

June 2012

HIGH SPEED 2 BRIEFING NOTE
Landscape and Visual Assessment
Report of David Green, Landscape Advisor
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Landscape encompasses all types and forms of open space and development in the countryside, villages, towns and cities. The range of environmental effects on the landscape arising from the construction and operation of the proposed scheme are likely to be significant and it will be important how the baseline is defined, the level of sensitivity attributed to receptors and the location of the viewpoints which are scoped in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). For example, the baseline landscape views must consider winter and summertime coverage of vegetation.

Local Authorities have stated in their response to the Draft EIA Scope and Methodology that Local Authorities' detailed landscape character assessments (LCA) should be used to assess the baseline.

The definition of the meaning of the word 'tranquillity' must be agreed and also how it is to be measured with reference to;

- Land use
- Level of seclusion or isolation
- Extent and type of enclosure by surrounding land uses
- Level of screening afforded by vegetation, ground level change or boundary treatments
- Levels of vehicular traffic within, or close to the character area
- Levels of pedestrian traffic with, or close to the character area
- The absence or presence of major infrastructure routes within or in the vicinity of the character area

Definitions of sensitivity in the EIA Scope and Methodology Report are very generic and should be tailored to relate to particular development as proposed by HS2. For example, officers in Buckinghamshire and Hillingdon may attribute a different level of sensitivity to the Colne Valley that the assessor.

The significance of effects will require the application of professional judgement to weigh the sensitivity. If this assessment differs substantially from Local Authorities' interpretation there will need to be a clear process for negotiation and this is particularly pertinent to the 'triggers' for which mitigation is required.

HS2 Ltd should commit to using high quality software that allow consultees to clearly see the impacts of the scheme.