

Technical Appendix 18.2: National, Regional and Local Policy

APPENDIX 18.2: Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

In terms of landscape and relevance to the proposed development, the National Planning Policy Framework advises that:

- developments should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (s135c)¹.
- planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (s187a).
- Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues (s189).

Regional and Local Policy

Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030²

The proposed development is located within the Cornwall Local Plan area and will need to be consistent with the strategic objectives and general policies relevant to landscape as summarised below:

- **Objective 10:** Enhance and reinforce local natural landscape and historic character and distinctiveness and raise the quality of development through: respecting the distinctive character of Cornwall's diverse landscapes; Excellence in design that manages change to maintain the distinctive character and quality of Cornwall.
- **Policy 2 – Spatial Strategy** (1) Respecting and enhancing quality of place: Proposals should maintain and respect the special character of Cornwall recognising that all urban and rural landscapes, designated and undesignated, are important by:
 - a) Ensuring that the design of development is high quality and demonstrates a cultural, physical and aesthetic understanding of its location;
 - b) Considering the impact of development upon the biodiversity, beauty and diversity of landscape and seascape, character and setting of settlements, wealth of natural resources, agricultural, historic and recreational value of Cornwall;
 - c) Identifying the value and sensitivity, of the character and importance of landscapes, biodiversity and geodiversity and historic assets;
 - d) Protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic landscape, heritage, cultural, biodiversity and geodiversity assets of Cornwall in recognition of their international, national and local status, in accordance with national legislation and policy, as amplified by the other policies of this plan.

General Policies / Advice

- **Policy 12: Design:** development must ensure it maintains and enhances its distinctive natural and historic character. Design process should clearly consider the existing context:
 - (1a) Character – create places with their own identity, promote local distinctiveness while not preventing or discouraging innovation. Being of an appropriate scale, density, layout height and mass with a clear understanding and response to its landscape, seascape and townscape setting layout to provide continuity with the existing built form.
 - (1b) Layout – provide continuity with the existing built form and respect and work with the natural and historic environment
- **Policy 13: Development standards:**
 - (5) Avoid adverse impacts either individually or cumulatively, resulting from [...] visual effects. Adverse impacts should be mitigated during construction, operation or restoration stage.
- **Policy 14: Renewable and low carbon energy**

- (1d) do not have overshadowing or overbearing effect on nearby habitations
- (5) when considering proposals for renewables that impact upon AONB setting – apply other relevant policies.

- **Policy 23: Natural Environment:**

- (1) Proposals need to sustain local distinctiveness and character and protect and where possible enhance environment.
- (2) Landscapes – development should be of an appropriate scale, mass and design that recognises and respects landscape character of both designated and undesignated landscapes. Development must take into account and respect the sensitivity and capacity of the landscape asset, considering cumulative impact and the wish to maintain dark skies and tranquillity in areas that are relatively undisturbed, using guidance from the Cornwall Landscape Character Assessment and supported by the descriptions of Areas of Great Landscape Value. In areas of undeveloped coast, outside main settlements, only development requiring a coastal location and that cannot be achieved elsewhere, will be acceptable.
- (2a) AONB – great weight to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty within or affecting the setting of the AONB.
- (2b) The Heritage Coast and Areas of Great Landscape Value Development within the Heritage Coast and / or Areas of Great Landscape Value should maintain the character and distinctive landscape qualities of such areas.

Points to note in relation to this assessment:

- Para: 2.146: **All landscapes matter** – not just those designated – attention to distinctiveness and character of whole of Cornwall is important and reflected in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). A range of evidence informs decisions on the impact on landscapes including well documented Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). Guidance and evidence available in: LCA; AONB Management Plan; WHS MP; Conservation Area Appraisals; Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Urban Survey and HE record.
- Para: 2.15: **Heritage Coast** – proposals must respect the natural beauty of the coast including heritage features – facilitate and enhance the enjoyment of the coast while complementing the natural beauty/features.
- Para: 2.153: **AGLV** – high landscape quality with strong/distinctive characteristics which make them particularly sensitive to development – primary objective is conservation and enhancement of their landscape quality and individual character.
- Para: 2.154: **The Undeveloped Coasts** – open stretches for the enjoyment of all – understand in combination with seascape character assessments
- Para: 2.157: **Seascape Character Assessment** – overlap with LCA – should consider atmospheric conditions/human use/ features/SW features/ coastal processes/ sunken and buried characteristics – Cornwall Council developing an SCA alongside the MMO.

