and a scattering of dwellings appear to be all that's left of Old Langho while Brockhall Village has a mixed more modern architectural vernacular. The northern entrance to the settlement consists of a Victorian red brick terrace which is set back from the road and only visible in the gaps in hedgerow. Hedgerows are tall and closely planted to the roadside on this northern approach. The central part of the setting when passing through on the Old Langho Road consists of open grassed areas and avenue trees. The buildings within the village include the sports centre and a modern gated entrance to Brockhall Village with modern housing in the distance. Separate from this there are some twentieth century crescents which have a distinct vernacular and are situated close to the road. The approach from the south starts with the gateway feature of the Black Bull Inn public house, followed by the church which although is a historic feature, is set back with trees on its boundaries secluding it from view. The existing Ribble Valley View lodges are visible in glimpses between the trees across the fields when approaching the settlement from further afield along Old Langho Road.

In summary the architectural vernacular and fabric of the built form of the settlement of Old Langho and Brockhall Village is mixed, the main settlement of Brockhall Village is set back and gated, the twentieth century crescents have a closer proximity to the Old Langho Road and there is little left of the historic Old Langho. All together there is an ad hoc spatial arrangement to the settlement as a whole with architecture that spans different eras. Hedgerows line the entrances to the village to the north and south at varying heights, with pasture fields beyond, and the built form is sporadic in its proximity to the road.

Landscape Receptors

For the purposes of this study the following landscape receptors have been identified within the study area.

- The key characteristics of the setting
- The southern approach to Old Langho / Brockhall Village settlement

The characteristics of each of these receptors which makes up their composition is set out on the previous pages and will be assessed in terms of the level of effect upon them in Section 7.

Based on the 'Landscape Sensitivity Criteria Table' within the methodology section of this report the following judgements have been made.

Value of the key characteristics of the setting

The setting hosts only a few of the distinctive features of the Undulating Lowland Farmland Landscape Character type of the county level assessment including '*deeply incised, wooded cloughs and gorges.*' This clough is the Dinckley Brook and is tranquil, well wooded and includes the gentle sound of the running water.

The setting enjoys views to fells and ridgelines in the distance which contribute to aesthetic quality. The setting includes the stone built (and rendered to the rear elevations) Black Bull Inn public house which acts as the gateway into Old Langho, as well as the existing lodges at Ribble Valley View. but due to the dominance of open fields, feels largely rural.

The setting has no landscape designation and has a number of elements which contribute to what could be described as a degraded nature. Whilst the majority of the setting is void of built form there is a small cluster of corrugated barns to the north west and a larger cluster of timber lodges towards the south east. Due to a lack of tree planting within the existing lodge park, expanses of timber in a horizontal alignment are apparent in some parts. The lodges do however benefit from a solid green backdrop that is the woodland block which bounds Brockhall Village to the south. Although the wider setting does appear to have some historic features these are not present within the setting and field boundaries appear to have become lost over time and hedgerows have become remnant. For the most part the setting does appear to have a quiet nature, although towards the Old Langho Road there is passing traffic and some human activity centred around the Public house and lodges.

The setting immediately adjacent to the Dinckley Brook is extremely tranquil and well wooded but appears somewhat removed from the rest of the setting due to its deeply incised nature. The character of this sunken gorge is therefore separate from the hillsides above it.

In summary the landscape is undesignated, has some distinctive landscape characteristics; and some landscape detractors and therefore the landscape receptor value is deemed as medium.

The landscape can accommodate some change. This is due to the presence of some degraded features such as remnant hedgerows and also presence of built form within the landscape including corrugated barns and a cluster of existing timber lodges. The landscape setting's susceptibility is therefore described as medium.

The overall landscape value taking into account susceptibility is therefore deemed as medium.

The value of the southern approach to Old Langho / Brockhall Village settlement

The settlement of Old Langho / Brockhall Village has no historic designation and although the Church of St Leonards is Grade I listed this is set back from the road and does not add a great deal of value to the street scene. The approach to the settlement from the south has several layers including distant and filtered views across the fields towards the existing lodges at Ribble Valley View, the Black Bull Inn public house which gives a historic reference, and then a mixed architectural vernacular within the settlement itself. The

settlement grain and density is mixed. Due to the lack of cohesion within the approach to the settlement this landscape receptor is valued as medium.

There are some distinctive features, however the ad hoc nature of fabric of the built form of the settlement allows a medium susceptibility to change.

The overall landscape value of the southern approach to the settlement, taking into account susceptibility, is therefore deemed as medium.

Landscape Receptor Summary Table

Receptor	Overall Value
Key characteristics of the setting	Medium
The setting of Old Langho / Brockhall Village	Medium

4 Baseline visual assessment

This section identifies those visual receptors that may be able to obtain views to and from the site, their distribution, character and sensitivity to change. An assessment of the views available (to the public) to and from the site has been undertaken, by walking and driving (as appropriate) local roads and rights of way. Before doing so, a broad area of search was defined using desk-based study of the topography of the area and the elements in the landscape that are likely to cause restriction of views, such as tree belts and settlements. From the desk-based study a visual envelope was established and then later verified on site.

Plan 8 – Visual Envelope and Viewpoint Locations illustrates the visual envelope of the proposed development using the above methodology with annotations from field based study.

Broad Visual Appraisal

Visual receptors have been identified by the following process. Public access points from within the areas highlighted by the visual envelope have been studied and those areas likely to have the best vantage point have been visited on foot, the results of which are described below.

Study Area

The topography of the study area is undulating. The northern part of the study area alongside the Ribble River and the Dinckley Brook has a pronounced undulating characteristic, with outcrops up to 80m AOD scattered north and south of the Ribble Valley. The Dinckley Brook itself sits at 30m AOD, south of this the ground rises towards Langho (within the study area) where the highest point is shown at 100m AOD and beyond this the land rises to the Mellor Ridge (which is south of the study area).

The Lancashire County Landscape Character Assessment describes the area to have hedgerows and hedgerow trees predominating as well as the presence of copses giving an impression of a well wooded landscape from ground level. Hedgerows and hedgerow trees are indeed common in the study area and there are some copses scattered throughout. The large band of woodland (some of which is recently planted and includes a large percentage of evergreens) running along the western edge of Brockhall Village provides enclosure to the site from eastern vantage points and forms a dominant feature in the landscape.

The site

The site is enclosed to the north and east by the band of woodland described above and settlement of Brockhall Village which sits upon raised topography.

To the north west the raised outcrop at Aspinalls Farm, north of the Dinckley Brook, encloses the site from views farther north west within the study area.

To the west and south the topography is gently undulating and lower in parts. From the lower level areas around the Bushburn Brook views are truncated by rising topography. From higher ground views are restricted by frequent hedgerow boundaries, mature field boundary trees and scattered copses.

Establishing the visual envelope

From the desk-top study the Visual Envelope included a wedge of land mostly west and south of the site, but also including the immediate vicinity to the north and east. Field-study revealed that intervening vegetation restricts views to the west and south and the Visual Envelope was reduced down to the fields leading up to Ribchester Road to the west and the fields leading up to Old Langho Road to the south.

Within this Visual Envelope visual receptors are limited to pedestrians along the Public Right of Way 3-6-FP-5 (which runs from Aspinalls Farm, north west of site to the Black Bull Inn public house, south east of site, road users along the Old Langho Road, cyclists on the Lancashire Cycle Way which follows Old Langho Road and finally visitor views from people staying at the existing Ribble Valley View lodges.

Some views may be available from a small number of houses within the Brockhall Village, however these views could not be assessed as they would be views from back gardens and rear windows and not the streets within the village. There is some intervening vegetation which will likely restrict views from these houses and due to the position of the site boundary the proposed lodges are unlikely to form a major component of these local resident views.

Visual Receptors

In light of the visual context described above, and the fieldwork observation undertaken, a number of representative viewpoints have been selected to aid the assessment of visual effects.

On the basis of the foregoing broad visual appraisal 6 viewpoints have been selected which will be used to aid the assessment. All of the viewpoints are taken from public vantage points and one of which is also representative of visitors staying at the existing adjacent Ribble Valley View lodges. The locations of viewpoints are illustrated on Plan 8 – Visual Envelope and Viewpoint Locations. Details of each viewpoint location and a description of the view observed are provided in Appendix 3 Viewpoints. A summary of these viewpoints and their sensitivity is detailed in the table below.

