

GLVIA webinar Q&As



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1 Introduction

In December 2020 the Landscape Institute held a webinar called [GLVIA Misconceptions and Best Practice](#). There was keen interest in the topic, with hundreds of attendees logging into the virtual debate. During the session a number of questions were asked. The LI's GLVIA Panel has been busy answering these questions and this information document is the result of their work. We hope you find it informative and helpful.

This document should be read alongside GLVIA3 and the statements of clarification on GLVIA3 which can be found [here](#).

2 Questions and answers

The table below is a summary of the questions/comments received during the webinar and answers provided by the GLVIA Panel.

	Question	Answer
1	<p>Status of GLVIA3 and compliance</p> <p>Should GLVIA3 be treated as:</p> <p>a) guidelines/advice to be followed which can be interpreted flexibly by LAs, depending on whether LVIA chapter or LVA and the report assessment are still compliant or</p> <p>b) rules/laws which need to followed strictly and with no flexibility in approach and reporting in order to be compliant?</p>	<p>This is set out in the Foreword to GLVIA3. In short:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a: It is guidance (i.e. not compulsory), setting out good practice and offering a framework for identifying likely significant effects of projects/proposals. The assessor should tailor their methodology (based on these guidelines) to the project and landscape context before them.b: It is not prescriptive. It states the ‘importance of sound professional judgement’ and ‘advises on approaches to best practice without being prescriptive’. The approach, principles and processes set out aim to support compliance with EIA regulations. <p>A description of status levels of information provided by the Landscape Institute can be found here.</p>
2	<p>Viewpoints</p> <p>GLVIA3 states that views should be discussed and agreed with the competent authority and other interested parties at the scoping stage (Para 6.18). Would this apply to LVA where the development is not an EIA development?</p>	<p>It is good practice to agree viewpoints to be considered in the assessment with the appropriate authority (it is not compulsory but GLVIA recommends it).</p> <p>If this is not possible, then EIA Regs require us to set out any limitations on or difficulties encountered in carrying out our assessment. It is recommended that the assessor demonstrates that efforts have been made to agree VPs for LVIA's and LVAs.</p>

	<p>And would not agreeing viewpoints make the LVA non-compliant with GLVIA3, as there are a number of reasons why viewpoints aren't agreed, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the LPA doesn't have an 'in-house' LA or retain landscape consultant to agree viewpoints with. • the LPA or retained consultant doesn't have time or the capacity to agree viewpoint. • seasonal constraints and project timescales don't allow for agreement with LPA even if they had relevant competency in house. • COVID delays and restrictions during the first lockdown. 	<p>Regarding seasonal constraints, it should be within the professional competence of a landscape professional to be able to say how the landscape would be and how views available would be different in different seasons.</p>
3	<p>Baseline reporting</p> <p>In the presentation of the LVA does there need to be a clear split between the baseline and assessment sections (as consideration of the landscape/visual baseline situation includes an element of analysis in determining the contribution that features have on a site or area and in identifying the sensitivity of features, characteristics or views, including to what degree they form a constraint to development or change and how they influence/inform the design and layout of a scheme)?</p>	<p>Yes, there is a difference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: analysing the site/area to describe and evaluate the existing condition. • Assessment: evaluating the likely change as result of the development. <p>GLVIA3 Para 3.15 states that 'for the landscape baseline the aim is to provide an understanding of the landscape in the area that may be affected – its constituent elements, its character and the way this varies spatially, its geographic extent, its history, which may require its own specialist study, its condition, the way the landscape is experienced, and the value attached to it'.</p>
4	<p>'Capacity' of the landscape</p> <p>We keep getting asked to assess the 'capacity of the landscape' to absorb a development but there doesn't seem to be much in GLVIA3. Can you offer any advice?</p>	<p>Capacity or sensitivity studies are typically undertaken at the strategic landscape planning level rather than the individual project proposal level (noting that there has been a general move away from capacity studies and towards sensitivity studies). Approaches to landscape sensitivity assessed as part of strategic landscape planning studies are set out in guidance (Natural England 2019 and NatureScot 2020).</p>

