

Cornwall Renewable Energy Planning Advice

March 2016

Annex 3: Cumulative Impact Assessment Guidance for Cornwall – Solar Farms



Contents

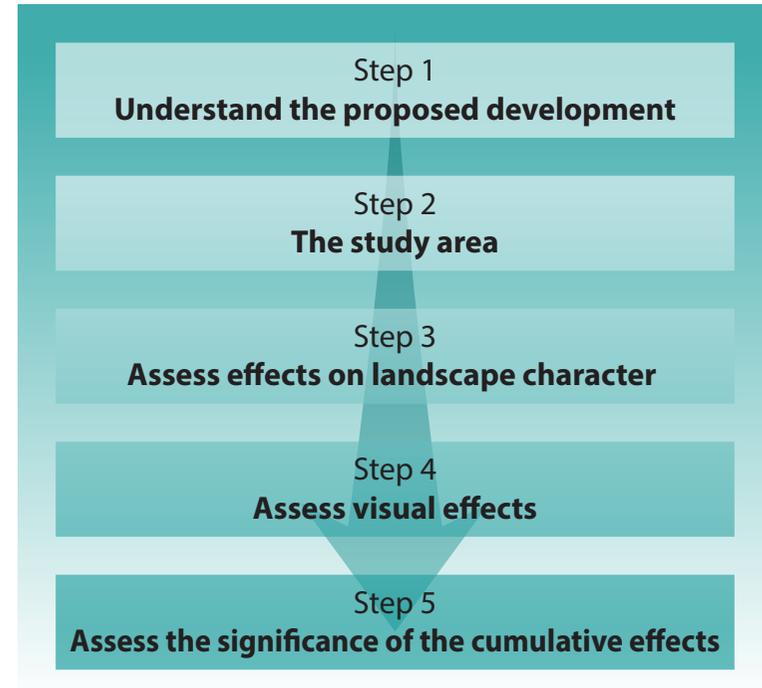
Introduction	3
Step 1 - Understand the proposed development	4
Step 2 - The cumulative assessment study area	4
Step 3 - Assessing cumulative effects on landscape character	5
Landscape Sensitivity	5
Magnitude of change to the landscape character	5
Table 1 – Reference table: Assessing magnitude of change to landscape character	6
Step 4 - Assessing visual effects	7
Visual Sensitivity	7
Table 2 – Levels of susceptibility of visual receptors	7
Table 3 – Guide for identifying the number of viewpoints to assess.	8
Magnitude of visual change	8
Table 4 – Reference table: Assessing the magnitude of cumulative visual change	8
Step 5 - Assessing the significance of the cumulative effects	10
Table 5 – Matrix combining sensitivity of the receptor with the magnitude of cumulative effect	10
Appendix 1 - Assessment tables	11
Cumulative effects upon landscape character	11
Cumulative combined visual effects from static viewpoints	11
Cumulative sequential visual effects as you move through the landscape on roads and public rights of way	12
Appendix 2 - Process checklist	13
Appendix 3 - Glossary	13
For more information	14

Introduction

The need for this guidance

- 1 Cornwall Council recognises the many benefits created by generating energy through renewable sources and supports the development of large-scale solar photovoltaic development (solar farms), where they do not create significantly adverse effects.
- 2 In recent years interest in generating energy from solar farms has increased. This has increased desire to provide clarity on the cumulative impact assessment process for those parties interested in the planning application decision-making process. This guidance provides a structured process to assist landscape and planning professionals in making and judging their assessments; and the enable non-professionals to engage in the process.
- 3 Cumulative impacts can be defined as the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments, or as the combined effect of a set of developments taken together. The cumulative impact of a solar farm on landscape and visual amenity are the product of :
 - the distance between the solar farms
 - the distance over which they are visible
 - the overall character of the landscape and its sensitivity to solar farms
 - the siting and design of the solar farms and
 - the way in which the landscape is experienced¹
- 4 Solar farm developments need to be assessed in conjunction with solar farms and sometimes other forms of development. The scale of a cumulative impact assessment should be appropriate for the particular circumstances of the proposed solar farm. The assessment of cumulative effects is only one of a number of factors considered in the determination of a planning application.