Sensitivity is determined using the Visual Receptor Sensitivity Table found within the methodology of this report. The views from the Public Right of Way are described as having medium sensitivity. This is because the Public Right of Way is not designated as a National Trail or Long Distance Path, nor is it known to be recorded or promoted and therefore walkers are likely to be of a less formal purpose, and possibly travelling a shorter distance from an immediate locality. Road users on the Moorgate Lane and Old Langho Road are described as having medium sensitivity. Views from the cyclists on the Lancashire Cycle Way, which passes along the Old Langho Road, are described as having a high sensitivity as this is a scenic leisure route and this factor therefore increases the sensitivity of the receptors along Old Langho Road. The visitors to the lodges in the adjacent Ribble Valley View park are described as having high sensitivity as they are likely to be holidaying and therefore appreciating surrounding views.

Representative Viewpoints Table

Viewpoint	Distance & Direction from site	Receptors	Sensitivity of Receptor
Viewpoint 1 – Moorgate Lane at Moorgate Farm	c.800m west of site	Road users	Low
Viewpoint 2 – PROW 3-6-FP-5 east of Aspinalls Farm	c.150m north of site	Pedestrians	Medium
Viewpoint 3 – PROW 3-6-FP-5 within site	Within site, on eastern boundary	Pedestrians and residents at existing Ribble Valley View lodges	High
Viewpoint 4 – PROW 3-6-FP-5 within site	Within southern transect of site boundary	Pedestrians	Medium
Viewpoint 5 – Old Langho Road and the Lancashire cycle Way (close to Black Bull Inn public house)	c.100m south west of site boundary	Road users and cyclists	Medium
Viewpoint 6 – Old Langho Road and the Lancashire cycle Way	c.350m south west of site	Road users and cyclists	Medium

Summary of Baseline Visual Amenity Matters

The desk-based visual envelope exercise indicated that theoretical views to the site in the local vicinity are limited generally to fields to the west and south and immediate areas north and east. The Visual Envelope was narrowed further when onsite due to intervening vegetation and topography. The resulting Visual Envelope measures around 1200m east to west and 800m north to south.

Receptors to these views are limited to footpath users of the Public Right of Way 3-6-FP-5, glimpse views from road users along Moorgate Lane, the road users and cyclists on the Old Langho Road and visitors at Ribble Valley View park. The viewpoints and descriptions of these views are found in Appendix 3 Viewpoints.

5 The proposed development and mitigation

The following description provides detail on the different elements included within the proposed development as well as mitigation measures to help the new development sit within the character of the area and its surroundings.

The proposed development consists of:

- 16 single storey timber lodges with external timber decking and balustrade, and parking bays.
- Access track made up of tarmac.
- Extension southwards of the existing outcrop plateau, to produce a naturalistic hillside to the south of the lodges.
- Provision of areas of structural landscape proposals to provide landscape mitigation which include:
 - Protection of existing trees on site
 - Reinstatement of a historic hedgerow field boundary within the site
 - Tree planting across site in groups in the open landscape and scattered between the lodges
 - Woody shrub buffer planting to the north of the lodges
 - Reinstatement of hedgerow on western boundary
 - A woodland corridor along the western boundary
 - A wildlife pond

Landscape and Visual Mitigation Measures

The proposed site layout is carefully designed in order to assimilate the proposed lodges and access track into their surroundings. The landscape strategy is designed to enhance the existing landscape character, including reinstatement of a historic hedgerow field boundary, tree planting and a woodland corridor in keeping with the copses found locally and in particular a woodland tree belt found along Ribchester Road. These proposals are illustrated on Plan 9 – Landscape and Visual Mitigation Plan.

In further detail the landscape mitigation proposals which are being proposed are as follows:

- Access track is to be unedged and unmarked tarmac and narrow in width.
PURPOSE: in keeping with lanes in the existing setting
- Access track is to be edged with grassed verge and hedgerow
PURPOSE: to be in keeping with existing lanes in the setting which are enclosed by hedgerow
- Lodge ridge heights are set at a level in line with or lower than the height of the outcrop of 67m AOD within the site.
PURPOSE: in order that lodges cannot be seen from Old Langho Road, therefore lessening the effect upon the open countryside setting and on the approach to the settlement.
- Existing outcrop of 67mAOD is extended south west, thus increasing levels by 1.5m.
PURPOSE: to provide screening of the four southern proposed lodges which are situated on higher ground, therefore lessening the effect upon the open countryside setting and on the approach to the settlement.

- Lodges are set in line with the existing contours.
PURPOSE: to set the lodges in a format that responds to the existing topography and naturally sits within the setting.
- Reinstatement of a historic hedgerow boundary within the site.
PURPOSE: to reinstate the historic character of the landscape, and provide a threshold from the access track to the field in which the lodges are set.
- Tree planting across site in groups in the open landscape and scattered between the lodges.
PURPOSE: to filter views towards the existing lodges at Ribble Valley View and to break up the views of the proposed lodges.
- Woody shrub buffer planting to the north of the lodges.
PURPOSE: to soften the views upwards towards the development from the Public Right of Way at the bridge across the Dinckley Brook.
- Reinstatement of hedgerow on western boundary.
PURPOSE: to reinstate the historic character of the landscape and provide additional screening from the west.
- A woodland corridor along the western boundary.
PURPOSE: to reflect the 'on the ground' wooded effect, a typical landscape characteristic of the surrounding landscape, to reflect the woodland belt along Ribchester Road and to provide additional screening from the west.
- A wildlife pond.
PURPOSE: to provide additional biodiversity to the site and a landscape feature for users of the Public Right of Way.

6 Assessment of effects

Having taken such a wide range of factors into account when assessing sensitivity and magnitude at each receptor, the level of effect is derived by combining the sensitivity and magnitude in accordance with the matrix set out within the assessment methodology at Appendix 2, with reference also made to the geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the effect within the assessment.

The elements of the development likely to lead to landscape and visual change are identified in Section 5, with this section also including the description of several inherent mitigation measures that are proposed to reduce landscape and visual effects. These measures have been considered in the assessment of effects detailed below. The level of effects described are the worst-case immediately following completion. In the longer term, residual effects resulting from maturation of landscape proposals and familiarity with the scheme within the context are expected to reduce the level of adverse effects (if present) and in some cases raise a beneficial effect.

Effects on Landscape Character

The proposed development will change the use of the site from an improved pasture with a timber post and rail field boundary, scattered existing mature trees and degraded access track to an area of timber lodges with a tarmac access track, extended landform plateau and significant planting including hedgerow, woodland belt, grouped trees and meadow.

In planning terms, what is relevant is whether this change in appearance will have a sufficiently profound or conflicting effect that it amounts to 'harm' to the character of the site or wider area.

The following receptors have been identified as having the potential to experience effects:

- The key characteristics of the setting
- The southern approach to Old Langho / Brockhall Village settlement

Key characteristics of the setting

As described within Section 4 the overall landscape value of the key characteristics of the setting is deemed as **medium**.

Description of effects on key characteristics of the setting

The key characteristics of the setting are described below with a description of the effect of the proposals upon each.

- The setting consists of a steep sided valley which descends to the Dinckley Brook, with an undulating plateau landscape to the south of the setting and some outcrops to the north and south of the river (in keeping with Lancashire County LCA Undulating Lowland Farmland).
Description of effects: The steeply sided valley of the Dinckley Brook will be unaffected. The outcrop currently found within site (and to the south of the Brook) will be extended southwards.
- The landuse consists of small-scale improved pastoral fields, namely for the grazing of sheep and cows.
Description of effects: A small section of field will change use from pasture to an area of land with timber lodges.
- The Dinckley Brook has a winding nature, is fast flowing and moderately wide (up to 10 metres).
Description of effects: unaffected
- A scattering of buildings within the setting, ties in with the county level landscape character description of a high density of farms, but with built form including the cluster of buildings and corrugated barns at Aspinalls Farm,

Moorgate Lane, an expanse of existing timber lodges at Ribble Valley View park and the stone built, and partly rendered Black Bull Inn public house.

Description of effects: Built form will increase marginally, in line with the existing vernacular of the lodges in the existing adjacent Ribble Valley View park, but will be positioned to the side of the valley of Dinckley Brook, hidden from the most frequent views which are from the south.

- Roads consists of unedged and unmarked tarmac lanes that are fairly narrow and enclosed by hedgerow.

Description of effects: The degraded track will be replaced with a proposed tarmac track in keeping with the aesthetic of the lanes in the setting. There will be an increase in length to the track to meet the new lodges to the north.

- The Old Langho Road (minor road) and its roadside hedges forms the boundary to the setting to the south east and creates some movement and activity with passing traffic.

Description of effects: unaffected

- There is a Public Right of Way footpath which is partly made up of unmade track and partly grassed which runs northwest to southeast through the setting, with a small wooden bridge across the Dinckley Brook.