		<p>GLVIA3 acknowledges that where there are existing landscape sensitivity and capacity studies 'they may provide useful preliminary background information for the assessment. But they cannot provide a substitute for the individual assessment of the susceptibility of the receptors in relation to change arising from the specific development proposal' (Para 5.41).</p>
5	<p>Climate change</p> <p>The most recent EIA regulation update requires specific consideration of climate change which arguably very much concerns landscape issues. However, the guidance does not yet include recommendations on how to consider it in the definition of critical parameters (i.e. sensitivity of the receptors and significance of effects). Is a technical note going to cover this? How shall we approach it in the meantime?</p>	<p>GLVIA3 refers to climate change in Paras 2.16 and 2.17.</p> <p>Climate change considerations are becoming a specialist area of EIA, to which the landscape assessor contributes with specific information about likely landscape change. See IEMA (2020a and forthcoming 2021a).</p> <p>For LVIA, the focus should be on the effects of the proposal on the landscape and visual resource.</p> <p>Climate change may affect the 'direction' of landscape change that may be relevant in considering how the baseline may alter in the absence of the development.</p> <p>We also draw attention to the fact that the Landscape Institute continuously reviews how it can contribute to limiting, reducing and avoiding climate change.</p>
6	<p>DMRB</p> <p>When should DMRB be used and is it solely for roads and bridges?</p>	<p>The <i>Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) LA 107 Landscape and visual effects</i> (formerly DMRB Volume 11 Section 3 Part 5 Landscape Effects and IAN 135/10) contains the requirements for assessing and reporting the landscape and visual effects of highway projects. See Highways England (2021).</p> <p>[NB the DMRB sets out <i>standards</i> (not just guidance) relating to the design, assessment and operation of motorway and all-purpose trunk roads in the United Kingdom].</p>

7	<p>Link between LVIA and policy</p> <p>Since GLVIA refers to some European legislation, should GLVIA3 refer to NPPF?</p>	<p>No, the reason GLVIA does not refer to specific policy documents or policies is because:</p> <p>a) the assessment process and judgements should operate independently of policy while policies will indicate how much weight could, should or may be attached to certain findings of an assessment in the subsequent decision making.</p> <p>b) GLVIA3 applies to all nations of the UK which have different policy contexts, and which also change.</p> <p>The Preface on page ix of GLVIA3 states that ‘whilst mentioning government policy and guidance (whether at the UK level or through the devolved administrations) the third edition seeks to avoid reflecting a specific point in time, recognising that legislative, statutory and policy contexts change so that guidance that is tied to contexts will quickly become dated and potentially out of step’.</p>
8	<p>Conflicts of interest</p> <p>Is there risk of a conflict of interest if the designer LA is also writing the LVIA?</p>	<p>Para 2.26 of GLVIA3 states that ‘landscape professionals are likely to be closely involved in the development of the scheme and its design. If they also undertake the LVIA, they must be able to take a sufficiently detached and dispassionate view of the proposals in the final assessment of landscape and visual impact. In carrying out an LVIA the landscape professional must always take an independent stance, and fully and transparently address both the negative and positive effects of a scheme in a way that is accessible and reliable for all parties concerned’.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that there is benefit to the designer and assessor being the same or the same team, since GLVIA3 advocates an integrated and iterative assessment-design process, whereby the design of the development can evolve in response to assessment findings as they emerge (and not just L&V findings) as in-built designed mitigation by avoiding or reducing otherwise potentially significant adverse effects.</p>
9	<p>Percentage of mitigation</p> <p>I am often asked in appraisal forms to put a percentage of mitigation for schemes but there is no guidance on this. Could this rely on our professional judgement?</p>	<p>Percentage of mitigation in relation to what? The key thing to understand is how the mitigation performs in relation to landscape and visual effects and this will very much depend on the location and type of development. Also, refer to the mitigation hierarchy. Calculations are more relevant to EIA topics that can be measured, for example so many decibels of noise change, so much habitat, etc.</p>

10	<p>Understating effects</p> <p>Para 3.27 of GLVIA3 states that three or four categories of effect are ‘ideal’. However, this can over-simplify effect and significance, and can be used to understate effects.</p>	<p>It is the assessor’s responsibility to ensure their methodology is appropriate to the task in hand and definitely not to ‘understate effects.</p>
11	<p>Visual effects from AONBs</p> <p>If a developer has identified a moderate adverse effect on a view from an AONB viewpoint, is it then appropriate for them to say that there is no adverse effect on the AONB (based on their assessment that the development would not have an adverse effect on views from other AONB viewpoints)?</p>	<p>Firstly, visual effects are effects on <i>people</i> experiencing the view not on the <i>place</i>.</p> <p>Secondly, the effect should be assessed in the usual way (susceptibility of viewer; value associated with the view = sensitivity; magnitude of change; degree/nature/significance of effect). If the view has particular value because of its particular context (perhaps a special quality of the AONB) then this should be reflected in the assessment.</p> <p>In this example, the adverse effect ought to be noted. The lack of adverse effects elsewhere does not negate the adverse effects at this location.</p>
12	<p>Landscape sensitivity</p> <p>GLVIA3 suggests that landscape sensitivity is arrived at by combining an understanding of susceptibility with value, but since these are incommensurable, it does not give clear pointers as to how this can be done. I think it is a major weakness in our method because it cannot be done with transparency and buries one of the few ideas of landscape that people, courts and NPPF understand – that of landscape value.</p>	<p>Both landscape susceptibility <i>and</i> landscape value should be considered as part of the process. It is up to the assessor to show how these factors have been taken account of in the assessment.</p>
13	<p>Proportionate approach</p> <p>For a small development (perhaps to EIA scale) what advice do you have for balancing the need to be proportionate as opposed to assessing the effects at all scales (e.g. the National Character Areas)?</p>	<p>GLVIA3 is clear that the approach should be ‘appropriate and proportional to the scale and type of development and the type and the significance of the landscape and visual effects likely to occur’ (Para 3.16). ‘This does not mean that effects should be ignored or their importance minimised but that the assessment should be tailored to the particular circumstances in each case. This applies to “appraisals” of landscape and visual impacts</p>

