

Technical Note

Project:	Support to Lancashire County Council Local Planning Authority		
Subject:	Land off 12 Bourbles Lane		
Author:	Katrine Morgan		
Date:	05/10/2023	Project No.:	5218724
Application number:	LCC/2023/0030		
Location:	Land off 12 Bourbles Lane		
Proposed works:	Proposed Sand and Gravel Extraction Land of Bourbles Lane, Preesall		
Grid Ref:	OS Grid Ref: SD 37660 47681		

Document History

Revision	Purpose description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
1.0	Technical Note	KM	JM	PT	AW	10/10/2023

Client

Client	Lancashire County Council (LCC)
Project	Support to Lancashire County Council Local Planning Authority
Project No.	5218724

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1. Application Documents

We have reviewed the following information submitted to inform the planning application for Land off 12 Bourbles Lane application number LCC/2023/0030:

Document
Bourbles Quarry ES (July 2023)
Bourbles Quarry Non-Technical Summary
ES Appendix 1 Scoping Response LCC (10th August 2022)
ES Appendix 3 Landscape and Visuals (Pt 1-2) Including LVIA (July 2023)
ES Appendix 3 Landscape and Visuals (Pt 3) Photography and photomontage (wireframe)

2. Context

Atkins has been employed to undertake a technical review of the information submitted as part of the planning application made by Baxter Group Ltd for the extraction and processing of sand and gravel including the construction of new site access roads, landscaping and screening bunds, minerals washing plant and other associated infrastructure with restoration to leisure end-uses, agricultural land and biodiversity enhancement, using imported inert fill; on land off 12 Bourbles Lane (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’).

3. Review Observations

This technical review has been undertaken as per guidance set out in the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 1/20(10 Jan 2020) - Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs) (TIN1/20). No site visit has taken place during the review of the submitted landscape and visual chapter and supporting information to support the review findings. The technical recommendations are based on the information provided.

3.1. Methodology, criteria, and process

3.1.1. Scoping

It is considered following a review of the LVIA chapter and supporting documents, submitted as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the LCC/2023/0030 Land off 12 Bourbles Lane Planning application that the information submitted complies with the Scoping Report, Para 2.18 of the LVIA (Appendix 3 of the ES) states ‘2.18 An EIA scoping opinion was submitted to Lancashire County Council on 13 June 2022. The general scope of the LVIA as set out in Appendix 2 of the scoping report was agreed.’

Lancashire County Council’s (LCC’s) EIA scoping opinion is dated 10 August 2022 and the applicant responses are summarised in Table 1 of Appendix 3 of the ES, it is evident from this table that’s the applicant has addressed LCC’s comments.

3.1.2. Scope compliance to TIN1/20

Table 1.0 below summarises the information requirements specific to landscape and visual assessment, and the information location within the EIA and its compliance with TIN1/20.

Table 1.0 Scope Compliance to compliance to LI TIN1/20

TIN1/20 Scope Requirement	Compliance with TIN1/20.
A description of the baseline scenario;	The baseline is fully described / established within Chapter 3.0 LVIA.
An outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development;	The baseline factors that have potential to be affected by the Proposed Development are fully described / established within Chapter 3.0

TIN1/20 Scope Requirement	Compliance with TIN1/20.
A description of the factors specified in regulation 4(2) likely to be significantly affected by the development including landscape; and description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment;	The factors that have potential to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development are fully established within Chapter 2.0 and fully described in Chapter 5.0
Methodology/ forecasting method;	The specific technical methodologies used to identify and assess effects are fully described (or referenced) within Chapter 2.0 of the LVIA. Specific technical Landscape and Visual methodologies are contained within Appendix 1 Methodology of the LVIA
A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for construction and operation);	Section 4.6 of the LVIA outlines landscape mitigation designed into the proposed development. Section 4.7 describes the eventual site restoration.

3.1.3. Consultations

A formal request for an EIA scoping opinion was received by LCC on the 13th June 2022, a response was sent by LCC on the 10th August 2022, a response was also submitted to the applicant from Natural England.

The applicant has responded to comments by LCC and Natural England in Table 1 of Appendix 3 of the ES.

Other than the Scoping Opinion it is noted that there does not appear to be any specific statutory consultee agreement included within Appendix 3 of the ES as to the LVIA methodology, including study area, and the indicative viewpoints assessed.

No further consultation is indicated during the design process or described within the LVIA.

3.1.4. Methodology

A separate technical discipline methodology has been developed and is contained within the EIA technical appendices. The assessment criteria has been clearly explained, it is noted that the methodology has been formulated to follow current best practice, with the use of professional judgement and is informed by guidance contained within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment, 3rd Edition, 2013).

The competence of the assessors is set out in a note accompanying the application and establishes the LVIA was undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) with approximately twenty-five years' post qualification experience.