Description of effects: The Public Right of Way which currently passes over a degraded track will be replaced with a proposed tarmac track in keeping with the aesthetic of the lanes in the setting. Where the Public Right of Way moves onto its northern section within site where it is grassed, this will be replaced with the new track as described, as well as a short section of Type 1 MOT footpath at the northern part of site.

- Field boundaries consist of mostly post and wire with some timber post and rail fencing dividing the fields. Hedgerows are a feature of the area, but within the setting they are often remnant - overgrown, open towards the bottom with large gaps in between. Alongside the Old Langho Road a more consistent, well maintained hedgerow is present that is maintained at a low height towards Ribchester Road and a greater height level towards the Old Langho.

Description of effects: New field boundaries will be post and wire and hedgerows where remnant within site will be reinstated.

- Vegetation consists of scattered mature trees of Oak and Sycamore within higher fields and mixed species alongside the river including alder, birch and sycamore. Hedgerows as described above are mainly overgrown hawthorne. Alongside the Old Langho Road hedgerow includes additional species such as elder and hazel.

Description of effects: There will be significant tree planting across site, with species in keeping with existing as well as additional species to give a robust stock of trees.

- A mature line of trees follows the route of the Dinckley Brook, providing a thick green winding corridor through the setting, although as the height of the river and trees is set around 30mAOD. much lower than the valley tops, the trees are hidden from view until within close proximity. Elsewhere in the setting tree cover is scattered, appearing to follow historic field boundaries and perhaps historic gardens and includes a woodland belt alongside the Ribchester Road.

Description of effects: Existing trees described are unaffected, these characteristics are however expanded across the site within the proposed tree strategy.

- Within the setting there is human activity focussed around the expanse of lodges, the public house, and Old Langho Road elsewhere the setting is quiet and free from human activity.

Description of effects: There will be a new area of human activity around the new lodges, as well as an introduction of traffic movement along the access track.

Views of the changes in the landscape character will only be available within the immediate context and not from any designated viewpoints.

Summary of effects on key characteristics of the setting

The proposals are anticipated to affect only the site itself and the surrounding setting, up to 800m from site, therefore a limited geographical extent.

There will be some change within the setting as a new area of timber lodges will be implemented. These lodges are built features which are of short to medium term duration and their presence is largely reversible. There will be a loss of improved grass pasture however this will be replaced by alternative landscape features which remain in keeping with

the landscape characteristics of the setting, including reinstatement of historic hedgerows, tree planting in groups and in corridor format and a tarmac access track and timber lodges in keeping with the existing adjacent Ribble Valley View park. No key characteristics described for the setting will be lost. In addition the tree planting proposed alongside the access track will filter views towards the existing lodges within Ribble Valley View and the wildlife pond will provide an additional landscape feature.

The landscape proposals are considered to be at a site level and to only have an effect on a small area of the setting.

With all this being taken into account the magnitude of change is deemed to be low.

The value of the key characteristics of the setting, taking into account its susceptibility, has been classed as medium, this combined with predicted magnitude of change of low has resulted in a **minor level of effect**. This effect is deemed to be of **neutral effect** to the overall landscape character due to defining elements of the mitigation proposals which look to reinforce the landscape character.

Description of effects on the southern approach to Old Langho / Brockhall Village settlement

The characteristics of the southern approach to the settlement are described below, followed by a description of the effects.

'In summary the architectural vernacular and fabric of the built form of the settlement of Old Langho and Brockhall Village is mixed, the main settlement of Brockhall Village is set back and gated, the twentieth century crescents have a closer proximity to the Old Langho Road and there is little left of the historic Old Langho. All together there is an ad hoc spatial arrangement to the settlement as a whole with architecture that spans different eras. Hedgerows, backed by pasture fields, line the entrances, to the village to the north and south at varying heights, and the built form is sporadic in its proximity to the road.'

Description of effects: The proposed development will use the existing Ribble Valley View access to Old Langho Road up to the a proposed gate entrance into the field, there will therefore be no effect on the setting from the junction with Old Langho Road adjacent to the Black Bull Inn public house up to this gate. The proposals for the existing access track are for improvement and extension to the track in keeping with lanes in the setting. Alongside this track groups of trees are proposed. This will filter views to the existing timber lodge elevations which are visible across the fields when entering into the settlement.

To the south east of the proposed lodges where the existing outcrop is proposed to be extended southwards there will be a level increase of 1.5m, this will be graded softly into the landscape. After construction this will be bare earth which will be noticeable as a change of colour in the landscape, however quickly over time the meadow and grass seed will take and this will be a grassed plateau within the field with groups of proposed trees atop of it. As the landform has been designed to be an extension of the existing outcrop and will be grassed, it is predicted that this proposal will barely be noticeable in the landscape. The trees atop of the plateau will however form a new feature within the landscape, however they are laid out in a naturalistic format and are designed to soften the landscape and tie in with the 'on the ground wooded feel' of the landscape which is a key characteristic of the host landscape character type as highlighted within the Lancashire County Landscape character Assessment. Reinforcement and reinstatement of hedgerows as well as the proposed woodland belt are all existing characteristics of the landscape setting and will reinforce and enhance the existing character.

Summary of effects on the southern approach to Old Langho / Brockhall Village settlement

In summary the ad hoc nature of the entrance into the settlement of Old Langho and Brockhall Village will be unaffected. The distant views of the existing timber lodges across the fields from Old Langho will be filtered by proposed tree planting, distinct tree and vegetation characteristics of the host landscape will be reinforced, and the landform will be barely noticeable once the seed has taken.

The proposals which are present within the southern approach to the settlement include an alteration of land use from pasture to meadow and grassland with tree groupings, hedgerows and a woodland belt with an extension of the outcrop plateau. An existing deteriorating tarmac track will be replaced by a new tarmac track and will be extended northward. The landscape proposals, although not all existing in the current landscape (meadow and tree groupings are not currently present), are likely to have a positive effect on the landscape setting.

Given that the proposals which will be present within the approach to the setting are largely soft landscape interventions the magnitude of change is deemed to be very low.

The value of the southern approach to the setting, taking into account its susceptibility, has been classed as medium, this combined with predicted magnitude of change of very low has resulted in a **Minor/ Negligible level of effect**. This effect is deemed to be **beneficial** to the overall landscape character due to defining elements of the mitigation proposals which look to reinforce the landscape character.

Summary of Effects on Landscape Character

There is no effect on the wider landscape beyond the setting defined in the Visual Envelope. Given that there are no landscape designations, the landscape receptors have been identified as the key characteristics of the setting as well as the southern approach to Old Langho / Brockhall Village. In both cases the sensitivity of the receptors is medium and the magnitude of change (given that there are existing lodges within the landscape) is predicted to be low to very low. There will be no loss of key and distinctive characteristics of the landscape and in particular the built form of the proposals is confined to a small area, hidden from view within the approach to the setting and visible in the setting only to the north. The soft landscape proposals of the development are wider spread throughout site and take inspiration from the wider landscape character, seeking to reinforce and enhance landscape characteristics. These soft landscape elements look to improve the character of the setting as well as the approach to the settlement with tree planting filtering views towards the existing lodges adjacent to site. When the landscape value and its susceptibility is combined with the low to very low magnitude of change the level of effect is anticipated to be minor to negligible, and in the case of the approach to the settlement this is deemed to be beneficial.

Summary of landscape effects table

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Nature of Effect
The key characteristics of the setting	Medium	Low	Minor	Neutral

The southern approach to Old Langho / Brockhall Village settlement	Medium	Very Low	Minor / negligible	Beneficial
--	--------	----------	--------------------	-------------------

Effects on Visual Amenity

Visual effects relate to changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity. Effects upon these receptors are derived through the changes to the views experienced and through this, the change to the overall visual amenity of the study area as brought about by the proposed development.

An assessment of the effects at each viewpoint has been undertaken in detail, and a summary of the results of this assessment are provided below in text and table format as well as within Appendix 3. The views are taken from the Moorgate Lane, the Public Right of Way 3-6-FP-5, the Old Langho Road and Ribble Valley View park.

Viewpoint 1 – Moorgate Lane, at Moorgate Farm, 800m west of site

Sensitivity of receptors: Low. This is deemed as a lesser value viewpoint, as views are transient and road users are likely to be travelling between the local farms between home and work and not for leisure.

Existing view - There is an open view of parts of the northern parcel of site between hedgerow trees in the intervening fields, this forms a small part of a wider view. There are no views of the southern transect of site due to intervening vegetation. The lodges within the northern part of the existing Ribble Valley View park can be seen from this viewpoint, however the view is filtered by intervening vegetation.

Proposed view - The proposed development of the lodges and access road within the northern parcel of the site will be visible from this viewpoint in a small section between the trees in the mid distance. The view of the lodges is unlikely to be dominant as the existing lodges within the northern part of the existing Ribble Valley View park can already be seen from this viewpoint.

