



**WARBLAW WOODLAND CREATION**

**WARB LAW, NEAR LANGHOLM, DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY**

**LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL**

**ON BEHALF OF SCOTTISH WOODLANDS LTD. for JAMES JONES & SONS LTD.**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) relates to the proposed new woodland creation scheme (WCS) on land at Warb Law to the west of the River Esk and south of Langholm, in Dumfries and Galloway (the Site). The WCS is being promoted and managed by Scottish Woodlands Ltd. (SW), on behalf of the landowner, James Jones & Sons Ltd. (JJS).
- 1.2 Full details of the WCS are provided elsewhere in the plans and documentation from SW. Only those details of the WCS which are of relevance to this appraisal are described in detail in the LVA.
- 1.3 The Site proposed for woodland creation comprises sloping ground on the lower northern/north-western and eastern slopes of Warb Law (also known as Stubholm Hill), with further areas of proposed planting further to the south around Jock's Knowe, Blackrig and the southern slopes of Hagg Hill – see **Figure 1: Landscape and Environmental Designations Plan**. The land holding also includes areas of existing woodland, areas recently planted (2018) with commercial conifers, and open ground (grassland, moorland and peat bog).
- 1.4 A different and unrelated WCS on the Site has previously been promoted by Tilhill Forestry, but was never progressed to approval or implementation.
- 1.5 The LVA considers the likely effects of the WCS on landscape character and visual amenity. Discussions between SW and Scottish Forestry (SF) in relation to the current WCS have identified a number of key views towards the Site, and the likely effects on these views are considered as part of this LVA.
- 1.6 All primary mitigation measures, such as the siting of different tree species areas to ensure that the proposed planting scheme fits within the local landscape, thereby minimising effects on landscape character and visual amenity, are incorporated into the design of the WCS through an iterative design process. Secondary mitigation measures to prevent, reduce or offset any residual landscape and/or visual effects are not therefore considered practicable or necessary.

## 2. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

### Guidance

2.1 The LVA has been undertaken with regard to best practice, as outlined in the following published guidance:

- Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2013), *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (GLVIA3);
- LI (2013), *GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13*;
- Natural England (2014), *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*;
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and The Countryside Agency (2002), *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland*;
- LI (2019), *Visual Representation of Development Proposals - Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/19*;
- LI (2021), *Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations – Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21*; and
- Forestry Commission (2014), *Design Techniques for Forest Management Planning*.

### Methodology

2.2 The LVA has been written by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) with extensive experience of landscape and visual assessments across a range of development types, as well as experience working in the UK forestry industry.

2.3 The detailed methodology is provided in **Appendix A**.

2.4 Landscape and visual effects are assessed through professional judgements on the sensitivity of landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors and representative viewpoints combined with the predicted magnitude of change arising from the proposals. The landscape and visual effects have been assessed in the following sections:

- Effects on landscape character, including physical landscape features and elements; and
- Effects on visual amenity.

2.5 The assessment of effects is based on the proposed planting scheme as shown on SW plans:

- Warblaw: North – Design v4, dated 05.07.2024; and
- Warblaw: South – Design v3, dated 16.05.2024.

### Study Area

2.6 The study area for this LVIA covers a 5km radius from the Site. However, the main focus of the assessment was taken as a radius of 3km from the Site as it is considered that even with clear visibility there would be only limited visibility of the WCS beyond this distance.

### **Survey Details**

- 2.7 The landscape resource survey work and visual assessment was undertaken in June 2024 when deciduous tree and hedgerow vegetation was in full leaf. Where appropriate, consideration has also therefore been given to the potential for increased visibility of the proposals during the winter months when deciduous vegetation is not in leaf.
- 2.8 A screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) for the proposed planting scheme was produced using ArcGIS Pro v3.2.2. The SZTV was generated using OS Terrain 5 Digital Terrain Modelling (DTM) data, with buildings and larger blocks of woodland (as mapped on OS Open Map Local) modelled (at 8m and 15m tall respectively) to take account of the screening effect that these would provide.
- 2.9 The proposed planting areas were modelled according to their expected height at Year 25 (i.e. 25 years after planting), as shown in Table 2.1 below. For mixed species areas, the top height of the likely tallest species was modelled.

**Table 2.1: Warblaw: Predicted Heights of Planting at Year 25**

Planting Type	Height at Year 25
Core Productive Areas (Sitka Spruce)	18m
Diverse Productive Areas (Douglas Fir, Norway Spruce and Scots Pine)	18, 16 and 12m respectively
Productive Broadleaves (Oak, Cherry and Sycamore)	12m
Scots Pine and Birch	12m
Native Mixed Broadleaves	8m

- 2.10 The area of recent (2018) conifer planting (at Cockplay Wood) was modelled at 21m high, as this will itself act as a screening feature in some views towards the proposals, in the same way that other areas of existing woodland will.
- 2.11 It should be noted that the screening effect provided by small blocks of woodland, screen belts and hedgerows/hedgerow trees which are not included on OS mapping has not been taken into account, and consequently the actual extent of the area from which the proposals are visible is likely to be smaller than shown on the SZTV. The SZTV was therefore used only as a guide to assist in the initial selection of the representative viewpoints, with locations refined during the field survey.
- 2.12 Publicly accessible locations within the SZTV from which the proposals may be visible were identified from OS maps and publicly available aerial imagery (Google Earth), and confirmed by visiting the Site and surrounding area. Viewpoints have been selected to represent a range of views and viewer types and are shown on the SZTV and Viewpoint Location Plan (**Figure 2**) and Photoviews and Detailed Visual Assessment (**Appendix B**). The viewpoints are not intended to cover every location within the local landscape from where the proposals might be visible, but to show the likely effects on a range of receptor types (e.g. users of recreational routes and Core Paths, road users, residential occupiers etc.), in a range of locations and at a range of distances from the Site.

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2.13 Viewpoints include, where relevant, publicly accessible locations close to residential properties to allow an assessment to be made of likely effects on visual amenity which would be experienced from these properties. It should however be remembered that views from private residential properties are not protected by national planning guidance or local planning policy.

2.14 Photographs have been taken digitally using a full-frame DSLR camera (a Canon EOS 6D), fitted with a fixed 50mm focal length lens and mounted on a levelled panoramic tripod. All of the representative viewpoints have been taken at 1.6m above ground level. However, where relevant, assumed views from the upper floors of buildings have also been considered.

2.15 The baseline data includes:

- Location of viewpoint;
- Nature of visual receptor;
- Sensitivity of visual receptor;
- Distance between the receptor and the Proposed Development; and
- Description of the existing view from each viewpoint.

2.16 Distances stated between potential (visual) receptors and the Site are measured to the nearest edge of the Site unless stated otherwise.

2.17 Four of the nine viewpoints were agreed with Scottish Forestry as part of the discussions with SW, these being considered to represent the most sensitive local views. For these four viewpoints, in addition to the assessment of likely effects undertaken by the author, photomontages were produced showing the predicted changes to the view at Year 5 and Year 25 – see **Appendix C**.

### 3. LANDSCAPE POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The current adopted Local Plan for the Site and its environs is the Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2), adopted September 2019.

#### Landscape Designations

3.2 The Site lies outside of any National Parks (NPs), National Scenic Areas (NSAs) or Areas of Wild Land (AWLs).

3.3 The north/north-western and eastern slopes of Warb Law, where much of the proposed tree planting would be located, lie within the Langholm Hills Regional Scenic Area (RSA), as designated by Dumfries and Galloway Council – see **Figure 1: Landscape and Environmental Designations Plan**.

3.4 Policy NE2: Regional Scenic Areas from the LDP2 states:

*'The siting and design of development within a Regional Scenic Area (RSAs) should respect the special qualities of the area. Development within, or which affects Regional Scenic Areas, may be supported where the Council is satisfied that:*

- the factors taken into account in designating the area would not be significantly adversely affected; or*
- there is a specific need for the development at that location.*

*Boundaries of RSAs are shown on the Proposals Maps.'*

#### Other Relevant Policies from the Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2

##### Policy NE7: Forestry and Woodland

*'The following policy will apply to those woodland/forestry felling, planting and replanting proposals which do not require planning permission but where the Council acts as a consultee to Forestry Commission Scotland.*

*The Council will support the creation and protection of sensitively designed and managed forests and woodlands.*

*Proposals should seek to ensure that ancient and semi-natural woodlands and other woodlands with high nature conservation value are protected and enhanced.*

*In determining its response to individual forestry felling, planting and replanting consultations where Forestry Commission Scotland are the determining authority, the Council will:*

- take into account environmental and other interests identified in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy including biodiversity, water (including flood risk management), soil and air, landscape setting, historic environment and land restoration;*
- consider the scheme's location as set out in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy;*
- seek to ensure an appropriate balance between both afforested and un-afforested areas in the locality;*
- encourage planting of a type, scale, design, age, composition and species mix that is appropriate to the locality;*

- *actively encourage proposals to have a positive effect on nature conservation and/or natural and historic environment interest;*
- *encourage proposals to take account of possible recreational use in the design of any planting schemes and indicate how such recreational uses have been investigated; and*
- *ensure that proposals do not have an adverse impact on the road network.'*

#### **Dumfries and Galloway Forestry and Woodland Strategy**

3.5 The Forestry and Woodland Strategy (FWS) is a Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance, adopted in December 2014. The purpose of the Strategy is stated as presenting '*a vision for forestry and woodland growth, management and use over the next ten years in the region.*'

3.6 The Strategy sets out a number of themes relating to woodland management and creation:

- A. Woodlands and the Environment;
- B. Woodlands and Sustainable Growth;
- C. Woodlands and Climate Change;
- D. Woodlands for People; and
- E. Woodlands and Development.

