

# What is a Local Landscape Character Assessment (LLCA)?

## Neighbourhood Planning



Public Space Team  
Natural Environment - Cornwall Council

# What is a Local Landscape Character Assessment (LLCA)?

Character assessment at a local level, bespoke to your Neighbourhood Plan area which can :

- provide environmental information as an evidence base for your Neighbourhood Plan
- positively and objectively inform decisions relating to the siting and environmental implications of development
- help to set priorities for future land management
- celebrate what is important about your landscape
- identify features and issues of key importance to you the local people
- assess the capacity of settlement edges to accept future growth

# How can the LLCA influence Neighbourhood Plan Policies?

LLCA can potentially do this in a number of areas :

- quality design in new residential development including local vernacular building styles
- climate change and renewable energy
- expansion of industrial areas
- highway development
- management of development in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- identifying 'valued landscapes' which para 109 of the NPPF seeks to protect and enhance
- site allocations as per paragraph 110 of the NPPF
- protection of green space within and between settlements
- local green space designations as per paragraph 97 of the NPPF
- conservation and enhancement of heritage features and their setting
- conservation and enhancement of ecology and habitats
- pedestrian and vehicular access to estuaries and the coast
- green infrastructure
- mineral extraction and reworking of spoil tips

# Neighbourhood plan policy examples

**Roseland Plan :Policy LA2 - Local Landscape Character** - Proposals for development will be supported where they have demonstrated that they respond to local character and reflect the identity of the local surroundings based on the assessment of the Roseland Local Landscape Character. Where development is proposed which will detract from or have an adverse impact on characteristics that have been identified by the community and in the Roseland Local Landscape Character Assessment as important to the character of the local area, it will be refused.

**Roseland Plan : Policy LA1 - AONB Management Plan** - Proposals for development, including tourism uses, will be supported where they have demonstrated that they meet the objectives of the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan, namely to:

- (i) conserve and enhance the diverse landscape and special qualities of the AONB;
- (ii) use materials and be of a scale and design that has appropriate regard to the character, sensitivity and capacity of the protected landscape;
- (iii) be appropriately sited to avoid damage (individually or cumulatively) to the natural beauty, character and special qualities of the AONB, especially avoiding the undeveloped coast and shores and slopes of the Fal Ria and elevated locations such as ridgelines.

**Upper Eden : Housing Densities Policy 4** - : For housing development within the Upper Eden Area the maintenance of local character has a higher significance than achieving a minimum housing density figure. The appropriate density for a housing site should in every case within the Upper Eden area result in a development that is in character with the local surrounding area

**Exeter St James : Heritage Policy 1:** Development affecting heritage assets within St James must pay special regard to the need to conserve and enhance their settings and any special architectural or historic features of significance.

# The Process

## **LLCA Stage 1–Landscape Character Assessment**

- **Step 1 - Initiating a Local Landscape Character Assessment** – establishing the need for a landscape evidence base for the Plan
- **Step 2 – Creating a LLCA core group** – gather together willing volunteers who are willing to see the project through to completion
- **Step 3 – Initial information gathering** – desk assessment of existing environmental information
- **Step 4 – Briefing volunteers** – the assessment needs to be undertaken and owned by the local community
- **Step 5 - Field survey work to record the local landscape character** – getting out and about to record what makes the character of the Plan area
- **Step 6 - Preparing the draft LLCA** – collating all information gathered into one document, and explaining how the document supports the Neighbourhood Plan
- **Step 7 - Presenting draft LLCA to community** – consultation is vital through the development of a Neighbourhood Plan and understanding what people consider important in the local landscape is a key part add value to the landscape character evidence base
- **Step 8 - Finalise the Local Landscape Character Assessment**

# The Process

## LLCA Stage 2–Settlement Edge Assessment

- **Step 1- Create land parcels** - divide the settlement edge of and its adjacent landscape setting into separate land parcels, where each parcel is a wedge extending from the settlement edge out into the landscape
- **Step 2 – Complete field assessment record** - for each land parcel to describe, how sensitive the landscape character and views/viewers are to change created by settlement growth; how valuable/important the character and views are to the local community
- **Step 3 – Determine capacity** – reach a capacity judgement for each land parcel to accept growth/change
- **Step 4 – Collate a summary description** – compile a summary description / overview of the capacity of the land parcel to accept growth/change
- **Step 5 – Compile all the documents into a report** which can be presented to the local community at a public consultation event.