Magnitude of change: Very Low. The proposed development will form a barely noticeable component of the view, and the view whilst slightly altered would be similar to the baseline situation.

Effect: Negligible neutral. The level of effect is negligible and is deemed as neutral as the small expansion of the existing lodge park landscape will form only a small component within this view.

Viewpoint 2 - PROW 3-6-FP-5, 150m north of site

Sensitivity of receptors: Medium. The Public Right of Way is not designated as a national trail or long distance path, nor is it known to be recorded or promoted and therefore walkers are likely to be of a less formal purpose, and possibly travelling a shorter distance from an immediate locality.

Existing view - There is an open view of the northern parcel of site and from this position this takes up a large part of the view. There are no views of the southern transect of site due to the raised topography at 67m AOD. Some of the lodges within the northern part of the existing Ribble Valley View park can be seen from this viewpoint, as well as the banking that has been put in place to enable a level surface for the lodges.

Proposed view - An open view of the proposed development of the lodges, access road, proposed tree planting and the extension to the existing plateau within the northern parcel of the site will be present from this viewpoint. While the existing lodges within Ribble Valley View park make up a compartment of this view, the proposed lodges within site will extend this component across the majority of the central part of this view. The proposed tree planting within site will however soften this view over time.

Magnitude of change: Medium. The proposed development will form a recognisable extension of the existing lodge park which will be recognised by the receptor. Although the majority of the central part of the view will be converted from pasture to a lodge park landscape, with some landform amendment, this vernacular is already present within this view and the proposed landscape strategy will break up the view of the lodges, helping them to assimilate into their surroundings.

Effect: Moderate / minor neutral. The level of effect is moderate / minor and is deemed as neutral as there will be an expansion of the existing lodge park landscape into the existing pasture which forms a large part of this view, but due to the existing lodge park character of the view, combined with proposed landscape mitigation, which will soften this view, this effect is deemed to be neutral.

Viewpoint 3 - PROW 3-6-FP-5 within site, on eastern boundary

Sensitivity of receptors: High overall. The Public Right of Way is not designated as a national trail or long distance path, nor is it known to be recorded or promoted and therefore walkers are likely to be of a less formal purpose, and possibly travelling a shorter distance from an immediate locality, these receptors are deemed as having a medium sensitivity. This view is also representative of views from within the lodges of the existing Ribble Valley View park. Visitors to the Ribble Valley View park are deemed as having a high sensitivity as they are likely to be holidaying with the purpose of enjoying the local landscape.

Existing view - Open view of pasture within part of northern parcel of site which sits upon the outcrop plateau, which takes up a large part of the view. The area of site further north, where the site descends to Dinckley Brook cannot be seen from this viewpoint. One of the lodges within the northern part of the existing Ribble Valley View park can be seen from this viewpoint.

Proposed view - An open view of the proposals in the foreground will be present from this viewpoint, including the access road, increase of levels by 1.5m which will tie in with the existing outcrop, the meadow, tree and hedgerow planting. Further into the site the southern four lodges with ridge heights at a similar height to the outcrop, as well as tree tops of proposed scattered tree planting may be present from this viewpoint, while the rest of the lodges, further north, are unlikely to be visible due to the proposed sunken landform as well as the naturally descending topography. A proposed hedgerow in the foreground will partially obscure this view of the northern parcel of the site over time.

Magnitude of change: Medium. The proposed development will form a recognisable alteration in the landscape due to the presence of new tree, hedgerow and meadow planting, access road and some lodge rooftops. Due to the largely soft and reversible nature of the changes to the landscape, which reinforce landscape character, the magnitude of change is deemed to be medium.

Effect: Moderate beneficial, reducing to moderate / minor. The level of effect is moderate and is deemed as beneficial as there will be a strong landscape strategy implemented on site which will be viewable in the foreground of this viewpoint. Landscape effects will reduce

over time as the landscape mitigation matures, in particular the proposed hedgerow which reinstates a historic field boundary but also indicates a gateway into site. Some proposed lodge rooftops may be viewable but are likely to form a recessive part of this view and thus not have a negative effect.

Viewpoint 4 - PROW 3-6-FP-5, within southern transect of site boundary

Sensitivity of receptors: Medium overall. The Public Right of Way is not designated as a national trail or long distance path, nor is it known to be recorded or promoted and therefore walkers are likely to be of a less formal purpose, and possibly travelling a shorter distance from an immediate locality, these receptors are deemed as having a medium sensitivity. The road users visiting Ribble Valley View park are transient but visitors are initially arriving at site and are likely to be holidaying, these receptors are deemed as having medium sensitivity.

Existing view - Open view of the existing access track and pasture within the southern transect of site. The uppermost ridgeline of the northern parcel of site is visible from this viewpoint, beyond this the rest of the northern parcel is obscured from view by topography as it descends to Dinckley Brook. The lodges along the south eastern boundary within the existing Ribble Valley View park can be seen from this viewpoint above the hedgerow along the eastern boundary of site. The ridgelines of the barns at Aspinalls Farm can be seen in the distance beyond site.

Proposed view - An open view of the proposals in the foreground will be present from this viewpoint, including the access road, meadow and tree planting. The existing ridgeline within the northern parcel of the site, which forms the background to this view will experience an increase of levels by 1.5m which will tie in with the existing outcrop but will be barely discernible from this viewpoint and will be tied in naturally to its surroundings. The tree planting and small section of proposed hedgerow along the ridgeline will also be present in this view. The top 300mm of the rooftops of the southern four lodges may be present above the ridgeline but are unlikely to be discernible beyond the proposed meadow, hedge and tree planting.

Magnitude of change: Low. The proposals within this view are largely soft landscape mitigation proposals which are in keeping with the open countryside setting and where the access road is proposed this will largely be replacing the existing track which is in disrepair.

Effect: Minor beneficial. The level of effect is minor and is deemed as beneficial as there will be a strong landscape strategy implemented on site which will be viewable in the foreground of this viewpoint. The landscape proposals will strengthen the landscape character over time as the planting matures, thus reducing the visual amenity effect to minor / negligible beneficial.

Viewpoint 5 - Old Langho Road and the Lancashire Cycle Way (close to Black Bull Inn public house), 100m south of site

Sensitivity of receptors: High overall. The road users along Old Langho Road are deemed as having a medium sensitivity. The cyclists which are using this same route may be on the Lancashire Cycle Way, a scenic leisure route of the county, these users are therefore deemed as having a higher sensitivity.

Existing view - From this viewpoint there is a view of parts of the existing access track and pasture within the southern transect of site, although partially obscured by the hedgerow boundary in the fields between the site and the viewpoint. The uppermost ridgeline of the

northern parcel of site is also visible from this viewpoint, beyond this the rest of the northern parcel is obscured from view by topography as it descends to Dinckley Brook. The lodges along the eastern boundary within the existing Ribble Valley View park can be seen from this viewpoint above the hedgerow. The barns at Aspinalls Farm can be seen to the left of site. The view of the site is partially filtered by field boundary hedgerow trees in the fields between the site and the viewpoint.

Proposed view - Within the southern transect of the site the proposed access track and adjacent planting may be visible in small sections within this view. Within the northern parcel of the site the ridgeline viewable will experience an increase of levels by 1.5m which will be barely discernible from this viewpoint and will be tied in naturally to its surroundings. The proposed tree planting along the ridgeline will be present in this view. The top 300mm of the rooftops of the southern four lodges may be present but are unlikely to be discernible beyond the proposed meadow and tree planting. The rest of the proposed lodges are will not be seen due to ridge heights being lower than the existing topography. The view of existing lodges within Ribble Valley View park above hedgerow will be filtered by proposed tree planting within the southern transect of site.

Magnitude of change: Very Low. The proposed development will form a barely noticeable component of the view, and the view whilst slightly altered would be similar to the baseline situation. Proposed planting which will filter views to the existing lodges will improve the view from this viewpoint.

Effect: Minor beneficial. The level of effect on visual amenity is minor and is deemed as beneficial as there will be a strong landscape strategy implemented on site which will be viewable in parts from this viewpoint and will strengthen the landscape character over time as the planting matures. In addition the proposed tree planting will filter views towards the existing lodges at Ribble Valley View. As these trees mature the visual effect is expected to reduce to minor / negligible beneficial.

Viewpoint 6 - Old Langho Road and the Lancashire Cycle Way, 350m south of site

Sensitivity of receptors: High overall. The road users along Old Langho Road are deemed as having a medium sensitivity. The cyclists which are using this same route may be on the Lancashire Cycle Way, a scenic leisure route of the county, these users are therefore deemed as having a higher sensitivity.