3.7 Within Theme A, a key policy objective is noted as:

*'A3: Ensure that tree, forest and woodland planting or restructure are appropriate to and enhance their landscape setting.'*

3.8 Within this policy objective, relevant key actions are stated as:

*'LAN 1 Encourage landowners and forest managers to consult the public and local residents to build a better picture of local views of the landscape of a site before planning new planting or forest restructure;*

*LAN 2 Ensure that the capacity of a landscape to accommodate change is considered at an early stage when planning tree planting or forest restructure;*

*LAN 3 Continue the process of restructuring productive forests to enhance their landscape setting in accordance with the UK Forest Standard;*

*LAN 4 Encourage planting open and accessible woodlands close to centres of population.'*

3.9 Section 10 of the Strategy considers '*Opportunities for Woodland Expansion and Restructure.*'

3.10 Relevant key objectives are stated as:

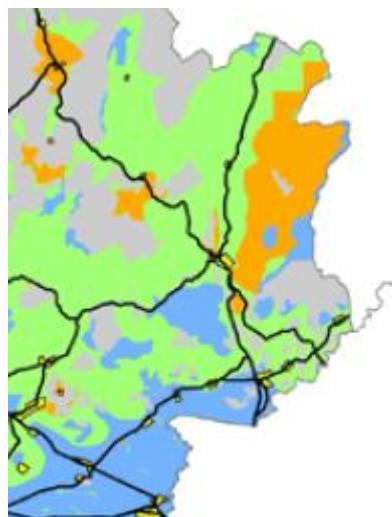
- 1. Identify potential areas where woodland expansion could make a significant contribution to one or more of the themes within this strategy;*
- 2. Target opportunities for tree planting and woodland expansion to appropriate locations, using an appropriate mix of tree species;*
- 3. Identify potential constraints and opportunities for enhancement through new planting and through restructure of the existing forest and woodland resource.'*

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3.11 The Strategy then provides an analysis to identify unsuitable, sensitive, potential and preferred areas for different types of woodland planting – native woodlands, mixed farm and policy woodlands, softwood forests, energy forests, and hedgerow trees and shelter belts. Of relevance to this LVA are the analyses for native woodlands and softwood forests.

#### Native Woodlands

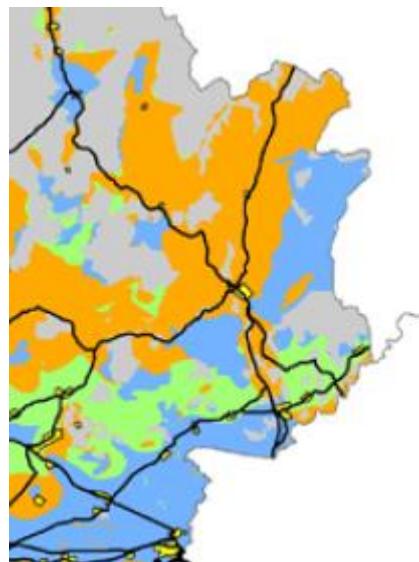
3.12 The northern and eastern parts of the Site lie within a ‘preferred’ area for native woodland creation, with some areas within the southern part of the Site being classed as ‘sensitive’ due to the soils being deep peat – see extract from Map 1. These areas have been excluded from the proposed planting areas.



Extract from DGC Forestry and Woodland Strategy – Map 1

#### Softwood Forests

3.13 The northern and eastern parts of the Site lie within a ‘potential’ area for softwood forest creation. Areas of deep peat within the southern part of the Site are again classed as ‘sensitive’ due to the soils being deep peat – see extract from Map 3. These areas have again been excluded from the proposed planting areas.

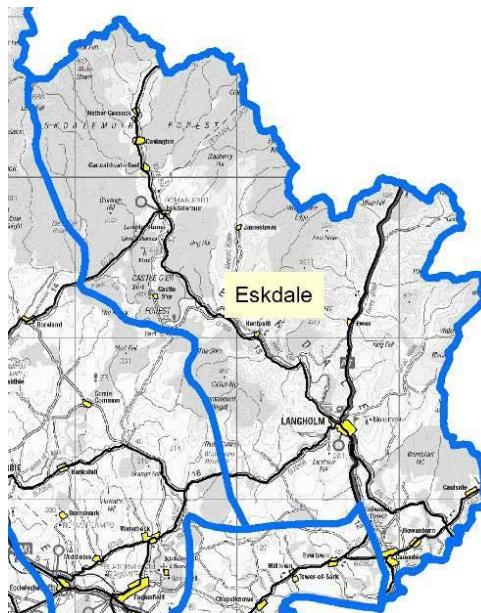


Extract from DGC Forestry and Woodland Strategy – Map 3

- 3.14 The classification as a 'potential' rather than 'preferred' area indicates that there are other constraints that need to be considered. In the case of the Site, these constraints relate predominantly to the RSA designation, as well as archaeological designations (a Scheduled Monument (SM) approximately 600m to the north of Old Irvine).
- 3.15 There is also a small 'preferred' area in the vicinity of Auchencrivo Plantation.

#### Local Areas

- 3.16 The Strategy also provides an analysis of local geographic areas considered '*likely to experience similar local issues, opportunities or potential constraints to forest and woodland expansion*'. The Site lies predominantly within the 'Eskdale' area, with a small area in the southern part of the Site lying within the 'Solway Coast and Lower Valleys' area – see extract from Map 6 below.



Extract from DGC Forestry and Woodland Strategy – Map 6

#### Eskdale Area

3.17 For the Eskdale area, local assets and issues are identified as:

**Table 3.1: Eskdale – Assets and Issues (from DGC Forestry and Woodland Strategy)**

Local Assets	Main Issues
Reasonable proximity to processing plants and key transport corridors.	Open ground habitat and distinctive open landscapes around Meggat Water and to the east and south of Langholm.
Extensive high value designated open ground habitats.	Land use balance; significance of open areas of land within landscapes which are predominantly covered by forests.
Scenic routes along the A7 and B709.	Much of the “old style” forests still to be restructured.
Fishing on the River Esk and tributaries.	Lack of good quality native woodland; need for native and riparian woodland development.
Langholm-Newcastleton Hills designated site for open-habitat species.	

3.18 Relevant priorities for new woodlands are stated as:

- *'A core timber production area with opportunities for new softwood forests close to timber processors, but area contains key open ground habitats and important open landscapes and significant fragmentation of these should be avoided;'*
- *'Potential for new native woodland on upper catchments where this can be achieved without compromising landscape character or other environmental interests;'*
- *'There is a lack of good quality riparian woodlands in this area. Significant opportunities for native woodland expansion which deliver these objectives.'*

#### Solway Coast and Lower Valleys Area

3.19 For Solway Coast and Lower Valleys area, the main assets and issues identified in the analysis are of limited relevance to landscape and visual matters.

3.20 Relevant priorities for new woodlands are stated as:

- *'Publicly accessible town woods or other small-scale woodlands close to towns can contribute to a wide range of commercial, environmental, social and community benefits. Woodlands can also form useful corridors for people as well as wildlife;'*
- *'Some opportunities for expansion of good quality small to medium scale softwood forests where the road network is suitable, taking account of public access, tourism and which doesn't affect the special landscape qualities of the NSAs or other highly valued landscapes.'*

## 4. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BASELINE

### Landscape Character Baseline

4.1 The Site proposed for woodland creation (409 hectares (ha)) comprises sloping ground on the lower northern/north-western and eastern slopes of Warb Law (also known as Stubholm Hill), with further areas of proposed planting further to the south around Jock's Knowe, Blackrig and the southern slopes of Hagg Hill – see **Figure 1: Landscape and Environmental Designations Plan**. The north-western part of the Site is also known as Earshaw Hill and Bloch Hill, and the eastern part of the Site is also known as Middleholm Hill and Burian Hill.

4.2 The wider land holding also includes:

- approximately 337ha of land on the southern slopes of Warb Law (known as Cockplay Wood) which was planted with conifers (predominantly Sitka Spruce) in 2018;
- areas of rough and improved grassland;
- areas of moorland; and
- areas of peat bog.

### Designated Landscapes

4.3 The Site lies outside of any National Parks, National Scenic Areas, or Areas of Wild Land.

4.4 The north/north-western and eastern slopes of Warb Law, where much of the proposed tree planting would be located, lie within the Langholm Hills RSA – see Figure 1: Landscape and Environmental Designations Plan.

4.5 The character of the RSA in the vicinity of the Site is described thus:

*'...To the south the Ewes joins the meandering Esk valley. North of the confluence at Langholm, Eskdale is more open with a flat valley floor of improved pastures, contained by steep slopes of rough grasslands and medium sized plantations. South of Langholm the valley sides close in and gradually reduce in height, and they are ribboned with an intricate pattern of policy-type woodlands. Farms and hamlets are scattered relatively sparsely along the northern valleys but are becomes [sic] more frequent south of Langholm. Interest in windfarms and forestry, plus expansion of Langholm itself, are the main pressures for landscape change.'*

### National Landscape Character

4.6 The Nature Scot / Scottish Natural Heritage National Landscape Character Assessment<sup>1</sup> places different parts of the Site within four different Landscape Character Types:

- The north-western slopes (Earshaw Hill and Bloch Hill) lie within LCT175: Foothills – Dumfries & Galloway (D&G);
- The northern and eastern slopes (Warb Law, Stubholm Hill, Middleholm Hill and Burian Hill) lie within LCT 161: Pastoral Valley – D&G;

<sup>1</sup> NatureScot/SNH (2019), *Landscape Character Assessment*, via [Scottish Landscape Character Types Map and Descriptions | NatureScot](https://www.nature-scot.org.uk/nature-scot/our-work/national-landscape-character-assessment/) [accessed June 2024]

- The southern slopes to the south of The Rigg and Cockplay wood lie within LCT 172: Upland Fringe – D&G; and
- Land to the south of Hagg Hill lies within LCT 171: Flow Plateau – D&G.

4.7 It should be noted that new planting is proposed in only a very small part of the Site within LCT 172: Upland Fringe.

4.8 In addition, the ZTV indicates, and the field survey has confirmed, that the proposed WCS would also be visible from restricted parts of some other nearby LCTs:

- To the north: LCT177: Southern Uplands – D&G and LCT160: Narrow Wooded Valley – D&G; and
- To the east: LCT176: Foothills with Forest – D&G.

