

## **How can the character of landscapes be assessed?**

Where appropriate, landscape character assessments can be prepared to complement Natural England's National Character Area profiles. Natural England provides [guidance on undertaking these assessments](#).

To help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can also be completed.

To demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) can be used.

For protected landscapes (National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes) the relevant management plan will contain further information on the area's natural beauty, special qualities and key characteristics.

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## **What are the statutory duties of local planning authorities in relation to National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes?**

[Section 11A\(2\) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949](#), [section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988](#) and [section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#) (as amended by section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023) require that 'in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land' in National Parks and National Landscapes, relevant authorities 'must seek to further' the purposes for which these areas are designated. Guidance on the operation can be found in [Defra guidance on this duty](#).

This duty is particularly important to the delivery of the statutory purposes of protected landscapes. It applies to all local planning authorities, not just National Park authorities, and is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside National Park or National Landscape boundaries, but which might have an impact on their setting or protection.

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## **How should development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty be approached?**

The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that the scale and extent of development in these areas should be limited, in view of the importance of conserving and enhancing their landscapes and scenic beauty. Its policies for protecting these areas may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs for development in full through the plan-making process, and they are unlikely to be suitable areas for accommodating unmet needs from adjoining (non-designated) areas. Effective joint working between planning authorities covering designated and adjoining areas, through the preparation and maintenance of statements of common ground, is particularly important in helping to identify how housing and other needs can best be accommodated.

All development in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Beauty will need to be located and designed in a way that reflects their status as landscapes of the highest quality. Where applications for major development come forward, [paragraph 172 of the Framework](#) sets out a number of particular considerations that should apply when deciding whether permission should be granted.

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