The Cumulative Impact Assessment Process



Note: Appendix 2 provides a checklist of questions which acts as a quick reference guide to the process.

¹ Scottish Natural Heritage (2012) Assessing the Cumulative Impact Of Onshore Wind Energy Developments

Step 1 - Understand the proposed development

The format of the submitted cumulative impact assessment

- 5 Cumulative impact assessments are normally undertaken by the application and submitted in support of the planning application. An application subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)² is likely to be supported by a Cumulative Impact Assessment. A non-EIA scheme may only go as far as making a statement regarding potential cumulative effects. The scale of the cumulative effects created by a proposed solar farm will vary depending upon the size of the proposed development. In both cases, agreeing the scope of the assessment with the Case Officer will help prevent problems later.

What should the cumulative assessment cover?

- 6 The landscape and visual effects are normally assessed separately in a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). Where such assessments are required, the LVIA will describe and assess the effects of the solar farm with those solar farms which are already operational or are being constructed. This assessment forms the landscape baseline. The Cumulative Impact Assessment looks at the potentially significant effects of the proposal in combination with other development in the area.

² Developments which are likely to create significant environmental effects will need to produce more detailed assessments in line with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations

Step 2 - The cumulative assessment study area

When is a cumulative impact assessment needed?

- 7 Cumulative impacts should be assessed where a proposed development involves :
- a new development in combination with one or more existing or approved but unbuilt developments;
 - an extension to an existing or approved but unbuilt development;
 - more than one development proposed at the same time within an area;
 - or any combination of the above³.

What development is included within the study area?

- 8 Cumulative effects are not only experienced between developments of the same type, i.e. multiple solar farms, they can also be experienced in combination with other development in the surrounding landscape, including industrial buildings and other forms of renewable energy. The scale of cumulative assessment study area will be dependent on the size of the proposed solar farm and the number and scale of other developments in the area.
- 9 The cumulative impact assessment must consider developments that are already operational, those which have been granted planning permission but are not yet built. It is at the discretion of the Council as to whether the cumulative impact assessment should also consider proposals which are currently under consideration (pending a decision or appeal and subject to an EIA screening request). This will need to be discussed with the Case Officer.

How big should the study area be?

- 10 The area to be considered as part of a cumulative impact assessment is usually larger than when assessing a single solar farm in isolation. It should cover the area where there is potential for combined effects from the proposed development and other nearby developments. Larger applications are likely to have produced Cumulative Zones of Theoretical Visibility (CZTVs)⁴ which will assist in the determination of the study area. It is best practice to agree the scope of these assessments with the Case Officer prior to the submission of the planning application. The size, design and location of the solar farm will influence the area over which it is likely to create significant effects, as will the proximity of any highways (which could result in sequential cumulative effects). The following simplified method is a good guide to how this is determined.

³ Scottish Natural Heritage 2012 - 'Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments'

⁴ Cumulative Zones of Theoretical Visibility shade areas on a map base from where it may be possible to see the proposed development (based on a bare ground scenario, not taking into consideration built form and vegetation)

Step 3 - Assessing cumulative effects on landscape character

What are cumulative landscape effects?

- 11 Scottish Natural Heritage guidance⁵ describes cumulative landscape effects as arising when two or more developments affect the physical fabric of the landscape components (e.g. removing or changing woodland, rural roads, hedges), or the character of the landscape (by introducing new features). Such effects can be both positive and negative.

What is the process to assess significance of the cumulative change?

- 12 To be able to arrive at a decision as to whether cumulative change to landscape character is, or isn't significant you must determine:
1. what the changes (effects) will be (Step 1 & 2 of this guide)
 2. how sensitive the affected landscape character is to the cumulative change
 3. what the magnitude of the change will be in terms of their scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility.