4.9 The published descriptions of these LCTs are not repeated in detail here, but can be accessed via the NatureScot website. Some key aspects of the LCTs which are relevant to this LVA include:

- LCT175: '*Belts of mixed woodland are found in lower more sheltered areas, most notably along rivers.*'
- LCT161: '*The extent of conifer woodland is mostly limited to the upper slopes usually in small to medium forests. These occasionally define a dark green horizon.*'
- LCT172: '*Pasture dominates the land cover with a mix of both rough and improved grassland. Small scale conifer forests create dark horizons and reinforce the enclosure formed by the landform. Forests in squared block patterns are typical of this landscape. Many represent field plot forests.*'
- LCT171: '*The landscape merges with the Upland Fringe – D&G where slopes are steeper and forestry is more frequent. This forestry is generally small scale.*'

4.10 The perception of these LCTs is summarised as:

- LCT175: '*Views within this landscape are not usually extensive, although summits and upper edges provide panoramic views.*'
- LCT161: '*The rivers themselves have a special character generated by the variety of light, shade and spatial enclosure.*'
- LCT172: '*Much of the character of this landscape lies in its very transitional feel between lowland pastures and upland areas, created in large part by the current balance between agriculture and forestry.*'
- LCT171: '*This Landscape Character Type has few strong features and visual interest is focussed on long views and the relationship of this Landscape Character Type with the sea and intervening landscapes.*'

#### Landscape Character of the Site and Surrounding Area

4.11 The landscape character of the Site and its immediate environs are described in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Site Landscape Character**

Criterion	Commentary
<i>Situation</i>	The Site comprises 409ha of land on the lower northern/north-western and eastern slopes of Warb Law, with further areas of proposed planting further to the south around Jock's Knowe, Blackrig and the southern slopes of Hagg Hill.
<i>Topography / Landform</i>	<p>The Site occupies sloping ground falling to the River Esk and Wauchope Water:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 275m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at the Warb Law telecoms mast (and slightly higher (281m AOD) at the summit of Stubholm Hill beyond the site boundary), falling to the north to approx. 140m AOD adjacent to the lower parts of the existing conifer woodland at Warblaw Bog, and to 100-110m AOD on the eastern boundary, close to the A7;</li> <li>• 271m AOD at Bloch Hill (beyond the site boundary), falling to 90-120m AOD along the Wauchope Water on the north-western boundary; and</li> <li>• 148m AOD at the highest point of Hagg Hill, falling to 100-124m AOD along the southern boundary at the B720 and Bloch to Mossknowe road</li> </ul>
<i>Geology / Hydrology</i>	<p>Soils are variable across the Site, including brown earths, peaty gleys, calcareous gleys, peaty podzols, and peat.</p> <p>There are a number of smaller watercourses within the Site, including the Earshaw and March Sikes to the north-west, Carlin Gill and Warblaw Sike to the north, Nicholson's Sike, Gaber Gill, Docken Beck, Irvine Burn and Hagg Burn to the west, and Braidridland Burn and Blackrigg Sike to the south. These flow towards the River Esk and the Wauchope Water.</p>
<i>Vegetation</i>	<p>Vegetation on the Site is a mix of rough and improved grassland, moorland, and scrub woodland.</p> <p>Within the wider land holding there are areas of existing conifer woodland. Including extensive areas of recently planted woodland at Cockplay Wood, and a number of smaller areas of mixed and/or deciduous woodland.</p>
<i>Land Use</i>	<p>The land proposed for tree planting is predominantly pastoral farmland of varying quality, and moorland. There are also some areas of existing scrub woodland.</p> <p>Historic land use is a mix of unenclosed improved pasture, rough grazing (heather moorland and rough grassland), and rectilinear fields and farms.</p>

Criterion	Commentary
<i>Notable Landscape Features</i>	The high ground of Warb Law is itself an important local landscape feature, prominent in views from Langholm, and from Whita Hill to the north-east.
<i>Boundaries / Edges</i>	Boundaries are a mix of drystone walls, post and wire fences, woodlands/tree belts, and hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
<i>Scale / Enclosure</i>	The scale of the landscape varies from smaller scale and higher levels of enclosure on the lower ground close to the rivers and roads, to more open, larger scale on the higher ground.
<i>Settlement / Townscape</i>	The Site lies to the south of the town of Langholm, with the northern part of the Site visible from a number of locations in the town, and the town visible from Warb Law itself.  There are a small number of farmsteads/steadings within the Site – Mouldy Hill and Old Irvine on the eastern side of the Site, and Tarcoon on the southern edge of the Site.
<i>Built Features / Landmarks</i>	The telecoms mast on the summit of Warb Law is a notable landmark in the local area.  Drystone walls, sheepfolds, and post and wire fences are the main built features within the landscape of the Site. Managed conifer forestry is also prominent in many views.
<i>Access</i> <sup>2</sup>	There are two Core Paths within the Site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lang 277 – Mouldy Hill to Outer Hill crosses the eastern slopes of the Site, and then follows the track on the southern edge of the recently planted Cockplay Wood;</li><li>• Lang 278 Warblaw Walk climbs from Langholm to the trig point on Warb law, and then runs east to join Lang 277 near Mouldy Hill.</li></ul> There are a number of other Core Paths in the surrounding area, including to Whita Hill (to the east of Langholm), and to Black Knowe (to the north-west of Langholm).

<sup>2</sup> The Land Reform Scotland Act (2003) gives the public a right of responsible access 'over most land and inland water in Scotland, including mountains, moorland, woods and forests, grassland, margins of fields in which crops are growing, paths and tracks, rivers and lochs, the coast and most parks and open spaces...'

In addition, 'local authorities have powers to establish and maintain core paths. It is the duty of each local authority to draw up a plan for a system of core paths to give the public reasonable access throughout their area.'

Core paths can be cross-country routes with variable states of surfacing, or they may follow hard-surfaced paths, roads or streets, sometimes in more urban areas.

Criterion	Commentary
<i>Heritage</i>	<p>There is a single designated heritage asset within the Site, the SM approximately 600m to the north of Old Irvine on the eastern side of the Site. There are also a number of other non-designated heritage assets.</p> <p>There are a number of other SMs and Listed Buildings within the surrounding area.</p>
<i>Visual Connections with Adjacent Landscapes</i>	<p>Views from the summit of Warb Law/Stubholm Hill extend across Eskdale to the north, towards Kielder Forest and the Northumberland National Park to the east, towards the Solway Firth to the south, and towards Lockerbie to the west. Views to and from the lower slopes where the majority of the proposed planting would be located are more restricted, generally limited to the adjacent valleys.</p>
<i>Perceptual Characteristics</i>	<p>The Site is predominantly rough grassland and moorland, with improved grassland adjacent to the rivers. The landscape is not intensively managed, but is also not wild or remote. Managed conifer forestry is a key component of the surrounding landscape, and there are multiple windfarms visible.</p>

### Visual Baseline

#### Visibility of the Site from the Surrounding Area

4.12 The visual envelope is the area of landscape from which a site or proposed development will potentially be visible. It accounts for general judgements on the theoretical visibility of a site or proposed development and sets a broad context for the study area within which to address landscape and visual impacts. The extent of a visual envelope will be influenced by the physical landscape components of an area, such as topography, hedgerows, woodlands or buildings, and can also be influenced by distance from a site.

4.13 Based on the modelled ZTV, combined with observations made during the field survey, the visual envelope beyond the site boundaries is broadly defined as follows (within the 5km study area):

- to the (upper) slopes the valleys of the Esk and Ewes Water to the north;
- to the slopes of the valley of the Esk to the east, including the near slopes of Whita Hill to the north-east, and restricted areas within the Tarras valley and to the south of Bruntsfield Hill where views are not obstructed by existing conifer forestry;
- to intermittent areas around Evertown and as far as Scots Dike to the south; and
- to the slopes above Wauchope Water and restricted areas around Collin Hags and Allfornought Hill to the west, with views beyond obstructed by topography and conifer woodland.

4.14 Whilst the proposed planting may be visible beyond these areas, it is considered unlikely that the proposals would form easily discernible features in such longer distance composite views.

#### Potential Visual Receptors and Representative Viewpoints

4.15 The visual assessment references a series of nine viewpoints that are representative of visual receptors in the area. These illustrate views towards the Site in the context of the surrounding landscape and are used to inform judgements on impacts for different receptors / receptor types – see Figure 2: ZTV and Viewpoint Location Plan, and Appendix B: Photoviews and Detailed Visual Analysis.

4.16 Potential visual receptors include:

- Residential occupiers in Langholm, in certain other smaller settlements, and occupiers of individual properties and farmsteads – see Viewpoints (VPs) 1, 6, 7 and 8;
- Users of recreational routes and Core Paths – see VPs 2 and 9; and
- Road users, including users of the promoted A7 Tourist Route – see VPs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

4.17 These visual receptors are considered further as part of the assessment of visual effects.

4.18 It is acknowledged that there may also be limited visibility from restricted sections of some other roads and recreational routes, and from some other residential properties, within the wider surrounding landscape. However, it is considered that the selected representative viewpoints provide an appropriate mix of views, locations and receptor types.

## 5. WOODLAND CREATION PROPOSALS

### Overview

- 5.1 To form judgements on the capacity of any given landscape to accommodate specific types of development (without an undue degree of landscape and visual impact) it is necessary to understand the nature and characteristics of the type of development proposed.
- 5.2 This section of the LVA considers the type of development proposed and the nature of the impacts that are likely to occur. Thereafter it draws the landscape and visual baseline information together and summarises the key constraints and opportunities in the existing landscape.

### Planting Proposals

- 5.3 The planting proposals are shown at Appendix D.
- 5.4 In summary, the proposals include:
  - woodland creation covering approx. 409ha of the approx. 1051ha site;
  - creating access routes and upgrading existing infrastructure for forestry; and
  - developing an amenity area which will incorporate existing native scrub woodland.

### Likely Causes of Impact

- 5.5 Although a landscape has some intrinsic sensitivity, different landscapes contain a range of components which will respond differently to change, subject to the type of the development that is proposed. Consequently, in order to inform the analysis of impacts, judgements should be made with reference to the specific changes which arise from the type of development being considered.
- 5.6 The following section sets out the likely causes of impacts which would occur in relation to the specific type of development proposed (i.e., conifer and broadleaved woodland creation).

### Temporary Impacts

- 5.7 The temporary construction works which may give rise to impacts on landscape and visual receptors are listed as follows:
  - construction and maintenance of access tracks;
  - installation of deer fence to protect broadleaf species from deer damage; and
  - mounding and drainage to provide raised platform for improved tree growth.

### Impacts at Completion

- 5.8 The permanent components of the proposed development which may give rise to impacts on landscape and visual receptors are the areas of woodland creation, which will include the planting of conifers and broadleaves.

### Constraints and Opportunities

- 5.9 Constraints associated with the Site are summarised as follows:

- the locally designated / non-statutory Regional Scenic Area;
- potential changes to views looking up from Langholm;
- potential changes to views from the A7 (a promoted tourism route) and the River Esk;
- potential changes to views from Whita Hill;
- deep peat upon the summit of Stubholm hill – which will not be planted as per UK policy. Any self-seeded Sitka Spruce will be removed from deep peat areas as required;
- species rich marsh lands – which will be left unplanted;
- existing native scrub woodland – which will be retained; and
- areas of unscheduled archaeology – which will be left as open ground.

