

LVIA CHECKLIST

Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

For Developments in Welsh Protected Landscapes

Purpose: A practical guide for developers and clients commissioning Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment work in Wales' National Parks and AONBs (National Landscapes).

Audience: Non-technical clients needing to understand what to commission and what quality standards to expect.

Authority: Based on Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3), Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Notes, and Planning Policy Wales Edition 12.

SECTION 1: BEFORE YOU COMMISSION

Do You Need an LVIa?

- Development in National Park (Eryri, Bannau Brycheiniog, Arfordir Penfro)
- Development in AONB/National Landscape (Anglesey, Llyn, Gower, etc.)
- Near Listed Buildings or in Conservation Area
- LPA has requested landscape assessment

Appointing the Right Professional

- Chartered Landscape Architect (CMLI qualification)
- Experience in Welsh protected landscapes
- Can provide examples of previous National Park/AONB work
- Professional Indemnity Insurance confirmed

Timing Matters

- Appoint landscape architect BEFORE finalizing site layout
- Allow landscape constraints to inform design from the start
- Schedule pre-application meeting with planning authority

SECTION 2: WHAT YOUR LVIa SHOULD INCLUDE

The Basics

- Clear statement of methodology (how assessment was done)
- Study area defined (typically 2-5km around site)
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility map (shows where site can be seen from)
- Site visit conducted in good weather/visibility

Understanding the Landscape

- Existing landscape character described
- LANDMAP data consulted (Wales' landscape baseline)
- Special landscape qualities identified (National Park/AONB)
- Planning policy context explained (Planning Policy Wales)

Understanding the Views

- Key viewpoints identified (roads, footpaths, homes, tourist areas)
- Viewpoint selection agreed with planning authority
- Photographs taken from agreed viewpoints
- Who will see the development explained (residents, visitors, road users)

SECTION 3: THE ASSESSMENT ITSELF

Landscape Effects (*How development changes landscape character*)

- Direct effects on site explained (trees removed, landform changed)
- Effects on wider landscape character assessed
- Effects on National Park/AONB special qualities addressed
- Significance of effects clearly stated (major/moderate/minor/negligible)

Visual Effects (*How development changes views*)

- Changes to views from key viewpoints described
- Effects on residential properties considered
- Effects on recreational routes assessed
- Significance of effects clearly stated

Cumulative Effects (*Combined with other developments*)

- Other nearby developments identified
- Combined visual effects assessed

SECTION 4: MITIGATION & SOLUTIONS

Design Responses

- How site layout responds to landscape constraints
- Building heights/materials chosen to minimize impact
- Existing trees/hedgerows retained where possible

Landscape Mitigation

- Screening planting proposed (native species appropriate to Wales)
- Timeframes for planting maturity stated
- Long-term landscape management plan included
- Residual effects after mitigation explained

SECTION 5: VISUAL MATERIALS

Essential Plans & Graphics

- Location plan showing site and study area
- Visibility map (ZTV) showing theoretical visibility
- Viewpoint location map
- Landscape mitigation proposals plan

Photomontages/Visualizations (*if required*)

- Accurate representation of building heights/scale
- Verified views (technically accurate, not artistic impressions)
- Show proposed development from agreed viewpoints
- Show summer and winter views (if vegetation screening proposed)

SECTION 6: WALES-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Planning Policy

- Planning Policy Wales (PPW Edition 12) referenced
- TAN 6 considered (if applying for exceptional rural dwelling)
- Local Development Plan policies addressed

Statutory Consultees

- Natural Resources Wales (NRW) consulted if required
- Cadw consulted if heritage assets nearby
- National Park Authority consulted (if in National Park)

Biodiversity Integration

- Landscape strategy coordinated with ecologist's NBB assessment
- Native planting supports DECCA framework principles
- Green Infrastructure Statement included (mandatory for all applications)

SECTION 7: FINAL CHECKS BEFORE SUBMISSION

Quality Checks

- Report is clear and easy to understand (not overly technical)
- Conclusions clearly stated (not buried in jargon)
- Professional judgements explained with clear reasoning
- Mitigation measures are practical and deliverable
- Report suitable for planning officer review
- Evidence withstands statutory consultee scrutiny

Documentation Complete

- All required plans included
- Viewpoint photographs clear and well-labeled
- Technical appendices provided (methodology, ZTV details)
- Professional's qualifications and experience stated

RED FLAGS - WHEN TO QUESTION YOUR LVIA

Warning Signs of Poor Quality Work:

- Generic descriptions that could apply to any site
- No site visit conducted or poor weather conditions
- Viewpoints not agreed with planning authority
- Assessment completed after design already fixed
- Mitigation measures vague or unrealistic
- No reference to National Park/AONB special qualities
- Report full of jargon with no clear conclusions
- Professional not Chartered or lacks Welsh experience

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

LVIA: Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

CMLI: Chartered Member of Landscape Institute (professional qualification)

LANDMAP: Wales' landscape baseline database maintained by Natural Resources Wales

ZTV: Zone of Theoretical Visibility - computer-generated map showing where development could theoretically be seen from

NBB: Net Benefit for Biodiversity (Wales' biodiversity requirement under Planning Policy Wales)

DECCA: Framework for assessing biodiversity in Wales (Diversity, Extent, Condition, Connectivity, Aspects of resilience)

Special Qualities: The unique characteristics that make a National Park or AONB special and worthy of protection

Photomontage: Accurate visual representation showing proposed development in photographic context

National Landscape: Formerly known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - designated landscape with special qualities

TAN 6: Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (covers exceptional dwellings in Wales)

PPW: Planning Policy Wales - Welsh Government's national planning policy framework

NRW: Natural Resources Wales - Welsh Government's environmental regulatory body

Cadw: Welsh Government's historic environment service (equivalent to Historic England)

This checklist is intended as educational guidance for clients commissioning LVIA work. It is based on Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3), Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Notes (including LITGN-2024-01), and Planning Policy Wales Edition 12. For detailed technical guidance, consult a Chartered Landscape Architect.