		<p>outside the formal requirements of EIA as well as those that are part of a formal Assessment’ (Para 1.17).</p> <p>Para. 5.15 states, in relation to landscape character assessments, that ‘Existing assessments may need to be reviewed and interpreted to adapt them for use in LVIA’. You should also avoid double counting of effects.</p>
14	<p>Openness and green belt</p> <p>How does LVIA relate to green belt and ‘openness’ issues?</p>	<p>As stated in GLVIA3, ‘openness’ may be one of the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape. Green Belt is a planning policy designation and compliance with policy will be addressed separately to the LVIA.</p>
15	<p>Scale of effect</p> <p>It would be helpful to have the Panel’s opinion on weighting of scale of effect compared to extent and duration/reversibility. Are they all equal or is scale of effect the most important?</p>	<p>This is one of the situations where the landscape professional should apply their professional judgement. It can vary from project to project but care is needed to avoid ‘cancelling out’ between the factors if this would lead to higher or lower rating than the assessment merits.</p>
16	<p>Susceptibility (visual)</p> <p>GLVIA3 notes the viewer’s activity/expectation influences or defines susceptibility. Can the Panel comment on whether susceptibility is equally a product of the development type? For example, is a viewer of a wooded landscape of lower susceptibility to more woodland even if engaged in an activity based on appreciation of the landscape. What is the Panel’s view?</p>	<p>According to GLVIA, the susceptibility of the viewer is independent of the development type (so in the example you provide susceptibility would be higher). The change to the view would be assessed under magnitude. Ultimately it is up to the assessor to ensure that their method is clearly set out and applied.</p>
17	<p>Susceptibility (landscape)</p> <p>Susceptibility is not adequately defined in GLVIA3.</p>	<p>Para 5.40 gives a definition: ‘This means the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character, quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element or and feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the</p>

		<p>proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies’.</p> <p>The Panel is aware that there has been a call for more information about how to assess susceptibility. In the meantime, we would suggest that you use your judgements and set out your approach clearly. Recent guidance on landscape sensitivity studies, though for strategic purposes and not site- or development-specific proposals, may provide some pointers on what to include for susceptibility (and value). Please see the references section at the end of this document.</p>
18	<p>Positive/negative change</p> <p>Is there an assumption in GLVIA that change is always negative, in the context of greenfield sites in particular? Can’t something just be different without being negative or positive?</p>	<p>The EIA Regs clearly state the need to identify positive/beneficial and negative/adverse effects.</p> <p>As GLVIA3 states, ‘an informed professional judgement should be made about whether the visual effects should be categorised as positive or negative (or in some cases neutral), with the criteria used in reaching this judgement clearly stated’.</p> <p>There is a more detailed question as to whether the level of effect and direction of effect are independent of each other (e.g. whether a major effect that is comprised of positive and negative changes, which perhaps balance out to neutral overall can be described as a ‘major’ effect that is neutral in direction) or whether the assessor should come to a conclusion about a ‘net effect’ that balances out positive and negative aspects of the change. The Panel’s view is that the former is preferred so that the level of effect is not ‘downgraded’. Any judgement on direction of effect should be clearly justified.</p>
19	<p>Susceptibility (landscape)</p> <p>Susceptibility is widely abused. Too many LVIA’s conclude that just because a green field site is adjacent to a settlement it must automatically follow that more housing must be acceptable due to this context – this is classic ‘salami slicing’ and clearly unsustainable.</p>	<p>The Panel shares this concern but it is not the result of GLVIA. It is the result of potentially being biased in the assessment and it may show that reasonable and minimum professional standards are not being met. The Landscape Institute’s GLVIA Panel is considering how to improve standards.</p> <p>Also note that identifying ‘acceptability’ is not the purpose of an LVIA (that is for the decision maker to determine).</p> <p>In some cases, the ‘value’ aspect of the sensitivity equation is underplayed. Ensuring that this is dealt with appropriately may help.</p>