5.10 Opportunities associated with the Site are summarised below:

- Existing areas of native scrub woodland will be expanded upon, creating habitat corridors for wildlife;
- The scheme will contribute towards Langholm's community plan, particularly its aims for Sports, Leisure and Outdoor Activity. These will benefit not only the local community, but those who come to Langholm for an outdoor holiday, as aimed for in the Community plan.
- This scheme will contribute towards an industry which is flourishing within this region. In this area, forestry is a major employer with around 3,000 jobs across all sectors. Employment/work opportunities include:
  - land preparation and tree planting;
  - maintenance of trees and forest roads;
  - ecological/wildlife surveys; and
  - timber harvesting.
- It is planned that walking and cycling/horse-riding routes will be incorporated in the area above Carlingill Wood. Consultation has been sought with Muckle Toon Joggers to help inform the placement of these paths.

**Landscape and Visual Strategy**

5.11 Having considered the landscape and visual analysis, the constraints and opportunities have been used to influence the design of the planting proposals. This ensures that matters of landscape character and visual amenity are embedded in the proposals and mitigation measures included to avoid or minimise impacts are an integral part of the proposals.

5.12 The overarching principles for the development and landscape strategy aim to:

- Enhance areas of positive landscape character - such as the scrub woodland;
- Retain and make best use of existing landscape elements and features where these can be retained;
- Avoid loss or damage to retained landscape elements and features, such as archaeology; and

- Maintain views over Langholm from the summit of Stubholm Hill.

## 6. ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

### Overview

6.1 It should be noted that the proposed planting and subsequent management of the woodland resource thereby created would be cyclical/rotational. Trees would be planted, managed, thinned, and then harvested over differing timescales (some very long term) and areas, and effects (particularly those relating to the visibility of the proposals) would therefore also vary over time.

### Landscape Sensitivity

#### Landscape Value

6.2 In LVIA, landscape value is the value attached to a potentially affected landscape. It is relative in relation to the different stakeholders and different parts of society that use or experience a landscape. Landscape value is not solely indicated by the presence of formal designations and a range of factors influence landscape value.

6.3 The GLVIA3 sets out a range of factors that can help in the identification of landscape value, and these concepts have been expanded in the later LI TGN 02/21. Whilst these have become commonly accepted, it is important to place them in the relevant context that the GLVIA3 is guidance and that its principles have to be adopted into a formal methodology by practitioners. The criteria for determining landscape value as set out in the methodology (Appendix A) accord with those presented in the GLVIA3 and LI TGN 02/21.

6.4 Landscape value will vary in response to the specific landscape that is being considered, even where a landscape is included in the boundaries of a formal designation.

6.5 This section determines the value of the defined LCTs (and local landscape context) relevant to the Site and study area. The considerations and professional judgements used in determining value are summarised in the following tables (with reference to GLVIA3, page 84, Box 5.1 and to LI TGN 02/21).

**Table 6.1: Assessment of Landscape Value**

Criterion	Commentary
<i>Formal landscape or landscape related designations</i>	The northern part of the Site lies within the locally designated Langholm Hills RSA.
<i>Natural and cultural heritage interests (i.e. ecological, geological or heritage matters)</i>	No Listed Buildings within the Site, but some LBs present in the surrounding area. One Scheduled Monument within the Site, and others in the vicinity. Some other areas of unscheduled archaeology within the Site.

Criterion	Commentary
<i>Landscape condition of individual elements or overall structure</i>	<p>The published LCT descriptions do not provide an overall summary of landscape condition.</p> <p>Overall, the landscape of the Site is considered to be in good condition. Conifer forestry on the slopes above Langholm which has suffered windblow damage in recent years has been felled in preparation for replanting. A plant health notice has also been issued for this area.</p>
<i>Landscape associations</i>	<p>No well-known specific associations with notable people, events or the arts.</p> <p>The Malcolm Monument is located on Whita Hill to the north-east, from where the proposals would be visible.</p>
<i>Distinctiveness and sense of place</i>	<p>There are subtle differences in the woodland character of the Site and its environs, but the area is not considered to be particularly distinctive. Woodland is clearly part of the landscape character.</p> <p>The character of RSA is noted as being different between areas to the north and to the south of Langholm, with policy-type woodlands being the main woodland type to the south.</p> <p>The presence of mixed woodland belts along rivers is noted in the description of LCT175 (which includes the north-western slopes of the Site). For LCT161 (which covers the eastern slopes above the Esk), conifer woodland cover is noted as being mainly on the upper slopes, and in small to medium-sized blocks. Forestry is noted as being more common in LCT171 (which covers the southern part of the Site).</p>
<i>Recreational opportunities in the landscape context</i>	<p>There are two Core Paths within the Site, and other Core Paths within the surrounding area which offer views towards the Site.</p>
<i>Perceptual aspects (in respect of scenic/visual quality)</i>	<p>Parts of the Site (within the RSA) are formally designated (at a local level) for their scenic value, though these areas already contain both broadleaf and conifer woodland.</p> <p>The open ground within the Site is noted as being important in the DGC Forestry and Woodland Strategy.</p> <p>As such, the Site is considered to be of moderate scenic quality overall.</p>

Criterion	Commentary
<i>Perceptual aspects (in respect of wildness and tranquillity)</i>	<p>The majority of the Site is managed to some degree, being used for forestry and livestock grazing. Land in the lower parts of the Site is generally managed more intensively (improved grassland), while the upper parts of the Site where the land cover is moorland are less managed. There is also a telecoms mast at Warb Law (and another on Whita Hill).</p> <p>The landscape of the Site is not considered to be wild, but is relatively tranquil.</p>
<i>Landscape function</i>	<p>The local landscape does not provide a particular function in relation to nearby settlements.</p> <p>Part of the Site lies within the Langholm Hills RSA.</p>

6.6 Overall, the landscape of the Site and its environs are considered to be of medium value.

#### Landscape Susceptibility

6.7 In LVIA, landscape susceptibility is the ability of a landscape to accommodate change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. Different types of development can affect landscapes in different ways and consequently landscape susceptibility is specific to the type of development proposed (i.e., woodland creation).

6.8 This section determines the susceptibility with the considerations and professional judgements used summarised in the following table.

**Table 6.2: Assessment of Landscape Value**

Criterion	Commentary
<i>Scale of enclosure</i>	The Site is located on the lower slopes of an area of higher ground. Different parts of the Site are therefore visible from different parts of the surrounding landscape, including from some locations on surrounding high ground.
<i>Nature of existing land use</i>	The existing land use comprises a mix of pastoral farming with varying levels of management intensity, and existing woodland. The surrounding area encompasses a similar range of land uses.  The settlement of Langholm lies to the north of the Site.
<i>Nature of existing landscape elements and features</i>	The Site contains a range of landscape features and elements, including coniferous and broadleaved woodland at differing scales, scrub woodland, areas of rough and improved grassland (in places with hedgerow field boundaries), and areas of peaty moorland.

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6.9 The proposals would not introduce new landscape features or elements that are not already present, and the susceptibility of the Site and its environs to development of the type proposed is therefore assessed as low.

#### Landscape Sensitivity

6.10 With parts of the Site being within a locally designated landscape RSA, and with woodlands and forestry (broadleaved and coniferous) already present within both the Site and its environs, the overall sensitivity of the Site to development of the type proposed (woodland creation) is assessed as low (outside of the RSA) to medium (within the RSA).

#### Effects on Landscape Character

##### The Site and Its Environs

6.11 The proposals would entail the planting of new areas of broadleaved and coniferous woodland in areas that are currently improved or rough grassland, and moorland. Sensitive peat or wetland areas within the Site would not be planted, and the upper and most visible parts of the Site would also be left unplanted. The pattern of planting and different mixes has been designed to fit within the existing structure of the Site through the retention of existing areas of scrub woodland and open ground, the maintenance of views to and from the hill summits, and the avoidance of large, rectilinear blocks of monoculture planting.

6.12 Whilst the proposed planting would clearly alter the landscape character of the newly planted areas, the proposals would not introduce woodland to an otherwise unwooded area. The proportion of woodland cover within the Site would increase, but the mix of woodland types created, together with the retention of large areas of open ground, would mean that the overriding landscape character of the Site and its environs would not be adversely affected. Direct effects would be experienced within LCTs 175, 161, 172 and 171, though only a very small area of planting is proposed within LCT 172, and direct effects on this LCT would therefore be similarly limited.

6.13 The change would be of medium scale, experienced within the Site and its environs. The duration would be long-term / permanent (i.e. more than 25 years), but reversible. The overall magnitude of change to the character of the Site and its immediate environs is therefore assessed as medium neutral, i.e. the character would change, but the change would be neither adverse nor beneficial.

6.14 With low to medium sensitivity, the scale of effect on the landscape character of the Site and its immediate environs would be **moderate neutral**.

##### The Wider Local Landscape

6.15 The proposals would result in indirect perceptual/experiential effects on landscape character in the wider area surrounding the Site, predominantly in locations from where the proposed woodland planting would be visible. Such effects would be experienced from within LCTs 175, 161, 172 and 171 (where direct effects would also be experienced), with more limited indirect effects experienced within LCTs 160, 176 and 177.

6.16 Indirect changes would be of small scale, experienced within restricted parts of the local area (typically out to approximately 2-4km from the Site). The duration would be long-term / permanent (i.e. more than 25 years), but reversible. The overall magnitude of change to the character of the surrounding landscape is therefore assessed as small neutral, reducing with increasing distance to very small and then negligible.

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6.17 With low to medium sensitivity, the scale of effect on the landscape character of the landscape surrounding the Site would be **minor to moderate neutral**, reducing to **minor neutral** and then **negligible** with increasing distance from the Site.

#### Designated Landscapes

6.18 The proposed changes would take place within a limited part of the RSA, and would be visible (and therefore result in perceptual/experiential effects on landscape character) from a slightly larger part of the RSA, extending out to Whita Hill, and the valley of the River Esk to the south of Langholm. There would also be some visibility from restricted areas along the Tarras Water (to the north-east), at Hareshaw Hill/Terrona Hill and at Potholm Hill/Clark Fell (to the north), and at Naze Hill (to the north-west).

6.19 Whilst there would be both direct and indirect changes to the character of the RSA, the proposals would not introduce new land uses or features to these areas, and the overall character of the RSA (a mix of farmland and forestry, spread across river valleys and uplands) would not be notably changed. The magnitude of change to the character of the RSA is therefore assessed as small, and with medium sensitivity, this would result in a **minor to moderate neutral** effect.