Existing view- From this viewpoint it is difficult to discern the site. There are glimpse views of the existing lodges within Ribble Valley View park and the hedgerow which runs along the eastern boundary of site. Elsewhere the view is truncated by intervening field boundary vegetation and the Black Bull Inn public house.

Proposed view- Within the southern transect of the site the proposed trees may be viewable, which will filter the view of the existing lodges. Occasional passing cars along the proposed access track may also be glimpsed between the existing field boundary vegetation.

Magnitude of change: Very Low. The proposed development will form a barely noticeable component of the view, and the view would be similar to the baseline situation. Proposed planting which will filter views to the existing lodges will improve the view from this viewpoint.

Effect: Minor beneficial. The level of effect is minor and is deemed as beneficial as the proposed tree planting will filter views towards the existing lodges at Ribble Valley View. As these trees mature the effect is expected to reduce to minor / negligible beneficial.

Summary of visual effects

In summary visual receptors are generally confined to the immediate setting of the site. The exception to this rule is when glimpse views occur from occasional breaks in hedgerows from lanes in the surrounding area, such as Moorgate Lane. From these further afield views, the proposed lodge park will make up a small part of a wider view within which the existing lodges are already present. Due to the natural colouring of the timber lodges and the proposed tree planting the effect on these visual receptors is expected to be negligible neutral.

Closer to site the visual receptors are divided between those to the north of site (from the Public Right of Way and visitors to the existing lodge park) which will experience open views of the proposed lodge park, soft landscape proposals and landform amendments, and those visual receptors to the south (Public Right of Way, road users, cyclist and visitors to the existing lodge park) which will experience views (both open and partially filtered) of the soft landscape proposals and access track only.

Furthermore within the viewpoints to the south the level of effect is deemed to be beneficial as the proposed lodges are out of sight, the landform amendments are unlikely to be discernible and the soft landscape proposals will reinforce and enhance the character of the setting as well as filter views towards the existing lodge park.

In all cases when considering the sensitivity of the user combined with the magnitude of change being medium to low (given that there is already a lodge park in existence within these views) the level of effect is between moderate and minor and is anticipated to reduce over time as the landscape matures assimilating the proposals into their surroundings and the receptor becomes acquainted with the development.

Summary of visual effects table

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Nature of Effect
Viewpoint 1 – Moorgate Lane at Moorgate Farm	Low	Very Low	Negligible	Neutral
Viewpoint 2 – PROW 3-6-FP-5 east of Aspinalls Farm	Medium	Medium	Moderate / minor reducing to minor	Neutral
Viewpoint 3 – PROW 3-6-FP-5 within site	High	Medium	Moderate reducing to moderate / minor	Beneficial
Viewpoint 4 – PROW 3-6-FP-5 within site	Medium	Low	Minor reducing to minor / negligible	Beneficial
Viewpoint 5 – Old Langho Road and the Lancashire	Medium	Very Low	Minor reducing to minor / negligible	Beneficial

Cycle Way (close to Black Bull Inn public house)				
Viewpoint 6 – Old Langho Road and the Lancashire Cycle Way	Medium	Very Low	Minor reducing to minor / negligible	Beneficial

7 Comparison of proposals

This section of the report considers the landscape and visual effects of the refused proposal, Ribble Valley Borough Council Planning Application No.3/2019/0851 (illustrated on Plan 10 Original Refused Application Plan), in relation to the proposals put forward as part of this application.

The refused proposals included:

- 29 timber single storey lodges with external timber decking and balustrade, and parking bays.
- Access track made up of tarmac.
- A landscape buffer surrounding the lodges.
- Some scattered trees within the site.

This original application was refused by the Local Planning Authority based on the following:

'The proposal is considered contrary to Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy insofar that it would result in the introduction of a significant level of built-form in a visually prominent location within the defined open countryside that would have a significant visual suburbanising effect upon the landscape resulting in the erosion of the sense of openness that defines the character of the area. As such it is considered that the proposal would be of significant detriment to the character, appearance and visual amenities of the area and inherent character of the defined open countryside.'

Comparison of landscape character effects

The current proposal will incorporate a well thought through landscape strategy including features which reflect the historical field pattern and landscape character of the setting as well as additional elements which look to enhance the setting. The lodges have been relocated to sit out of sight from the wider setting with careful landform design and use of existing topography and have been reduced in number, thus reducing built form overall. Furthermore the new proposals look to soften views to the existing Ribble Valley View lodges and thus give a greener view of the existing lodge park.

Comparison of visual amenity effects

In general views of the proposed lodges within the original application would have been present in the landscape due to situation atop the plateau. The proposed lodges in the original refused application were to be situated at a higher topography, with ridge heights up to 71m AOD (3.5m above current proposals), closer to Old Langho Road and in greater numbers. The lodges would have therefore been present in views from the south, including Old Langho Road, as well as the north and for a greater length of the Public Right of Way. The current layout situates 16 lodges at a height below the ridgeline.

Response to Decision Notice refusal

Each of the concerns outlined within the Decision Notice for the refused application have been discussed and the way in which these concerns have been addressed is described below.

The Decision notice states that the original proposals will contribute to a ‘significant level of built-form in a visually prominent location’.

When considering the views of the existing lodges within the open countryside (refer to photograph viewpoints within Appendix 3) it is noted that the lodges have a somewhat subdued and unobtrusive presence within the landscape due to their single storey height, natural colours – timber and grey tile roof and green backdrop of existing woodland.

The layout has been redesigned and the built form is now set on the valley side of the Dinckley Brook, to the side of (rather than on top of) the existing outcrop and out of sight from the southern approach to the settlement of Old Langho and Brockhall Village. Where there is a view of several existing lodges in line with one another causing an expanse of timber this has been tackled by proposing hedgerow and trees which will soften this view over time.

The Decision notice states that the original proposals will have a ‘significant visual suburbanising effect’

It is argued that the proposals are small in scale (single storey) and will have an unobtrusive effect on the landscape (due to their natural materiality and colour). The built form of the new proposals is situated on the valley side of the Dinckley Brook, hidden from views from the south. There will be a degree of separation from other built form due to the two open pasture fields and a proposed area of open landscape between the proposed lodges and the Black Bull Inn public house.

The Decision notice states that the original proposals will cause an ‘erosion of the sense of openness that defines the character of the area.’

Following review of published landscape character assessments it is argued that the character of the area is in fact well settled and does not inherently have a sense of openness.

At a national level it is stated that ‘*The many towns, including Blackburn, Accrington and Burnley, which developed as a result of the Industrial Revolution give the area a strong urban character.*’

At a county level the wider area is described as ‘*well settled*’ with a *high density of farms and scattered cottages outside the clustered settlements, linked by a network of minor roads.*’ And the Lower Ribblesdale character area in particular is described as: ‘*a particularly well settled area and provides a corridor for communication routes along the Ribble Valley. The A59(T) runs the length of the area. The railway links the valley to Blackburn and Yorkshire. This communication structure has encouraged built development and industry.*’

At the setting level as described and written for this report there is built form scattered through the setting consisting of ‘*the cluster of buildings and corrugated barns at Aspinalls Farm, Moorgate Lane, an expanse of existing timber lodges at Ribble Valley View park and the stone built, and partly rendered Black Bull Inn public house.*’

So, whilst it is true that there is a sense of openness due to the dominance of open pasture fields, settlements and built form are also a common feature throughout. The area may also be described as being relatively enclosed at ground level due to the layering of vegetated field boundaries, scattering of copses and an abundance of hedgerow trees, which filter views across open fields.

The Decision notice states that the original proposals will have a 'significant detriment to the character, appearance and visual amenities and inherent character of the open countryside'

Character: As concluded within this report when the landscape value and its susceptibility is combined with the low magnitude of change the level of effect is anticipated to be minor to negligible, and in the case of the approach to the settlement this is deemed to be a beneficial effect due to significant landscape proposals that will soften views to the existing lodges.

Appearance: The existing lodges have been described above as unobtrusive within the landscape, the newly proposed lodges will have a similar unobtrusive appearance and will be softened with intermittent tree planting and combined with a strong landscape strategy that serves to reinforce and enhance the landscape character of the setting.

Visual amenity: As concluded within this report when considering the sensitivity of the user combined with the magnitude of change being medium to low (given that there is already a lodge park in existence) the level of effect up on the visual receptors selected for this report is between moderate and minor and is anticipated to reduce over time to minor / negligible. The reduction in effect is predicted to occur as the landscape matures and assimilates the proposals into their surroundings and the receptor becomes acquainted with the development.