20	<p>Mandatory standards</p> <p>We are being increasingly asked for robust methodology, such as DMRB, and have to explain why we deviate from GLVIA3. Is there going to be any more prescriptive guidance to help us justify on this front?</p>	<p>DMRB is a ‘standard’ whereas GLVIA3 is ‘guidance’.</p> <p>There is a danger that ‘prescription’ relegates the need for informed professional judgement which requires experience. Landscape and visual resources (and changes to them) are not easily measurable. Therefore, we have to proceed by a process of description, analysis and reasoning leading to assessment conclusions. GLVIA3 provides a rigorous and systematic step-wise process for assessing effects on landscape and visual resources. The responsibility of the assessor is to tailor it to the place and project under consideration.</p>
21	<p>Outline applications</p> <p>Do you think that a full and accurate LVIA can be provided for an outline application with all details reserved?</p>	<p>As GLVIA3 states at Para 4.3, ‘It may be appropriate to consider a range of possibilities, including a reasonable scenario of maximum effects, sometimes referred to as the “worst case” situation. Mitigation proposals will need to be adequate to cope with the likely effects of this worst case’.</p> <p>Any limitations of the information available would need to be spelt out. Para 4.2 of GLVIA3 states that ‘it is now established in case law that the project must be defined in sufficient detail, even in an outline planning application, to allow its effects on the environment to be identified and assessed’. The Panel would encourage you to speak to your EIA Project Manager/planning lawyers about the level of detail required for robust assessment of landscape and visual effects, remembering that assessment and design should be an iterative process.</p>
22	<p>Assessment of allocated sites</p> <p>We have come across several situations where the LPA has designated sites in the local plan for housing or employment and then when an application goes in they want a full LVIA. Surely the LPA should have carried this out prior to the designation in the local plan?</p>	<p>The fact that an area has a certain planning status does not negate the potential need for assessment – including EIA and thus LVIA.</p> <p>Also, the following may be of relevance here:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding the difference between SEA and EIA: strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is used at the strategic level to ensure environmental considerations are integrated into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes whereas environmental impact assessment (EIA) is used to ensure that planning decisions are made with full knowledge of a project’s likely significant

		<p>environmental effects, and that any negative effects are prevented, reduced or offset, while positive effects are enhanced.</p> <p>2. Understanding the difference between landscape sensitivity assessment (LSA) and landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA). LSA is carried out for the purposes of strategic spatial planning, and LVIA assesses the effects of the specific development proposals. Both are important, at different stages of the process. LVIA should also help local communities understand the likely effects of specific proposals.</p> <p>A clear professional judgement is needed to be communicated and robustly justified in the LVIA in order for decision makers to weigh up any harm against the benefits of the development in the planning balance.</p>
23	<p>Planning balance</p> <p>In my experience far too many authors of LVIAs stray into planning balance territory and do not stick to identifying the effects of development on the landscape and visual baseline. Too many practitioners seem to feel that it is their job to be an advocate for a scheme rather than sticking to the job of assessing the effects.</p>	<p>GLVIA3 clearly states (in Para 8.9) that ‘writing should be comprehensive, covering all the material assembled in the assessment, but also concise and to the point and written in plain easy to understand language. Above all it should be impartial and dispassionate, presenting information and reasoning accurately and in a balanced way and making clear where statements are based on the author’s judgment’. It most certainly does not include, or should not, include advocacy for the scheme.</p> <p>Too often LVIAs are introduced as ‘submitted in support of the application’. This is wrong, instead they should ‘accompany’ the application.</p>
24	<p>Cumulative assessment</p> <p>Cumulative assessment always seems to be a tricky one. Guidance so often uses the example of multiple wind farm applications but projects frequently involve having to consider a whole mixed bag of other cumulative developments, which is much harder to do in a transparent and justified way.</p>	<p>The Panel is aware that cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment is an area where supplementary guidance might be useful. In the meantime, we would suggest becoming familiar with the difference between intra-project and inter-project effects (as set out in GLVIA3 Paras 7.7. and 7.8), and the difference between additional effects and combined effects (as set out in Para 7.18 of GLVIA3).</p> <p>The task should be in proportion to the nature of the project under consideration (Para 7.5 GLVIA3) and the scope should be agreed in discussion with the competent authority and consultation bodies (Para 7.4).</p> <p>See also IEMA (2020b).</p>

