



APPENDICES

Footpath View Sharpham Park near Street



APPENDIX I

BRIEF TO CONSULTANTS

View over the Foxcote / Shoscombe Valley from the A366 / Park Lane Cross Roads

BRIEF TO CONSULTANTS

1. Introduction / Background

Mendip District Council is developing an ambitious 2050 growth strategy to drive long-term housing and economic development and support sustainable development in its market towns and rural communities.

To understand the growth potential across the District, the Council is commissioning a range of technical studies to examine both the capacity for growth and to identify the infrastructure investment necessary to unlock opportunities and support smart growth. Technical studies are also required as evidence to update the Mendip Local Development Plan from 2020-2036 and develop effective policies to manage future development.

This brief sets out a specification for specialist advice to produce an up-to-date and objective Landscape Character Assessment for the District.

2. Reasons for the LCA Commission

There are a number of reasons that this study is being commissioned.

- a) The existing evidence base is drawn from local assessments undertaken in 1996/7 and 2006. While inherent landscape characteristics may not change, these studies are considered out of date. They do not refer to the 2014 National Character Area profiles or reflect current approaches to Character Assessment. The Council also wishes to understand how it should be seeking to define 'valued landscapes' in its development plan as set out in NPPF para 170 and how best to integrate/retain its special landscape features policy.
- b) Significant additional development has taken place over the last 20 years affecting the edges of Mendip towns, some villages and employment sites in the countryside.
- c) There is a need for a study to take a comprehensive approach which reflects the diversity and high quality of the District's landscapes. The adopted plan policy rightly focuses on the AONB areas and specific landscape features. However, this means that the quality of other landscapes areas are potentially being under-valued in plan and decision making.
- d) The study will provide evidence to the assessment of broad locations and 'opportunity areas' in the district for longer-term housing and employment development. The 2050 growth work (which is being commissioned separately) is likely to explore a range of options including extensions to market towns, locations associated with major road proposals/rail stations, extensions to villages or forms of rural new settlements. The output of the study in terms of characteristics, landscape sensitivity and quality will be used to assess these areas, initially at a strategic level and then to undertake more detailed testing of landscape impact as specific options and locations or masterplans are refined.

- e) The 2050 growth work also includes technical and route studies to bid for highway road bypasses around Glastonbury and Walton/Ashcott. The character study will provide input into the testing of options.
- f) The study will also be used to support the development of preferred and final options for specific development allocations and policies in the updated Local Plan 2020 – 2036. It will also feed into the formal sustainability appraisal of the Plan and production of other strategies and documents such as Green Infrastructure Plans. The Council will also use this study to review and redraft the landscape policy in the adopted Plan.
- g) The Council does not have an in-house landscape officer. The study outputs will provide a comprehensive baseline to support specialist expertise where required on particular proposals, appeals or projects. It will also support in-house skills and capacity building in this area.
- h) The Council may also, in due course, seek to develop more specific landscape assessment tools or bolt-on studies based on this work to assist in the assessment of individual planning applications, appeal sites or particular types of development (such as wind/solar). Any such further work will be the subject of a separate tender exercise.

3. Development Plan and Policy Context

Mendip is a largely rural district within the County of Somerset covering an area of 738 km² (258 square miles) with four market towns of Glastonbury, Frome, Shepton Mallet, Street and the city of Wells.

The Mendip District Local Plan (Part 1) was adopted in December 2014 and will be more than five years from adoption in 2020. The Council intends to undertake a major review and update of the Local Plan Part I, updating its evidence base in 2019 and publishing initial/preferred options for consultation during 2020. It may also need to address the challenge of speculative housing applications submitted contrary to the adopted plan from 2020.

The impact of development on Mendip's landscapes is assessed through adopted policies DP1 (Local Identity and distinctiveness) and DP4 (Mendip's Landscapes) Policy DP4 and supporting text is appended to this brief for information.

There is a very limited area of the district which falls within the Bath and Bristol Green Belt which means that nearly all Mendip is covered by 'countryside' policies.

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4. Landscape Designations and Previous Assessment

The district contains significant areas of the Mendip Hills AONB. The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB also fringes the eastern side of the Mendip boundary. The adopted Plan also identifies a series of 'Special Landscape Features (or SLF)', specific to the district. The extent and characteristics of the SLF were reviewed in 2012.

A district wide landscape character assessment was last produced in 1997 and identified 8 principal character areas:

- The Central Mendip Hills
- The East Mendip Hills
- The Frome Valley
- The Cotswold Edge
- The Batcombe Down & Valleys
- The Lias Lowlands & Ridges
- The Moors
- The Wookey Islands

Consideration of the project being an up-date of the previous work or an entirely new study was given during the process of tender, consultant appointment and in the project initiation meeting. A review of the status of the previous work with regard to the guidance from Natural England [2014] on this subject was provided in the consultant tender submission. From this while aspects of the 1997 approach are seen to predate the standard best practice, the work is thought to form a good foundation for the new assessment project. The essential point being that the previous broad mapping of the individual character areas seems well considered and robust. With the distribution of character areas broadly accepted as a suitable starting point, this allows resources to be focused on gathering updated information and field assessments to add more layers of detail to the individual areas. The review against the NE 2014 [ref 1-Tudor 2014] guidance is set out in Table 1 below.

5. Project Brief

The character assessment will be undertaken following the best practice guidelines for LCA produced by Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage. The study is intended to provide an update of the 1997 district wide character assessment reflecting both changes in assessment approaches and the landscape over the previous two decades.

In respect of specific coverage the character study will cover the whole of the Mendip District area and have regard to a number of locations beyond the district boundary; in particular to the south of Midsomer Norton/Radstock and land to the west of Walton around Ashcott. These are shown on Figure 1. These locations have particular development pressures or need to be

included to test future infrastructure options. In these areas, the study will need to align with landscape assessment undertaken in Sedgemoor District and Bath NE Somerset. The study will also draw in the potential overlap of the similar assessments of the neighbouring local authorities in other locations.

The study will focus on the rural areas and urban fringes around the five main settlements within the District. The landscape/townscape features within the main settlements are excluded to allow focussed study of the surrounding rural or semi-rural landscapes. Character assessments of the urban areas may be subject to a separate project in due course. Given the existence of more up to date assessment of the AONB the study will not need to make a detailed assessment of features within the AONB boundaries.

External Stakeholders

As an update of a long-standing assessment it is considered that the basic framework of the assessment is well established; but the work will involve considerable research and field work to provide a comprehensive update. While stakeholder input and public consultation is essential to the final publication; for the most efficient use of time and resource it is envisaged the initial study will produce a draft for wider consultation. For this draft some focused information gathering discussion with key external agencies is included to ensure pertinent detail is captured at the outset.

This includes contact with planning officers in the two AONBs and with officers familiar with the respective LCA Studies in the relevant neighbouring authorities. The other sources anticipated for the initial support to the study include the following organisations; -

Somerset County Council
Mendip ANOB Partnership
Somerset Wildlife Trust

Key Stages

The project approach is set out as a series of key stages, these follow the best practice recommendations and are to be reviewed and agreed as the project progresses.

Stage 1 – Brief, Purpose and Scope.

At the commencement of the project the brief and reasons for commissioning the study as set down by MDC were reviewed and the intended project approach combined into an agreed working brief.

As set out in the introduction the requirement for an updated LCA was triggered primarily by the need for an evidence base to inform the future long term growth strategy and local plan process. Other objectives raised by the initial council brief included a review of how valued landscapes may be defined in relation to national planning guidance and how the existing Local Plan policy

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designation of Special Landscape Features may be integrated into the future iterations of the plan. Reference was also made to the study providing the baseline to assist with application proposals or appeals and the desire for the council to develop more specific assessment tools.

For the working brief the more straightforward functions of a landscape assessment as a standard part of the planning, design and management of the local landscapes is noted. The best practice guidance sources [1] and [2] set out the history and rationale behind the accepted approaches to Landscape Character Assessment and provide a range of examples of how LCA are used. In summary and in terms of the MDC work the potential uses of the completed study are noted as;

1. To provide a comprehensive description of the landscape with reference to the characteristics that make the area distinctive and the factors which may be seen to be of particular value or sensitivity to change. This may be valuable at a general level in helping people to develop greater appreciation and engagement with the local environment. At a more specific level understanding the local distinctiveness, interest and value of the local landscape may be of assistance to the promotion of the Mendip landscapes as a tourism and recreational resource.
2. Provide a resource of accessible spatial information on the district environment that can relate the mapped landscape character to underlying aspects of physical geography, biodiversity and human influence. With this the LCA can be integrated into other environmental study work as part of a coordinated approach to environmental mapping, decision making and management. In particular the appreciation of the potential interrelationships of various environmental sensitivities may assist with the process of screening environmental assessments. (The agreed brief does not propose an 'Integrated' landscape assessment but there is scope for the work to be integrated with other studies in the future).
3. Provide greater understanding of the key landscape considerations that will underpin the necessary judgments at all levels of the planning process from strategic decision making on local plans, site allocations, development master planning, siting, scale or massing of development or infrastructure, major land use changes, or smaller development/land-use changes, forestry or woodland design and renewable energy projects. As such the LCA should not only be used by the LPA in development of allocations and policy but also form a key reference point for developers in the preparation of application proposals, Design and Access Statements and LVIA / EIA studies.
4. Provide a framework of distinct landscape areas and baseline information on the character, condition and potential influences which would inform any future coordinated landscape management programme. Within the AONB the landscape management is coordinated with reference to the AONB Landscape Management Plan; outside of the AONB the district

council currently has more limited remit for landscape management but the study may facilitate future initiatives in this respect.

5. Provide a baseline of the current condition for the monitoring of change. As an update of the previous assessment the study provides the opportunity to log the key changes and extent or pace of change that has occurred in the previous 20 or so years since the original LCA study. In some regards the previous study was not set up to provide a clear baseline for monitoring against but in the structure of the current work this can be remedied. By identifying some of the main areas/types of development that have been undertaken in recent years within the district the LCA update provides an opportunity to note the cumulative impact of recent development. The use of GIS and the inclusion of all field work will also assist this function in the future.

The MCD objectives set out above highlight a number of points which need to be integrated into the study approach. These are identified as follows;

To provide a comprehensive baseline to inform options for future growth and for assessing landscape effects for future applications or appeals; the work needs to address the distinction between Landscape and Visual Impacts that would normally be drawn in any (LVIA) impact assessment. For both of these uses it would assist if the baseline can include some appreciation of the general visual sensitivity across the district and how existing urban areas and other major development is seen. An appreciation of the distinction between landscape character and visual sensitivity would also be a key element in any future tool box for assessment of applications.

