

SECTION 4: GENERIC GUIDANCE ON SITING & DESIGN

- 4.1 This SPG provides strategic guidance on the siting and design of renewable energy, transmission infrastructure and/or tourism developments and should be read in conjunction with the more specific Guidance Notes that are included for each LCA. To understand whether development can be integrated within its local context however requires site specific landscape and visual assessment.
- 4.2 The landscape factors set out in Table 2.03 can be used to assess the capacity of the landscape in the locality of the site at the development feasibility stage. Where a number of *Indicators of higher sensitivity* are present, the landscape is less likely to be able to accommodate development. Where areas of Natural Beauty and Special Qualities are *strongly expressed and evident*, landscape is less likely to be able to accommodate development (see section 6 - What is Natural Beauty?). In both cases carefully designed proposals in response to local character and the availability of views would be necessary to ensure development could be integrated sympathetically without harming the purpose of the statutory landscape designation.
- 4.3 Proposals would need to demonstrate how the assessment of landscape sensitivity/capacity and site assessment has informed the planning application.
- 4.4 It is also necessary to take into consideration the effects of development on views to and from Snowdonia National Park. Wireframe and photomontage visualisations are likely to be required for wind developments larger than micro in scale.
- 4.5 In considering how the proposed development accords with the landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment, it will be necessary to have regard to both the LCA within which the development is proposed and adjacent LCAs where the scale of development is such as to result in wider visual effects. Where the proposal lies towards the edge of Snowdonia National Park, consideration must be given to the sensitivity and capacity of LCAs in neighbouring local planning authorities.
- 4.6 The initial stages in planning any development involve the identification of an appropriate type/scale of development and the consideration and selection of a suitable site in order to minimise landscape and visual effects. For example, choosing an appropriate site may help mitigate the visual impact of a development even before the detailed design stage. As a starting point, the sensitivity assessment of the relevant LCA should be consulted for each potential development to gain an understanding of the baseline landscape character and key sensitivities to that particular type of development.
- 4.7 The next step is to consult the strategy for that type of development within the LCA to understand whether there may be scope to accommodate it and, if so, where it may best be located. The specific siting and design guidelines produced for each LCA may also assist in the selection of a suitable site and type/scale of development. At this point it is also important to understand how the baseline situation with regard to that particular development may have changed through consultation with the local planning authority (this is particularly important where there may be a need to consider potential cumulative effects (refer Section 6)).
- 4.8 It is important to note that there are often local variations in the character and sensitivity of each LCA, therefore a site specific analysis should be undertaken to identify any potential landscape and/or visual issues at any given location. As part of this it will be important to consider potential impact on the following:
- Landscape character (particularly key characteristics)
 - Key views
 - Special qualities (of landscape designations/remoteness/tranquillity etc.)
- 4.9 Impacts on landscape character are likely to be related to the following:

Potential Impacts on Landscape Character	Wind Energy	Field Scale Solar PV Energy	400 kV Overhead Line	Mobile Masts	Static Caravan/Chalet Parks
Scale of the landscape – whether it is small or large and whether the proposed development is of an appropriate scale	✓		✓		
Field Pattern, Scale and Enclosure – whether field scale is large or small and patterns are simple or complex and how the proposed development relates or conflicts with this together with the sense of enclosure.		✓			
Landform – whether landform is complex or simple and how the nature of the proposed development relates to this or conflicts with it. Development can dominate small scale or intricate landform if not carefully sited.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Landcover – how the proposed developments fits in or conflicts with the pattern of the land cover and what sensitive features may be at risk.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Man-made Influences – does the proposed development introduce an uncharacteristic man-made influence into a landscape?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Settlement Pattern – 400 kV overhead lines cannot easily deviate around individual or small groups of properties			✓		
Skylines and settings – vertical structures such as wind turbines, pylons and mobile masts can affect the simplicity of skyline or ridges even if located below such features	✓		✓		

Useful Sources of Information

4.10 The following Guidance documents are a useful source of information to assist the sensitive siting and design of renewable energy, transmission infrastructure and/or tourism developments:

Wind Energy Development

- *Design Commission for Wales (2012) Designing Wind Farms in Wales*
- *Natural Resources Wales (2013) LANDMAP Information Guidance Note 3: Using LANDMAP for Landscape and Visual Assessment of Onshore Wind Turbines*
- *Scottish Natural Heritage (1996, edited in 2000) Guidelines on the Environmental Impacts of Windfarms and Small Scale Hydroelectric Schemes*
- *Scottish Natural Heritage (2009) Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape, Version 1*
- *EN-1, Section 4.5 sets out the principles for good design that should be applied to all energy infrastructure*
- *EN-1, Section 5.9 covers generic landscape and visual impacts of energy projects*
- *Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Routledge (GLVIA3)*
- *The Landscape Institute, Advice Note 01/11: Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, March 2011*

Mobile Masts

- *Welsh Assembly Government, Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Note (TAN) 19: Telecommunications (2002)*
- *Turnbull Jeffrey Partnership (2002). Siting and Design Guidelines for Mobile Telecommunications Developments in the Highlands and Islands. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. F00AA508*
- *Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development in England (2013) – Appendix B Siting and Design Principles (produced jointly by representatives of central and local government and the mobile phone industry, bVHlds on Government Guidance and operators' commitments)*
- *Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Routledge (GLVIA3)*
- *The Landscape Institute, Advice Note 01/11: Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment, March 2011*

Static Caravan/Chalet Park Development

- *Welsh Assembly Government, Planning Guidance (Wales), Technical Advice Note (TAN) 13: Tourism (1997)*
- *Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Routledge (GLVIA3)*
- *The Landscape Institute, Advice Note 01/11: Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment, March 2011*

4.11 In addition to the above sources of information Cadw has also produced a number of useful publications. Those particularly relevant to this study are as follows:

- *Caring for Coastal Heritage*
http://cadw.wales.gov.uk/docs/cadw/publications/Caring_for_Coastal_Heritage_EN_CY.pdf
- *Caring for Historic Landscapes*
http://cadw.wales.gov.uk/docs/cadw/publications/Caring_for_Historic_Landscapes_EN_CY.pdf