25	<p>Special Landscape Qualities</p> <p>Special Landscape Qualities is a key part of Scottish Planning relative to National Parks and National Scenic Areas, with an assessment methodology set out by NatureScot. How does the Panel feel this sits alongside GLVIA?</p>	<p>LVIA should address how the development proposal affects the Special Qualities of the designated landscape. Understanding Special Qualities can also be helpful in considering landscape value within LVIA.</p> <p>NatureScot (2008) provides information on the Special Landscape Qualities of each NSA. In England and Wales, Management Plans for National Parks and AONBs usually set out the ‘special qualities’ of these protected landscapes.</p> <p>The Panel understands that NatureScot is in the process of updating guidance for assessing the likely effects of development proposals on Special Landscape Qualities in National Scenic Areas and National Parks in Scotland. This fits with, and does not replace, LVIA.</p>
26	<p>Landscape value</p> <p>We sometimes find difficulty with the concept that according to GLVIA3, views are deemed to be high value because of the scenic value of the landscape. This seems to suggest that only people with ‘expansive’ scenic views are highly valued, and that every day but treasured views from other places are less valued. What are the Panel’s views on this?</p>	<p>This is not the case in GLVIA 3. The value attached to views is addressed at Para 6.37 of GLVIA3 which says that ‘judgments should also be made about the value attached to the views experienced’. This should take account of ‘e.g. recognition through designation, appearance in guidebooks, facilities provided for enjoyment of the view, etc.’. Para 6.33, dealing with susceptibility, refers to ‘views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area’.</p>
27	<p>Reasonable judgements</p> <p>Far too many LVIA’s appear to be divorced from reasonableness. Too many practitioners seem to lack the ability to step back and ask themselves if what they are concluding is reasonable. What would the occupant of the ‘Clapham Omnibus’ say?</p>	<p>GLVIA3 clearly states that ‘there is a need for the judgements that are made to be reasonable and based on clear and transparent methods so that the reasoning applied at different stages can be traced and examined by others’ (Para 2.24) and that ‘the challenge is to keep the task reasonable and in proportion to the nature of the project under consideration’ (Para 7.5).</p>
28	<p>Designations</p> <p>GLVIA suggests that there are areas within an AONB that are either not representative of the AONB character or</p>	<p>This question may relate to Paras 5.23 and 5.24 of GLVIA3. The Panel thinks that there is no such devaluation. It says the assessor should seek to understand the basis for designation and why the landscape is considered to be of value and that care should be taken to understand what the designation means in today’s context. This means determining to what degree the</p>

	<p>do not meet the designation criteria, and this is used to reduce the value of these features to low. The purpose of AONB designation is to enhance any degraded areas. Does the panel think that this lowering of value in what are our highest valued landscapes is justifiable?</p>	<p>factors used to support the designation are represented in the specific study area. Para 5.24 goes on to say that sometimes at a local scale of LVIA study area it is possible that the landscape value of that specific area may be different from that suggested by the formal designation. Fieldwork should establish how the criteria for designation are expressed in that area and it should be recognised how every part of the designated area contributes to the whole.</p>
29	<p>Cumulative assessment</p> <p>Cumulative assessment is very important, especially with increased intensive development of areas, for example renewable energy. Combined effect is the key effect which should be explored?</p>	<p>As Para 7.18 of GLVIA3 states, agreement should be reached ‘about whether the cumulative effects assessment is focused on the additional effects of the main project under consideration, or on the combined effects of all past, present and future proposals together with the new project’.</p> <p>Both will be relevant to consider.</p> <p>Combined cumulative effects is also used in another sense to describe the type of cumulative visual effects that may be experienced. In this context a combined visual effect is where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint, whereas a sequential visual effect is when an observer has to move to another viewpoints to see the same of different developments, for example experience from routes (see Table 7.1 of GLVIA3). Both should be considered.</p>
30	<p>Seascape sensitivity guidance</p> <p>Will MMO seascape sensitivity guidance be acknowledged/adopted as part of a GLVIA3 addendum?</p>	<p>Specific guidance by statutory agencies and local authorities sits alongside GLVIA3. It is important to note the difference between guidance for identifying landscape (or seascape/ coastal) sensitivity as part of strategic landscape planning (such as that provided by Natural England in relation to landscape and seascape sensitivity assessment) and identifying sensitivity in relation to a specific development proposal for the purposes of LVIA or SLVIA (as set out in GLVIA3).</p> <p>As stated in GLVIA3, at Para 5.41, existing landscape sensitivity studies may provide useful preliminary background information for the assessment, but they cannot provide a substitute for the individual assessment of the susceptibility of the receptors in relation to change arising from the specific development proposal.</p>