The council have specifically included the need to clarify how 'valued landscapes' are defined and how to integrate or retain its Special Landscape Features Policy in future iterations of the local plan. The council also notes a need to consider how the landscapes outside of the AONB are valued in the plan and decision making process. This requires consideration of the landscape in terms of quality and relative value which go beyond the characterisation of the landscape. Landscape quality includes consideration of the physical state of characteristic landscape, the condition or intactness of existing features, the visual condition, and other overlapping aspects of interest such as cultural heritage or wildlife interest. Relative value may be attached to perceptual aspects which may require judgements on aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness and may also be linked to public access and/or appreciation. The assessment will therefore need to include reference to these factors and map the various forms of landscape access that exists within the district.

As aspects of value are inherently subjective it is considered a degree of consensus in any final value judgements would be important; this is an area where the study may need to set out the rationale and seek wider consultation input to finalise a robust position. The future stages of stakeholder and public consultation engagement are seen as an important aspect in this regard. Consideration of various ways to make the final assessment report accessible to the public and to engage public interest in the topic are also noted as important aspects of the study.

[1] Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland 2002 by Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage

[2] An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment October 2014 by Christine Tudor, Natural England

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To assist the Authority in the use of the landscape character assessment in future development control situations transparency in the process approach and accessibility to supporting field work are noted as important. The relevance of the character assessment in LVIA and planning application preparation should be noted and consideration will be given to how the document can be more easily accessed by other professionals.

Stage 2 – Desk Study

The assessment process will start with a comprehensive desk top study undertaken in advance of the main detailed field work. Time is allowed in the project programme for there to be some iteration between the stages. The study will encompass the review of existing landscape assessments including the English National Character Areas work, any county assessment and cross boundary neighbouring assessments.

For the consideration of landscape value relative to the AONB the setting of the Mendip District in the wider context of regional designations, major settlements and broad landscape types may well be relevant. Mapping of broad landscape attributes such as tranquillity and dark skies is available and also relevant at this contextual level.

The identified character areas output from the 1997 study can be transferred into GIS format to allow overlay on larger scale up to date mapping. Likewise the simple topographic, geology, drainage and other physical mapping information can be drawn together into a set of comprehensive base maps.

The distribution of all the various planning, natural and cultural heritage interests of the district will be drawn together through the available open source GIS data sets and the council local plan data sets. Alongside the mapping the desk top work will also involve the background review of available reference material on the history and ecological interest of the district.

The cultural associations of the district landscape would be built up via the background research. As part of this contact with the county artworks organisation (Somerset Art Works) is proposed as a means to highlight some of the current work inspired by the landscapes of the district.

Stage 3 Field Survey

The field survey stage will in itself be staged. After an initial review of the desktop work in stage 2 some sample visits to selected character areas would be undertaken. This will allow review of the data already gathered and the accuracy of the existing LCA boundaries. The data gathered during the desk top stage would be part of the survey pack for each area. A project specific Field Survey Proforma has been prepared for this stage, a blank copy of which is provided below.

The initial sample visits will allow the proforma to be tested and modified if necessary before being applied to the whole district. In planning the resourcing for this stage the initial sampling is to be undertaken in pairs to allow discussion and consistency in how the proforma is used record and respond to different areas. Following this initial testing the bulk of the assessments will be made individually. In the subsequent classification and description stage these will be reviewed and discussed as a team.

To cover the district in manageable zones a series of eight main field work zones are identified along with two focus areas relating to the cross boundary locations highlighted by MDC. As illustrated on Figure 1 these all encompass a number of character areas and are sized relative to the complexity and scale of the areas involved.

In planning out the intended approach it was noted the network of strategic long-distance trails actually cut through the majority of all the LCA areas. Figure 1 illustrates the key routes of the Mendip Way, Macmillan Way and Monarch's Way combine with the Sustrans routes 3, 24 and 254. While it is recognised there may be some degree of these trails tending to be routed through better quality landscape it is intended these routes would be included as a key part of the assessment routes. These would be used along with other footpaths and minor lanes, not least because there will be a need for some circular routes for the practical purpose of a day visits.

The majority of the field work would be done on foot or via cycle access as this is a more immersive experience in the landscape and allows much more concentration on the assessment. It is noted that within the centre of the district there is a gap between most of the long distance path network, this corresponds with the Fosse Way / A37 corridor (where tranquillity may be less evident).

The Field Survey Proforma is based on best practice guidance and previous project experience. The format aims to cover the normal range of aspects to be recorded but in greater detail than the previous assessment. The form includes aspects of particular relevance to the wider understanding of visual amenity/sensitivity that may be important in the future consideration of local landscape capacity. It also includes a section to make note of the types of recreational access and the influences of leisure and tourism; the accessibility of landscape is one aspect of interest but there is also the point that in some locations the presence or pressure of recreational uses may have an effect on the landscape people have come to enjoy.

In order to capture value judgements on the landscape, which is key to understanding the valued and special landscapes within the district, there are sections to record judgements on the condition and quality of the area. As these value judgements are by definition complex and subjective the final page includes a section to record on site observations on why an area may be of low or high value.

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Within each area the expectation is to gather a good selection of photographs to illustrate the points observed. The proforma includes space to note specific points / view captions that will be added at the post site visit review stage. It is anticipated on average three or four proformas would be provided per LCA. With each field work zone taking at least 2 days to survey and allowing for some sample areas and general visits around 20 – 25 days of field work are anticipated.

The field work proformas will be retained in a format that allows easy retrieval as part of the final output report (for clarity the forms will be in a typed up format).

Stage 4 Classification and Description

In the field and as a first step on the output of the LCA the boundaries of the various LCA's will be reviewed and adjusted as appropriate. Where changes are more than simply minor adjustment to deal with the increase in scale or updating of the base mapping the changes would be recorded on a separate map overlay.

Following this the area names and basic physical descriptions would be updated from the previous text. For each area the physical geography, landscape vegetation and habitat types, human land-use and settlement patterns would be set down in text. The physical character would then be described in objective terms followed by the more subjective aesthetic and perceptual responses. These combined would be identified as the key characteristics and observed character.

Where relevant the additional interest arising from natural, historical, cultural or societal layers of landscape appreciation would be set down as aspects that may be seen to either add directly to the landscape character or as added interest/attraction to a locality. Key settlements and historic landscape features would be highlighted as part of the landscape; although the internal townscapes and detailed settlement analysis is beyond the study scope, the presence and broad nature of the settlements (or settlement edges) is seen as part of the landscape character.

The landscape condition and senses of unspoilt tranquillity or visual/audible intrusion would be noted either as a general observation across each area or how this may be seen to change as the area is passed through. For each area the nature of the visual interest/condition and sensitivity would be noted and any key viewpoints, panoramas, vistas, landmarks, intrusions noted. The overview of the general extent of unspoilt or good condition landscape across the district and the cumulative impact of change over the last two decades (the first two of the 21st century) is a potential output from the study.

Specific recreational access features and influences would be noted within the character areas where these provide major focus of access activity or have a direct bearing on the perceived character. The recreational access/activity is expected to be relevant to how the landscapes may be perceived at a district level.

Within each landscape character area description consideration of any emerging trends, threats, or particular sensitivities would be included. The risks of climate change and the influx of non-native pest and diseases may have implications across the district; where this is the case the issues may be addressed in summary form at the end of the study to avoid extensive duplication.

It is noted that in the period since the original report there has been significant development of renewable energy installations across the district; with the expectation that there may be more to come. The study will include confirmation of the extent of these across the district and comment on any evident cumulative impact provided.

The local areas of identified Special Landscape Features would be referred to where they occur within each character area. The ways in which these areas may be seen as valued landscape will be identified within the text as appropriate. The consideration of the relevance of these in relation to the general landscape, other potential areas of valued landscape, the AONB and other forms of designation will be considered at a district wide level. On completion of the character assessment work the existing landscape related planning policy guidance and local plan policies will be set out along with any suggested adjustments to the policy protection. Subject to further development of the planned departure of the UK from the EU, discussion on the implications for the district's landscape will be included.

Commentary on how the LCA may be used to assist with the development of project proposals and decision making will also be provided.

The landscape character areas along with other key elements of the study findings would be illustrated and digitally mapped. The updated LCA's would be issued in a GIS format compatible with the council's MapInfo system.

The field work proforma data would be typed/captured digitally and provided in a searchable appendix format. The collection of area photographs would be likewise organised in sets and geo-located.

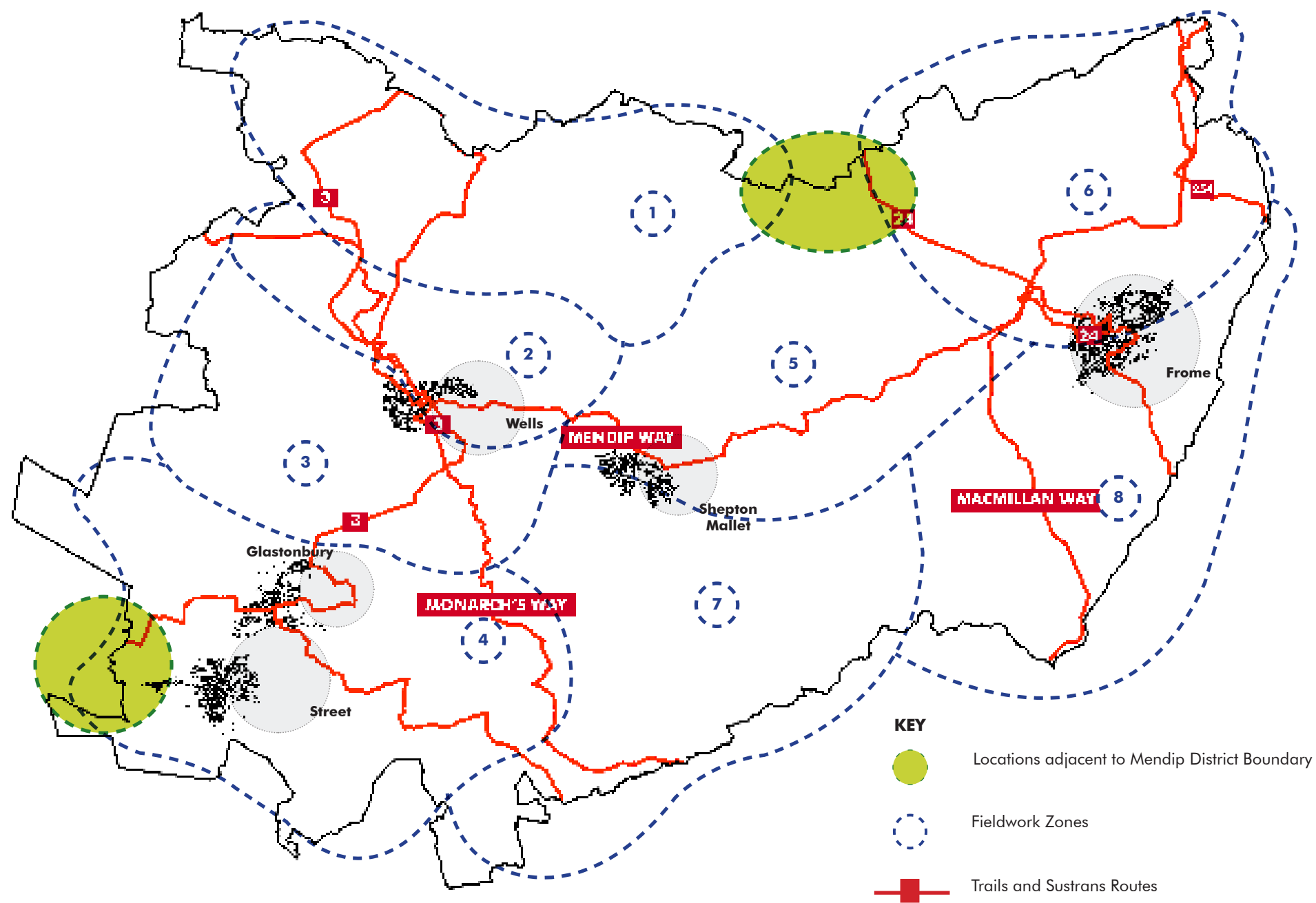
In anticipation of future public engagement with the landscape character assessment and to make the final report output as useful to external agencies as possible, the study graphics will be presented in digital format that may allow presentation either as slides or web enabled content. Graphics which allow comparison between factors and to overlay LCA areas on clear base mapping are considered to be of greatest assistance to others viewing the report.