Landscape Sensitivity

Which Landscape Character Area is the development within?

- 13 Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Landscape Character Study 2007 provides an overview of existing landscape character. This Study is available on the Council's website. The sensitivity of each of Cornwall's Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) to solar farms is detailed with Annex 1 of the Cornwall Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Document. Annex 1 also sets out a strategy for solar farm development in the LCA which gives a clear guide as to whether or not additional solar farm development can be accommodated in an area.
- 14 Four possible strategies for the deployment of solar farms are described in Annex 1. These are summarised below.

Strategy 1 - Landscape without solar farm development

- In general there should be no solar farms in these LCAs
- Some LCAs have capacity for very occasional solar farms smaller than 1 hectare in size
- Some views of solar farm (which are located in different LCAs) which may be acceptable

Strategy 2 - Landscape with occasional solar farm development

- Solar farms will be present, including some minor cumulative effects may be experienced in LCAs with this strategy
- Developments will be clearly separated
- Small parts of the LCA may be able to accept more concentrated clusters of solar farms (these must not define the character of the whole LCA)
- Solar farms maybe visible in more than one direction
- Solar farms will not have a defining influence on the character of the LCA

Strategy 3 - Landscape with solar farm development

- Several solar farms will be present with cumulative effects experienced.
- Developments will generally be separated
- Pockets of higher density solar farm clusters may be accommodated in parts of the LCA (these must not define the character of the whole LCA)
- Solar farms will be visible in more than one direction
- Solar farms will influence, but not overwhelm the character of the LCA

Strategy 4 - A solar farm landscape

- Numerous solar farms in an LCA with significant cumulative effects
- Solar farms visible in the majority of directions
- Solar farms are the overwhelming influence on character of the LCA

- 15 Each of Cornwall LCAs has been given one of these 4 strategies, based on an assessment its sensitivity to solar farms. Where the introduction of a solar farm(s) means that the next strategy up (e.g. strategy 3 rather than 2) best describes the situation in the LCA, the LCA is deemed to have exceeded its recommended capacity. This should trigger a higher level of sensitivity for the relevant area of landscape.
- 16 Where new solar farms are being proposed close to the boundary of a LCA the capacity of more than one LCA may need to be considered in the assessment

Magnitude of change to the landscape character

What is cumulative magnitude of change to landscape character?

- 17 This deals with the size, scale, geographical area, duration and reversibility of the cumulative landscape effects upon the wider landscape character area; the quality and condition of the landscape, individual features and elements within the landscape; and the aesthetic and perceptual appreciation of the area.

⁵ Scottish Natural Heritage (2012) Assessing the Cumulative Impact Of Onshore Wind Energy Developments

18 To determine the magnitude of change (to landscape character) you will need to look at:

- the extent of the landscape elements which will be changed or lost
- the proportion of the landscape as a whole that this represents
- the contribution that these elements make to the wider landscape character
- how the proposed development relates to the existing pattern of development (including the number, design, layout, size, scale and distance between developments)

19 Table 1 (below) provides the basis for an objective assessment of the likely magnitude of change. This is intended as a guide to assist in gaining an overview of the magnitude of change. Other tools may be used. Your results can be recorded in a blank table provided in Appendix 1

**Table 1 – Reference table:
Assessing magnitude of change to landscape character**

NOTES:

1. The information given against each rating (low, moderate and high) in the table is for illustrative purposes and is intended to guide the assessor rather than provide a definitive framework for assessing magnitude of change.
2. Assessment should also cover those solar farms which are not yet built (as agreed with the Case Officer).

