

TAG Landscape Impacts Worksheet

Step 2		Step 3			Step 4	
Features	Description	Scale it matters	Rarity	Importance	Substitutability	Impact
Pattern	The route is visually interesting with a variety of enclosed and open views ranging from industrial and residential dominance to a more natural steep gorge landscape of cliffs and woodlands. Recreational activities in the area include waterway activities as well as the gorge being popular for rock climbing. This all provides additional visual interest for vehicle users as well as pedestrians and cyclists travelling along the A4 Portway. The route follows the course of the River Avon on its southern and western side, with the edge of the urban settlements of Shirehampton, Sea Mills, Clifton and Hotwells fronting the majority of its northern and eastern side. Most of the views are constrained by the built-up settlements and heavily wooded landscape in-between the settlements as well as the steep sided gorge (southern extents) which limit views from any distance.	Regional	Regional level - Landscape rare within Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges National Landscape Character Area (NCA118) as it supports an exceptional number of nationally rare and scarce plant species.	High importance regionally	The area is generally of consistent character although it has been already spoilt slightly by intrusive developments to the north and south of the site. Vegetation may be lost in the short term, but replaceable in the long term.	Neutral: The wider pattern of the landscape will not be impacted by the proposed scheme which is designed in a largely linear along the A4 Portway route.
Tranquility	Built up, visually intrusive and noisy development area. There is a clear presence of industrial and retail development within the immediate surroundings to the northern extend of the study area and traffic characterise this area where the busy M5 motorway meets the start of the A4 Portway (north of the route). This heavy industrial setting provides a strong visual backdrop to views within this area. The topography is generally flat at the northern extents of the route, gradually steepening to form the steep gorge rocky landscape from Sea Mills to Clifton. Where views open up towards the west along the southern section of the route, this affords some spectacular views across the gorge and to the iconic Clifton Suspension Bridge.	Local level	Typical to Bristol City Council local character area	High importance locally	The area is generally of consistent character although it has been already spoilt slightly by intrusive developments. Vegetation may be lost in the short term, but replaceable in the long term.	Short term: Slight adverse due to disruption in form and increased in traffic volumes. Longer term: Neutral as landscape mitigation is established and screen activity and movement within site. Mitigation: Screening planting located around the outer edges of the site to protect views. Replacement mitigation planting to the east of the rail line.
Cultural	Avon Gorge which cuts through the ridge at Bristol and is spanned by the historic Clifton Suspension Bridge. The ridge rises about 100 m from the tidal River Avon to Observatory Hill on the eastern side and Stokeleigh Camp to the west. The gorge has natural cliffs and quarry exposures of Carboniferous Limestone, which are of great geological interest, and, together with the screes, scrub, pockets of grassland and adjacent woodland, it supports an exceptional number of nationally rare and scarce plant species. Further south the ridge forms the distinctive landscape of the Failand Hills. Ashton Court, the grandest of the parklands, makes good use of the limestone landform and provides a wide range of recreation opportunities for the surrounding population. Historic field patterns are evident closer to the west parallel to River Bristol Avon and to the rural settlements of A4 Portway route. There are number of Public Rights of Way (PROW), in particular the Severn Way Long Distance Path which follows the course of the A4 Portway for most of its length. There are also a number of conservation areas, scheduled monuments and listed buildings which include the iconic Grade I Listed Clifton Suspension Bridge which passes directly over the Site and forms the main landmark of the approach into Bristol along the A4 Portway.	Regional level	Regional level	High importance regionally - as landscape have local recreational value	The area is generally of consistent character although it has been already spoilt slightly by intrusive developments. Vegetation may be lost in the short term, but replaceable in the long term. PROWs could be redirected, but this could impact on the recreational value attributed to these routes.	Slight Adverse: It is not envisaged that the enhancements associated with the proposed options would directly impact the cultural aspect of the landscape, however, would potentially be slightly impactful on the wider landscape character.
Landcover	There is a clear presence of industrial and retail development within the immediate surroundings to the northern extend of the study area where the busy M5 motorway meets the start of the A4 Portway route. This heavy industrial setting provides a strong visual backdrop to views within this area. The majority of the route is then dominated by the residential setting with properties typically fronting on to the A4 on both sides of the A4 in Shirehampton. In between Shirehampton and Sea Mills is the Shirehampton Park Golf Club on the northern side, which is screened by a heavily wooded boundary. A Nature Reserve and Clifton Down break up the residential areas of Sea Mills and Clifton which are also heavily wooded and restrict views. Clifton then merges into Hotwells providing a strong residential backdrop to the southern extents of the route.	Regional level	Regional level	Features of the NCA118: Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges National Landscape Character Area and NCA106: Severn and Avon Vales are irreplaceable or cannot be replaced in the short to medium term, including the pockets of grassland and woodland, nationally rare and scarce plant species.	Mature vegetation cannot be easily replaced, as planting would take time to establish. Ancient woodland and wood pasture are particularly important within the study area, and due to their maturity/age, are elements that are not easily mitigated for or replaced.	Negligible/Slight Adverse: It is not envisaged that the enhancements associated with the proposed options would directly impact the cultural aspect of the landscape, however it may be impactful on the wider landscape character, and are elements that are not easily mitigated for or replaced.
Summary of character	Given the minor nature of the works, the study area would be proposed to be set at a maximum of 1km radius from the proposed development to include all likely sensitive receptors that might potentially be affected by the proposed scheme. It is considered that beyond this distance intervening landform, vegetation and built form would prevent clear views to the proposed scheme. At such distances the proposed schemet would be difficult to discern in the view to the extent that significant landscape character and/or visual effects would be unlikely.	Regional level	Regional level	High importance regionally		Negligible/Slight Adverse: The proposed scheme would introduce footway widening to a shared use path, proposed road marking modification due to road space and raised table resulting into urbanising elements into the landscape which would reduce the landscape setting of heritage assets and would slightly affecting visual amenity of surrounding receptors. The works would result into negligible/slightly adverse impacts to nature of existing landscape and limited culture; and landscape character. Additional mitigation: Landscape design to integrate proposals into the landscape such as establishing landscape and visual impact mitigation strategy, provide screening where appropriate. There may be opportunities for improving the landscape character in the local area and integrating the surrounding levels landscape character. Nature and conservation considerations given its proximity to the Avon Gorge SAC.