#### Effects on Visual Amenity

##### Representative Viewpoint Assessment

6.20 Effects on the views obtained at the nine representative viewpoints are assessed in detail on the photoview sheets at Appendix B.

6.21 The assessed effects are summarised in Table 6.3:

**Table 6.3: Summary of Effects on Representative Viewpoints**

VP No.	VP Location & Receptors Description of Change to the View	Sensitivity	Scale of Effect
1.	Langholm car park A7 main road and car park users (incl. tourists) and residential occupiers  Planting below the summit of Warb Law would be visible, but the summit would remain clear.	Medium	Year 5: Minor neutral Year 25: Minor to moderate neutral
2.	Core Path Langholm 282 at summit of Whita Hill, near Malcolm Memorial Core Path users  New planting would be clearly visible on the lower slopes of Warb Law /Stubholm Hill, but the summit would remain clear.	High	Year 5: Major neutral Year 25: Major neutral

VP No.	VP Location & Receptors Description of Change to the View	Sensitivity	Scale of Effect
3.	A7 near junction with minor road to Auchenrivock  Main road users (incl. tourists)  Conifer planting on rising ground adjacent to the road would be visible, but the summit would remain clear.	Medium	Year 5: Minor to moderate neutral  Year 25: Moderate neutral
4.	B7068 near Earshaw Knowe  Minor road users  Broadleaved planting on the lower slopes of Warb Law / Stubholm Hill would be clearly visible, infilling the land between the areas of existing scrub woodland. Conifer planting would be visible beyond, restricting views towards the summit.	Medium	Year 5: Moderate neutral  Year 25: Major neutral
5.	B6318 between Claygate and Upper Mumbie  Minor road users  Conifer and broadleaved planting would be visible on the lower slopes of Warb Law / Stubholm Hill, but the summit would remain open.	Medium	Year 5: Minor to moderate neutral  Year 25: Moderate neutral
6.	Minor road between Mossknowe and Saughtree Cottages / Tomshielburn  Minor road users and residential occupiers  Conifer and broadleaved planting would become visible across much of the foreground land to the north of the road.	Medium High	Minor road users:  Year 5: Moderate neutral  Year 25: Major neutral  Residential occupiers:  Year 5: Moderate neutral  Year 25: Moderate neutral to moderate adverse

VP No.	VP Location & Receptors Description of Change to the View	Sensitivity	Scale of Effect
7.	Minor road between Jock's Knowe and B7068  Minor road users  Conifer planting on Bloch Hill would become visible, with the intervening land remaining open.	Medium	Year 5: Minor to moderate neutral  Year 25: Minor to moderate neutral
8.	Minor road between B7068 and Calfield  Minor road users and residential occupiers  Conifer and broadleaved planting would become visible on the lower slopes of Warb Law / Stubholm Hill, connected to the existing woodland that is already present. The summit would remain clear.	Medium  High	Minor road users:  Year 5: Minor to moderate neutral  Year 25: Moderate neutral  Residential occupiers:  Year 5: Moderate neutral  Year 25: Major neutral
9.	Core Path Langholm 278 near Warb Law trig point  Core Path users  Some of the fields below the viewpoint would be planted up with a mix of conifer and broadleaved woodland. The immediate foreground would remain open, maintaining views across Langholm and Eskdale.	High	Year 5: Moderate neutral  Year 25: Major neutral

#### Effects on Sensitive Visual Receptors

##### Recreational Visitors

6.22 The 2003 Land Reform Scotland Act gives the public a right of responsible access (in accordance with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code) '*over most land and inland water in Scotland, including mountains, moorland, woods and forests, grassland, margins of fields in which crops are growing, paths and tracks, rivers and lochs, the coast and most parks and open spaces...*' The focus of the assessment of effects on recreational visitors has therefore been based on effects likely to be experienced by users of the Core Path network. While the proposals may be visible from other recreational routes in the local area, this approach is considered to be proportional and appropriate, in line with the guidance in GLVIA3.

6.23 There are four notable Core Paths within, or in the vicinity of, the Site:

- Langholm 278 on Warb Law – see VP9;
- Langholm 277 on the lower slopes of Middleholm Hill;
- Langholm 282 on Whita Hill to the east of Langholm – see VP2; and
- Langholm 279 to the west of Langholm.

6.24 Langholm 277 and 278 pass through the Site, and in places users would obtain close views of the proposed planting, both broadleaved and conifer. The proposed planting would not introduce woodland to areas where it is currently absent from the landscape, though in some sections the route would become more enclosed than at present. It should be noted that for all routes within the Site, the planting has been set back from the routes in order to reduce the sense of enclosure that would arise from the proposed planting once it reaches maturity.

6.25 The magnitude of change experienced by users of these routes would vary between small and large, depending on the proximity of the planting to the different sections of the routes. The magnitude would increase as the planting grows and matures. With high sensitivity, the effect would be **moderate to major**, generally **neutral** in nature, but occasionally **adverse**. Effects would increase in scale over time.

6.26 For Langholm 279 and 282, the proposals would introduce additional woodland into a landscape where it is already prominent in the majority of views, and in some views this would be seen over a notable area. The magnitude of change would be medium to large, resulting in **major neutral** effects.

*Road Users (including those using the promoted A7 Tourist Route)*

6.27 Visibility of the proposals from the surrounding road network would be highly variable due to the undulating valley topography and the presence of frequent areas of existing forestry.

6.28 For the A7 main road (a promoted tourist route), there are sections of the route where new planting would be visible, but woodland (both conifer and broadleaved) is already present in such views, often lining the road. The magnitude of change would therefore be very small to medium, and with medium sensitivity the scale of effect would be **minor neutral to moderate neutral** depending on distance from the Site, increasing over time.

6.29 For minor roads in the vicinity of the Site, notably the B7068 to the west of the Site and the road between Mossknowe and the B7068 to the south of the Site, some areas of new planting would be very close to the road. Alongside the B7068, the proposed broadleaved planting would not notably change the view as broadleaved woodland is already present in close proximity to the road – see VP4. By Year 25, conifer planting further up the hill would restrict visibility of the summit of Warb Law / Stubholm Hill. For the Mossknowe road, the proposals would introduce new conifer and broadleaved planting to the immediate north of the road (and to the south as well in the vicinity of Tarcoon), on land that is currently rough grass and moorland – see VPs 6 and 7. Changes to the view here would be much greater, though large-scale conifer forestry is already present on both sides of the road a little further to the west at Long Rigg / Kerr Plantation and Cockplay Wood. Further west, the proposed conifer planting on Bloch Hill would be visible from the road, though at a distance of approx. 1.5km. The magnitude of change would be small, medium or large depending on proximity to the proposals, and increasing over time as the planting matures. With medium sensitivity, the scale of effect would be **moderate neutral**, becoming **major neutral** by Year 25.

6.30 For other roads in the wider surrounding landscape (see VPs 5 and 8), new planting would be visible in a landscape where woodland is already a notable feature of the wider landscape. The

magnitude of change would typically be small to medium, increasing over time. With medium sensitivity, the scale of effect would be **minor to moderate neutral**, becoming **moderate neutral** by Year 25.

6.31 Beyond the valleys of the Esk and the Wauchope Water, and restricted areas to the east (around Claygate) and south (around Evertown), the visibility of the proposals from the local road network would be very limited.

Residential Occupiers

6.32 The main settlement in the vicinity of the Site is Langholm, but there are also numerous smaller settlements (such as Claygate and Evertown) and individual / isolated properties and farmsteads in the local area. The level of visibility from residential properties will be affected by the orientation of the building and how this affects the direction of the main views, the presence and proximity of other built form which may screen views, and any intervening topography and/or vegetation.

6.33 Occupiers of residential properties in urban areas are generally considered to be of medium sensitivity, while those in rural or edge-of-settlement properties are typically considered to be of high sensitivity.

6.34 The occupiers of certain residential properties in Langholm may have varying levels of visibility of the proposals – see VP1. The planting on the lower slopes of Warb Law may be visible from some of these properties, though even where visible it would result in only limited change to the view. The magnitude of change would be very small, increasing to small, resulting in **minor neutral** effects at Year 5, increasing to **minor to moderate neutral** by Year 25 as the planting matures.

6.35 Where views of the proposals are possible from properties to the east of the Site, such as those on or near the B6318 near, but not in, Claygate, such views are at distances of 1-2km. Views from the B6318 are shown at VP5. The proposed planting would be seen on the lower slopes of the Site, and would be seen in the context of the extensive existing planting. The higher ground of the Site would remain open. The magnitude of change would be at greatest small, resulting in a **moderate neutral** effect.

6.36 For properties to the south of the Site near Torbeck Hill, such as at Tarcoon / Tarcoon Cottages, Chapelhills, Saughtree Cottages, Upper Tomshiel Burn, Ryehills, and The Kerr, there would be variable levels of visibility – see VP6. The properties at Tarcoon and Tarcoon Cottages would be closest to the proposals, and views from these properties would be most notably affected. The magnitude of change would be small at Year 5 and at Year 25, but for Tarcoon / Tarcoon Cottages the nature of effect would change from neutral to adverse by Year 25 as views become more restricted by the developing tree cover. The scale of effect would be moderate neutral for the occupiers of most of these properties, but would become moderate adverse by Year 25 for the occupiers of Tarcoon and Tarcoon Cottages.

6.37 There may also be some visibility of the proposed woodland planting from some properties in or near Evertown, but effects would be much more limited, seen at a distance of over 1km, and would be unlikely to be adverse in nature.

6.38 The orientation of the property at Bloch Farm means that the main views are not towards the proposed planting on Bloch Hill. Effects on views from this property would therefore be very limited – see VP7.

6.39 For properties to the west of the Site on the road between the B7068 and the property known as Calfield there would be visibility of the proposed planting on the north-western slopes of

Warb Law / Stubholm Hill – see VP8. New conifer and mixed broadleaved planting would be seen, but the summit would remain clear. The degree of visibility from individual properties may be highly variable. The magnitude of change would be small at Year 5, increasing to medium by Year 25 as the planting develops. With high sensitivity, the scale of effect would be moderate neutral, increasing to major neutral.

## 7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### Overview

7.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal relates to the proposed new woodland creation scheme on land at Warb Law to the west of the River Esk and south of Langholm, in Dumfries and Galloway. The WCS is being promoted and managed by Scottish Woodlands Ltd., on behalf of the landowner, James Jones & Sons Ltd.

7.2 The LVA considers the Site and its environs, the likely landscape and visual impacts of the proposed planting scheme, and whether any further design changes are needed.