Landscape Change Size/scale/ compatibility	Magnitude of change		
	Low	Moderate	High
SS1 - What is the extent of the change to the landscape features / characteristics? And how important are these features to the landscape character?	A minor degree of change to landscape features The landscape features affected have little significance in terms of the wider landscape character	A moderate change to landscape features, moderate in extent The landscape features affected are considered key to the wider landscape	An extensive and substantial change or removal of key individual, or combinations of landscape features The landscape features affected are key to and positively contribute to the wider landscape character
SS2 - How compatible is the proposal with the landscape character?	The development is compatible with the landscape in terms of size, scale and pattern etc.	The development is incongruous within the landscape in terms of size, scale and pattern etc.	The further introduction of elements totally uncharacteristic / incompatible with the wider landscape in terms of size, scale and pattern etc.
Geographical Extent			
GE1 - What is the extent of the area of potential cumulative landscape effects as a proportion of the Landscape Character Area (LCA)?	Small or relatively localised change in the LCA.	Notable but not extensive change to the LCA; or to a more intensive change over a smaller part of the LCA.	An extensive area of the LCA is affected; or an intensive change over a significant part of the LCA.
Duration & reversibility			
DR1 - What is the duration of the application permission?	Less than 5 years	Between 6 and 19 years	20 years or more
DR2 - Is it possible to reverse the effects of the development after the period of the permission has expired?	The proposal can be removed and reinstatement will not create residual adverse effects upon the landscape character.	The landscape can be partially restored when the proposal is decommissioned.	It is impossible to partly or wholly restore the landscape (when the proposal is decommissioned) to an equivalent 'base line' ⁷ quality.

Step 4 - Assessing visual effects

What is cumulative visual change?

20 Cumulative effects on visual amenity are summarise below:

- **Combined visibility**
 - in combination - the observer is able to see two or more developments from one stationary viewpoint, without moving his or her head (a 90 degree arc of view is used).
 - in succession - the observer whilst stationary, can see two or more development when they turn their head.
- **Sequential visibility** - the observer moves to other viewpoints to see different developments. Typically routes that will be assessed include roads and public rights of way.

What is the process to assess significance of the cumulative change?

21 To be able to arrive at a decision as to whether cumulative change to visual amenity is, or isn't significant you must determine

1. what the changes (effects) will be (Step 1 and 2 of this Guide)
2. who will be affected by the changes
3. how sensitive these individuals are to the potential cumulative change
4. what is the magnitude of the cumulative visual change. This considers the numbers of other developments present in the landscape, their design, layout, direction, distance, and duration of their lifetime.

Visual Sensitivity

Sensitivity of the visual receptor⁶

22 The assessment of sensitivity of the visual receptor based on a judgement of the following:

- How the people viewing the landscape might be affected by the proposed change
- The purpose (e.g. recreation, passing through a landscape, residence or employment)
- The context of their view (e.g. location, time of day, degree of exposure).

⁶ Visual receptor is a term used to describe the person or persons who will experience the change in view brought about by the prosed development

23 Different visual receptors will have different levels of susceptibility to changes created by solar farms. By providing some examples, Table 2 (below) offers some guidance on the different levels.

Table 2 - Levels of susceptibility of visual receptors

	Levels of viewer susceptibility		
	Low	Moderate	High
People who will perceive the change	Users of 'A' class roads	Vehicles using noted 'Scenic Routes'	Residents
	Train passengers	Those working outdoors	Recreational users – walkers horse riders, cyclists with an interest focused on the landscape
	People at their place of work	Users of 'B' class and smaller roads in the open countryside	Visitors to popular natural / historic features or attractions which maybe mentioned in guidebooks or on tourist maps(such as standing stones, ancient woodland)
		Visitors to tourist theme park attractions (such as Paradise Park, Flambards, Crealy etc)	Visitor holiday accommodation

Assessing the suitability of the submitted viewpoints and sequential routes

24 The number and location of static viewpoints, and the routes to be assessed in the sequential assessment should be identified by the applicant and it is best practice to agree these with the Case Officer prior to submission. The number of viewpoints assessed should be relative to the scale of the solar farm, and the number of other developments within the wider landscape. The use of early stage cumulative ZTVs is a valuable tool to determine the choice of static viewpoints for the assessment. As a guide the following is an indication of the number of viewpoints the developer is likely to provide for the cumulative impact assessment.

