

GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13

10-06-13

Purpose of Statement of Clarification

As a result of questions posed by members and a request for a response from the GLVIA3 Panel, the Panel has prepared this statement of clarification which has been approved by the Chair and a member of the Technical Committee on behalf of the Committee. The statement deals with the following:

- 1 GLVIA3 and how it should be understood;
- 2 The use of the phrase 'significant in EIA terms';
- 3 The use of the term 'significant'; and
- 4 How the assessment process may differ between Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment undertaken for EIA purposes and landscape and visual impact appraisal undertaken for other purposes.

Statement of Clarification

1 GLVIA3 and how it should be understood

The guidance in GLVIA3 should be read with common sense. Chapters 1 and 2 are introductory, setting the context in general terms and are aimed at general readers. Chapter 3 and those which follow provide advice for the landscape professional. Chapter 3 establishes the principles to which later chapters conform. Therefore if there appears to be a measure of ambiguity between something stated in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, then the professional is encouraged to regard Chapter 3's advice as having primacy.

2 The Phrase 'Significant in EIA Terms'

In carrying out LVIA, landscape professionals have on occasion identified effects as being 'significant in EIA terms'. It is recommended that this phrase should not be used in a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). It is understood that the phrase does not appear in any relevant EIA Regulations or associated statutory publications. (see GLVIA3 Page 40, Para 3.32)

3 Significance

Concerning 'significance', it is for the assessor to define what the assessor considers significant. Members may find the following helpful: In simple terms, assume an environment (A). Then assume a proposed development (B). B is placed into A and, as a result, gives rise to impacts which permit the identification of effects of various sorts. The level of, or degree of, effect may then be judged. This may be achieved, for example, by determining magnitude and registering it against sensitivity, each as defined in GLVIA3 in Paras 3.23 to 3.30. Depending on the means of judgement and terminology (which should be explicitly set out), effects of varying degrees of change (or levels of change), may be derived. The assessor should then establish (and it is for the assessor to decide and explain) the degree or level of change that is considered to be significant.

4 For Non-EIA Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal

In carrying out appraisals, the same principles and process as LVIA may be applied but, in so doing, it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are or are not significant given that the exercise is not being undertaken for EIA purposes. The reason is that should a landscape professional apply LVIA principles and processes in carrying out an appraisal and then go on to determine that certain effects would be likely to be significant, given the term 'significant' is enshrined in EIA Regulations, such a judgement could trigger the requirement for a formal EIA. The emphasis on likely '*significant effects*' in formal LVIA stresses the need for an approach that is

proportional to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of its likely effects. The same principle - focussing on a proportional approach – also applies to appraisals of landscape and visual impacts outside the formal requirements of EIA.