### Methodology

7.3 The LVA has been undertaken with regard to best practice, as outlined in published guidance including *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition* (LI / IEMA, 2013) and other related guidance. The LVA has been written by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute with extensive experience of landscape and visual assessments across a range of development types, as well as experience working in the UK forestry industry.

7.4 The survey area for the LVA covers a 5km radius from the site boundaries, with the main focus being within 3km of the Site. Whilst the proposed planting may be visible beyond these areas, it is considered unlikely that the proposals would form easily discernible features in such longer distance composite views.

7.5 The LVA includes the modelling of the screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility for the planting proposals, based on their predicted height 25 years after planting.

### The Site and Its Context

7.6 The Site proposed for woodland creation comprises sloping ground on the lower northern/north-western and eastern slopes of Warb Law (also known as Stubholm Hill), with further areas of proposed planting further to the south around Jock's Knowe, Blackrig and the southern slopes of Hagg Hill. The areas proposed for planting are a mix of improved and unimproved / rough grassland, and some moorland. The land holding also includes areas of existing woodland and scrub woodland, areas recently planted (2018) with commercial conifers, and open ground (grassland, moorland and peat bog).

7.7 The Site lies outside of any National Parks, National Scenic Areas or Areas of Wild Land. The north/north-western and eastern slopes of Warb Law, where much of the proposed tree planting would be located, lie within the Langholm Hills Regional Scenic Area, as designated by Dumfries and Galloway Council. This is a local / non-statutory designation.

7.8 The Site lies within four different Nature Scot Landscape Character Types:

- The north-western slopes (Earshaw Hill and Bloch Hill) lie within LCT175: Foothills - Dumfries & Galloway (D&G);
- The northern and eastern slopes (Warb Law, Stubholm Hill, Middleholm Hill and Burian Hill) lie within LCT 161: Pastoral Valley - D&G;
- The southern slopes to the south of The Rigg and Cockplay wood lie within LCT 172: Upland Fringe - D&G (though only a very small area of proposed planting lies within this LCT); and
- Land to the south of Hagg Hill lies within LCT 171: Flow Plateau - D&G.

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7.9 In addition, the ZTV indicates, and the field survey has confirmed, that the proposals would also be visible from restricted parts of some other nearby LCTs:

- To the north: LCT177: Southern Uplands – D&G and LCT160: Narrow Wooded Valley – D&G; and
- To the east: LCT176: Foothills with Forest – D&G.

7.10 The published descriptions of the LCTs are considered to be broadly accurate for the site and its environs. The published descriptions all make reference to the presence of woodland at varying scales, both coniferous and broadleaved.

7.11 Based on the modelled ZTV, combined with observations made during the field survey, the visual envelope beyond the site boundaries is broadly defined as follows (within the 5km study area):

- to the (upper) slopes the valleys of the Esk and Ewes Water to the north;
- to the slopes of the valley of the Esk to the east, including the near slopes of Whita Hill to the north-east, and restricted areas within the Tarras valley and to the south of Bruntshiel Hill where views are not obstructed by existing conifer forestry;
- to intermittent areas around Evertown and as far as Scots Dike to the south; and
- to the slopes above Wauchope Water and restricted areas around Collin Hags and Allfornought Hill to the west, with views beyond obstructed by topography and conifer woodland.

### **Policy Matters**

7.12 Policy NE7: Forestry and Woodland from the 2019 Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 states that '*the Council will support the creation and protection of sensitively designed and managed forests and woodlands.*'

7.13 The 2014 Dumfries & Galloway Woodland Strategy places the northern and eastern parts of the Site lie within a 'preferred' area for native woodland creation, with some areas within the southern part of the Site being classed as 'sensitive' due to the soils being deep peat. These areas have been excluded from the proposed planting areas. The northern and eastern parts of the Site also lie within a 'potential' area for softwood forest creation, with the 'potential' classification indicating that there are other constraints which need to be considered (in this case, mainly the RSA). For the local Eskdale area, a number of assets and issues are identified.

7.14 These matters identified in the D&G Woodland Strategy have been considered in the design process for the woodland creation scheme.

### **Woodland Creation Proposals**

7.15 The planting proposals include:

- woodland creation covering approx. 409ha of the approx. 1051ha site;
- creating access routes and upgrading existing infrastructure for forestry; and
- developing an amenity area which will incorporate existing native scrub woodland.

7.16 The proposals have been designed to ensure that the different planting areas fit within the local landscape, based on the following overarching principles:

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- Enhance areas of positive landscape character - such as the scrub woodland;
- Retain and make best use of existing landscape elements and features where these can be retained;
- Avoid loss or damage to retained landscape elements and features, such as archaeology; and
- Maintain views over Langholm from the summit of Stubholm Hill.

### **Effects on Landscape Character and Visual Amenity**

7.17 It should be noted that the proposed planting and subsequent management of the woodland resource thereby created would be cyclical/rotational. Trees would be planted, managed, thinned, and then harvested over differing timescales (some very long term) and areas, and effects (particularly those relating to the visibility of the proposals) would therefore also vary over time.

#### Landscape Character

7.18 The proposals would entail the planting of new areas of broadleaved and coniferous woodland in areas that are currently improved or rough grassland, and moorland. Sensitive peat or wetland areas within the Site would not be planted, and the upper and most visible parts of the Site would also be left unplanted. The pattern of planting and different mixes has been designed to fit within the existing structure of the Site through the retention of existing areas of scrub woodland and open ground, the maintenance of views to and from the hill summits, and the avoidance of large, rectilinear monoculture blocks of planting.

7.19 Whilst the proposed planting would clearly alter the landscape character of the newly planted areas, the proposals would not introduce woodland to an otherwise unwooded area. The proportion of woodland cover within the Site would increase, but the mix of woodland types created, together with the retention of large areas of open ground, would mean that the overriding landscape character of the Site and its environs would not be adversely affected. Direct effects would be experienced within LCTs 175, 161, 172 and 171, though only a very small area of planting is proposed within LCT 172, and direct effects on this LCT would therefore be similarly limited. With low to medium sensitivity, the scale of effect on the landscape character of the Site and its immediate environs would be moderate neutral, i.e., neither adverse nor beneficial.

7.20 The proposals would result in indirect perceptual/experiential effects on landscape character in the wider area surrounding the Site, predominantly in locations from where the proposed woodland planting would be visible. Such effects would be experienced from within LCTs 175, 161, 172 and 171 (where direct effects would also be experienced), with more limited indirect effects experienced within LCTs 160, 176 and 177. With low to medium sensitivity, the scale of effect on the landscape character of the landscape surrounding the Site would be minor to moderate neutral, reducing to minor neutral and then negligible with increasing distance from the Site.

7.21 The proposed changes would take place within a limited part of the RSA, and would be visible (and therefore result in perceptual/experiential effects on landscape character) from a slightly larger part of the RSA. Whilst there would be both direct and indirect changes to the character of the RSA, the proposals would not introduce new land uses or features to these areas, and the overall character of the RSA (a mix of farmland and forestry, spread across river valleys

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and uplands) would not be notably changed. This would result in a minor to moderate neutral effect on the character of the RSA.

#### Visual Amenity

- 7.22 Effects on visual amenity have been assessed in detail for nine viewpoints representing a range of receptor types in different locations and at different distances from the proposals. Photomontages have been produced for four of the viewpoints, as agreed with Scottish Forestry through the consultation process.
- 7.23 For recreational users of local Core Paths within the Site (Langholm 277 and 278), the effects would be moderate to major, generally neutral in nature, but occasionally adverse. Effects would increase in scale over time. For users of Core Paths to the west of Langholm and on Whita Hill (Langholm 279 and 282), effects would be major neutral.
- 7.24 For main road users on the A7 (a promoted tourist route), the scale of effect would be minor neutral to moderate neutral depending on distance from the Site, increasing over time.
- 7.25 For minor road users in the vicinity of the Site, including the B7068 to the west of the Site, the scale of effect would be minor to moderate neutral, becoming major or moderate neutral by Year 25. Beyond the valleys of the Esk and the Wauchope Water, and restricted areas to the east (around Claygate) and south (around Evertown), the visibility of the proposals from the local road network would be very limited.
- 7.26 For residential occupiers in properties in Langholm where views of the proposals are possible, effects would be minor neutral at Year 5, increasing to minor to moderate neutral by Year 25 as the planting matures. For occupiers of properties to the east of the Site where views of the proposals are possible, effects would be up to moderate neutral.
- 7.27 For properties to the south of the Site, such as near Torbeck Hill, levels of visibility would be variable, with occupiers of the properties at Tarcoon and Tarcoon Cottages most affected. The scale of effect would be moderate neutral for the occupiers of most of these properties, but would become moderate adverse by Year 25 for the occupiers of Tarcoon and Tarcoon Cottages. There may also be some visibility of the proposed woodland planting from some properties in or near Evertown, but effects would be much more limited, seen at a distance of over 1km, and would be unlikely to be adverse in nature.
- 7.28 For properties to the west of the Site on the road between the B7068 and the property known as Calfield there would be visibility of the proposed planting on the north-western slopes of Warb Law / Stubholm Hill. The scale of effect would be moderate neutral, increasing to major neutral by Year 25 as the planting develops.

#### Conclusions

- 7.29 The proposed woodland creation scheme is of a considered design, appropriate for the Site and its context. The pattern of planting and different mixes has been designed to fit within the existing structure of the Site through the retention of existing areas of scrub woodland and open ground, the maintenance of views to and from the hill summits, and the avoidance of large, rectilinear blocks of monoculture planting.
- 7.30 The majority of effects on landscape character would be neutral in nature – adding more woodland cover to an already well-wooded landscape, but not causing notable detrimental change in the overall make-up or character of the landscape or of views. Effects on the character of the locally designated Langholm Hills RSA would also be limited.

