

Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

31st May 2017



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Bath and North East Somerset Council

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**

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

Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

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
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.

Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

Doing a Landscape Assessment



Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

Available Information

Natural England National Character
Area Profiles:

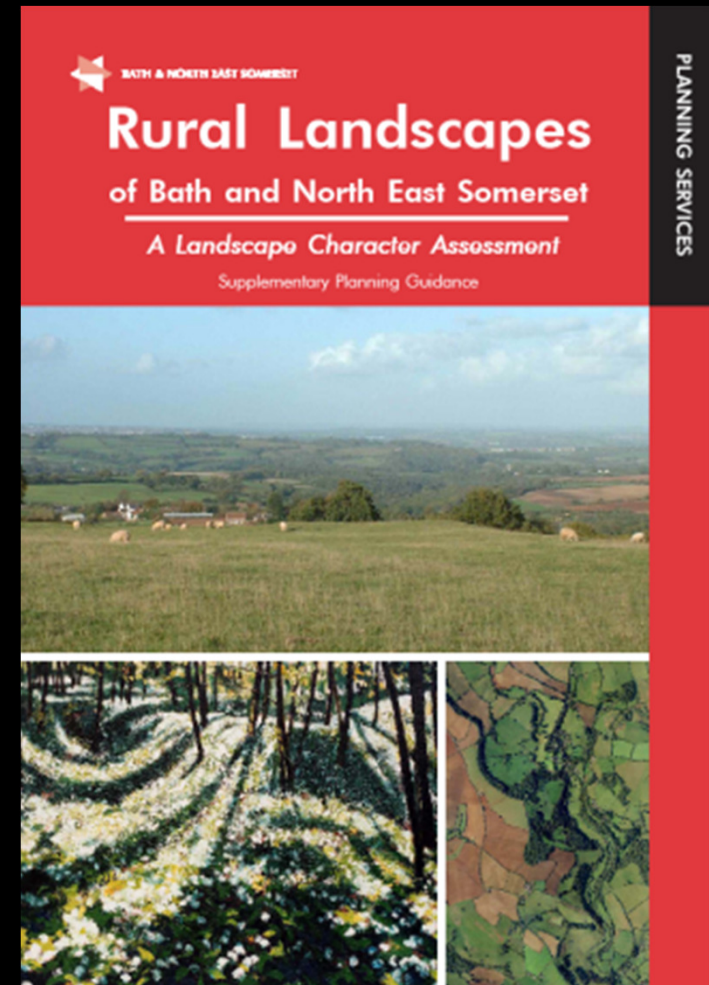
107 Cotswold

118 Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges

142 Mendip Hills

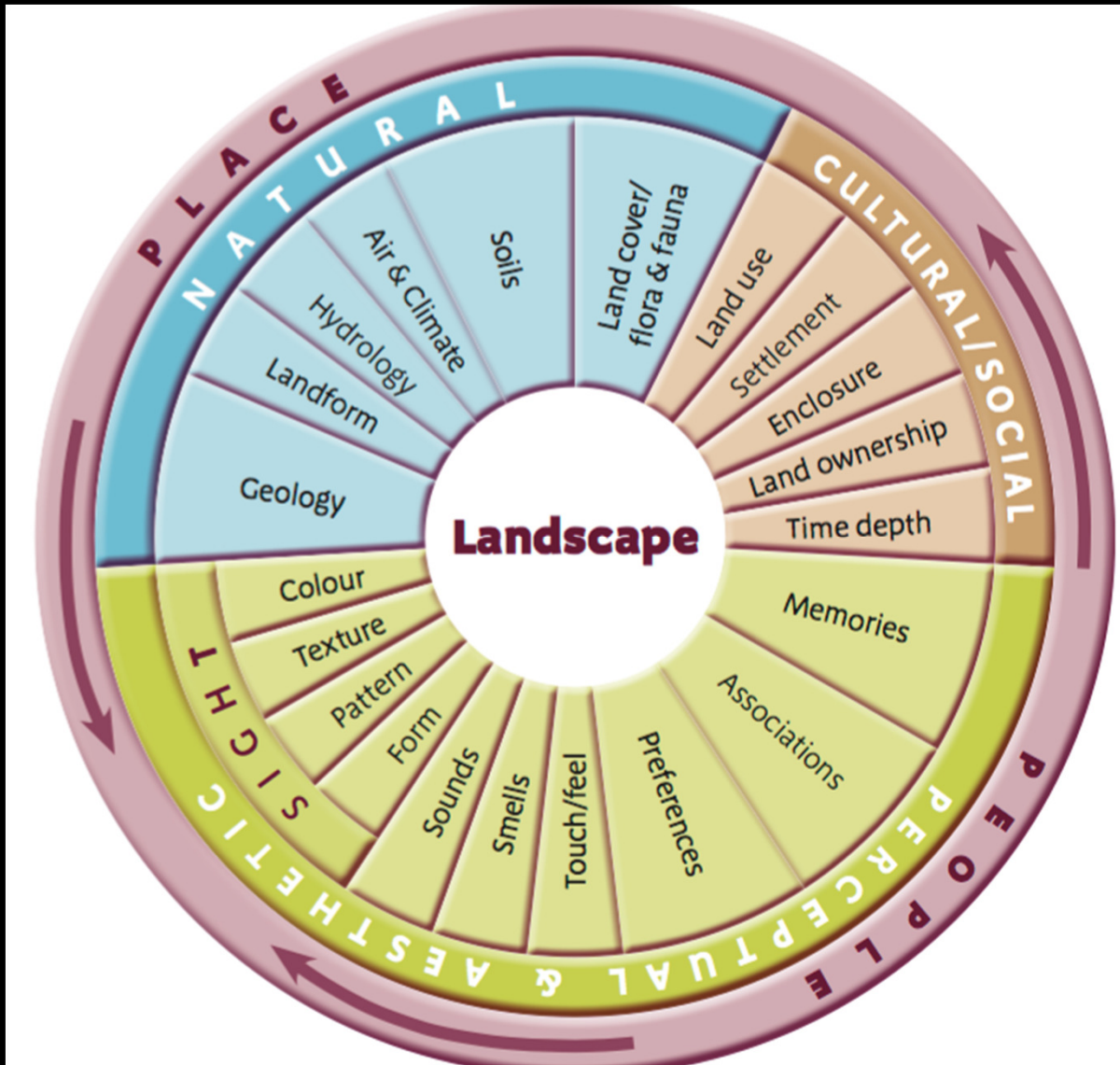
Cotswold AONB Landscape Character
Assessment

Bathscape Landscape Character
Assessment



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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 (eg 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 are a common feature.
- Historic listed buildings.



PHOTO 9: Stone Walls and Porches are key features

Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

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**



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Protect

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

**Cultural /
Social factors**

**Cultural
associations**

Desk-top Assessment



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Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

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

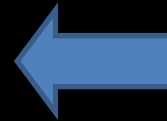