Reference Sources

Department for Transport TAG Unit A3 Environmental Impact Appraisal November 2023, Magic.gov.uk, Google Maps satellite photography, OS Maps, NCA118: Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges National Landscape Character Area and NCA106: Severn and Avon Vales

Step 5 - Summary Assessment Score

Negligible - Slightly adverse

Qualitative Comments

It is envisaged that the changes associated with the proposed scheme have localised impacts on the landscape character of the area. Potential construction phase impacts on landscape character and visual amenity may arise from:

- Movement of plant and traffic to, from and within the application site;
- Removal of vegetation and soil stripping as part of site clearance and preparation;
- On-site changes to landform due to excavation and the temporary stockpiling and storage of excavated materials;
- Construction working areas, storage areas and temporary structures associated with construction;
- Construction roads, fencing, temporary lighting and security features; and construction of the proposed scheme itself.

Potential operational phase impacts on landscape character and visual amenity may arise from:

- Materials and surfacing proposed such as new red coloured surfacing to the bus lanes as well as tactile paving at crossing points;
- Street Furniture such as proposed bollards and any additional signage;
- Introduction of features such as raised tables;
- Introduction of new or change to existing lighting; and
- Removal or reduction in grass verges and vegetation.

However, with the appropriate mitigation measures such as careful planning, siting and design of the built form and open space within the proposed scheme and Green infrastructure considerations given the importance of the Avon Gorge as an important 'Strategic Green Infrastructure Link', consideration of views into and from the proposed scheme route (intervisibility) would result in negligible impact.