Table 3 – Guide for identifying the number of viewpoints to assess.

Number of other developments to be included in the Assessment within the study area	Typical recommendation of cumulative viewpoints
1 or 2	1-2
3 to 5	2-4
6 to 8	4-6
9 to 12	6-8
13 +	9-12

In addition, the viewpoints should:

- Represent a diversity of viewers;
- Include residential properties, areas used for recreation, Public Rights of Way (PROW), open access land, key routes, locations detailed in guide books, important features in the landscape, both natural and built (where there is public access);
- Locations noted for their long distance views, vistas, or particular focal points in the landscape;
- Different categories of road, and railways (where appropriate).

Magnitude of visual change

What is the visual cumulative magnitude of change?

25 Each of the cumulative visual effects of the development need to be assessed in terms of the size, scale, geographical area, duration and reversibility. Visual magnitude of change will need to look at:

- the scale of change in the view
- whether the developments integrate or contrast with the existing landscape
- whether the proposed development appears as an extension to an existing solar farm or introduces development into a new part of the view
- the compatibility of the developments (i.e. design)
- the position of the solar farms in the view (e.g. the distance from the viewer or location relative to the skyline)
- the distance over which the cumulative effects would be visible, and for how long (combined and sequential)
- the frequency and duration of views of solar farms when travelling along routes

- the nature of the cumulative view, whether this includes the full extent of the solar farms, or seen partially, or glimpsed, or a combination of these
- the impact of seasonal changes in vegetation
- whether the cumulative visual effects reversible

26 Table 4 (below) provides the basis for an objective assessment of the likely magnitude of change. This is intended as a guide to assist in gaining an overview of the magnitude of change. Other tools may be used.

Table 4 – Reference table: Assessing the magnitude of cumulative visual change

NOTE:

1. The information given against each rating (low, moderate and high) in the table is for illustrative purposes and is intended to guide the assessor rather than provide a definitive framework for assessing magnitude of change.
2. Assessment should also cover those solar farm which are not yet built (as agreed with the Case Officer).
3. Complete this assessment for each fixed viewpoint, but where the question is not relevant do not provide a rating.

Visual change Number, prominence, compatibility, scale	Ratings for magnitude of change		
	Low	Moderate	High
Combined Visibility Assessment			
Looking directly at the development, (assuming the proposal site is visible), in the same 90 degree field of view (standing still), how many of the other relevant developments are visible?	Only one other relevant development will be visible closely associated with the proposal	The proposal and more than one other relevant developments will be visible within the 90o view	The proposal and frequent number of other relevant developments will be visible spread across the whole 90o view with some developments considered close to the proposed development.
Looking directly at the development, (assuming the proposal site is visible) turn around 360 degrees on the spot, how many of the other relevant developments are visible?	Other relevant developments will be visible in 2 directions and the proposal is within one of these views	The proposal and multiple other relevant developments occupy approximately 50% of the 360° view and the proposal is in one of these views	Multiple relevant developments would be visible in more than 50% of the 360 degree view and the proposal is in one of these views, creating a feeling of being surrounded on all sides