3.1.5. Consideration of landscape and visual effects

Chapter 5.0 sets out the assessment of effects for the land off 12 Bourbles Lane, Landscape and visual receptors have been identified and separate consideration has been made of landscape and visual effects.

Detailed assessment information is contained within Appendix 3 of the LVIA in Table 5: Landscape Effects and Table 6: Visual Effects.

3.1.6. Findings and conclusions

In accordance with the guidance set out in the GLVIA (Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment), the LVIA adopts an approach proportionate to the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development. The conclusions of the LVIA have been determined via use of professional judgement, set within a structured assessment framework, and supported by reasoned justification.

3.2. Baseline, content, and findings of the assessment

3.2.1. Visual baseline

Para 3.27 of the LVIA discusses the visual baseline, and further detail is provided within Appendix 1 of the LVIA

Appendix 2 ZTV and Visualisations Methodology sets out methodology used for Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) production, viewpoint selection and visualisations. It is noted that the methodology is in-line with Landscape Institute GLIVA3 and Technical Guidance Note 06/19 and it is considered that the methodology is appropriate for this assessment and as per current best practice.

Figure 2 shows the ZTV produced to accompany the LVIA, at 2km.

Also noted in para 3.29 *'A field survey on 3 May 2023 examined landscape components that may affect visibility, including buildings, trees, hedgerows, woodland and landform, and established actual visibility on the ground is less than indicated by the ZTV plan.'*

The assessment site visit was a summer visit undertaken when leaves were present on the trees, and therefore assessment conclusions can only be made for the best case scenario whilst the trees have leaves on and are able to screen views to their fullest potential. It is concluded a further winter assessment is required to fully understand the effects when they are likely to be most visible.

It is also noted that the residential views have been assessed as being of low value, it is considered that residential value of views would likely be high. The low value should be clarified by the assessor as the reasoning *'the view is of an everyday landscape which is likely to be valued locally as most farmland adjacent to a residential property and the value of the view is low'* does not adequately consider the value likely placed on the view by residents. This information may not change the overall significance but would be useful to the reader and be more wholly representative of the value of residential views.

3.2.2. Landscape baseline

There is full description of the site and its surroundings within Chapter 3.0 along with a review of landscape designations, landscape character, and Landscape features on site.

The value of landscape resources is addressed within Chapter 3.0 para. 3.11 states *'This sub-section establishes the relative value that is attached to different landscapes within the study area by society'*. It is noted that the chapter makes reference to TGN 02-21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations (Landscape Institute, 2021).

Landscape character areas considered within the LVIA are of local, regional, and national scale, this is considered appropriate for this assessment. Those referred to include:

- National Character Area 32: Lancashire and Amounderness Plain (NCA 32)
- A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire - Landscape Character Assessment (December 2000)
- A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire - Landscape Strategy (December 2000)

3.2.3. Criteria to inform levels of sensitivity (both landscape and visual) and magnitude of change have been clearly and objectively defined.

The criteria to inform levels of sensitivity for landscape and visibility, and magnitude are set out in Appendix 1: of the LVIA. The criteria are as per GLIVA3 and considered appropriate for this assessment.

3.2.4. Cross-over with other topics

Natural heritage and cultural heritage are addressed within the baseline, however for the avoidance of doubt the assessor should state that the LVIA does not consider effects upon the setting of cultural heritage assets. The landscape and visual effects and effects upon setting, whilst sometimes being concerned with the same receptors, deal with different environmental effects, using different methodologies.

The scoping opinion noted that *'any tree and hedgerow removal be identified and a schedule provided identifying any trees or hedgerows to be removed and including sufficient information to allow an assessment of their quality and contribution towards landscape character'*. The applicant response within LVIA (Appendix 3 of the ES) was that *'A Tree Survey, including a quality assessment, and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment identifying any trees/ hedges to be removed is provided as part of the planning application'*.

The ES at 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 notes loss of hedge and the LVIA at 5.7 clarifies this will be 55m of hedge, it is therefore assumed that no further hedgerow or trees further are removed, if there is no further likely tree or hedgerow removal this should be stated; although this information may not materially change the conclusions drawn of effects stated within the LVIA it is a useful clarification for the reader. Also it should be noted that no hedgerow removal is not shown in the arboricultural report submitted as part of the planning information package, this should be updated to align with the LVIA.

3.2.5. Iterative assessment-design process

There is no evidence of an iterative assessment-design process within the LVIA and therefore this omission undermines the completeness of the LVIA.

3.2.6. Methodology applied in the assessment

The landscape and visual effects are reported in a tabulated form, the landscape and visual receptors are clearly defined, the sensitivity (value and susceptibility) is also clearly indicated, along with the effects timeframe.

The effects at construction and operation are described within the main chapter, this is considered appropriate to the assessment and in line with best practice.