Field-work

Viewpoint No.		Desktop Summary Description					
Location							
Date							
Photo No.s							
LC Type							
LC Area							
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)							
Built:	Heritage:	Farming:	Other Land Cover:	Woodland / Trees:	Hydrology:	Communications:	Recreation:
Urban	Vernacular buildings	Stone walls	Designed parkland	Deciduous woodland	River	Road	Footpath
Sub urban	Country house	Fences	Scrub / set aside	Coniferous woodland	Stream	Lane	Bridleway
Village	Field systems	Hedges	Water meadows	Mixed woodland	Brook	Track	Picnic site
Hamlet	Industry / mining	Arable	Disturbed ground	Shelterbelt	Dry valley	Footpath	Viewpoint
Isolated houses		Ley		Hedge trees	Winterbourne	Railway	Park
Farm buildings		Improved pasture		Orchard	Pond	Pylons	Sports
Industry		Unimproved pasture / Rough grazing		Clumps / copses	Lake	Communication masts	Historic monument
		Orchard		Isolated trees	Drainage ditch		Industrial / mining
		Farm stock		Parkland trees	Canal		Natural heritage
				Ancient woodland	Springs		

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Neighbourhood Plan Process

A vision statement



Description of the area



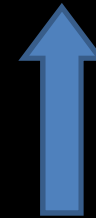
Current issues



Policies and objectives



Environment / community initiatives



Development Opportunities

Design Briefs



Landscape Character Assessment for Neighbourhood Development Plans

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



Policies and Objectives

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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 Tynning 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?

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Questions