Summary

The proposals put forward as part of this application have addressed the concerns highlighted within the Decision Notice of the original refused application. Built form has been reduced and situated out of view from the south and the approach to the settlement. The proposals seek to significantly enhance the landscape character of the area, filter views to the existing lodges and afford a sizable area of openness between the areas of built form, and are therefore not described as suburbanising. The proposed lodges, where they will be present within views, are expected to be unobtrusive and familiar to the receptor in an environment where timber lodges are already present. The effect on landscape character is minor and the effect on visual amenity is restricted to the local vicinity and is described as moderate to minor, reducing over time to minor / negligible. As a whole the proposals are not anticipated to have a significant detriment to the character, appearance and visual amenities and character of the countryside.

7 Conclusion

This report has undertaken a review of the circumstances of the proposed development at Ribble Valley View, Old Langho Road in order that an assessment can be made on the potential effects on the existing landscape and visual resource.

The site is situated in undesignated open countryside within the Ribble valley, Lancashire.

The proposed development is for an extension to the existing Ribble Valley View lodge park at Old Langho and will re-site the lodges of a previously refused application and reduce the lodge numbers from 29 to 16. The proposed location of the lodges is to the north of the site and at a lower topography than the refused proposal. There will be an extension of an existing outcrop plateau which will be softly graded and will enclose the site to the south thus causing minimal visual intrusion from built form. The visual receptors to the built elements are therefore reduced to visual receptors to the north including users of a Public Right of Way, visitors staying in the northern lodges of the existing Ribble Valley View park and glimpse views from lanes further afield. There will be no views of the built form from the south. The proposals seek to take cues from the existing landscape setting and wider host landscape character type in order to provide a strong landscape strategy. The proposals are therefore designed to enhance the existing landscape character of the setting and the approach to Old Langho and Brockhall Village.

Mitigation proposals are to reinstate historic field pattern boundaries with hedgerow, reinstate existing degraded hedgerow, provide an extension of an existing outcrop, with softly graded landscape and to propose expanses of meadow and groupings of trees, while positively retaining the existing mature trees on site. Material choices are largely of a natural palette, with timber for the lodges and decking and natural gravel materials for footpaths. The access road will be maintained at a narrow width, with subtle edging and no markings in keeping with the lanes of the local setting.

Due to the presence of raised topography, settlement and woodland to the north and east there is a localised setting which has been established to include the immediate vicinity to the site as well as the fields to the west and south, this area is described as the Visual Envelope and is confined to an area 800m north to south and 1200m east to west.

There is no effect on the wider landscape character beyond the setting defined in the Visual Envelope. Given that there are no landscape designations, the landscape receptors have been identified as the key characteristics of the setting as well as the southern approach to Old Langho / Brockhall Village. In both cases the sensitivity of the receptors is medium and the magnitude of change (given that there are existing lodges within the landscape) is predicted to be low to very low. There will be no loss of key and distinctive characteristics of the landscape. The built form of the proposals is confined to a small area, hidden from view when approaching the setting and visible in the setting only to the north. The soft landscape proposals of the development are wider spread throughout site and take inspiration from the wider landscape character, seeking to reinforce and enhance landscape characteristics. These soft landscape elements look to improve the character of the setting as well as the approach to the settlement with tree planting filtering views towards the existing lodges adjacent to site. When the landscape value and it's susceptibility is combined with the low to very low magnitude of change the level of effect on the landscape character is anticipated to be minor to negligible, and in the case of the approach to the settlement this is deemed to be beneficial.

Visual receptors are generally confined to the immediate setting of the site with the exception of glimpse views which occur from occasional breaks in hedgerows from lanes in the surrounding area. Closer to site the visual receptors are divided between those to the north of site which will experience open views of the proposed lodge park, soft landscape proposals and landform amendments, and those visual receptors to the south which will experience views of the soft landscape proposals and access track only. Furthermore within the viewpoints to the south the level of effect is deemed to be beneficial as the proposed lodges are out of sight, the landform amendments are anticipated to be barely discernible and the soft landscape proposals reinforce and enhance the character of the setting as well as filter of views towards the existing lodge park. In all cases when considering the sensitivity of the users (being generally medium to high) combined with the magnitude of change which is deemed as medium to very low (given that there is already a lodge park in existence within these views) the level of effect on the visual receptors is between moderate and minor and is anticipated to reduce over time to minor / negligible as the landscape matures.

As a result of the discreet nature and setting of the built form, the presence of existing timber lodges and the positive contribution of the soft landscape proposals, this study has concluded that the development will have a minor level of effect on the landscape character (which is beneficial within the approach to Old Langho) and a moderate to minor effect on visual amenity reducing over time to minor / negligible as the landscape proposals mature. These effects are limited to the immediate setting of the site and have no landscape and visual effects on the wider landscape, or the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the north.

With regards to the statements and policies of Ribble Valley Borough Council Policy Core Strategy 2014 which relate to landscape, the proposals have incorporated their guidance. In particular the clients have taken on board landscape design advice in order to '*adopt a non-standardised approach to design which recognises and enhances local distinctiveness, landscape character, the quality of the built fabric, historic patterns and landscape tranquillity*' as advised within the Landscape statement of the Core Strategy.

The design of the layout and proposals seek to be in line with the following statements and policies from the Core Strategy:

- Key Statement EN2 Landscape, which states; *As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials.'*
- Policy DMG2: Strategic considerations description which states: *'Within the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting.'*
- And Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection *'Development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important landscape or landscape.'*

In addition the proposals seek to improve the Public Right of Way through site by way of delineating a route, improving surfacing and enhancing the setting with meadow and tree planting as well as a wildlife pond feature with resting benches. These proposals fall in line with Policy DMB5: Footpaths and Bridleways which states *'The borough council will seek to ensure the retention, maintenance and improvement of by-ways and un-surfaced/unclassified roads as part of the public rights of way network.'*

The proposals put forward as part of this application have addressed the concerns highlighted within the Decision Notice of the original refused application. As a whole the proposals are not anticipated to have a significant detriment to the character, appearance and visual amenities and character of the countryside.

This report has summarised that the effects on the landscape and visual amenity are limited to the immediate vicinity, are small in scale and in keeping with the local setting. As such it is concluded that the proposals are in line with local policy and national policy which seek to ensure that new development is appropriate for its location and takes into account likely effects on the natural environment.

Appendix 1

Glossary of LVA Terms

TERM AND DEFINITION

Baseline

The existing (pre-development) landscape and visual context of a study area, including landscape fabric, landscape character and existing views. The landscape baseline is not static and may be changing for various reasons. The landscape baseline can also consider such factors and describe the likely future landscape character of the landscape, without the proposed development.

Effects

A predicted change in the environmental baseline as a result of the proposed development taking into account the sensitivity of the receptor to the type of development proposed and the magnitude of the impact. Effects can be positive or negative.

Field Pattern

The pattern of hedges and walls that define fields in farmed landscapes (LI/IEMA 2002).

Intervisibility

Two points on the ground or two features are described as “intervisible” when they are visible from each other.

Landscape

Landscape results from the way that different aspects of our environment (physical, social, aesthetic and perceptual) interact together and are perceived by us:

- Physical elements – e.g. geology, landform, soils, flora and fauna;
- Social elements – e.g. land use, enclosure patterns, and the patterns, form and scale of settlements and other built development;
- Aesthetic factors – e.g. colour, form, visual texture and pattern, sounds, smells and touch; and
- Perceptual factors – e.g. memories, associations, stimuli and preferences.

Landscape capacity

The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed.

Landscape character

Landscape character arises from a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of physical and social elements, aesthetic factors and perceptual aspects in the landscape.

Landscape character areas (LCAs)

Single unique areas that are discrete geographical areas containing one or more landscape types.

Landscape character types (LCTs)

Generic units of landscape that display a distinct, consistent and recognisable landscape character.

Landscape condition

Description of the maintenance and condition of landscape elements and the degree to which landscape elements are representative of the landscape character area.

Landscape element

A physical component (both natural and manmade) of the landscape.

Landscape fabric

The elements and features that constitute the physical components of the landscape, including ground vegetation, hedgerows, trees, shrubs, walls, fences and vernacular structures.

Landscape value

The importance or value of the landscape to society, usually based on landscape designations or policies as indicators of recognised value.

Mitigation

Measures, including any process, activity or design that will avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for the predicted effects of a development on the environmental baseline.

