Basic scoping request response

Content for an LVIA

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Whether the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations are applied to an application or not, the impact of the proposal on landscape character and visual amenity will need to be examined through a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). Such an assessment will need to cover the following detail :

1 Description of the development

- The need for the development set within local regional and national strategies;
- The timescale for construction, operation and where appropriate decommissioning;
- The site's location and overall layout including plans, elevations and sections;
- Visual representations (photomontages, single frame images, transparencies, wire frames) of the development within its landscape context illustrating the landscape and visual impact of the development;
- Development's design and specification, method of construction / installation;
- Reasonable estimates of quantity and type of traffic which will be generated through construction and operation.

2 Site Description

- Description of the main reasons for the site selection and any alternatives in site design or layout which have been considered;
- Area of proposed land which the development will occupy, clearly described and indicated on a map or diagram;
- Illustrated description of the land use of the surrounding area;
- Description of the policies plans and designations which are relevant to the proposal;
- Evaluation of the direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative, short medium and long term effects resulting from the existence of the development.

3 Landscape Baseline Conditions

- The current condition of the landscape;
- Cornwall Landscape Assessment 2007 to provide the framework landscape character information, supplemented by a study to assess the specific impact of the development;
- Relationship of the site to any designated areas of landscape at a national, regional or local level, and to areas of landscape value or scenic quality.
- Description of all baseline date sources, and methods used to supplement this information;
- The landscape baseline should be evaluated in relation to its sensitivity and importance. The sensitivity evaluation of each landscape element should reflect its quality value, contribution to landscape character and the degree to which the particular element or characteristic can be replaced or substituted.

4 Predictions of Impact

- Assess the scale, or magnitude of change to the landscape and visual elements as a deviation from the baseline conditions for each phase of the

proposal. Consideration will need to given to visitor and resident populations, and seasonal variations;

- Provide a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) for the development clearly indicating distance radii from the site. The intervals of the radii and the scope of the ZTV will be specific to differing types of development and will need to be agreed with the Council's Landscape Architect.;
- The methods used to establish the magnitude of change should be clearly described and be appropriate and reasonable in relation to the landscape and visual impact of the development;
- Where assumptions or unsupported data has been used in the impact predictions, these should be highlighted and accompanied by an indication of the reliability / confidence of those assumptions or data;
- Evaluation of the direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative, short medium and long term effects resulting from the existence of the development.

5 Impact Significance

- Clearly describe the judgements which underpin the attribution of significance;
- The assessment of significance should consider the impact's deviation from the established landscape baseline condition, the sensitivity of the landscape and receptors and the extent to which the impact will be mitigated or is reversible;
- The range of factors which are likely to influence the assessment of significance should be clearly identified;
- Provide detail of how these variables will affect the significance of the impacts over the life of the development;
- Identify the significance of impacts that remain following mitigation.

6 Mitigation

- Describe the measures proposed to avoid, reduce and if possible remedy significant adverse impacts on both landscape character and visual amenity;
- Provide an indication of the effectiveness of the stated measures;
- Clear indication of how the mitigation measures will be implemented.

7 Presentation of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

- The document should be clear and logical in its layout and presentation and be capable of being understood by a non–specialist;
- It should be a balanced document providing an unbiased account of the landscape and visual effects, with reasoned and justifiable arguments;
- A glossary of all technical terms and full reference list should be provided;
- Plans, diagrams and visual representations should be provided to assist in the understanding of the development and its impact, and should be clearly labelled with all locations reference in the text.

8 Non Technical Summary

1. A brief stand alone document to be available to a non-specialist reader, to enable them to understand the landscape and visual impacts of the proposal;
2. To include a summary description of the development; the aspects of landscape character and visual amenity likely to be significantly affected; the likely significant effects; and the mitigations measures to be implemented;
3. Include as a minimum the plans, maps and other visual representations which illustrate the location of the application site, the footprint of the development, and the location of key features.

LANDSCAPE

(Urban Design Compendium 1)

Questions to ask

1. Should the site be developed at all, are there particular areas to develop and those to leave alone?
2. What mitigation measures can be employed to reduce and remedy negative environmental effects?
3. Does the development integrate with the surrounding built and natural environment, what building type is appropriate?
4. which features can form the basis of the landscape structure?
5. how can the site's unique assets be used to reinforce sense of place and local distinctiveness?

Tasks

- Understand the intrinsic landscape character, and local characteristics
- Create a cohesive landscape structure / strategy of the site as a whole which included materials in landscape and construction.
- Treat everything as landscape with buildings defining the edge of the space, this sets the parameters for a landscape strategy
- Plan the open space, the typology, hierarchy, function and frequency, and desirable features
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- Treat detailed elements as part of the overall landscape structure
- Work with and value what is already there, from features to views and access

Strengthen the identity and structure of the landscape

Identify those landscape features for inclusion in a scheme which contribute towards the unique character of a site. Particularly on green filed sites, every effort should be made to work with the grain of the land and incorporate existing features of the landscape into a scheme. Reviving historic features provides opportunities to enrich outdoor space and can include natural and man made elements, from watercourses and streams to ancient filed boundaries.

The intrinsic landscape characteristics for evaluation include topography; orientation; aspect and prospect; current landscape assets (trees, water, habitat etc) and liabilities; contaminated despoiled and poorly drained land; unsightly structures; overhead lines and utility facilities.

Working with the elements

Maximum use of the site's resources, with minimum demands on the environment Utilise solar potential orientate buildings to the south or within 30 degrees to either side; make full use of rain water and drainage systems, SUDS, water attenuation; use ground heating or cooling; harness wind energy; use Combined Heat and Power (CHP).

Understand existing access

Integrate the site with its surroundings, analyse the existing points of access and linkages for cycling, walking, PROW, private vehicles and public transport, permeability and barriers. Understand how people move, why they choose certain routes, safety, light and shade, landscape, noise, pollution. Consider the needs of different groups, parents with small children, elderly, disabled.

Types of open spaces

1. Green way – possible cycle or footpath also acting as wildlife corridors
2. Water way – lakes ponds streams can be used as movement corridors
3. Meadow – informal recreational public open space
4. Woodland and Nature Reserves – areas rich in wildlife possibly with some access
5. Playing Fields – formally laid out for activities, golf, rugby, football,
6. Cemetery or church yard – often a green oasis
7. Allotments
8. Park
9. Local Green
10. Square, Plaza
11. Communal and private gardens
12. Courtyard

Densities

- 40 number 150x150m units per hectare – low permeability, large variety of uses, high wildlife support
- 90x90 plots including private or communal gardens provide a good trade off between biodiversity and other considerations such as ease of movement, and variety of use
- 65x65 - 70 units per hectare has good permeability, medium wildlife support and variety of use
- 35x35 – 55 units per hectare high permeability, low variety of uses and low wildlife value

Design

- Use deciduous trees, for shade in the summer which filter the light through the branches in winter. Check the mature height of trees to ensure they will not block light or overshadow.
- Avoid excessive overshadowing of building by earthworks, vegetation or walls, and place trees away from the southerly aspect
- Provide shelter from uncomfortable draughts and shelter in planting and wind breaks from the west and south west.
- Create places to go to, rather than to just pass through
- Stimulate the sense, sounds, smells, touch by hand and under foot
- Strengthen local identity by using local materials, plants and craftsmen
- Avoid clutter in the public spaces