The final report will be issued to MDC in word, PDF and digital formats to allow distribution and up loading to the internet as an open source document. All copyright on graphic material will be attributed to MDC but with the presumption that as environmental information third parties may be allowed to download and make use of the material without undue restriction. Where OS mapping is included in supporting graphics this may be subject to the normal licence restrictions for copying and reuse.

TABLE 1 : 'Reviewing and Updating and Existing Landscape Character Assessment'**Review and Updating an Existing Landscape Character Assessment
based on Section 1.6 NE/Tudor 2014**

CONSIDERATIONS	SITUATION FOR MDC LCA	
Date carried out	1997 – pre-2002 methodology – based on 1993 guidance approach	X
Date and provenance of data	Project drew on previous work from 1996 by same consultancy, parallel work by County Council and 1995 MAFF work.	✓
Original purpose of the existing LCA	Prepared specifically as a district wide / level Landscape Character Assessment	✓
Scale of the assessment and its appropriateness for the proposed use	1997 Mapping bases at 1:50,000 scale – diagrams do not show field boundaries or definitive PROW's.	X
Whether or not and if so to what extent stakeholders engaged in the assessment process	No reference to consultation in methodology or text.	X
Age of the assessment and amount of landscape change since its compilation	As an essentially rural area the degree of change across broad areas of the district the landscape has been limited. Some subtle changes can be identified which would be relevant to map and consider. Extent of urbanisation since 1997, extent of mineral extraction (limited geographic increase – maturing mitigation), highway traffic growth (may be modest but common perceptions of growth) Frome bypass (only recently completed in 97 – subsequent maturing of mitigation landscape). Growth in solar / sustainable power generation. Countryside and Recreation Act 2000 – creation of access areas (limited extent in east Mendip). Creation of popular Sustrans cycle routes and promotion of long distance walking routes – potential changes in perception of the landscape through improved and increased public access.	-
Extent of cross-boundary join up at the edges of the study area	N/A -now highlighted in project brief.	X
Whether the original field survey work is available and can be updated	Assumed not available	X
Location – relevance of coastal assessment (2012 publication of seascape methodology)	N/A	N/A
Will particular aspects of landscape character require more scrutiny or emphasis	Capacity for change / development noted as aspect of future work for Local Planning Authority	X
Note Guidance note at end of 1.6:- 'if a LCA pre-dates Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002), and / or it does not pay regard to significant stakeholder engagement then it might be necessary to carry out a new Landscape Character Assessment'		X

FIGURE 1



FIELD SURVEY PROFORMA

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Field Survey Proforma					
Assessment Location No.		Assessor (Initials)	Date	Office Ref	
Location GR		Direction of View(s) –			
Nature/Setting Viewpoint, Location & Experience – (road/path/village/open access – experience of getting to location / being there)					
Elevation	Aspect	Weather			
Landscape Type(s)		1997 LCA Ref(s)			
Intervisibility with other LCA areas / significant boundaries (physical or admin)					
Extent of view/Landscape assessed					
Topography & hydrology/surface water features/exposed geology					
Level / Moor	Steep Hills	Dry/Wet Generally	Exposed rock features		
Plain / Plateau	Ridge	Wetland	Natural Cliffs		
Undulating	Wide Vale	Dry valley/sink holes	Quarry		
Gentle Slope	Valley -Wide Flat Bottom	Resurgence	Other mineral workings		
Rolling Lowland	- Narrow w flood plains	Ditches			
Low hills	- Narrow no flood plains	Drainage Channels	Local stone		
Scarp/cliffs	- Gorge/Ravine	Stream/River	- Walls		
		Ponds/Lakes	- buildings		
Dominant Landcover/Landscape Present at Location [P] /in view [M]					
Landcover	Veg. Type	Management	Settlement	Built/Design ed Env.	Boundary Treatments
Woodland	Conifer	Un-managed	Sporadic Houses/	Conservation Area	Hedges -
<u>Grassland</u>	Broadleaved	Semi Natural	Farmsteads	Parkland/	informal /
Ley / Permanent pasture/meadow	Plantation	Low input	Hamlet	Designed	managed
Rough Grassland	Coppice	Hill grazing	Estate Farmstead	Landscape	Walls
<u>Arable</u>	Copse/Farm	Species rich	Village SML	(parks/garde	Fences
Maize/Cereals	Woodland	Extensive managed	Pre-war dev	ns)	Boundaries
Moor/Heath	Hedgerow trees	Intensive managed	Post-war dev		Ditches
Scrub	Game Cover	Other Intensive	Urban Edge		Parish
Marsh/wetland	Biomass/Oiser	Industrial	Urban		Domestic :
Bog	pollards	Urbanised			- Walls
Other	Orchard				- Fencing
	Parkland Trees				- Hedges
	Arboretum				
	Non-Native				
	Planting				
	Other				

Infrastructure/development - Present or Nearby				Natural & Cultural Heritage	
Historic Infrastructure				Wildlife Interest	
Mineral Workings/Processing/Waste				Distinctive Habitat	
Highways / Railways				Historic Settlement	
- Minor Roads - Main Roads - Trunk dual carriageway - Major Highway features				Industrial Heritage	
Power Lines				Notable Houses/Folly's	
Solar				Tourist Attractions	
Wind				Cultural Locations/Associations	
Other					
Aesthetic & Perceptual					
Scale -	Intimate	Small	Medium	Large	Vast
Enclosure -	Tight	Enclosed	Medium	Open	Exposed
Diversity -	Uniform	Simple	Varied	Diverse	Complex
Texture -	Smooth	Textured	Varied/Mid	Rough	Very rough
Form -	Vertical	Very Steep	Sloping	Rolling	Horizontal
Line -	Straight	Angular	Curved	Sinuous	Erratic
Colour -	Monochrome	Muted	Nat. Blend	Colourful	Garish
Balance -	Harmonious	Balanced	Discordant	Chaotic	
Movement -	Dead	Still	Neutral	Calm	Busy
Pattern -	Random	Organised	Varied	Regular	Formal
Visual & Audible Tranquillity				Noise	Natural
Visual Intrusions			High Mod/High		
Modern Infrastructure			Moderate Mod/Low		
Dereliction			Low None		
Unsympathetic Development			Other tranquillity influences		

Visual Amenity/Sensitivity				
Open Panoramic Views	Immediate/Middle Distance			
Distant Landmarks/Reference Points	Intrusions/Clutter			
Distant Visual Intrusions	Harmonious Development			
Framed Views / Vistas	Inharmonious Development			
Rare Views / Secluded Landscapes	Mitigation Landscape			
	Popular Viewpoints			
	Recreational Access Views			
	Busy/High Volume Views			
Recreational Access/Activity				
Types & Ease of Access	+ _	Leisure & Tourism Influence		
Open Access Land		Traffic & Parking		
Multi-use Access Sustrans Routes		Visitor Numbers		
Long Distance Trails		Signage		
PROW Network		Noticeable Tourism Development		
Adventure Sports		Spectator Gatherings		
Recreational use of Land		Event Locations		
Condition & Initial Value Judgements				
	High	Medium	Low	Impoverished
Condition / Quality				
Unspoilt Semi natural				
Isolation / Remote character				
Scenic quality – Natural Interest/factors				
- Human Patterns/settled				
Heritage/Natural interest settings				
- Nature Reserves/Distinct habitat				
- Recognised Landscape type/character				
- Designed Landscapes – Parklands/Gardens				
- Conservation Areas/settings				
Condition Comments				

Valued Landscapes – General Observations			
Photo Collection – notes in field – scope to add photos / captions at review stage			

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- d) The study will provide evidence to the assessment of broad locations and 'opportunity areas' in the district for longer-term housing and employment development. The 2050 growth work (which is being commissioned separately) is likely to explore a range of options including extensions to market towns, locations associated with major road proposals/rail stations, extensions to villages or forms of rural new settlements. The output of the study in terms of characteristics, landscape sensitivity and quality will be used to assess these areas, initially at a strategic level and then to undertake more detailed testing of landscape impact as specific options and locations or masterplans are refined.

- e) The 2050 growth work also includes technical and route studies to bid for highway road bypasses around Glastonbury and Walton/Ashcott. The character study will provide input into the testing of options.
- f) The study will also be used to support the development of preferred and final options for specific development allocations and policies in the updated Local Plan 2020 – 2036. It will also feed into the formal sustainability appraisal of the Plan and production of other strategies and documents such as Green Infrastructure Plans. The Council will also use this study to review and redraft the landscape policy in the adopted Plan.
- g) The Council does not have an in-house landscape officer. The study outputs will provide a comprehensive baseline to support specialist expertise where required on particular proposals, appeals or projects. It will also support in-house skills and capacity building in this area.
- h) The Council may also, in due course, seek to develop more specific landscape assessment tools or bolt-on studies based on this work to assist in the assessment of individual planning applications, appeal sites or particular types of development (such as wind/solar). Any such further work will be the subject of a separate tender exercise.