Public access

Land with public access includes:

- Definitive rights of way – public footpaths, bridleways, cycle routes, Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATS) and highways. Shown on Definitive Rights of Way maps held by the Local Authority.
- Permissive paths and bridleways – routes where there is public access with the permission of the landowner. Such routes are usually closed at least one day a year to prevent establishment of a Public Right of Way;
- Public open space – areas designated for specified public uses, usually in the ownership of the Local Authority. Includes parks and recreation grounds. Shown on Local Development Plans;
- Beaches – the public have permitted access to much of the foreshore (intertidal zone – between high and low tide marks) owned by the Crown Estate, and on land above high water mark owned by the Local Authority. Some beaches above high tide mark are privately owned and some beaches and foreshore have restricted access for military purposes;
- Access land – land where public access is currently permitted with the permission of landowners. Includes land outlined in purple on the OS Explorer (1:25,000) sheets
- Open access land – areas of mountains, moor, heath, down, common land and coastal foreshore that have been designated under Section 2 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The right of access is for walkers only and does not extend to cycling, horse riding or driving a vehicle, nor does the right of access apply to developed land, gardens or cultivated land. Under the CRow Act 2000, there was a process of consultation that allowed the right of appeal for those with a legal interest in the land, and for sensitive ecological or archaeological Sites to be excluded. Conclusive maps showing the areas designated as open access land (Registered Common Land and Open Country) are now available from Natural England (in England) and the Countryside Council for Wales (in Wales).

Viewing distance

That distance that a viewpoint illustration should be held from the eye in order for the

illustration to match the scale of the actual view when used in the field to identify the location and scale of the proposed development.

- Visibility is a measure of the distance that can be seen by the human eye at any one time. Daylight visibility will depend on several factors, including:
- Atmospheric transparency (governed by the solid and liquid particles held in suspension in the atmosphere);
- Degree of contrast between an object and the background against which it is observed;
- Position of the sun; and
- Observer's visual acuity.

Visual Envelope

Area defined by desk top and field based study within which the proposed site is visible.

Visual receptor(s)

An individual observer or group of observers who are capable of experiencing a change in the view.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

The ZTVs consider the 'bareground' situation, unless otherwise stated where Environmental Agency Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) data is available, and assume excellent visibility with no atmospheric attenuation. The ZTVs therefore represent the maximum potential, theoretical visibility i.e. the worst-case situation. In reality, other components of the landscape such as forestry, trees, buildings etc. will introduce screening effects which, coupled with the atmospheric conditions, will reduce this visibility, in some instances to a considerable extent.

Appendix 2

Assessment Methodology

Introduction

Provided within this section is the methodology for this Landscape and Visual Assessment, which has been adopted to ensure a robust appraisal of effects, that conforms to best practice guidance. This assessment is not provided as part of a wider Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and therefore does not identify effects as 'significant' in EIA terms.

Methodology

The assessment methodology for assessing landscape and visual effects prepared is principally based on the following best practice guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition (LI/IEMA, 2013); and
- Guidance issued by Natural England, 'Landscape Character Assessments: Identify and describe landscape types', published 2014.

Other reference documents used to understand the baseline position in landscape terms comprise published landscape character assessments appropriate to the site's location and the nature of the proposed development.

The nature of landscape and visual assessment requires both objective analysis and subjective professional judgement. Accordingly, the following assessment is based on the best practice guidance listed above, information and data analysis techniques. It uses subjective professional judgement and quantifiable factors wherever possible and is based on clearly defined terms.

Landscape Assessment

Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape fabric which may contribute to changes in its character and how this is experienced. These effects need to be considered in line with changes already occurring within the landscape and which help define the character of it.

Effects upon the wider landscape resource, i.e. the landscape surrounding the development, requires an assessment of visibility of the proposals from adjacent landscape character areas, but remains an assessment of landscape character and not visual amenity.

Visual Assessment

The assessment of effects on visual amenity draws on the predicted effects of the development, the landscape and visual context, and the visibility and viewpoint analysis, and considers the overall effects of the proposed development on the visual amenity of the main visual receptor types in the study area.

Identifying Landscape and Visual Receptors

This assessment has sought to identify the key landscape and visual receptors that may be affected by the changes proposed.

The assessment of effects on landscape as a resource in its own right draws on the description of the development, the landscape context and the visibility and viewpoint

analysis to identify receptors, which, for the proposed development may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- The landscape fabric of the development site;
- The key landscape characteristics of the local context;
- The 'host' landscape character area which contains the proposed development;
- The 'non-host' landscape character areas where there is the potential for secondary effects beyond the host landscape character area; and
- Landscape designations on a national, regional or local level (where relevant).

The locations and types of visual receptors within the defined study areas are identified from Ordnance Survey maps and other published information (such as walking guides), from fieldwork observations and from local knowledge provided during the consultation process.

Examples of visual receptors may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Settlements and private residences;
- Users of National Cycle Routes and National Trails;
- Users of local/regional cycle and walking routes;
- Those using local rights of way – walkers, horse riders, cyclists;
- Users of open spaces with public access;
- People using major (motorways, A and B) roads;
- People using minor roads; and
- People using railways.

Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects

The assessment of effects on the landscape resource includes consideration of the potential changes to those key elements and components which contribute towards recognised landscape character or the quality of designated landscape areas; these features are termed landscape receptors. The assessment of visual amenity requires the identification of potential visual receptors that may be affected by the development. As noted, following the identification of each of these various landscape and visual receptors, the effect of the development on each of them is assessed through consideration of a combination of:

Their overall sensitivity to the proposed form of development that includes the value attached to the receptor following the baseline appraisal, combined with the susceptibility of the receptor to the change proposed, determined during the assessment stage; and

The overall magnitude of change that will occur - based on the size and scale of the change, its duration and reversibility.

Defining Receptor Sensitivity

A number of factors influence professional judgement when assessing the degree to which a particular landscape or visual receptor can accommodate change arising from a particular development. Sensitivity is made up of judgements about the 'value' attached to the receptor, which is determined at baseline stage, and the 'susceptibility' of the receptor, which is determined at the assessment stage when the nature of the proposals, and therefore the susceptibility of the landscape and visual resource to change, is better understood.

Susceptibility indicates "the ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences". Susceptibility of visual receptors is primarily a function of the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor. A degree of professional judgement applies in arriving at the susceptibility for both

landscape and visual receptors and this is clearly set out in the technical appendices to this assessment.

A location may have different levels of sensitivity according to the types of visual receptors at that location and any one receptor type may be accorded different levels of sensitivity at different locations.

The landscape sensitivity criteria table below provides an indication of the criteria by which the overall sensitivity of a landscape receptor is judged within this assessment and considers both value and susceptibility independently.

Landscape sensitivity criteria table

Category	Landscape Receptor Value Criteria	Landscape Susceptibility to Change Criteria
Very High	Nationally/internationally designated/valued countryside and landscape features; strong/distinctive landscape characteristics; absence of landscape detractors.	Strong/distinctive landscape elements/-aesthetic/perceptual aspects; absence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in excellent condition. Landscapes with clear and widely recognised cultural value. Landscapes with a high level of tranquillity.
High	Locally designated/valued countryside (e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas) and landscape features; many distinctive landscape characteristics; very few landscape detractors.	Many distinctive landscape elements/-aesthetic/perceptual aspects; very few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in good condition. The landscape has a low capacity for change as a result of potential changes to defining character.
Medium	Undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape characteristics; few landscape detractors.	Some distinctive landscape elements/-aesthetic/perceptual aspects; few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in fair condition. Landscape is able to accommodate some change as a result.
Low	Undesignated countryside and landscape features; few distinctive landscape characteristics; presence of landscape detractors.	Few distinctive landscape elements/-aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in poor condition. Landscape is able to accommodate large amounts of change without changing these characteristics fundamentally.
Very Low	Undesignated countryside and landscape features; absence of distinctive landscape characteristics; despoiled/-degraded by the presence of many landscape detractors.	Absence of distinctive landscape elements/-aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of many landscape detractors; landscape receptors in very poor condition. As such landscape is able to accommodate considerable change.

For visual receptors, judgements of susceptibility and value are closely interlinked considerations. For example, the most valued views are those which people go and visit because of the available view – and it is at those viewpoints that their expectations will be highest and thus most susceptible to change.

Table below provides an indication of the criteria by which the overall sensitivity of a visual receptor is judged within this assessment and considers both value and susceptibility independently.