3.2.7. Viewpoints

Appendix 2: ZTV and Visualisations Methodology describes the viewpoint selection process, which is aligned to GLVIA3 (Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment edition 3). Appendix 2 states *'The viewpoints for visualisation purposes were selected by a chartered landscape architect and the range and representation of the viewpoints were agreed with Lancashire County Council before proceeding. The position of the viewpoints was also selected to be practical for the visualisation process, including the safe and legal access to the viewpoints.'* this method is considered appropriate to the assessment and in line with best practice.

3.2.8. Appropriateness of the proposed mitigation

Chapter 4 sets out the mitigation considered during operation and post operation restoration.

Chapter 5 of the LVIA presents the assessment of landscape and visual effects and potential mitigation relating to landscape character and views experienced by people in the study area with reference to thirteen representative viewpoints.

Following a review of paras 4.6 – 4.7 and Figures 6 and 7 it is considered that further detail is required to accurately conclude the effectiveness of the mitigation. Detail should include detailed landscape proposals, descriptions, sections, and elevations to illustrate to the reader the likely effectiveness and appropriateness of the mitigation proposed and whether it is embedded or essential. This is a lack of information indicates a limitation in the assessment of effects which should be noted by the assessor. Additionally it indicates that the assessment has not been considered as part of an iterative design process. See 4.1 Recommendations for further information of this document.

Additionally, there is no consideration of long-term management of landscape proposals, it is recommended that a reference to the ecology chapter and any biodiversity net gain proposal (if being considered) is made, and that more detail is required to establish the conclusion of the mitigation effectiveness.

It is noted that part of the restoration includes a holiday lodge area, it is not clear if this area has been fully assessed on its own or as part of the restoration scheme. It is recommended that the holiday lodge area is assessed separately from the rest of the restoration scheme, as the other phases have been. This information may not change the overall assessment findings but would be useful to the reader, and make clear that the restoration includes permanent new built features within the landscape; the current lack of clarity could be deemed fairly critically and it is recommended is clarified.

3.2.9. Consistency and objectivity

The assessment methodology has been applied consistently throughout and the reporting is clear and well defined. There is some weakness in the description of landscape mitigation, the detail and how this is applied within the assessment.

It is considered that the assessment should consider the reporting of beneficial effects could also be considered as part of this assessment, as the restoration scheme would include *'A number of new waterbodies would be established including two field ponds on the Phase 1 site, a fishing pond on the Phase 2 site and a field pond on the Phase 3B site'*

3.2.10. Completeness of the information

The methodology is objective and thresholds for assessing the receptors is clear, the method of reporting is successful, although it is difficult to identify phasing within the supporting appendices and there is no mention of

potential summer and winter differences, or night-time working or lighting. See 4.1 Recommendations for further information of this document.

3.2.11. Landscape and visual effects

Landscape and visual effects are clearly identified within the assessment and reported separately, this is considered appropriate and in-line with best practice. The levels of effect are clearly defined, and the thresholds of significance are in-line with GLIVA3. However indirect effects considered seem limited and further information should be included within the assessment, along with; a description of temporary compound areas, access and traffic arrangement that might be included as part of the development (or alternative and explain why they have been scoped from the assessment). See 4.1 Recommendations for further information of this document.

3.2.12. Presentation of the findings of the assessment

The landscape visual chapter displays transparency and objectivity; and it is proportionate to the type of the development and location. However mitigation, and seasonal changes do not appear to have been fully addressed. The inclusion of further detailed landscape mitigation would add confidence to the assessment findings. See 4.1 Recommendations for further information of this document.

The viewpoint photography has been taken in summer and therefore intervening vegetation is in leaf and views of the development site are considered to be 'at best'; comparative winter assessment (including photography) where intervening vegetation is without leaf or 'at worst' would allow a more complete assessment and give confidence to the reader that effects fully considered seasonal change (with regard to visibility of the proposed development).

The assessment, otherwise, overall is clear and comprehensive the findings were communicated well and accurately. The supporting figures and documents were clear and enabled the reader to understand the over location, development, and baseline. However it is considered the Figure 6: Site Layout and Proposed Levels and Figure 7: Restoration Scheme do not provide adequate information relating to operational and restoration phases, this somewhat brings into question how a positive effect can be concluded if there is not sufficient information on which to assess. The assessor should state clearly within the limitation and assumptions how the conclusions have been drawn and the level of information used to make an assessment. See 4.1 Recommendations for further information of this document.

The findings were also compliant with current best practice GLIVA3, and the LI (Landscape Institute) guidance note (TIN1/20).

Other than the requirement for more further detail as to trees and hedgerow (see 4.1 Recommendations for further information) of this document. the findings are compliant with the Scoping Opinion, it is recommended that the applicant address the omission with an update and confirm the assessment findings are unchanged.