3. Development Plan and Policy Context

Mendip is a largely rural district within the County of Somerset covering an area of 738 km² (258 square miles) with four market towns of Glastonbury, Frome, Shepton Mallet, Street and the city of Wells.

The Mendip District Local Plan (Part 1) was adopted in December 2014 and will be more than five years from adoption in 2020. The Council intends to undertake a major review and update of the Local Plan Part I, updating its evidence base in 2019 and publishing initial/preferred options for consultation during 2020. It may also need to address the challenge of speculative housing applications submitted contrary to the adopted plan from 2020.

The impact of development on Mendip's landscapes is assessed through adopted policies DP1 (Local Identity and distinctiveness) and DP4 (Mendip's Landscapes) Policy DP4 and supporting text is appended to this brief for information.

There is a very limited area of the district which falls within the Bath and Bristol Green Belt which means that nearly all Mendip is covered by 'countryside' policies.

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4. Landscape Designations and Previous Assessment

The district contains significant areas of the Mendip Hills AONB. The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB also fringes the eastern side of the Mendip boundary. The adopted Plan also identifies a series of 'Special Landscape Features (or SLF)', specific to the district. The extent and characteristics of the SLF were reviewed in 2012.

A district wide landscape character assessment was last produced in 1997 and identified 8 principal character areas:

- The Central Mendip Hills
- The East Mendip Hills
- The Frome Valley
- The Cotswold Edge
- The Batcombe Down & Valleys
- The Lias Lowlands & Ridges
- The Moors
- The Wookey Islands

Consideration of the project being an up-date of the previous work or an entirely new study was given during the process of tender, consultant appointment and in the project initiation meeting. A review of the status of the previous work with regard to the guidance from Natural England [2014] on this subject was provided in the consultant tender submission. From this while aspects of the 1997 approach are seen to predate the standard best practice, the work is thought to form a good foundation for the new assessment project. The essential point being that the previous broad mapping of the individual character areas seems well considered and robust. With the distribution of character areas broadly accepted as a suitable starting point, this allows resources to be focused on gathering updated information and field assessments to add more layers of detail to the individual areas. The review against the NE 2014 [ref 1-Tudor 2014] guidance is set out in Table 1 below.

5. Project Brief

The character assessment will be undertaken following the best practice guidelines for LCA produced by Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage. The study is intended to provide an update of the 1997 district wide character assessment reflecting both changes in assessment approaches and the landscape over the previous two decades.

In respect of specific coverage the character study will cover the whole of the Mendip District area and have regard to a number of locations beyond the district boundary; in particular to the south of Midsomer Norton/Radstock and land to the west of Walton around Ashcott. These are shown on Figure 1. These locations have particular development pressures or need to be

included to test future infrastructure options. In these areas, the study will need to align with landscape assessment undertaken in Sedgemoor District and Bath NE Somerset. The study will also draw in the potential overlap of the similar assessments of the neighbouring local authorities in other locations.

The study will focus on the rural areas and urban fringes around the five main settlements within the District. The landscape/townscape features within the main settlements are excluded to allow focussed study of the surrounding rural or semi-rural landscapes. Character assessments of the urban areas may be subject to a separate project in due course. Given the existence of more up to date assessment of the AONB the study will not need to make a detailed assessment of features within the AONB boundaries.

External Stakeholders

As an update of a long-standing assessment it is considered that the basic framework of the assessment is well established; but the work will involve considerable research and field work to provide a comprehensive update. While stakeholder input and public consultation is essential to the final publication; for the most efficient use of time and resource it is envisaged the initial study will produce a draft for wider consultation. For this draft some focused information gathering discussion with key external agencies is included to ensure pertinent detail is captured at the outset.

This includes contact with planning officers in the two AONBs and with officers familiar with the respective LCA Studies in the relevant neighbouring authorities. The other sources anticipated for the initial support to the study include the following organisations; -

Somerset County Council
Mendip ANOB Partnership
Somerset Wildlife Trust

Key Stages

The project approach is set out as a series of key stages, these follow the best practice recommendations and are to be reviewed and agreed as the project progresses.

Stage 1 – Brief, Purpose and Scope.

At the commencement of the project the brief and reasons for commissioning the study as set down by MDC were reviewed and the intended project approach combined into an agreed working brief.

As set out in the introduction the requirement for an updated LCA was triggered primarily by the need for an evidence base to inform the future long term growth strategy and local plan process. Other objectives raised by the initial council brief included a review of how valued landscapes may be defined in relation to national planning guidance and how the existing Local Plan policy

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designation of Special Landscape Features may be integrated into the future iterations of the plan. Reference was also made to the study providing the baseline to assist with application proposals or appeals and the desire for the council to develop more specific assessment tools.

For the working brief the more straightforward functions of a landscape assessment as a standard part of the planning, design and management of the local landscapes is noted. The best practice guidance sources [1] and [2] set out the history and rationale behind the accepted approaches to Landscape Character Assessment and provide a range of examples of how LCA are used. In summary and in terms of the MDC work the potential uses of the completed study are noted as;

1. To provide a comprehensive description of the landscape with reference to the characteristics that make the area distinctive and the factors which may be seen to be of particular value or sensitivity to change. This may be valuable at a general level in helping people to develop greater appreciation and engagement with the local environment. At a more specific level understanding the local distinctiveness, interest and value of the local landscape may be of assistance to the promotion of the Mendip landscapes as a tourism and recreational resource.
2. Provide a resource of accessible spatial information on the district environment that can relate the mapped landscape character to underlying aspects of physical geography, biodiversity and human influence. With this the LCA can be integrated into other environmental study work as part of a coordinated approach to environmental mapping, decision making and management. In particular the appreciation of the potential interrelationships of various environmental sensitivities may assist with the process of screening environmental assessments. (The agreed brief does not propose an 'Integrated' landscape assessment but there is scope for the work to be integrated with other studies in the future).
3. Provide greater understanding of the key landscape considerations that will underpin the necessary judgments at all levels of the planning process from strategic decision making on local plans, site allocations, development master planning, siting, scale or massing of development or infrastructure, major land use changes, or smaller development/land-use changes, forestry or woodland design and renewable energy projects. As such the LCA should not only be used by the LPA in development of allocations and policy but also form a key reference point for developers in the preparation of application proposals, Design and Access Statements and LVIA / EIA studies.
4. Provide a framework of distinct landscape areas and baseline information on the character, condition and potential influences which would inform any future coordinated landscape management programme. Within the AONB the landscape management is coordinated with reference to the AONB Landscape Management Plan; outside of the AONB the district

council currently has more limited remit for landscape management but the study may facilitate future initiatives in this respect.

5. Provide a baseline of the current condition for the monitoring of change. As an update of the previous assessment the study provides the opportunity to log the key changes and extent or pace of change that has occurred in the previous 20 or so years since the original LCA study. In some regards the previous study was not set up to provide a clear baseline for monitoring against but in the structure of the current work this can be remedied. By identifying some of the main areas/types of development that have been undertaken in recent years within the district the LCA update provides an opportunity to note the cumulative impact of recent development. The use of GIS and the inclusion of all field work will also assist this function in the future.

The MCD objectives set out above highlight a number of points which need to be integrated into the study approach. These are identified as follows;

To provide a comprehensive baseline to inform options for future growth and for assessing landscape effects for future applications or appeals; the work needs to address the distinction between Landscape and Visual Impacts that would normally be drawn in any (LVIA) impact assessment. For both of these uses it would assist if the baseline can include some appreciation of the general visual sensitivity across the district and how existing urban areas and other major development is seen. An appreciation of the distinction between landscape character and visual sensitivity would also be a key element in any future tool box for assessment of applications.

The council have specifically included the need to clarify how 'valued landscapes' are defined and how to integrate or retain its Special Landscape Features Policy in future iterations of the local plan. The council also notes a need to consider how the landscapes outside of the AONB are valued in the plan and decision making process. This requires consideration of the landscape in terms of quality and relative value which go beyond the characterisation of the landscape. Landscape quality includes consideration of the physical state of characteristic landscape, the condition or intactness of existing features, the visual condition, and other overlapping aspects of interest such as cultural heritage or wildlife interest. Relative value may be attached to perceptual aspects which may require judgements on aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness and may also be linked to public access and/or appreciation. The assessment will therefore need to include reference to these factors and map the various forms of landscape access that exists within the district.

As aspects of value are inherently subjective it is considered a degree of consensus in any final value judgements would be important; this is an area where the study may need to set out the rationale and seek wider consultation input to finalise a robust position. The future stages of stakeholder and public consultation engagement are seen as an important aspect in this regard. Consideration of various ways to make the final assessment report accessible to the public and to engage public interest in the topic are also noted as important aspects of the study.

[1] Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland 2002 by Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage

[2] An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment October 2014 by Christine Tudor, Natural England

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To assist the Authority in the use of the landscape character assessment in future development control situations transparency in the process approach and accessibility to supporting field work are noted as important. The relevance of the character assessment in LVIA and planning application preparation should be noted and consideration will be given to how the document can be more easily accessed by other professionals.

Stage 2 – Desk Study

The assessment process will start with a comprehensive desk top study undertaken in advance of the main detailed field work. Time is allowed in the project programme for there to be some iteration between the stages. The study will encompass the review of existing landscape assessments including the English National Character Areas work, any county assessment and cross boundary neighbouring assessments.

For the consideration of landscape value relative to the AONB the setting of the Mendip District in the wider context of regional designations, major settlements and broad landscape types may well be relevant. Mapping of broad landscape attributes such as tranquillity and dark skies is available and also relevant at this contextual level.

The identified character areas output from the 1997 study can be transferred into GIS format to allow overlay on larger scale up to date mapping. Likewise the simple topographic, geology, drainage and other physical mapping information can be drawn together into a set of comprehensive base maps.

The distribution of all the various planning, natural and cultural heritage interests of the district will be drawn together through the available open source GIS data sets and the council local plan data sets. Alongside the mapping the desk top work will also involve the background review of available reference material on the history and ecological interest of the district.

The cultural associations of the district landscape would be built up via the background research. As part of this contact with the county artworks organisation (Somerset Art Works) is proposed as a means to highlight some of the current work inspired by the landscapes of the district.

