

Local Landscape Character Assessment

What is meant by landscape?

Landscape covers all the factors that make up the environment, from natural factors such as geology and topography, to the human influences such as landuses and field patterns, and also embraces the cultural aspects related to art and personal associations for example. It is about the pattern that arises from all those different aspects, or characteristics of an area that contribute to a common *landscape character*.

What is a Landscape Character Assessment?

A Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a technique for analysing and describing the character of the landscape. There are LCAs at many different scales: one covers the whole of England which divides the country into 159 separate character areas, most local authority areas have them and National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have them. At each level, the detail increases so that the scale of the LCA is suitable for the area it covers. It is used to inform planning policy and guide decisions about development.

What is a Local Landscape Character Assessment (LLCA)?

A LLCA adds the next level of detail on from the local authority LCA, which is the starting point for a local level assessment. The Landscape Character Areas identified at the local authority level share common characteristics. The many and varied characteristics of the character areas could be further refined to add more local level detail, and could even be further divided into small areas to reflect the increased level of detail. So, in a nutshell it,

- builds on the local authority LCA
- is a community-led process, the more people that carry out surveys and contribute, the stronger the evidence.
- is a way of identifying what qualities local people value about their landscape, and can highlight what may be harming those qualities.
- provides an evidence base of environmental information at parish level
- influences policy and planning as community views are recorded and structured as evidence.
- is not about finding sites for development, but the evidence and understanding provided by your work will also inform appropriate choices to be made about possible development sites and about the form and nature of any development that might then take place.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER (EXAMPLE SURVEY)

Date:

Conditions:

Survey Team:

- This survey is designed to help you examine and record the distinctive character of the landscape in your parish.
- It will provide the basis for community views to be recorded and structured within the existing Landscape Character Assessment for the whole of the district.
- It will contribute to an evidence base for policy and planning and;
- the evidence and understanding provided by your work will also inform appropriate choices to be made about possible development sites and about the form and nature of any development that might then take place.

We are giving you:

- This introduction and form.
- A map of the area
- Just for information:
 - Key points from the district landscape character assessment for this area.

Getting the survey done:

- You will follow a planned route, stopping at perhaps 3 or 4 points to give an overall view of the landscape.
- Take photographs to illustrate and explain any comments you make on the survey sheet.

It is good to number your photographs and note their position and direction on the map as you take them (just use a dot and small arrow). Also use the words below as prompts to make notes on the map.

- Making notes on the map is also a useful way to explain certain features, e.g. direction of views, location of key buildings, spaces, etc. Use these annotations to record observations:



**prominent feature /
landmark**



Ridgeline



Key View



Survey Point

When you have finished:

- Place the form and annotated map back in the envelope (keep anything else if you wish).
- We also need your photos so please either:
 - call in to the Parish Office with your camera, memory card or CD and we can
 - download them on the spot, or
 - email them at any time.

Description

Topography

Rolling lowland
Plateau
Scarp / cliffs
Hills

Flat
Gently sloping
Steeply sloping
Rolling

Dry valley
Deep gorge
Broad valley
Narrow valley

Main landscape elements

Buildings

Farmstead(s)
Hamlet(s)
Village(s)
Landmarks (eg. Church)

Farming

Large fields
Small fields
Regular / irregular
Walls / fences / hedges
Arable / grazing

Landcover

Open farmland
Farmland with woods
Woodland
Is it...*extensive*
fragmented
interlocking

Woodland / Trees

Coniferous plantation
Deciduous woodlands
Mixed woodlands
Hedge trees
Isolated trees

Hydrology

Stream / river
Reservoir
Dry valley
Wet ditches & Ponds
Lake

Communications

Road / track / lane
Footpath / rail line
Straight / winding /
sunken
Pylons / masts / poles

Visual qualities

Pattern:	Dominant	Strong	Broken	Weak
Scale:	Intimate	Small	Medium	Large
Texture:	Smooth	Textured	Rough	
Enclosure:	Expansive	Open	Enclosed	Constrained
Views:	Sweeping	Channelled	Long	Short

NOTES:

Overall impression

Brief description (including main elements, features, what adds, what detracts):

Scenic quality (a description which could include sounds, smells and colours, how it makes you feel, points about tranquility etc.):

Sense of place (identification with that place, cultural or personal associations, stories, pictures, people etc.):

Other heritage values – are there any features of archaeological, cultural or ecological value?

If you had to pick just one or a few of all the aspects above that most helps to shape the character of the area, what would it/they be?