Visual change	Ratings for magnitude of change		
	Low	Moderate	High
Number, prominence, compatibility, scale			
Are any of these combined interactions (above two stages) prominent? <i>Consider distance and the way in which landform may add to the visual prominence (e.g. where development is located on the skyline) and where landform, vegetation and built features may serve to screen the development.</i>	The development proposal in association with the existing relevant development generally results in distant views where the development is not considered prominent. Developments are to some extent screened by the landform or vegetation	The development proposal in association with the existing relevant development results in a mixed view with some nearby / prominent and some distant developments, overall the prominence of development is not overwhelming to the landscape setting. Landform and vegetation do not play a significant screening role	The development proposal in association with the existing relevant development results in a view where the developments appear to predominate and dominate / define the view. A number of these developments will be clearly visible, possibly including prominent skyline views. Landform and vegetation will play little role in screening the development.
Are the interactions between the proposed and existing development compatible with and harmonious within the landscape or are views generally being eroded or changed to a more industrial character?	The development proposal in association with the existing relevant development generally fits sympathetically into the landscape, respecting pattern and scale and is not considered jarring. The visual appreciation of the landscape may be slightly affected.	The development proposal in association with the existing relevant development is at odds with the landscape, with some disturbance to pattern and scale. The visual appreciation of the landscape may be affected as the view may be changing to a more industrial character	The development proposal in association with the existing relevant development is incompatible with the landscape setting. Developments are generally out of scale and disruptive of the landscape pattern. The landscape may appear cluttered and it's overall character changed to an industrial landscape as a result of the combined visual effect of developments
Does the proposed development associate with any existing relevant development(s) to create the appearance of a development which is clearly 'out of scale' with its landscape setting	The development proposal in association with the existing relevant development(s) creates a minor extension but this is barely noticeable	The development proposal in association with the existing relevant development(s) creates the appearance of a moderately extensive and visually prominent development	The development proposal in association with the existing relevant development(s) creates the appearance of a very extensive and visually prominent development, obviously out of scale with the landscape in which it is set

Visual change	Ratings for magnitude of change		
	Low	Moderate	High
Number, prominence, compatibility, scale			
Duration and reversibility of the development			
What is the duration of the application permission?	Less than 5 years	Between 6 and 19 years	20 years or more
Is it possible to reverse the visual effects of the development after the period of the permission has expired?	The visual effects can be wholly reversed (when the proposal is decommissioned) to an equivalent 'base line' ¹ quality	The visual effects can be partially reversed (when the proposal is decommissioned) to an equivalent 'base line' ⁷ quality	It is impossible to partly or wholly reverse the visual effects (when the proposal is decommissioned) to an equivalent 'base line' ⁷ quality
Sequential visibility assessment complete this assessment for key / sensitive routes			
When travelling on key routes e.g. public roads, bridleways, public footpaths, to what extent will the proposal in conjunction with the other relevant developments have a visual impact?	The proposal and other relevant developments can only be seen occasionally or seen for a short time (overall 30% or less of the journey time) and are often not prominent in these views	The proposal and other relevant developments are regularly seen or seen for a significant amount of time (overall 30 – 70% of the journey time) and are often quite prominent in the view	The proposal and other relevant developments are frequently seen or seen for a significant amount of time (over 70% of the journey time) and are often very prominent in the view

Step 5 - Assessing the significance of the cumulative effects

Significance of cumulative change

27 Steps 3 and 4 explained how to determine the level of sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptor, and the cumulative magnitude of change to each. Step 5 explains as part of the overview how to determine whether the cumulative landscape and visual effects are significant. The following matrix can be used to combine the results to combine the results of steps 3 and 4 to give an indication of the level of significance of the cumulative effects. A blank table has been provided in Appendix 1 to allow you to record your results.

Table 5 – Matrix combining sensitivity of the receptor with the magnitude of cumulative effect

Sensitivity of landscape or visual receptor	Landscape or visual magnitude of change		
	Low	Moderate	High
Low	Low	Low Moderate	Moderate
Moderate	Low Moderate	Moderate	Moderate High
High	Moderate	Moderate High	High

■ Indicates a significant effect

- 28 The following examples give an illustration the way the matrix can be used to help form a judgement about the overall significance of the cumulative effects:
- where the landscape character is rated of low sensitivity (Step 3) and the magnitude of change is deemed moderate (Table 3), it is not likely that there will be a significant cumulative effect upon the landscape character; or
 - where the person viewing the landscape is considered of high sensitivity (e.g. they are going for a walk along a public right of way), and the magnitude of change to the view is deemed to be high (Table 5), it is likely that the cumulative visual effect will be significant.