4. Summary

This review has been undertaken as per guidance set out in the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 1/20(10 Jan 2020) - Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs) (TIN1/20). The methodology has been formulated to follow current best practice, with the use of professional judgement and is informed by guidance contained within the GLIVA3

Regarding the findings of the review and of the scope of the assessment the EIA does not indicate a specific technical discipline consultation has taken place for landscape; consultation is an advisory step in line with GLIVA3.

Following the review of the assessment of effects, it is concluded that:

- No detailed consideration of seasonal changes is included;
- No crossover references to statutory nature conservation designations (this should be considered for completeness or a detailed explanation of why it is excluded);
- No crossover references to ecology or Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)¹;
- Inconsistency between the submitted arboricultural report and ES relating to hedgerows;

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain>

- Clarification required as to the low value of residential views given, it is considered this should be high;
- No mention of long term management plan;
- It is considered the Figure 6: Site Layout and Proposed Levels and Figure 7: Restoration Scheme do not provide adequate information relating to operational and restoration phases, this somewhat brings into question how a positive effect can be concluded if there is not sufficient information on which to assess. The assessor should state clearly within the limitation and assumptions how the conclusions have been drawn and the level of information used to make an assessment.
- It is unclear if the holiday lodges have been assessed full, requires full clarification;
- Landscape and visual effects are clearly identified within the assessment and reported separately, this is considered appropriate and in-line with best practice.
- The levels of effect are clearly defined, and the thresholds of significance are in-line with GLIVA3. However indirect effects do not appear to have considered separately within the landscape chapter (they are noted within the tables).
- It is observed that significant visual and landscape visual effects are only reported for during the operational phase and these are typically at a local level, short-term in duration, and applicable to some receptors closely adjacent to the site.
- It is considered that the residual post operational negative effects identified, are limited to receptors using adjacent footpaths. The assessment does not report any post restoration significant negative effects.
- There are some positive landscape effects reported in the LVIA, it concludes 'The restoration scheme of the Site would introduce wetland habitats to the Phase 4 site and ponds to Phases 1,2, and 3B and the permanent level of effect overall would be moderate and positive.'
- There are some positive visual effects reported in the LVIA, it concludes '*Phase 4 site where the creation of wetlands on an area previously bare earth would be a moderate and positive level of effect.*'

Overall, the landscape and visual chapter displays transparency and objectivity; and it is proportionate to the type of the development and location, however mitigation, and seasonal changes do not appear to have been addressed fully.

The assessment, otherwise, overall is clear and comprehensive the findings were communicated well and accurately. The supporting figures and documents were clear (though further work is required to figures 5 and 6) and enabled the reader to understand the over location, development, and baseline. The findings were also compliant with current best practice GLIVA3, and the LI guidance note (TIN1/20).

4.1. Recommendations for further information

The findings of the assessment are consistent and represent a balanced report of likely landscape and visual effects, which this concludes are likely accurate based on the information supplied. The following recommendations are suggested regarding further information:

- Evidence of an iterative design process is lacking in the LVIA and should be included, the LVIA should illustrate the development of mitigation and establish principles to be embedded into the long term management;
- Further detail as to the mitigation proposed, including further details regarding the landscape proposals and any long term management/ maintenance plans referenced along with details of any BNG (include in assessment where and how this creates a positive effect);
- The holiday lodges should be assessed separately from the rest of the restoration scheme and further detail as to the built form, height, layout, design, etc be given.
- Update arboricultural report to include hedgerow removal;
- Seasonal changes (and tree removal) or likely comparative study to be included in assessment findings;
- Detail as to indirect effects to receptors outside of the site including road users, footpath users etc;
- Clarification on the reporting of beneficial effects with regard to clear mitigation; and
- A section covering compliance with planning policy would be useful for the reader.

4.2. Overall conclusions

The assessment methodology, scope, baseline, and findings are compliant with current best practice, GLIVA3 and the LI guidance note (TIN1/20).

It is unlikely that the clarifications/ recommendations outlined above in section 4.1 of this technical note would change the overall reporting of the assessment findings; however, regarding information required to inform a planning decision, further details are required, particularly with regard to the landscape restoration and holiday lodge proposals, this could be deemed as an omission of information, and it would be prudent to ensure that LCC has all of this information available as without clarification it could potentially affect the planning decision for this proposal.

Further landscape detail should be secured through appropriate planning conditions related to landscape; and should include the requirement for the provision of detailed landscape proposals plans with sections and elevations, planting schedules and details, a detailed landscape specification and landscape management plan (minimum of 30 years considering BNG) prior to works starting on site. Landscape proposals and plans should align with any landscape mitigation that has developed as part of the LVIA, as should the long term biodiversity objectives stated within the landscape management plan.