Stage 3 Field Survey

The field survey stage will in itself be staged. After an initial review of the desktop work in stage 2 some sample visits to selected character areas would be undertaken. This will allow review of the data already gathered and the accuracy of the existing LCA boundaries. The data gathered during the desk top stage would be part of the survey pack for each area. A project specific Field Survey Proforma has been prepared for this stage, a blank copy of which is provided below.

The initial sample visits will allow the proforma to be tested and modified if necessary before being applied to the whole district. In planning the resourcing for this stage the initial sampling is to be undertaken in pairs to allow discussion and consistency in how the proforma is used record and respond to different areas. Following this initial testing the bulk of the assessments will be made individually. In the subsequent classification and description stage these will be reviewed and discussed as a team.

To cover the district in manageable zones a series of eight main field work zones are identified along with two focus areas relating to the cross boundary locations highlighted by MDC. As illustrated on Figure 1 these all encompass a number of character areas and are sized relative to the complexity and scale of the areas involved.

In planning out the intended approach it was noted the network of strategic long-distance trails actually cut through the majority of all the LCA areas. Figure 1 illustrates the key routes of the Mendip Way, Macmillan Way and Monarch's Way combine with the Sustrans routes 3, 24 and 254. While it is recognised there may be some degree of these trails tending to be routed through better quality landscape it is intended these routes would be included as a key part of the assessment routes. These would be used along with other footpaths and minor lanes, not least because there will be a need for some circular routes for the practical purpose of a day visits.

The majority of the field work would be done on foot or via cycle access as this is a more immersive experience in the landscape and allows much more concentration on the assessment. It is noted that within the centre of the district there is a gap between most of the long distance path network, this corresponds with the Fosse Way / A37 corridor (where tranquillity may be less evident).

The Field Survey Proforma is based on best practice guidance and previous project experience. The format aims to cover the normal range of aspects to be recorded but in greater detail than the previous assessment. The form includes aspects of particular relevance to the wider understanding of visual amenity/sensitivity that may be important in the future consideration of local landscape capacity. It also includes a section to make note of the types of recreational access and the influences of leisure and tourism; the accessibility of landscape is one aspect of interest but there is also the point that in some locations the presence or pressure of recreational uses may have an effect on the landscape people have come to enjoy.

In order to capture value judgements on the landscape, which is key to understanding the valued and special landscapes within the district, there are sections to record judgements on the condition and quality of the area. As these value judgements are by definition complex and subjective the final page includes a section to record on site observations on why an area may be of low or high value.

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Within each area the expectation is to gather a good selection of photographs to illustrate the points observed. The proforma includes space to note specific points / view captions that will be added at the post site visit review stage. It is anticipated on average three or four proformas would be provided per LCA. With each field work zone taking at least 2 days to survey and allowing for some sample areas and general visits around 20 – 25 days of field work are anticipated.

The field work proformas will be retained in a format that allows easy retrieval as part of the final output report (for clarity the forms will be in a typed up format).

Stage 4 Classification and Description

In the field and as a first step on the output of the LCA the boundaries of the various LCA's will be reviewed and adjusted as appropriate. Where changes are more than simply minor adjustment to deal with the increase in scale or updating of the base mapping the changes would be recorded on a separate map overlay.

Following this the area names and basic physical descriptions would be updated from the previous text. For each area the physical geography, landscape vegetation and habitat types, human land-use and settlement patterns would be set down in text. The physical character would then be described in objective terms followed by the more subjective aesthetic and perceptual responses. These combined would be identified as the key characteristics and observed character.

Where relevant the additional interest arising from natural, historical, cultural or societal layers of landscape appreciation would be set down as aspects that may be seen to either add directly to the landscape character or as added interest/attraction to a locality. Key settlements and historic landscape features would be highlighted as part of the landscape; although the internal townscapes and detailed settlement analysis is beyond the study scope, the presence and broad nature of the settlements (or settlement edges) is seen as part of the landscape character.

The landscape condition and senses of unspoilt tranquillity or visual/audible intrusion would be noted either as a general observation across each area or how this may be seen to change as the area is passed through. For each area the nature of the visual interest/condition and sensitivity would be noted and any key viewpoints, panoramas, vistas, landmarks, intrusions noted. The overview of the general extent of unspoilt or good condition landscape across the district and the cumulative impact of change over the last two decades (the first two of the 21st century) is a potential output from the study.

Specific recreational access features and influences would be noted within the character areas where these provide major focus of access activity or have a direct bearing on the perceived character. The recreational access/activity is expected to be relevant to how the landscapes may be perceived at a district level.

Within each landscape character area description consideration of any emerging trends, threats, or particular sensitivities would be included. The risks of climate change and the influx of non-native pest and diseases may have implications across the district; where this is the case the issues may be addressed in summary form at the end of the study to avoid extensive duplication.

It is noted that in the period since the original report there has been significant development of renewable energy installations across the district; with the expectation that there may be more to come. The study will include confirmation of the extent of these across the district and comment on any evident cumulative impact provided.

The local areas of identified Special Landscape Features would be referred to where they occur within each character area. The ways in which these areas may be seen as valued landscape will be identified within the text as appropriate. The consideration of the relevance of these in relation to the general landscape, other potential areas of valued landscape, the AONB and other forms of designation will be considered at a district wide level. On completion of the character assessment work the existing landscape related planning policy guidance and local plan policies will be set out along with any suggested adjustments to the policy protection. Subject to further development of the planned departure of the UK from the EU, discussion on the implications for the district's landscape will be included.

Commentary on how the LCA may be used to assist with the development of project proposals and decision making will also be provided.

The landscape character areas along with other key elements of the study findings would be illustrated and digitally mapped. The updated LCA's would be issued in a GIS format compatible with the council's MapInfo system.

The field work proforma data would be typed/captured digitally and provided in a searchable appendix format. The collection of area photographs would be likewise organised in sets and geo-located.

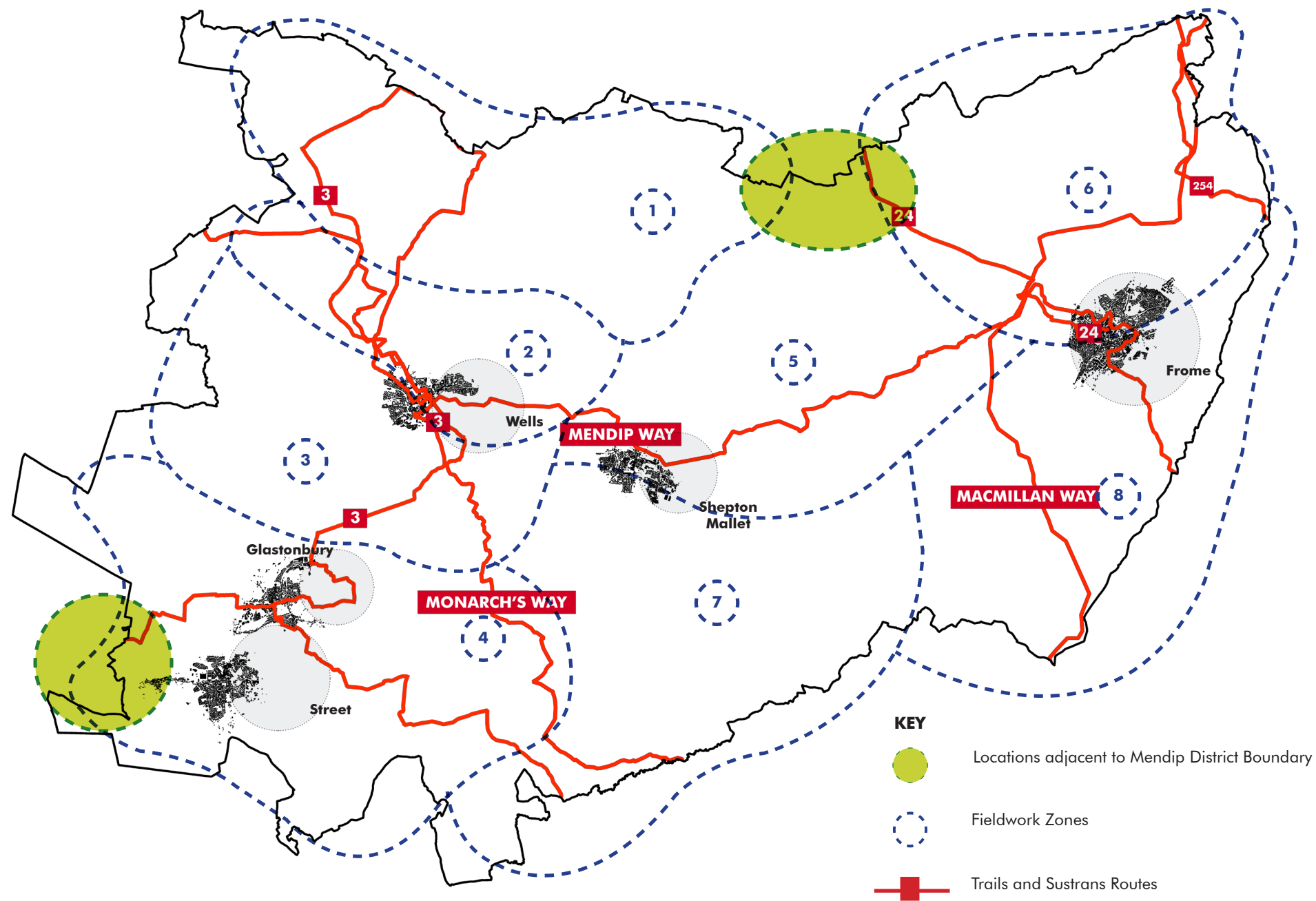
In anticipation of future public engagement with the landscape character assessment and to make the final report output as useful to external agencies as possible, the study graphics will be presented in digital format that may allow presentation either as slides or web enabled content. Graphics which allow comparison between factors and to overlay LCA areas on clear base mapping are considered to be of greatest assistance to others viewing the report.

The final report will be issued to MDC in word, PDF and digital formats to allow distribution and up loading to the internet as an open source document. All copyright on graphic material will be attributed to MDC but with the presumption that as environmental information third parties may be allowed to download and make use of the material without undue restriction. Where OS mapping is included in supporting graphics this may be subject to the normal licence restrictions for copying and reuse.