Visual receptor sensitivity table

Category	Visual Receptor Criteria
Very High	<p>Designed view (which may be to or from a recognised heritage asset or other important viewpoint), or where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience. Key promoted viewpoint e.g. interpretative signs. References in literature and art and/or guidebooks tourist maps. Protected view recognised in planning policy designation.</p> <p>Examples may include views from residential properties, especially from rooms normally occupied in waking or daylight hours; national public rights of way e.g. National Trails and nationally designated countryside/landscape features with public access which people might visit purely to experience the view; and visitors to heritage assets of national importance.</p>
High	<p>View of clear value but may not be formally recognised e.g. framed view of high scenic value, or destination hill summits. It may also be inferred that the view is likely to have value e.g. to local residents.</p> <p>Examples may include views from recreational receptors where there is some appreciation of the landscape e.g. golf and fishing; local public rights of way, access land and National Trust land, also panoramic viewpoints marked on maps; road routes promoted in tourist guides for their scenic value.</p>
Medium	<p>View is not promoted or recorded in any published sources and may be typical of the views experienced from a given receptor.</p> <p>Examples may include people engaged in outdoor sport other than appreciation of the landscape e.g. football and rugby or road users on minor routes passing through rural or scenic areas.</p>
Low	<p>View of clearly lesser value than similar views experienced from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible.</p> <p>Examples may include road users on main road routes (motorways/A roads) and users of rail routes or people at their place of work (where the place of work may be in a sensitive location). Also views from commercial buildings where views of the surrounding landscape may have some limited importance.</p>
Very Low	<p>View affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued.</p> <p>Examples may include people at their place of work, indoor recreational or leisure facilities or other locations where views of the wider landscape have little or no importance.</p>

The tables above offer a template for assessing overall sensitivity of any landscape or visual receptor as determined by combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape as set out at paragraph 5.39 of GLVIA 3rd Edition (2013). However, the narrative in this report may demonstrate that assessment of overall sensitivity can change on a case-by-case basis.

For example a high susceptibility to change and a low value may result in a medium overall sensitivity, unless it can be demonstrated that the receptor is unusually susceptible or is in some particular way more valuable. A degree of professional judgement applies in arriving at the overall sensitivity for both landscape and visual receptors.

Magnitude of Change

The magnitude of any landscape or visual change is determined through a range of considerations particular to each receptor. The three attributes considered in defining the magnitude are:

- Scale of change
- Geographical extent; and
- Duration and reversibility/proportion.

Receptor locations from which views of the proposed development are not likely to occur will receive no change and therefore no effect. With reference to the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) and site survey, the magnitude of change is defined for receptor locations from where visibility of the proposed development is predicted to occur.



The scale of change criteria table provides an indication of the criteria by which the size/scale of change at a landscape or visual receptor is judged within this assessment.

Scale of change criteria table

Category	Landscape Receptor Criteria	Visual Receptor Criteria
Very High	Total loss of or major alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline condition. Addition of elements which strongly conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.	There would be a substantial change to the baseline, with the proposed development creating a new focus and having a defining influence on the view.
High	Notable loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline condition. Addition of elements that are prominent and may conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.	The proposed development will be clearly noticeable and the view would be fundamentally altered by its presence.
Medium	Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline condition. Addition of elements that may be evident but do not necessarily conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.	The proposed development will form a new and recognisable element within the view which is likely to be recognised by the receptor.
Low	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline landscape. Addition of elements that may not be uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.	The proposed development will form a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component.
Very Low	Barely discernible loss or alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline landscape. Addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.	The proposed development will form a barely noticeable component of the view, and the view whilst slightly altered would be similar to the baseline situation.

The Geographical extent criteria table provides an indication of the criteria by which the geographical extent of the area affected is adjudged within this assessment.

Geographical extent criteria table

	Landscape Receptors	Visual Receptor Criteria
Largest   Smallest	Large scale effects influencing several landscape types or character areas.	Direct views at close range with changes over a wide horizontal and vertical extent.
	Effects at the scale of the landscape type or character areas within which the proposal lies.	Direct or oblique views at close range with changes over a notable horizontal and/or vertical extent.
	Effects within the immediate landscape setting of the site.	Direct or oblique views at medium range with a moderate horizontal and/or vertical extent of the view affected.
	Effects at the site level (within the development site itself).	Oblique views at medium or long range with a small horizontal/vertical extent of the view affected.
	Effects only experienced on parts of the site at a very localised level.	Long range views with a negligible part of the view affected.

The third, and final, factor, in determining the predicted magnitude of change is duration and reversibility. Duration and reversibility are separate but linked considerations. Duration is judged according to the defined terms set out below, whereas reversibility is a judgement about the prospects and practicality of the particular effect being reversed in, for example, a generation. The categories used in this assessment are set out below.

Duration:

- Long term (20 years+);
- Medium to long term (10 to 20 years);
- Medium term (5 to 10 years);
- Short term (1 year to 5 years); and
- Temporary (less than 12 months).

Reversibility:

Permanent with unlikely restoration to original state e.g. major road corridor, power station, urban extension etc.;

- Permanent with possible conversion to original state e.g. agricultural buildings, retail units;
- Partially reversible to a different state e.g. mineral workings;
- Reversible after decommissioning to a similar original state e.g. wind energy development; and
- Quickly reversible e.g. temporary structures.

Residual Effects

Residual effects are those that remain once the landscape mitigation measures have taken effect. In this assessment, effects are judged as 'worst case' for all receptors, which is anticipated to be at year 1, following completion of development, but prior to establishment of proposed mitigation. Where necessary, how mitigation will become effective and reduce the level of effect, and these longer term effects (typically at year 15) are described.

Level of Effect

To consider the likely level of any effect, the sensitivity of each receptor is combined with the predicted magnitude of change to determine the level of effect, with reference also made to the geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the effect within the assessment. Having taken such a wide range of factors into account when assessing sensitivity and magnitude at each receptor, the level of effect can be derived by combining the sensitivity and magnitude in accordance with the matrix in the table below.

Level of effects matrix table

Overall Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude of Change				
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Very High	Substantial	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor
High	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
Medium	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Negligible
Very Low	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Negligible	Negligible/ None

Definition of Effects

Taking into account the levels of effect described above, and with regard to effects being either adverse or beneficial, the following table represents a description of the range of effects likely at any one receptor.

Definition of effect table

Category	Definition of Adverse Effects	Definition of Beneficial Effects
Substantial	Typically the landscape or visual receptor is highly sensitive with the proposals representing a high adverse magnitude of change. The changes would be at complete variance with the landscape character and would permanently diminish the integrity of a valued landscape or view.	The removal of substantial existing incongruous landscape or visual elements and the introduction or restoration of highly valued landscape elements or built form which would reinforce local landscape character and substantially improve landscape condition and visual amenity.
Major	Typically the landscape or visual receptor has a high to medium sensitivity with the proposals representing a high to medium adverse magnitude of change to the view or landscape resource. Changes would result in a fundamental change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.	The removal of existing incongruous landscape/visual elements and the introduction or restoration of some valued landscape or visual elements would complement landscape character and improve landscape condition, and improve the local visual amenity.
Moderate	Typically the landscape or visual receptor has a medium to low sensitivity with the proposals representing a high to medium magnitude of change. The proposals would represent a material but non-fundamental change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.	The removal of some existing incongruous landscape elements and/or the introduction or restoration of some potentially valued landscape elements which reflect landscape character and result in some improvements to landscape condition and/or visual amenity.

Minor	Typically the landscape or visual receptor has a low sensitivity with the proposals representing a medium to low magnitude of change. The proposals would result in a slight but non-material change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.	Some potential removal of incongruous landscape features or visual amenity, although more likely the existing landscape and/or resource is complemented by new landscape features or built features compliant with the local landscape and published landscape character assessments.
Negligible	Typically the landscape or visual receptor has a low or very low sensitivity with the proposals representing a very low magnitude of change. There would be a detectable but non-material change to the landscape resource or visual amenity	The proposals would result in minimal positive change to the landscape or visual resource, either through perceptual or physical change, and any change would not be readily apparent but would be coherent with ongoing change and process, and coherent with published landscape character assessments.
None	Typically the landscape receptor has a very low sensitivity with the proposals resulting in no loss or alteration to the landscape resource or change to the view. There would be no detectable change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.	There would be no detectable positive or negative change to the landscape resource or visual amenity.

Nature of Effect

Effects can be adverse (negative), beneficial (positive) or neutral. The landscape effects will be considered against the landscape baseline, which includes published landscape strategies or policies if they exist. Changes involving the addition of large scale man-made objects are typically considered to be adverse as they are not usually actively promoted as part of published landscape strategies. Accordingly, in the assessment landscape effects as a result of these aspects of the proposed development will be assumed to be adverse, unless otherwise stated within the assessment.

Visual effects are more subjective as people's perception of development varies through the spectrum of negative, neutral and positive attitudes. In the assessment of visual effects, the assessor will exercise objective professional judgement in assessing the level of effects and, unless otherwise stated, will assume that all effects are adverse, thus representing the worst case scenario.

Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects generally occur where there may be simultaneous or sequential visibility of two or more developments of the same type and scale, or where the consideration of other schemes would increase an effect identified. Where other similar schemes are in the planning system and made known to the applicant, or are under construction, these are considered in conjunction with the proposed scheme.