Interpreting the Scores for Significance

29 Having arrived at an overall significance level for the proposed development, the final stage in the assessment process is to form a judgement on whether the cumulative impact is likely to be acceptable or not. The scenarios below give an example of how the various scores for significance could be interpreted. These scenarios are intended for illustrative purposes only.

Scenario 1 – The significance levels for each criterion assessed (landscape and visual) are predominantly Moderate High or High.

- This means the proposal has the potential to create unacceptable cumulative effects.

Scenario 2 – The significance levels for each criterion assessed (landscape and visual) are predominantly Moderate, but one of the viewpoints records a High rating.

- This means the proposal has some potential to create significant cumulative effects, but that one particular viewpoint is very sensitive to the cumulative change. The relative importance of this viewpoint may be critical in reaching a judgement about whether or not the proposal is acceptable. For example, an important historic vantage point visited by a great many people throughout the year might attract greater weight than a viewpoint of relatively low importance that is not visited frequently.

Scenario 3 – The significance levels for each criterion assessed (landscape and visual) are varied.

- In this instance it will be important to look at each of the criteria assessed (landscape and visual) to judge whether they are of individual importance, sufficient to influence the overall judgement about the acceptability of the proposal. In particular look at the importance of those criteria which have high levels of significance. If multiple LCAs are affected, the sensitivities (including the LCA strategies explained in Step 3) should be carefully considered.

Scenario 4 – The significance levels for each criterion assessed (landscape and visual) are Low to Moderate.

- Low to Moderate cumulative effects are not likely to be significant.

Appendix 1 - Assessment tables

The tables have been provided as a guide to help record your findings and build up the assessment as you go.

Cumulative effects upon landscape character

Complete this table recording:

1. the sensitivity of the landscape in the first column;
2. the magnitude of cumulative change to the landscape character as a rating of Low Moderate or High;
3. combining the sensitivity and magnitude ratings using the matrix in Table 6 to reach a conclusion upon whether the effect is considered significant.

Landscape sensitivity	Landscape change	Rating for magnitude of change			Significance Rating
		Low	Moderate	High	
	Size/scale/compatibility				
	What is the extent of the change to the landscape features / characteristics? And how important are these features to the landscape character?				
	How compatible is the proposal with the landscape character? Has the character of the landscape been changed?				
	Geographical Extent				
	What is the extent of the area of potential cumulative landscape effects in relation to the Landscape Character Area (LCA) or if applicable, more than one LCA?				
	Duration & reversibility (DR)				
	What is the duration of the application permission?				
	Is it possible to reverse the effects of the development after the period of the permission has expired?				

Cumulative combined visual effects from static viewpoints

Complete this table for each viewpoint which forms the cumulative visual assessment, record:

1. the visual sensitivity of the person(s) who will perceive the change from this viewpoint in the first column
2. the magnitude of cumulative visual change as a rating of Low Moderate or High
3. combine the sensitivity and magnitude ratings using the matrix in Table 6 to reach a conclusion upon whether the effect is considered significant.

Visual Sensitivity	Visual change	Ratings for magnitude of change			Significance
		Low	Moderate	High	
	How many of the other relevant developments are visible in the same 90 degree view as the proposal?				
	How many of the other relevant developments are visible in a 360 degree view?				
	How prominent are these interactions?				
	Does the proposed development associate with any existing development to create the appearance of a development which is clearly 'out of scale' with its landscape setting?				
	Duration and reversibility of the development				
	What is the duration of the application permission?				
	Is it possible to reverse the visual effects of the development after the period of the permission has expired?				