TABLE 1 : 'Reviewing and Updating and Existing Landscape Character Assessment'**Review and Updating an Existing Landscape Character Assessment
based on Section 1.6 NE/Tudor 2014**

CONSIDERATIONS	SITUATION FOR MDC LCA	
Date carried out	1997 – pre-2002 methodology – based on 1993 guidance approach	X
Date and provenance of data	Project drew on previous work from 1996 by same consultancy, parallel work by County Council and 1995 MAFF work.	✓
Original purpose of the existing LCA	Prepared specifically as a district wide / level Landscape Character Assessment	✓
Scale of the assessment and its appropriateness for the proposed use	1997 Mapping bases at 1:50,000 scale – diagrams do not show field boundaries or definitive PROW's.	X
Whether or not and if so to what extent stakeholders engaged in the assessment process	No reference to consultation in methodology or text.	X
Age of the assessment and amount of landscape change since its compilation	As an essentially rural area the degree of change across broad areas of the district the landscape has been limited. Some subtle changes can be identified which would be relevant to map and consider. Extent of urbanisation since 1997, extent of mineral extraction (limited geographic increase – maturing mitigation), highway traffic growth (may be modest but common perceptions of growth) Frome bypass (only recently completed in 97 – subsequent maturing of mitigation landscape). Growth in solar / sustainable power generation. Countryside and Recreation Act 2000 – creation of access areas (limited extent in east Mendip). Creation of popular Sustrans cycle routes and promotion of long distance walking routes – potential changes in perception of the landscape through improved and increased public access.	-
Extent of cross-boundary join up at the edges of the study area	N/A -now highlighted in project brief.	X
Whether the original field survey work is available and can be updated	Assumed not available	X
Location – relevance of coastal assessment (2012 publication of seascape methodology)	N/A	N/A
Will particular aspects of landscape character require more scrutiny or emphasis	Capacity for change / development noted as aspect of future work for Local Planning Authority	X
Note Guidance note at end of 1.6:- 'if a LCA pre-dates Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002), and / or it does not pay regard to significant stakeholder engagement then it might be necessary to carry out a new Landscape Character Assessment'		X

FIGURE 1



FIELD SURVEY PROFORMA

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Field Survey Proforma					
Assessment Location No.		Assessor (Initials)	Date	Office Ref	
Location GR		Direction of View(s) –			
Nature/Setting Viewpoint, Location & Experience – (road/path/village/open access – experience of getting to location / being there)					
Elevation	Aspect	Weather			
Landscape Type(s)		1997 LCA Ref(s)			
Intervisibility with other LCA areas / significant boundaries (physical or admin)					
Extent of view/Landscape assessed					
Typography & hydrology/surface water features/exposed geology					
Level / Moor	Steep Hills	Dry/Wet Generally	Exposed rock features		
Plain / Plateau	Ridge	Wetland	Natural Cliffs		
Undulating	Wide Vale	Dry valley/sink holes	Quarry		
Gentle Slope	Valley -Wide Flat Bottom	Resurgence	Other mineral workings		
Rolling Lowland	- Narrow <u>w</u> flood plains	Ditches			
Low hills	- Narrow no flood plains	Drainage Channels	Local stone		
Scarp/cliffs	- Gorge/Ravine	Stream/River	- Walls		
		Ponds/Lakes	- buildings		
Dominant Landcover/Landscape Present at Location [P] /in view [M]					
Landcover	Veg. Type	Management	Settlement	Built/Design ed Env.	Boundary Treatments
Woodland	Conifer	Un-managed	Sporadic Houses/	Conservation Area	Hedges - informal /
<u>Grassland</u>	Broadleaved	Semi Natural	Farmsteads	Parkland/	managed
Ley / Permanent pasture/meadow	Coppice	Low input	Hamlet	Designed	Walls
Rough Grassland	Copse/Farm	Hill grazing	Estate Farmstead	Landscape	Fences
<u>Arable</u>	Woodland	Species rich	Village SML	(parks/garde ns)	Boundaries
Maize/Cereals	Hedgerow trees	Extensive managed	Pre-war dev		Ditches
Moor/Heath	Biomass/Oiser	Intensive managed	Post-war dev		Parish
Scrub	pollards	Other Intensive	Urban Edge		Domestic :
Marsh/wetland	Orchard	Industrial	Urban		- Walls
Bog	Parkland Trees	Urbanised			- Fencing
Other	Arboretum				- Hedges
	Non-Native				
	Planting				
	Other				

Infrastructure/development - Present or Nearby				Natural & Cultural Heritage	
Historic Infrastructure				Wildlife Interest	
Mineral Workings/Processing/Waste				Distinctive Habitat	
Highways / Railways				Historic Settlement	
- Minor Roads - Main Roads - Trunk dual carriageway - Major Highway features				Industrial Heritage	
Power Lines				Notable Houses/Folly's	
Solar				Tourist Attractions	
Wind				Cultural Locations/Associations	
Other					
Aesthetic & Perceptual					
Scale -	Intimate	Small	Medium	Large	Vast
Enclosure -	Tight	Enclosed	Medium	Open	Exposed
Diversity -	Uniform	Simple	Varied	Diverse	Complex
Texture -	Smooth	Textured	Varied/Mid	Rough	Very rough
Form -	Vertical	Very Steep	Sloping	Rolling	Horizontal
Line -	Straight	Angular	Curved	Sinuous	Erratic
Colour -	Monochrome	Muted	Nat. Blend	Colourful	Garish
Balance -	Harmonious	Balanced	Discordant	Chaotic	
Movement -	Dead	Still	Neutral	Calm	Busy
Pattern -	Random	Organised	Varied	Regular	Formal
Visual & Audible Tranquillity				Noise	Natural
Visual Intrusions			High Mod/High		
Modern Infrastructure			Moderate Mod/Low		
Dereliction			Low None		
Unsympathetic Development			Other tranquillity influences		

Visual Amenity/Sensitivity				
Open Panoramic Views	Immediate/Middle Distance			
Distant Landmarks/Reference Points	Intrusions/Clutter			
Distant Visual Intrusions	Harmonious Development			
Framed Views / Vistas	Inharmonious Development			
Rare Views / Secluded Landscapes	Mitigation Landscape			
	Popular Viewpoints			
	Recreational Access Views			
	Busy/High Volume Views			
Recreational Access/Activity				
Types & Ease of Access	+ _	Leisure & Tourism Influence		
Open Access Land		Traffic & Parking		
Multi-use Access Sustrans Routes		Visitor Numbers		
Long Distance Trails		Signage		
PROW Network		Noticeable Tourism Development		
Adventure Sports		Spectator Gatherings		
Recreational use of Land		Event Locations		
Condition & Initial Value Judgements				
	High	Medium	Low	Impoverished
Condition / Quality				
Unspoilt Semi natural				
Isolation / Remote character				
Scenic quality – Natural Interest/factors				
- Human Patterns/settled				
Heritage/Natural interest settings				
- Nature Reserves/Distinct habitat				
- Recognised Landscape type/character				
- Designed Landscapes – Parklands/Gardens				
- Conservation Areas/settings				
Condition Comments				

Valued Landscapes – General Observations			
Photo Collection – notes in field – scope to add photos / captions at review stage			



APPENDIX II

MENDIP ASSETS DATABASE

View from Colliers Way Cycleway near Great Elm

DATABASE - NAVIGATION PAGE

DIAGRAM	REF. PAGE IN ASSESSMENT	DATA CONTAINED	REF. SHEET IN EXCEL	HYPERLINK TO REF. SHEET
Open Access Land	p.XX	Open Access Land, Open Nature Reserves, Trust Lands, Woodlands via PROW	Open Access Land	Click to go to ref. sheet
Ecology & Woodlands	p.XX	Ecological Designations, Woodlands & Stewaship Schemes	Ecology & Woodlands	Click to go to ref. sheet
Mineral Sites	p.XX	Active, Dormant, Inactive Quarry Sites	Mineral Sites	Click to go to ref. sheet
Energy Sites	p.XX	Solar Farms, Wind Turbines, Hydro Scheme	Energy Sites	Click to go to ref. sheet
Registered Parks & Gardens	p.XX	Scheduled Registered Parks & Gardens by HE	Registered Parklands	Click to go to ref. sheet
Landmarks & Viewpoints	p.XX	Positive land marks, Towers, Distant Hills, Wind Turbines & Viewpoints	Landmarks & Viewpoints	Click to go to ref. sheet
Protected Landscape	p.XX	AONB, Special Landscape Features, Open Areas of Local Significance, Green Belt, Registered Parklands & Conservation Areas	Protected Landscape	Click to go to ref. sheet
* Please click onto the hyperlink to view information related to specific diagrams in the document				
* For the full list of data, please go DATABASE				

OPEN ACCESS LAND				
CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES	AREA (HA)	Cumulative Areas Totals	
Open Access Land	CROW Act Designations	1056	1,056	Please refer to 1243-G835-CRoW
Nature Reserves	National Nature Reserves	401	1,598	
Nature Reserves	Local Nature Reserves	8		
Nature Reserves	Other Nature Reserves	645		
Land in Trust	National Trust (Open & Limited Access Land)	43	1,985	
Land in Trust	Woodland Trust Woodlands	608		
Woodlands accessible via PROW	Woodland intersect with PROW	3472	4,817	Please refer to 1243-G835-Overlay_FC_Woodland_&_PROW

[illegible]

MINERAL SITES						
CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES	SITE NAME	GRID REFERENCE	AREA (HA)	Cumulative Areas Totals	NOTES
Mineral Sites	Active	ABBEY (FARRINGTON LANE)	ST 648 435	2.00	672.03ha	
Mineral Sites	Active	DOULTING (CHELYNCH)	ST 648 435	10.50		
Mineral Sites	Active	GURNEY SLADE/BINEGAR	ST 625 497	73.90		
Mineral Sites	Active	HALECOMBE	ST 701 474	60.00		
Mineral Sites	Active	MOONS HILL	ST 662 460	95.10		
Mineral Sites	Active	TORR WORKS	ST 695 446	249.00		
Mineral Sites	Active	WEST CRANMORE	ST 659 431	1.53		
Mineral Sites	Active	WHATLEY	ST 722 480	180.00	121.35ha	
Mineral Sites	Inactive	DULCOTE	ST 568 440	22.90		
Mineral Sites	Inactive	HOLWELL/COLEMANS	ST 726 460	61.90		
Mineral Sites	Inactive	LIME KILN HILL	ST 731 487	8.10		
Mineral Sites	Inactive	SHIPHAM HILL	ST 452 559	20.80		
Mineral Sites	Inactive	STOKE LANE	ST 667 474	2.85	249.98ha	
Mineral Sites	Inactive	WESTBURY	ST 505 503	4.80		
Mineral Sites	Dormant	BARNCLOSE	ST 693 478	13.73		
Mineral Sites	Dormant	BEACON FARM	ST 635 447	0.65		
Mineral Sites	Dormant	CLOSFORD	ST 717 445	40.60		
Mineral Sites	Dormant	COOKSWOOD/HOLCOMBE	ST 669 479	57.10		
Mineral Sites	Dormant	EMBOROUGH	ST 622 508	41.00		
Mineral Sites	Dormant	HIGHCROFT	ST 619 487	7.10		
Mineral Sites	Dormant	TADHILL	ST 688 461	16.00		
Mineral Sites	Dormant	TOR HILL	ST 558 455	6.40		
Mineral Sites	Dormant	WESTDOWN	ST 719 461	67.40		