Cornwall AONB Management Plan 2022 - 2027³

The following general policies are relevant to the proposed development:

- Policy LS-P1: Understand clearly the social, environmental and economic benefits of landscape and seascape and ensure this is reflected in decision making at every level, supported by comprehensive information and evidence.
- Policy LS-P2: Approach the conservation and enhancement of the AONB according to landscape-led principles based upon landscape and seascape character as required by Planning Policy and Guidance.
- Policy LS-P3: Safeguard and enhance characteristic high levels of peace and tranquillity in the AONB with dark night skies by minimising noise, intrusive development and light pollution.

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2024). National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

² Cornwall Council (2016). Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030. Adopted November 2016. Available at: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/ozhj5k0z/adopted-local-plan-strategic-policies-2016.pdf>

³ Cornwall AONB Management Plan 2022-2027. Available at: <https://cornwall-landscape.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/plan-fixed-and-wheel-XS.pdf>. Note that the Cornwall AONB is now referred to as Cornwall National Landscape.

- Policy LS-P4: Take a landscape-led approach to the management of the historic landscapes, settlements and seascapes of the AONB, using Landscape Characterisation, Historic Landscape Characterisation and Historic Seascape Assessment as key tools.
- Policy SCE-P3: Value and protect the landscape and seascape of Cornwall AONB. Support sustainable management of tourism, where this does not adversely impact the landscape character of the AONB.
- Policy PD-P11: Any development in, or within the setting of, the AONB must be sustainable development that:
 - maintains local distinctiveness and contributes to the sense of place; it should respond to local historical, cultural and landscape context and enhance and feel part of the existing landscape. This can include responding to both built and natural attributes, for instance using characteristic local construction methods, built forms, field patterns and landscapes. It may also include retaining or enhancing key views, landscapes and buildings that provide a tangible link to Cornish culture;
 - is appropriately located, and addresses landscape sensitivity and capacity being of a scale, density, layout, height and mass with a clear understanding and response to its landscape, seascape and townscape setting;
 - reflects vernacular scale and detailing avoiding the uncharacteristic introduction of large scale dwellings with very extensive glazed elevations and imposing presence
 - is compatible with the distinctive character of the location described by the Landscape Character Assessment, with particular regard to the setting of settlements and the rural landscape;
 - does not compromise the special qualities and characteristics of the AONB designation as outlined for each local section and in relevant landscape character assessments;
 - respects and does not diminish dark skies, designated or otherwise, and maintains tranquillity. Any development that leads to increase light spill will not be supported.
- Policy PD-P14: Renewable energy technologies and associated infrastructure, both onshore and offshore, should be of a scale and design able to be accommodated within the AONB and its setting. Any such development should adopt landscape led principles to guard against landscape, visual and cumulative impacts, in accordance with the evidence base contained within the local relevant renewable policies.

The management plan divides the AONB into 12 local sections. The South Coast Central section and the South Coast Western section of the National Landscape fall within the study area as shown in Figure 18.8, Technical Appendix 18.1.

Section policies relevant to this assessment are summarised as follows:

The South Coast Central section spans an area of approximately 16,000 ha extending from Porthpean near St Austell to the Roseland Peninsular. Section policies of relevance include:

- SCC-P6: Require protection of the landscape setting of key landmarks such as St Mawes Castle, St Anthony's Lighthouse and others from negative impacts by new development including housing and lighting and seek enhancement of their settings
- SCC-P8: Ensure that the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the AONB is fully taken into account in development proposals for expansion of Truro, Falmouth and Penryn and at smaller settlements in order to retain the character of the Fal Ria landscape. Particular care should be taken to ensure that no development is permitted inside or outside the AONB, which would damage its natural beauty, character and special qualities.

The South Coast Western Section spans an area of approximately 19,258 ha from Lizard to Marazion, encompassing the Helford River. A relatively small area falls within the study area. No specific section policies are identified as being relevant to the type of development proposed.

Falmouth Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2030⁴

In terms of landscape and visual amenity, the Plan supports the economic plan prepared by the Falmouth Coastal Community team that aims to:

'take Falmouth forward into the 21st century through a strategy that builds on the town's unique and traditional sea-port character whilst providing exciting new opportunities for housing , retail, tourism, industry and bringing improved environment and facilities for its residents.' (Falmouth Town Council, 2016).

Fundamental to the plan is the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and the maritime and coastal character (pp.16). The following policies are relevant to this assessment:

- Policy DG 2 requires proposals for new development to incorporate high quality design in terms of its format, scale, massing, articulation and use of materials and other external finishes. Development proposals should demonstrate the application of the following specific guidance (The Cornwall Design Guide and Chief Planning Officer's Advice Note on Good Design in Cornwall).
- Policy DG 3 As appropriate to their scale and location development proposals should respond positively to local identity and distinctiveness using the Falmouth Character Areas.

⁴ Falmouth Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 to 2030. Post Examination Version March 2020. Available at: www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/13sfqeim/falmouth-neighbourhood-development-plan-adopted-web.pdf