31	<p>Townscape and visual impact assessment</p> <p>Townscape and visual impact assessment (TVIA) is a rising service as regeneration happens within big cities. There are a number of documents that guide the production of TVIA, GLVIA3 being in my opinion the starting point, as it provides a general structure that can be applied to the townscape context too.</p> <p>However, I found the following difficulties in applying the GLVIA3 approach: 1. defining valued townscape in the absence of designations; 2. the consideration of the aesthetic quality of the proposed development, i.e. does a 'beautiful' proposal result in beneficial effect? 'Beauty' is a very subjective idea, although it relates partially to 'high-quality design'. How can it be taken into consideration fairly?</p>	<p>Value does not have to rely on designations. GLVIA3 states that judgements can be based on suitable criteria that can be used to establish value. The Panel suggests that you refer to the Landscape Institute's Technical Information Note 05/2017 on Townscape Character Assessment.</p> <p>In terms of assessing the direction of effect (if this is what is meant in the question), GLVIA3 states that 'an informed professional judgement should be made about whether the visual effects should be categorised as positive or negative (or in some cases neutral), with the criteria used in reaching this judgement clearly stated'. It may be beneficial to think about the degree to which the proposal fits with its contextual character and the contribution to the townscape that the development makes. Any judgement should be clearly explained.</p>
32	<p>Out-of-date character assessments</p> <p>Local planning authorities struggle with resources to have up-to-date landscape character assessments ref. forces for change etc. Do you see this as a problem with production of LVIA's?</p>	<p>No. It is up to the LVIA assessor to identify all of the relevant factors that inform their assessment.</p>
33	<p>Soils</p> <p>Threats to soil are now being viewed as equivalent in importance to the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis. Can we really wait until GLVIA4 before the importance of soils as a landscape receptor in LVIA's is considered?</p>	<p>This is a good question. However, the Panel thinks it goes beyond LVIA and to the heart of EIA more widely. The Panel is liaising with IEMA about future changes in EIA and this topic will fit into those discussions (see IEMA, forthcoming 2021b, and this interesting and related article from their website).</p>

34	<p>Landscape and visual appraisals (LVAs)</p> <p>Most of the assessments we carry out are relatively small scale and not part of an EIA. Does the Panel think that there should be more specific references in a possible GLVIA 4 to LVAs?</p>	<p>Previous clarification has been provided on this topic:</p> <p>https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/technical-resource/landscape-assessment-or-appraisal/</p> <p>https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/technical-resource/glvia3-clarifications/</p>
35	<p>Requirements for LVA</p> <p>Where does the requirement for an LVA come from if the EIA screening comes back as ‘not EIA’? My LPA doesn’t have LVA in its validation list.</p>	<p>The LPA can request an LVA as part of pre-app discussions. Even where a proposal is not an ‘EIA project’, LPAs often wish to be informed about landscape and visual effects, as they are often sensitive issues for their community. Early consultation with the LPA is recommended to ensure the appraisal contains the information that the LPA needs to make an informed decision.</p>
36	<p>Lessons from case law</p> <p>Does the Panel think there are any lessons to be learnt from planning appeals/case law that would require any amendments to the current guidance?</p>	<p>Case law is unlikely to influence the details of the technical methodology for LVIA (although it might inform interpretation of how an EIA should be carried out so as to comply with the EIA Regulations more generally).</p> <p>Case law with respect to ‘valued landscapes’ (as referred to in England’s NPPF) will be covered in the LI’s upcoming Technical Guidance Note on Landscape Value (currently in draft).</p>
37	<p>Setting of protected landscapes</p> <p>Guidance on the setting of protected landscapes would be helpful.</p>	<p>LVIA should address how the effects fit with the Special Qualities of the designated landscape/ how the Special Qualities are affected.</p> <p><i>Note: ‘the setting of protected landscapes’ is generally created in policy and is not a designation in its own right. In LVIA, the question would remain whether changes in the defined setting would affect the designated landscape (and to what extent if so).</i></p>
38	<p>Out-of-date LCA</p> <p>Some AONBs don’t have up-to-date LCA of their area and that needs to be addressed as soon as possible.</p>	<p>This is not a role for GLVIA3 or the Panel, and as noted earlier, ‘it is up to the LVIA assessor to identify all of the relevant factors that inform their assessment’ and to provide more detailed assessment (including LCA), if needed.</p>