ENERGY SITES								Cumulative Areas Totals	NOTES
CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES	SITE ADDRESS	GRID REFERENCE	PLANNING APPLICATION NO.	Output kW	AREA (HA)			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Shooters Bottom Farm, Townsend Lane, Chewton Mendip	ST 59307 50350	2011/0529	7.3	10.53	229.77ha		
Solar Farms	Commercial	Whitchurch Farm, Chilcompton, BA3 4DW (near Ston Easton note installation postcode remote from application address)	ST632522	2012/0554	5	14.06			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Hawkers Farm Yeo Moor Drove Theale Wedmore Somerset	ST 46812 47885	2014/1598	2.39	6.80			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Whitley Farm, Ashcott, Somerset, TA7 9QA	ST 44745 36958	2013/1515	7.14	33.80			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Land North Of Butleigh Drove, Butleigh Drove, Pedwell, Somerset	ST 43057 35190	2013/1189	5.78	16.50			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Land At Higher Hill Farm Butleigh Glastonbury Somerset	ST 51413 31497	2011/0688	4.9	10.70			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Land adjacent to Park Wood Butleigh Glastonbury Somerset	ST 52893 34138	2011/0781	4.9	12.82			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Pitts Farm Chilcote Lane Chilcote, Wells, BA5 3DX	ST 59253 45930	2012/0645	3.6	8.60			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Pitts Farm, Chilcote Lane, Chilcote, Wells, BA5 3DX	ST 59205 45825	2013/0526	3.6	8.60			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Crapnell Farm, Crapnell Lane, Crapnell, Wells, BA5 3HG	ST 59567 45785	2013/1243	5.4	15.64			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Land North Of Old Frome Road, Maesbury, Somerset BA5 3HA	ST 59639 47490	2011/0498	0.5	1.30			
Solar Farms	Commercial	New Row Farm, Yelling Mill Lane, Downside, Shepton Mallet, BA4 4JT	ST 62725 44530	2013/1510	3.93	10.63			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Lodge Farm Doultling Near Shepton Mallet Somerset BA4 4ND	ST 64802 45257	2011/0765	5	9.00			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Land at Soho Farm Soho Leigh upon Mendip Radstock BA3 5RD	ST 69920 48030	2012/2982	1.5	2.75			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Land @ The Royal Bath and West Showground, Shepton Mallet BA4 6QN	ST 63562 39195	2011/0440	5	8.40			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Land Off Easton Lane Pylle Shepton Mallet Somerset BA4 6SY	ST 62627 38275	2014/2237	12.4	25.00			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Land At Manor Farm, Keinton Mandeville, Somerton	ST 55632 30460	2011/0687	5.6	2.40			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Land At Toid, Burts Hill To Nunney Catch Roundabout Trudoxhill Frome Somerset	ST 73235 44363	2014/1562	6	14.00			
Solar Farms	Commercial	Monksham Farm, Marston Bigot, Frome, BA11 5BR	ST 76519 43039	2013/1118	10.77	17.20	N/A		
Solar Farms	Commercial	Court Farm West Woodlands Frome BA11 5EN	ST 78065 44162	2014/2326	4	7.50			
Solar Farms	Commercial	The Hermitage Witham Friary Frome BA11 5HL	ST 75175 38891	2013/1538	0.55	2.14			
Solar Farms	Farm-scale	Green Acres Farm, Doctors Hill, Wookey, Wells, Somerset	ST 51778 46170	2011/2476	60	N/A			
Solar Farms	Farm-scale	SHARPHAM PARK SHARPHAM PARK STREET SOMERSET BA16 9SA	ST 46562 37545	2011/2998	50	N/A			
Solar Farms	Farm-scale	Steanbow Farm, Steanbow, Pilton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 4EH	ST 58473 39329	2012/1632	32	N/A			
Solar Farms	Farm-scale	Steanbow Farm, Steanbow, Pilton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 4EH	ST 58410 39521	2012/1633	260	N/A			
Solar Farms	Farm-scale	Steanbow Farm, Steanbow, Pilton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 4EH	ST 58044 40106	2012/1634	240	N/A			
Solar Farms	Farm-scale	Beard Hill Farm Fosse Way Pylle Shepton Mallet Somerset BA4 6SS	ST 62636 40725	2015/0223		N/A			
Solar Farms	Farm-scale	Farncombe Farm Prestleigh Lane Prestleigh Shepton Mallet BA4 4NG	ST 64267 41107	2013/2320	8.8	N/A			
Solar Farms	Farm-scale	Rodmore Farm, Evercreech, Shepton Mallet BA4 6DW	ST 649 380	2011/2922	50	N/A			

ENERGY SITES								Cumulative Areas Totals	NOTES
CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES	SITE ADDRESS	GRID REFERENCE	PLANNING APPLICATION NO.	Output kW	AREA (HA)			
Solar Farms	Farm-scale	RUBBERY FARM EAST LYDFORD SOMERTON TA11 7HE	ST 569 303	2011/2997	50	N/A			
Solar Farms	Farm-scale	Moorleaze Farm, Witham Friary, Frome, Somerset BA11 5HH	ST 74268 40155	2012/1630	60	N/A			
Solar Farms	Farm-scale	Pyle Farm, Marl Pits Lane, Trudoxhill, Frome, BA11 5DL	ST 7450 444	2011/2743	60	N/A			
Solar Farms	Farm-scale	Gibbons Farm Holt Lane Witham Friary Frome Somerset BA11 5HL	ST 75100 37967	2014/2576	60	N/A			
Wind Turbines	Over 15 m to Hub Turbines	Land at Shooters Bottom Farm, Townsend Lane, Chewton Mendip	ST 59492 50985	116407/000	1800	N/A			
Wind Turbines	Over 15 m to Hub Turbines	Franklyns Farm, Chewton Mendip, Radstock BA3 4NB	ST 59775 50982	2013/1163	50	N/A			
Wind Turbines	Over 15 m to Hub Turbines	Knitts Farm 132 Stockhill Road Chilcompton Radstock Somerset BA3 4JQ	ST 63887 50520	2014/2614/FUL	60	N/A			
Wind Turbines	Over 15 m to Hub Turbines	Lower Haydon Farm, Haydon Drove, West Horrington, BA5 3EH	ST 58527 48363	2010/2314	11	N/A			
Wind Turbines	Over 15 m to Hub Turbines	Beechbarrow Farm, Hillgrove, Wells, BA5 3EL	ST 57355 48820	2010/2997	30	N/A			
Wind Turbines	Over 15 m to Hub Turbines	Warren Farm, Old Frome Road, Masbury, Wells BA5 3HB	ST 61823 46740	2011/2201	330	N/A			
Wind Turbines	Over 15 m to Hub Turbines	Warren Farm, Masbury	ST 61823 46740			N/A			
Wind Turbines	Over 15 m to Hub Turbines	Moons Hill Quarry, Stoke St Michael, Radstock BA5 5JN	BA5 5JN	085790/009	6	N/A			
Wind Turbines	Over 15 m to Hub Turbines	Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB	ST 71865 54997	2012/0248	10	N/A			
Wind Turbines	Over 15 m to Hub Turbines	Creech Hill Farm, Creech hill Lane, Bruton	ST 67016 35844	085630/007	20	N/A			
Wind Turbines	Over 15 m to Hub Turbines	Landmark Farm, Wanstrow, Shepton Mallet BA4 4TQ	ST72688 41893	2012/17512013/0206	1500	N/A			
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	The Beeches, Chilcote Drove, Chilcote, Wells, BA5 3DU				N/A			
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Lower Haydon Farm, Haydon Drove, Haydon		2010/3087	5	N/A			
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Wells Hill Bottom Farm, Roemead Road, Haydon, Wells, Somerset, BA5 3EZ		103248/003	5	N/A			
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Temple House Farm, Chelynych Road, Doultling, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 4RQ		2009/0204	5	N/A			
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Brottons Lodge, Doultling, Shepton Mallet, BA4 4RB		2009/0203	5	N/A			
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	The Royal Bath and West Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 6QN		2011/1840	5	N/A			
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Mitchells Elm House, Wanstrow, Shepton Mallet		2012/0821	5	N/A			
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines		ST 70277 43332	064429/008	5	N/A			
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Bendalls Farm, Green Ore, Wells, Somerset, BA5 3EX				N/A			
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Long Run Farm, Godney, Wells, Somerset, BA5 1RX		022817/007	5	N/A			
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Charterhouse Outdoor Education Centre, -, Charterhouse, Bristol, Somerset, BS40 7XR		076489/003	5	N/A			
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines			069935/007	5	N/A			
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	The Old Laundry, Marston Bigot		117106/000	2.5	N/A			

Energy Sites								
							Cumulative Areas Totals	Notes
Categories	Sub-Categories	Site Address	Grid Reference	Planning Application No.	Output kW	Area (ha)		
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Lower East End Farmhouse East End Lane Chewton Mendip Bath BA3 4LX	ST 59512 51490	101998/018	6	N/A		
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Gelden Bed East Mead Lane Walton Street Somerset BA16 9RA		034902/000	5	N/A		
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Chanters House East Town Pilton Shepton Mallet Somerset BA4 4NX		118474/004	5	N/A		
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Royal Bath And West Showground, Prestleigh Hill, Prestleigh, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 6QN		2009/0042	5	N/A		
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Splotts Moor Farm, Wick Lane, Wick, Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6 8JS		2009/0130	5	N/A		
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	The Bridge, Worthy Farm, Pilton, Somerset, BA4 4BG		2009/0263	5	N/A		
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Westhay Moor National Nature Reserve, Westhay		2009/1374	5	N/A		
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Piltown Farm Piltown West Pennard Glastonbury Somerset BA6 8NQ		2012/1315	11	N/A		
Wind Turbines	15 m or below to Hub Turbines	Hill Farm, Smithams Hill, East Harptree, Bristol, BS40 6DB		2013/0886	5	N/A		
Hydro Scheme	River Frome	Tellisford Mill	ST 80534 55681		50	N/A		
Hydro Scheme	River Frome	Stowford	ST 81025 57609		37	N/A		
Hydro Scheme	River Frome	Lullington Mill	ST 78786 51638		66	N/A		
Hydro Scheme	River Frome	Beckington VEP	ST 79618 51988		26	N/A		
Hydro Scheme	River Frome	Shawford Mill,			31	N/A		
Hydro Scheme	River Frome	Beckington				N/A		
Hydro Scheme	River Frome	Wallbridge, The Retreat, Frome	ST 78655 47601		12	N/A		
Hydro Scheme	Mells River Tributary of the Frome	Hapsford	ST 76051 49600		58	N/A		
Hydro Scheme	Other Rivers	The Mill House, Mill Lane, Alhampton, Shepton Mallet, Some	ST 63005 35008		10	N/A		
Hydro Scheme	Other Rivers	Cutterne Mill Evercreech	ST 64358 36713		N/A	N/A		
Hydro Scheme	Other Rivers	Burcott Mill Wookey	ST 52106 45605		N/A	N/A		
Hydro Scheme	Other Rivers	Wookey Hole	ST 53172 47748		30	N/A		