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**APPENDIX A:**  
**DETAILED METHODOLOGY**

## APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

A.1 This assessment has been undertaken with regard to best practice, as outlined in published guidance:

- Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013), *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition)* [GLVIA3]<sup>1</sup>;
- Landscape Institute (2013), *GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13*<sup>2</sup>;
- Natural England, (2014), *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*<sup>3</sup>;
- Landscape Institute (2019), *Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note – Visual Representation of Development Proposals* [TGN 06/19]<sup>4</sup>; and
- Landscape Institute (2021), *Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note – Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations* [TGN 02/21]<sup>5</sup>.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and The Countryside Agency (2002), *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland*;

A.2 GLVIA3 states within paragraph 1.1 that “**Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right, and on people’s views and visual amenity.**”

A.3 GLVIA3 also states within paragraph 1.17 that when identifying landscape and visual effects there is a “**need for an approach that is in proportion to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of the likely effects. Judgement needs to be exercised at all stages in terms of the scale of investigation that is appropriate and proportional.**”

A.4 GLVIA3 recognises within paragraph 2.23 that “**professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA. While there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters much of the assessment must rely on qualitative**

<sup>1</sup> Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd Edition, Routledge

<sup>2</sup> Landscape Institute (2013) *GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13*, Landscape Institute

<sup>3</sup> Natural England (2014) *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*, Natural England

<sup>4</sup> Landscape Institute (2019) *Technical Guidance Note 06/19: Visual representation of Development Proposals*, Landscape Institute

<sup>5</sup> Landscape Institute (2021) *Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations*, Landscape Institute

**judgements**" undertaken by a landscape consultant or a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI).

A.5 The effects on cultural heritage and ecology are not considered within this LVIA but where relevant are considered elsewhere in the ES or planning application documentation.

### **Study Area**

A.6 The study area for this LVIA covers a 5km radius from the Application Site. However, the main focus of the assessment was taken as a radius of 2km from the Application Site as it is considered that even with clear visibility it is considered that there would be only very limited visibility of the Proposed Development beyond this distance, seen as a relatively small component in the wider landscape.

### **Effects Assessed**

A.7 Landscape and visual effects are assessed through professional judgements on the sensitivity of landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors and representative viewpoints combined with the predicted magnitude of change arising from the proposals. The landscape and visual effects have been assessed in the following sections:

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

A.8 Sensitivity is defined in GLVIA3 as "**a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgments of susceptibility of the receptor to a specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor.**" Various factors in relation to the value and susceptibility of landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors or representative viewpoints are considered below and are cross referenced, in combination with professional judgement, to determine the overall sensitivity as shown in **Table A.3**.

A.9 Magnitude of change is defined in GLVIA3 as "**a term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration.**" Various factors contribute to the magnitude of change on landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors and representative viewpoints.

A.10 Professional and reasoned judgements on the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptor and the magnitude of change arising from the proposals are cross referenced in **Table A.18** to determine the overall degree of landscape and visual effects.

Effects on Landscape Character and Landscape Features and Elements

A.11 Landscape character is defined in GLVIA3 as the “distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.” The assessment of effects on landscape character considers how the introduction of new landscape elements physically alters the landform, landcover, landscape pattern and perceptual attributes of the Application Site or how visibility of the proposals changes the way in which the surrounding landscape character is perceived.

A.12 The effects on landscape features and elements are limited to within the Application Site and includes the direct physical change to the fabric of the land, such as the removal of woodland, hedgerows or grassland to allow for the proposals.

*Sensitivity of Landscape Character and Landscape Features and Elements*

A.13 Sensitivity of landscape character and landscape features and elements is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to landscape character or a particular landscape feature or element and the susceptibility of the landscape character, feature or element to changes that would arise as a result of the proposals – see pages 88-90 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed on a scale of high, medium or low.

A.14 The criteria for assessing the value of landscape character and landscape features and elements are shown in **Table A.1** below. These criteria also relate to those identified in Box 5.1 of GLVIA3 (Page 84) and TGN 02/21, namely:

- natural heritage;
- cultural heritage;
- landscape condition;
- associations;
- distinctiveness;
- recreational;
- perceptual – scenic;
- perceptual – wildness and tranquillity; and
- functional.

**Table A.1: Criteria for Assessing the Value of Landscape Features and Elements and Landscape Character**

<b>High</b>	<p>Landscapes falling under statutory landscape designations including, but not limited to, World Heritage Sites, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and considered to be an important component of the country's character experienced by a high number of people.</p> <p>Landscape condition is good, and components are generally maintained to a high standard.</p> <p>In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence/absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has an elevated level of tranquillity.</p> <p>Rare or distinctive landscape elements and features are key components that contribute to the landscape character of the area.</p> <p>Recognised associations with people or events.</p>
<b>Medium</b>	<p>Undesignated landscapes or those falling under local (non-statutory) designations, including urban fringe and rural countryside, considered to be a distinctive component of the local landscape character.</p> <p>Landscape condition is fair, and components are generally well maintained.</p> <p>In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence/absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has a moderate level of tranquillity.</p> <p>Rare or distinctive landscape elements and features are notable components that contribute to the character of the area.</p>
<b>Low</b>	<p>Undesignated landscape including urban fringe and rural countryside considered to be of unremarkable character.</p> <p>Landscape condition may be poor, and components poorly maintained or damaged.</p> <p>In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence/absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has limited levels of tranquillity.</p> <p>Rare or distinctive elements and features are not notable components that contribute to the landscape character of the area.</p>

A.15 The criteria for assessing the susceptibility of landscape character and landscape features and elements are shown in **Table A.2**:

**Table A.2: Criteria for Assessing Susceptibility of Landscape Character and Landscape Features and Elements**

<b>High</b>	<p>Scale of enclosure – landscapes with a low capacity to accommodate the type of development being proposed owing to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover, built form etc.</p> <p>Nature of land use – landscapes with no or little existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p> <p>Nature of existing elements – landscapes with components that are not easily replaced or substituted (e.g. ancient woodland, mature trees, historic parkland etc.).</p> <p>Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features, major infrastructure or industry is not present or where present has a limited influence on landscape character.</p>
<b>Medium</b>	<p>Scale of enclosure – landscapes with a medium capacity to accommodate the type of development being proposed owing to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover, built form etc.</p> <p>Nature of land use – landscapes with some existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p> <p>Nature of existing elements – landscapes with components that are easily replaced or substituted.</p> <p>Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features, major infrastructure or industry is present and has a noticeable influence on landscape character.</p>
<b>Low</b>	<p>Scale of enclosure – landscapes with a high capacity to accommodate the type of development being proposed owing to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover, built form, etc.</p> <p>Nature of land use – landscapes with extensive existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p> <p>Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features or major infrastructure is present and has a dominating influence on the landscape.</p>

A.16 The relationship between the value of landscape character and landscape features and elements and their susceptibility to changes likely to arise from the Proposed Development is then used to determine the overall sensitivity, as shown in **Table A.3**.

**Table A.3: Overall Sensitivity of Landscape and Visual Receptors**

Value				
Susceptibility		High	Medium	Low
	High	High	High	Medium
	Medium	High	Medium	Low
	Low	Medium	Low	Low

A.17 Indicative landscape sensitivity criteria are then described in Table A.4:

**Table A.4: Overall Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors**

Criteria Level	Sensitivity Description
<b>High</b>	<p>Key characteristic(s) of landscape very vulnerable and could be adversely affected by development; and/or</p> <p>Areas of very strong positive character that are highly valued by virtue of their scenic quality (including most statutorily designated landscapes); and/or</p> <p>Distinctive perceptual/ aesthetic aspect that is often a signature feature of a landscape and that is vulnerable to adverse change; and/or</p> <p>Elements/features that could be described as unique; or are nationally scarce; or mature vegetation with provenance such as ancient woodland or mature parkland trees.</p>
<b>Medium</b>	<p>Some key characteristics may exhibit vulnerability to adverse effects from inappropriate or unsympathetic development that may lead to wider effects on character; and/or</p> <p>Areas that exhibit positive character but may have some evidence of alteration to/ degradation of/ erosion of features resulting in areas of more mixed character. Can also apply to areas with evidence of degraded character that remain valued by local communities; and/or</p> <p>Perceptual/ aesthetic aspect has some vulnerability to unsympathetic development; and/or</p> <p>Features/elements that are locally commonplace; unusual locally but in moderate/poor condition; or mature vegetation that is in moderate/poor condition or readily replicated.</p>

<b>Low</b>	<p>Key characteristics are robust and unlikely to be adversely affected by development; and/or</p> <p>Areas that are relatively bland or neutral in character with few/no notable features; and/or</p> <p>Evidence of alteration to/ degradation of /erosion of features; and/or</p> <p>Perceptual/ aesthetic aspect is either robust and unlikely to be affected by development, or is in the main negative; and/or</p> <p>Elements/features that are regionally and/or nationally ubiquitous; or make little contribution to local distinctiveness; and/or</p> <p>Elements/features that might be considered to detract from landscape character such as obtrusive man-made artefacts (e.g. power lines, large areas of hard-standing etc).</p>
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*Magnitude of Change on Landscape Character and Landscape Features and Elements*

A.18 Reasoned professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude of change on landscape character and landscape features and elements. The following separate factors are considered:

- size/scale;
- geographical extent;
- duration; and
- reversibility.

A.19 The assessment of size and scale of change is based on the indicative criteria set out in **Table A.5:**

**Table A.5: Indicative Size/Scale Criteria**

Criteria Level	Feature/Element	Aesthetic/Perceptual Aspect	Key Characteristics/Overall Character
<b>Large</b>	All, or a large proportion of the feature/element is lost or altered, with its integrity compromised or greatly enhanced.	Change wholly or largely alters an aesthetic/ perceptual aspect, such that it becomes difficult/ impossible to appreciate, when considered against the baseline.	Very obvious/intensive change in the balance of landscape characteristics, with a resulting change in overall character.

<b>Medium</b>	Partial change to the element/feature in question, which may in some cases diminish or enhance its overall integrity.	Change is such that the development has an influence upon an aesthetic/ perceptual aspect, but said aspect remains appreciable.	Obvious change to one/more key characteristics, but overall character does not fundamentally change.
<b>Small</b>	Only a small proportion of the feature/element is affected, with no effect on its integrity.	Change has little tangible effect upon an aesthetic/ perceptual aspect.	Unremarkable change to key characteristics; and/or little/no effect upon the wider character

A.20 The geographical extent of a change is determined by the indicative criteria set out in **Table A.6:**

**Table A.6: Geographical Extent Criteria**

Criteria Level	Description
<b>Site</b>	The effect would be experienced only within the development site itself
<b>Immediate setting/ localised</b>	The effect would be experienced in the immediate setting or surroundings of the site only, and would not be experienced within the wider landscape; or
<b>Landscape character type/landscape character area</b>	Localised change that would affect only a part of a landscape type/character area.
<b>Wider landscape</b>	The effect would be experienced wholly/largely within the landscape type/character area within which the development is located.