Cumulative sequential visual effects as you move through the landscape on roads and public rights of way

Complete this table for selected key / important routes, the number of routes to be assessed should be agreed with the Case Officer and will only cover the routes where there are likely to be significant visual effects. Record:

1. in the first column, the visual sensitivity of the person(s) who will perceive the change as they move along this route
2. the magnitude of cumulative visual change they will experience with the addition of the proposal as a rating of Low Moderate or High
3. a final level of significance in the last column by combining the sensitivity and magnitude ratings using the matrix in Table 6 to reach a conclusion upon whether the sequential effect(s) is considered significant.

Landscape Sensitivity (see table 2)	Visual change	Ratings for magnitude of change			Significance
		Low	Moderate	High	
	Route 1 When travelling on key routes e.g. public roads, bridleways, public footpaths, to what extent will the proposal in conjunction with the other relevant developments have a visual impact?				
	Route 2 When travelling on key routes e.g. public roads, bridleways, public footpaths, to what extent will the proposal in conjunction with the other relevant developments have a visual impact?				

Appendix 2 - Process checklist

The following process checklist poses a list of questions for each stage in the process as a reminder of the key considerations.

Step 1 – Understand the proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What size is the solar farm? • Does it form one continuous development? • What is the landscape like in which the proposal lies?
Step 2 – The study area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the applicant demonstrated how they have determined the extent of their assessment area?
Step 3 – Landscape Character	<p>Landscape Sensitivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the sensitivity assessment for the LCA in which the site is located (Annex 1)? • If the site is close to an adjacent LCA, note the sensitivity assessment for that LCA too (Annex 1). • What is the strategy for the LCA/s in Annex 1? • Does the proposed solar farm fit with this strategy, or exceed the recommendation? <p>Magnitude of change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does the proposed development fit with the existing pattern of development (size scale, and distance between solar farms)? • What features will be lost and how important are they to the wider landscape? • How much of the landscape will be affected? • How long will the changes last?
Step 4 – Visual Impact	<p>Visual Sensitivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the photographic viewpoints - do you think these are appropriate (Table 3 combined with a visit to the site will help you check them)? • How sensitive do you think the views are to solar farms? (Table 2). <p>Magnitude of change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does the proposed development fit with the existing pattern of development (size scale, and distance between solar farms)? • Over what distance will the cumulative effects be experienced? • How long will the changes last?
Step 5 - Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do your findings tell you about (i) the level of significance of the effects and (ii) whether those effects will be acceptable or unacceptable in planning terms?

Appendix 3 - Glossary

AGLV	Area of Great Landscape Value
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CLVIA	Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
Cumulative effect	The summation of effects that result from changes caused by a development in conjunction with other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions.
Cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility (CZTV)	This represents the area(s) over which there may be visibility of multiple wind energy developments, based on digital terrain data. This information is usually presented on a map base and represents a bare ground scenario so does not allow for built form and vegetation. Actual visibility will need to be confirmed by visiting the landscape in which the developments are located.
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations from the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 where the identification, prediction and evaluation of potentially significant environmental effects is undertaken, with a view to the reduction of negative impacts.
Landscape character	The distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that occur in a particular landscape and how these are perceived. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.
LCA	Landscape Character Area. A single unique discrete geographical area of a particular landscape type taken from the 2007 Landscape Character Assessment.
Landscape sensitivity	The relative extent to which the character and quality of the landscape is susceptible to change as a result of a particular type of development.
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
Receptor	Either the landscape which is affected by the cumulative change or the person who experiences the cumulative change in the view of the landscape
Skyline	The outline of a range of hills, ridge or group of buildings seen against the sky.
Wire lines	Also known as wire frames, or computer generated line drawings which are digital terrain models that illustrate a three dimensional shape of the landscape

For more information

Email: renewableenergy@cornwall.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 1234 151

www.cornwall.gov.uk/renewablespd

If you would like this information
in another format or language please contact:
Cornwall Council, County Hall
Treyew Road, Truro TR1 3AY
Telephone: 0300 1234 100
Email: enquiries@cornwall.gov.uk
www.cornwall.gov.uk