Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

Introduction to Local Landscape Character Assessment
Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

Some Principles

• **Understanding the special characteristics** of the landscape is key to holding on to the **distinctiveness of this landscape**
• The greater the involvement of the community the greater the sense of ownership and the stronger the case for protection / caring for / changing the landscape
• There may be benefits in combining with neighbouring parishes to share workload and to be comprehensive
• There are benefits of involvement in a common endeavour and in developing a shared vision for your area
• With relevant evidence it becomes possible to balance the protection and enhancement of Landscape Character and opportunities for new development
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National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 109. The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
• protecting and enhancing valued landscapes,

Bath and North East Somerset Placemaking Plan

POLICY NE2: Conserving and Enhancing the Landscape and Landscape Character
1 Development will be permitted where it:
a) conserves or enhances local landscape character, landscape features and local distinctiveness

POLICY NE2A: LANDSCAPE SETTING OF SETTLEMENTS
Any development should seek to conserve and enhance the landscape setting of settlements and their landscape character, views and features. Development that would result in harm to the landscape setting of settlements that cannot be successfully mitigated will not be permitted.
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Doing a Landscape Assessment
Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

Available Information

Natural England National Character Area Profiles:
107 Cotswold
118 Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges
142 Mendip Hills

Cotswold AONB Landscape Character Assessment

Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment
Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

Taken from:

An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment October 2014 Natural England
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The level of detail will be influenced by:

- the communities vision for the area
- the particular landscape character of the area
- the resources available in terms of people and finance
- the local issues the community considers need addressing

Options:

- Rely primarily on existing assessments to capture the local character
- Address specific characteristics (e.g., views or landscape features)
- Do a Local Landscape Character Assessment

Buildings and Details – The Parish is enriched by its legacy of fine older buildings of architectural interest with vernacular details which contribute greatly to the character of the area. More recent buildings have continued to reinforce the sense of place with use of materials. Key elements are:

- Central green space outside the church contained by the low stone walls so characteristic to the settlement.
- Informal grass verges and low irregularly capped boundary walls help maintain openness.
- No buildings extend above three storeys, with the majority being two storeys in height.
- Stone porches area a common feature.
- Historic listed buildings.
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Define the purpose of the assessment
what is important about your area and what are the local issues?

Analyse and describe the landscape based on:
• Desktop work
• Field Work

Support with maps, illustrations and photos

May include:
• Housing types and settlement character areas
• How the settlement sits in the landscape
• The settlement edge
• Location of gateways (arrival)
• Open space and trees

• Distinctive features
• Habitat and biodiversity
• Landscape management considerations
• Development considerations
• Key views
• Condition
Which aspects of the landscape do you consider the most important to conserve?

Where in your local area would you take a visitor to enjoy the landscape and why?

Which view best captures the essence of your area and what would be in the view?

Is there a special place or place where you feel away from it all?

Where would you go for outdoor recreation?
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Manage / Restore / Guide Change

What positive changes do you think could be made to improve the landscape and environment of your area?

What changes have happened to the local landscape which you did not like?

Looking to the future, what changes do you envisage would have the greatest negative effect on the landscape of your area?

What issues are we facing as a community that could be informed by a better understanding of the landscape?
Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

Geology
Landform
Hydrology
Air and Climate
Soils
Land cover / flora and fauna
Land use
Settlement
Enclosure
Land ownership
Time depth
Art / Literature / Events / Myth
/ Legends – folklore / Music /
People / Media

Natural factors
Social factors
Cultural associations

Desk-top Assessment
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Description of the area

Structured description using desktop work and fieldwork - use headings of existing higher level assessment where possible

Character summary
Landform and Drainage features
Land cover and land use
Landscape and heritage features
Open spaces and links
Settlement pattern
Buildings and details
Key views and landmarks
Detracting elements
Supporting maps, illustrations and photos
# Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