39	<p>LVIA in the design process</p> <p>The LVIA should inform the development location/layout and form part of the early design process, but is often carried out as an add-on tickbox exercise following the site design. How can we change this and better embed it into GLVIA guidance?</p>	<p>GLVIA3 already advocates, at Para 4.7 that ‘landscape professionals should be involved as early as possible in this iterative approach to ensure that the likely landscape and visual effects of a proposal play an important part in the evolution of a development proposal’.</p> <p>This could be about education for developers – to show them that early engagement of landscape professionals can be of huge benefit to a project, and can save money and time in the long run.</p> <p>In addition, no matter at what stage in the project the LVIA is carried out, it should be carried out systematically and rigorously to identify likely significant effects and advise on mitigation measures.</p>
40	<p>Box 5.1</p> <p>Please can we stop peddling the myth that Box 5.1 is the only way to identify landscape value. GLVIA3 is clear that it ‘is not comprehensive and other factors may be considered important in specific areas’ (Para 5.28).</p>	<p>GLVIA3 includes Box 5.1 as an example of one way in which value can be assessed, noting that the list is not comprehensive. As noted in the comment, the surrounding paragraphs provide more information.</p> <p>Also look out for the LI’s upcoming Technical Guidance Note on Landscape Value which expands on Box 5.1 (currently in draft).</p>
41	<p>Susceptibility</p> <p>Susceptibility has been described as whether the landscape could accommodate the nature of the proposed development without undue consequences etc. GLVIA3 Para 5.40 definition of susceptibility talks about the proposed development rather than the nature of the proposed development. When writing our last LVIA in my practice we had some discussion around whether susceptibility takes into account the nature of the proposed development or the actual proposed development. Which should we be considering?</p>	<p>Susceptibility should consider the <i>type</i> of change (whether it be housing, a railway, warehouses, afforestation/deforestation, open storage, a wind farm, a grid connection etc.). This is because if the actual proposed development is considered, this then crosses over with the magnitude judgement (with potential for double counting). The receiving landscape may have characteristics that make it more susceptible or less susceptible to change from the type of development in question and, in the Panel’s view, these ‘indicators of higher and lower susceptibility’ should be clearly set out.</p> <p>Some examples of indicators of higher and lower susceptibility can be found in Natural England’s (2019) guidance on <i>Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Inform Spatial Planning and Land Management</i>.</p>

42	<p>Historic landscape characterisation (HLC)</p> <p>Historic landscape characterisation hasn't yet been mentioned [at that point in the Webinar]. We are increasingly seeing LVIA's in our AONB using this data, but mis-interpreting it. Would the LI consider running training for LVIA practitioners on HLC?</p>	<p>Pages 76–77 of GLVIA 3 cover 'Links to cultural heritage and historic landscape character'. This explains that 'historic landscape characterisation is complementary to Landscape Character Assessment. It looks at the material remains of the past and perceptions and interpretations of them, in order to help us understand the present-day landscape' (Para 5.8) and that 'landscape professionals should make good use of existing historic landscape information, and collaborate with historic environment specialists, who will be collating or recording such information for the cultural heritage part of the EIA. This collaboration will allow the landscape baseline information to reflect a full understanding of the historic characteristics and features of today's landscape' (Para 5.10). There may be an opportunity for the LI to run training in this area in collaboration with Historic England (training needs are determined by an analysis of the size and nature of the issue).</p> <p>There is also some useful information on Historic England's website.</p> <p>Assessing the effects on the historic environment is a separate specialist topic in EIA. There are overlaps and it is important that the two topic specialists discuss the overlapping issues and agree how they should be dealt with, including the terminology being used (e.g. 'visual impact' means something different to the heritage specialist from the L&V understanding that it is to do with peoples' visual amenity; similarly 'setting' which is applied differently by the historic and visual specialists).</p> <p>See IEMA/Cifa/IHBC (forthcoming, 2021).</p>
43	<p>Agreeing viewpoints</p> <p>We always agree viewpoints with practitioners prior to submission, usually after the visual envelope is agreed. Is this good practice?</p>	<p>It is good practice to agree viewpoints to be considered in the assessment with the appropriate authority.</p>
44	<p>Assessing viewpoints</p> <p>Is there too much focus on assessing viewpoints as opposed to the change of visual experiences, that is,</p>	<p>The focus of the visual assessment should be the visual receptors (i.e. the people), not viewpoints.</p> <p>As Para 6.31 of GLVIA3 states, 'It is important to remember at the outset that visual receptors are all people. Each visual receptor, meaning the particular person or group of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint, should be assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to</p>