A.21 The duration of a change is determined by the indicative criteria set out in **Table A.7:**

**Table A.7: Duration Criteria**

Criteria Level	Description
<b>Permanent</b>	Permanent or more than 25 years/a generation.
<b>Long-term</b>	10-25 years; or the change could not reasonably be considered temporary in nature.
<b>Medium-term</b>	3-10 years; or the limited duration of the change can be inferred by any reasonably informed person.
<b>Short-term</b>	0-3 years; or the change would be considered as temporary in nature by any reasonable person.

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A.22 The reversibility of a change relates to the prospects and practicality of a change being able to be reversed, and is determined by the indicative criteria set out in **Table A.8**:

**Table A.8: Reversibility Criteria**

Criteria Level	Description
<b>Reversible</b>	Change can be wholly or largely reversed. For example, the removal of a wind farm development following decommissioning.
<b>Partially reversible</b>	Change is partially reversible. For example, the restoration of an unsightly quarry to something similar to the baseline.
<b>Irreversible</b>	Change cannot realistically be reversed, i.e., it is permanent.

A.23 These four factors are then considered together to derive an overall magnitude of change for each receptor, which is determined by use of professional judgement, based on the indicative criteria set out in **Tables A.9 & A.10** below.

**Table 2.9: Indicative Criteria for Magnitude of Change upon Landscape Character**

Criteria Level	Description
<b>Very large</b>	Fundamental change in the make-up and balance of landscape characteristics over an extensive area.
<b>Large</b>	Very obvious change in the balance of landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to particularly intensive change over a more limited area.
<b>Medium</b>	Changes in an extensive area which whilst notable do not alter the balance of the landscape characteristics ranging to moderate changes in the localised area which whilst obvious do not fundamentally change local character.
<b>Small</b>	Limited change in any components of the wider landscape with modest and unremarkable changes in the localised area.
<b>Very small</b>	Very small and unremarkable change in any components of the landscape.
<b>Negligible</b>	Change, which whilst occurring would be virtually imperceptible within the wider landscape.

**Table A.10: Indicative Criteria for Magnitude of Change upon Landscape Features and Elements**

Criteria Level	Description
<b>Very large</b>	Permanent removal of, or a significant change to, the characteristics of the landscape element in question that cannot be replaced, reinstated or otherwise mitigated against.
<b>Large</b>	Permanent removal of, or a significant change to, the characteristics of the landscape element in question. Limited scope for replacement, reinstatement or other mitigation.
<b>Medium</b>	Partial removal of or moderate changes to the characteristics of the landscape element in question. Also applies to complete removal that can be suitably mitigated against.
<b>Small</b>	Small scale changes to a landscape element or loss of/change to a small proportion of an extensive feature. Larger scale losses that can be fully mitigated against through provision of equivalent replacement features.
<b>Very small</b>	Very small-scale changes to a landscape element or loss of/change to a very small proportion of an extensive feature. The changes can be fully mitigated against through provision of equivalent replacement features.
<b>Negligible</b>	Changes to a landscape element that would have no impact on the integrity of the element as a whole and that can be fully mitigated against through provision of equivalent replacement features.

Effects on Visual Amenity

A.24 The assessment of effects on visual amenity considers the changes in views arising from the proposals in relation to visual receptors including settlements, residential properties, transport routes, recreational facilities and attractions; including detailed assessments from the representative viewpoints within the study area.

*Sensitivity of Visual Receptors*

A.25 Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a view and the susceptibility of the visual receptor to changes in that view that would arise as a result of the proposals – see pages 113-114 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed on a scale of high, medium or low.

A.26 The criteria for assessing the value of views are shown in **Table A.11**.

**Table A.11: Criteria for Assessing the Value of Views**

<b>High</b>	Views with high scenic value within landscapes falling under statutory landscape designations including, but not limited to, World Heritage Sites, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty etc. Likely to include key viewpoints on OS maps or reference within guidebooks, provision of facilities, presence of interpretation boards, etc.
<b>Medium</b>	Views with moderate scenic value within undesignated landscapes or those falling under local (non-statutory) designations, including urban fringe and rural countryside.
<b>Low</b>	Views with unremarkable scenic value within undesignated landscape with partly degraded visual quality and detractors.

A.27 The criteria for assessing the susceptibility of views are shown in **Table A.12**.

**Table A.12: Criteria for Assessing Visual Susceptibility**

<b>High</b>	Includes occupiers of residential properties, and people engaged in recreational activities in the countryside including using public rights of way (PRoWs).
<b>Medium</b>	Includes people engaged in outdoor sporting activities where the focus of the receptor is not on the surrounding landscape, and people travelling through the landscape on minor roads and trains. Also includes those travelling on main roads which are promoted tourist routes.
<b>Low</b>	Includes people at places of work (e.g. industrial and commercial premises), and people travelling through the landscape on major roads and motorways.

A.28 The relationship between the value of the view and the susceptibility of visual receptors to changes likely to arise as a result of the Proposed Development is then used to determine the overall sensitivity, as shown in **Table 2.3** above.

*Magnitude of Change on Visual Receptors*

A.29 Reasoned professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude of change on the views experienced by visual receptors. The following separate factors are considered:

- size/scale;
- geographical extent;
- duration; and
- reversibility.

A.30 The assessment of size and scale of change is based on the indicative criteria set out in

**Table A.13:**

**Table A.13: Indicative Size/Scale Criteria**

Criteria Level	Description
<b>Large</b>	A marked change in the balance of features visible in the view; a marked change in the composition of the view; change would affect a significant proportion of the view; change/new features would represent an obvious contrast with existing features; views of the change would be clear and unencumbered by screening features; the development would occupy the foreground of the view.
<b>Medium</b>	The balance of features in the view would change, but not to such a degree that the existing composition of the view would fundamentally change; the change would, whilst obvious, be subordinate to existing features; the development would occupy the middle ground of the view.
<b>Small</b>	The balance and composition of the view would not change greatly from baseline; change would affect only a small proportion of the view; change/new features would not contrast strongly with existing features; views of the change would be screened/filtered or otherwise encumbered by existing foreground features; the development would occupy the background of the view.

A.31 The geographical extent of an effect is determined by the indicative criteria set out in **Table A.14:**

**Table A.14: Indicative Geographic Extent Criteria**

Criteria Level	Description
<b>Large</b>	Views would be direct from the receptor; views would generally be at short-range; change in view would be evident over a wide area.
<b>Medium</b>	The change in view would be experienced at an oblique angle to the main view available to the receptor; views would generally be at medium range.
<b>Small</b>	The change in view would not fall within the main angle of the view available to the receptor; views would generally be at long-range; change would be evident over a small area only.

A.32 The duration of a change is determined by the indicative criteria set out in **Table A.15:**

**Table A.15: Duration Criteria**

Criteria Level	Description
<b>Permanent</b>	Permanent or more than 25 years/a generation.
<b>Long-term</b>	10-25 years; or the change could not reasonably be considered temporary in nature.
<b>Medium-term</b>	3-10 years; or the limited duration of the change can be inferred by any reasonably informed person.
<b>Short-term</b>	0-3 years; or the change would be considered as temporary in nature by any reasonable person.

A.33 The reversibility of a change relates to the prospects and practicality of a change being able to be reversed, and is determined by the indicative criteria set out in **Table A.16**:

**Table A.16: Reversibility Criteria**

Criteria Level	Description
<b>Reversible</b>	Change can be wholly or largely reversed. For example, the removal of a wind farm development following decommissioning.
<b>Partially reversible</b>	Change is partially reversible. For example, the restoration of an unsightly quarry to something similar to the baseline.
<b>Irreversible</b>	Change cannot realistically be reversed, i.e., it is permanent.

A.34 These four factors are then considered together to derive an overall magnitude of change for each receptor, which is determined by use of professional judgement, based on the indicative criteria set out in **Tables A.17**:

**Table A.17: Indicative Criteria for Magnitude of Change upon the View**

Criteria Level	Description
<b>Very large</b>	Fundamental change in the character, make-up and balance of the view. The proposals would be dominant; a controlling feature within the view.
<b>Large</b>	Very obvious changes in the character, make-up and balance of the view. The proposals would be a prominent feature. The nature of the existing view would change.
<b>Medium</b>	Moderate changes in the character, make-up and balance of the view, with the proposals noticeably distinct. This may lead to an overall change in the nature of the view depending upon the type and nature of change.

<b>Small</b>	The proposals would be visible as a new feature. Change would be limited and would be unlikely to affect the nature of the existing view as a whole.
<b>Very small</b>	Minor change in the nature of the view. Lacking sharpness of definition, not obvious, indistinct, not clear, obscure, blurred, indefinite.
<b>Negligible</b>	No discernible change in the view.

#### **Assessment of Scale of Landscape and Visual Effects**

A.35 The likely scale of effects is dependent on all of the factors considered in the sensitivity and the magnitude of change upon the relevant landscape and visual receptors. These factors are assimilated to assess the likely scale of effect which would arise from the Proposed Development. The variables considered in the evaluation of the sensitivity and the magnitude of change are reviewed holistically to inform the professional judgement of the scale of effect. The cross referencing of the sensitivity and magnitude of change on the landscape and visual receptor determines the scale of effect as shown in **Table A.18** below.

**Table A.18: Scale of Landscape and Visual Effects**

		Sensitivity		
		High	Medium	Low
Magnitude of Change	<b>Very large</b>	Major	Major	Moderate to Major
	<b>Large</b>	Major	Major	Moderate
	<b>Medium</b>	Major	Moderate	Minor to Moderate
	<b>Small</b>	Moderate	Minor to Moderate	Minor
	<b>Very small</b>	Minor to Moderate	Minor	Minor to Negligible
	<b>Negligible</b>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

#### **Nature of Effects**

A.36 GLVIA3 includes an entry that states “**effects can be described as positive or negative (or in some cases neutral) in their consequences for views and visual amenity.**” GLVIA3

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does not, however, state how negative or positive effects should be assessed and it therefore becomes a matter of subjective judgement rather than reasoned criteria. Due to inconsistencies with the assessment of negative or positive effects, a precautionary approach is typically applied to LVAs that assumes all landscape and visual effects are considered to be negative or adverse unless specifically otherwise stated. However, in the case of woodland creation schemes, it is considered legitimate in some circumstances to assess effects as being neutral in nature, i.e., changes would occur to landscape character or views, but the changes would be neither adverse nor beneficial.

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**APPENDIX B:**  
**PHOTOVIEWS AND DETAILED VISUAL ASSESSMENT**

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**APPENDIX C:**  
**PHOTOMONTAGES**

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**APPENDIX D:**  
**PLANTING PROPOSALS**