**Field-work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location No.</th>
<th>Desktop Summary Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Photo No.s</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>LC Type</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>LC Area</td>
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**Topography / Landform** (additional to desktop assessment)
- Flat / rolling / undulating / sloping / steep / vertical / plain / plateau / scarp / hills / ridge / broad valley / narrow valley / high / intermediate / low

**Dominant Elements** (additional to desktop assessment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Built</th>
<th>Heritage</th>
<th>Farming</th>
<th>Other Land Cover</th>
<th>Woodland / Trees</th>
<th>Hydrology</th>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>Recreation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Vernacular buildings</td>
<td>Stone walls</td>
<td>Designed parkland</td>
<td>Deciduous woodland</td>
<td>River</td>
<td>Road</td>
<td>Footpath</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub urban</td>
<td>Country house</td>
<td>Fences</td>
<td>Scrub / set aside</td>
<td>Coniferous woodland</td>
<td>Stream</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>Bridleway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Field systems</td>
<td>Hedges</td>
<td>Water meadows</td>
<td>Mixed woodland</td>
<td>Brook</td>
<td>Track</td>
<td>Picnic site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamlet</td>
<td>Industry / mining</td>
<td>Arable</td>
<td>Disturbed ground</td>
<td>Shelterbelt</td>
<td>Dry valley</td>
<td>Footpath</td>
<td>Viewpoint</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isolated houses</td>
<td>Lev</td>
<td>Hedgerows</td>
<td>Winterbourne</td>
<td>Railway</td>
<td>Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm buildings</td>
<td>Improved pasture</td>
<td>Orchard</td>
<td>Pond</td>
<td>Pylons</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Unimproved pasture / rough grading</td>
<td>Orchard</td>
<td>Isolated trees</td>
<td>Drainage ditch</td>
<td>Industrial / mining</td>
<td>Historic monument</td>
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**Bath & North East Somerset Council**
Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

Neighbourhood Plan Process

- A vision statement
- Description of the area
- Current issues
- Policies and objectives
- Environment / community initiatives
- Development Opportunities
- Design Briefs
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Policies and Objectives

• Conserving and enhancing **local character, features and qualities** and ensure appropriate management
• Identifying and protecting **key views**
• Reinforcing **settlement pattern**
• Protection of key aspects of a **settlements setting**
• **Accommodating new development** including specifying building height, layout, materials, open space and Green Infrastructure and heritage, landscape and ecology assets to protect or enhance
• Provision of **new open space, footpaths and Green Infrastructure**
• Improved **community facilities**
• Improving **specific areas** (streets, developed edges)
• Addressing specific issues such as **parking provision, street lighting**
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- Rural Landscape Character
- Settlement Build Character
- Important Views
- Skyline Policy
- Housing
- Sustainability
- Traffic Impact
- Parking for Domestic Dwellings
- Sustainable Drainage to Minimise Flooding
- Community Green Space Design
- Protection of Designated Green Spaces
- Tree and Ancient Hedgerow Conservation
- Green Corridors and Biodiversity
- Water Life Biodiversity
- Dark Skies Policy
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Environmental and community initiatives

Improved access to the landscape
Reinforcing landscape character

New woodland
Reinstatement of hedges
Improved development boundaries
Enhancement of watercourses
Reinstating ponds
Improved street scene
New open spaces, Green Infrastructure and ecological corridors

Recording wildlife species / historic features
Addressing local issues
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Natural Environment
• Established an Environment Group
• Educational Programme
• Views, woodland management and improved access

Safeguarding Local Green Space
• Management of the Tyning green space
• Improve land in front of the war memorial
• Recreational facilities and improved access

Walking, Cycling and Safer Roads
• Measures to reduce traffic speed
• Improving pedestrian routes

Environmental and Community Initiatives
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The Way Forward

What are our issues (our vision, our local distinctiveness / our concerns)?

What evidence / projects / policies are already existing / available

What level of landscape assessment is proportionate and can realistically be carried out with the resources we have?

What extra resources / guidance do we need?
Questions