	when walking along a PROW as opposed to standing at a gap in a hedge looking towards a development?	change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views'. The purpose of viewpoints is covered at Para 6.19 (i.e. for illustration of the visual effects).
45	<p>Description of effects</p> <p>In reference to the point about 'death by a thousand cuts' of designated landscape or LCAs, how would the Panel suggest describing the balance between effect on a wider landscape character area and effects which are limited to the local area?</p>	It would be helpful to describe (factually, perhaps using a map) the geographical area over which a significant landscape effect is likely to be experienced. This is often more useful to the decision maker than a <i>relative</i> area in comparison to an assessment unit.
46	<p>Development visible from a designated landscape</p> <p>If the development is outside a designated landscape, but can be seen at a distance, how is the effect best assessed?</p>	See responses to questions 11 and 37.
47	<p>Assessment and design</p> <p>The whole point of the process surely is to assess the effects to lead to better design. The assessment, then design, is just good practice.</p>	The point of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is, as set out in Para 1.1 of GLVIA3, 'to identify and assess the significance of the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity'. Design is of course very important and a part of an iterative process alongside the assessment, which GLVIA3 encourages.
48	<p>Setting and visual character</p> <p>I am interested in the relationship between 'setting' and visual/character. Is the effect on the setting of, say, a designated landscape, purely a visual matter rather than a character matter, as without outward views there can be no appreciation of or sense of setting?</p>	<p>When assessing the effect on a designated landscape the key issue is whether and how its special qualities and value will be affected, and how changes in the setting affect the designated landscape – and visual amenity – of people enjoying the landscape.</p> <p>Visual impact assessment deals with impact on visual amenity of <i>people</i>.</p>

49	<p>Visual receptors</p> <p>We talk about visual receptors but the reality is that we mean ‘people’. How do we allow for the number of people that will experience that view in the assessment? Are all viewpoints equal? I often get asked to move a viewpoint a few metres or across a road etc. to make a scheme more or less visible (depending on who is commissioning it). Is this the correct approach?</p>	<p>GLVIA3 is not clear how the number of people should influence the overall effect and this is something for the assessor to determine as part of developing the assessment methodology. This could, for example, be built into the geographical extent (i.e. extent of the receptor affected in terms of area/length [of a footpath] and number of people affected in a broad sense).</p> <p>The role of viewpoints is covered at Para 6.19 (i.e. for illustration of the visual effects). They should fairly represent the views of users, but may also be used to demonstrate a particular effect or specific issues, which might, for example, be the restricted visibility at certain locations. In any case their purpose should be made clear in the assessment. It should also be noted that the assessment should focus on the receptor (person experiencing the view/visual experience).</p> <p>A viewpoint should never be moved to make a scheme less visible. This subterfuge is often discovered and can undermine the credibility (and professionalism) of the assessor.</p>
50	<p>Impartiality of experts</p> <p>Does the Panel think that more practitioners would benefit from reading (and understanding) the principles set out in the Ikarian Reefer judgement on impartiality of experts?</p>	<p>The issue of impartiality is very important in LVIA – an LVIA ‘should be impartial and dispassionate, presenting information and reasoning accurately and in a balanced way and making clear where statements are based on the author's judgement’ (Para 8.9 GLVIA3).</p> <p>We also operate under the LI's Code of Conduct which requires members to exercise impartial and independent professional judgement.</p> <p>The duties of an expert witness reported in the Ikarian Reefer judgement are certainly of relevance to the legal status and role of the expert landscape witness.</p>
51	<p>Judgement on direction of effect</p> <p>One of the biggest challenges is how to judge the impact a new large-scale development would have on an area of existing waste ground that is valued by the local community – positive or negative.</p>	<p>Judgement on direction of effect (whether it is adverse/ beneficial/ neutral) should be an informed professional judgement, addressing both landscape and visual receptors. Both the effect on the landscape and the effect on the visual amenity of people in the local community will need to be assessed and explained.</p>

52	<p>Poor-quality LVIA's</p> <p>Does the LI have any enforcement procedures to deal with companies that produce poor LVIA's and bring the LI into disrepute?</p>	<p>Please refer to the LI website for information on professional conduct.</p> <p>The GLVIA Panel is also looking into the possibility of developing a certification mechanism for professionals involved in this type of work.</p>
53	<p>GLVIA format</p> <p>It is so expensive to have hard and electronic versions. Are there plans to change this?</p>	<p>This is something that the Panel is aware of and will be considered in any future updates the GLVIA.</p>
54	<p>Future editions</p> <p>The GLVIA3 is a very useful update to the second edition. Further work is needed in regard to visual amenity and value of views.</p>	<p>Comments and feedback on any future editions of GLVIA can be sent to technical@landscapeinstitute.org</p>
55	<p>GLVIA4</p> <p>Is it time for GLVIA4?</p>	<p>The GLVIA Panel's role is to provide clarifications on the current version of GLVIA and to review the need for any updated guidance. The Panel will continually review this need.</p>

3 References

Highways England (2021) *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges*. Guildford: Highways England.

IEMA (2020a) *Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation*. Lincoln: IEMA.

IEMA (2020b) 'Demystifying Cumulative Effects', *Impact Assessment Outlook Journal*. Lincoln: IEMA.

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IEMA (forthcoming, 2021b) *Impact Assessment Guide to Land and Soils*. Lincoln: IEMA.

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