REGISTERED PARKLANDS & GARDENS

CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES	SITE NAME	GRID REFERENCE	AREA (HA)	Cumulative Areas Totals	NOTES
Registered Parks & Gardens	Grade II	Ston Easton Park	ST 62661 53434	98.48	1153.28	
Registered Parks & Gardens	Grade II*	Orchardleigh	ST7710651503	306.01		
Registered Parks & Gardens	Grade I	Mells Manor House	ST 72708 49288	1.53		
Registered Parks & Gardens	Grade II*	Ammerdown House	ST7134952805	188.03		
Registered Parks & Gardens	Grade II	Babington House	ST 70571 50889	62.46		
Registered Parks & Gardens	Grade II*	Bishops Palace, Wells	ST5546345511	32.76		
Registered Parks & Gardens	Grade II*	The Chantry	ST 71987 46248	12.40		
Registered Parks & Gardens	Grade II	Marston House	ST7590644811	220.81		
Registered Parks & Gardens	Grade II	Mells Park	ST 71116 48318	193.17		
Registered Parks & Gardens	Grade II	Milton Lodge and The Combe	ST 54651 46764	33.38		
Registered Parks & Gardens	Grade II	Hapsford House	ST 75958 49535	4.26		

Landmarks & Viewpoints						
CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES	SITE NAME / ADDRESS	GRID REFERENCE	AOD	HEIGHT	NOTES
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Positive Landmarks	Glastonbury Tor	ST 51218 38624	158	N/A	Note function as landmark & viewpoint
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Positive Landmarks	Penn Hill Mast	ST 56437 48862	305	281.60	Built in 1967 - major element of infrastructure - intrusive but overall height creates reference point in views at almost sub regional scale.
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Positive Landmarks	Admiral Hood Monument	ST 49592 33808	N/A	N/A	
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Positive Landmarks	Walton Windmill	ST 46212 35219	N/A	N/A	
Landmarks & Viewpoints	The Three Towers	Cranmore Tower	ST 67668 45029	280	45.00	Grade 2 Listed - one of three towers that form a intervisible triangle in the East Mendip area
Landmarks & Viewpoints	The Three Towers	Ammerdown Tower	ST 71813 52173	180	50.00	The Jolliffe Column and terraced base. Grade II* Listed - one of three towers that form a intervisible triangle in the East Mendip area
Landmarks & Viewpoints	The Three Towers	Alfred's Tower	ST 74545 35123	255	49.00	Grade 1 Listed - Often open to the public - National Trust. Note function as viewpoint as well as landmark
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Distant Hills - Outside of MDC	Clay Hill	ST 83844 44917	239	N/A	
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Distant Hills - Outside of MDC	Westbury White Horse	ST 89845 51649	150	N/A	
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Wind Turbines	Land at Shooters Bottom Farm, Townsend Lane, Chewton Mendip	ST 59492 50985	236	100.00	
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Wind Turbines	Franklyn's Farm, Chewton Mendip, Radstock BA3 4NB	ST 59775 50982	230	35.00	
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Wind Turbines	Lower Haydon Farm, Haydon Drove, West Horrington, BA5 3EH	ST 58527 48363	233	30.50	
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Wind Turbines	Warren Farm, Old Frome Road, Masbury, Wells BA5 3HB	ST 61823 46740	288	N/A	
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Wind Turbines	Landmark Farm, Wanstrow, Shepton Mallet BA4 4TQ	ST72688 41893	153	N/A	
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Destination View Points	Glastonbury Tor	ST 51218 38624	158	N/A	Note function as landmark & viewpoint
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Destination View Points	Deers Leap	ST 51873 49272	245	N/A	National Trust Land - View Point Car Park
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Destination View Points	Beacon Batch	ST 48461 57265	325	N/A	Hill Top Trig Point - Highest Point on Mendip & within MDC Area
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Destination View Points	Walton Hill	ST 46637 35051	82	N/A	National Trust Land - View Point Car Park
Landmarks & Viewpoints	Destination View Points	The Leys - Field above Vallis Vale	ST 76418 48650	125	N/A	Field popular with dog walkers on edge of town also start of the East Mendip Way long distance path

PROTECTED LANDSCAPE				
				NOTES
CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES	AREA (HA)	Cumulative Areas Totals	
Protected Landscape	AONB	10150.90	10150.90	
Protected Landscape	Special Landscape Features	2810.47	1296.37	
Protected Landscape	Open Areas of Local Significance	194.34	13,149.5	
Protected Landscape	Green Belt	855.23	13,955.5	
Protected Landscape	Registered Parklands	1153.00	15,041.9	
Protected Landscape	Conservation Areas	1185.52	15,818.5	

APPENDIX III

LANDSCAPE VALUE APPRAISAL

View from New Road between Draycott and Priddy

INTRODUCTION

Previous landscape assessments undertaken within the Mendip Area have identified the Mendip Hills and edge of the Cranborne Chase areas as of exceptional landscape quality. Other assessment work also identified the smaller areas of Special Landscape Features within the district area. As part of the study brief for this assessment a question was raised on the point that, with the policy focus on the AONB areas and specific landscape features, are other landscape areas potentially being overlooked in plan and decision making. To assist with consideration of the value of the landscape across the wider district, Section 7 of the main study set out the general approach to landscape value assessment and highlighted 8 special landscape qualities of the district as a whole.

As set out within Section 7, following on from the character assessment work, it was considered useful to draw together a set of qualities that relate to the range of landscapes across the district. These were identified at the end of the process and were thought to be consistent considerations across the district. They were also thought to be represented at least in part within each of the main landscape types of the area.

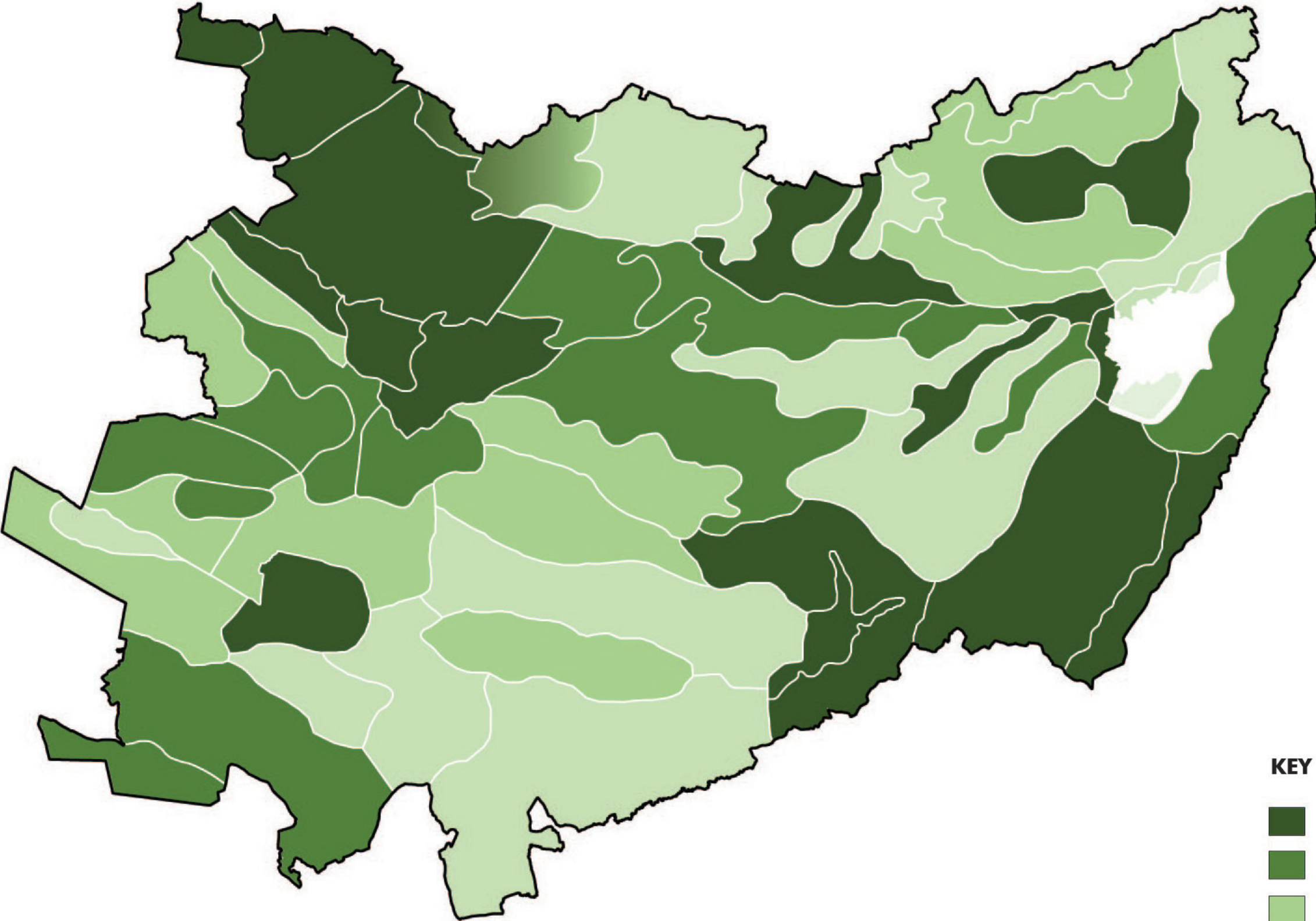
As considerations of landscape value and quality will involve a degree of subjective opinion, it helps if there is consensus on the attributes that may be seen as important. The first draft of these qualities was discussed with MDC Officers and then the list was put forward as a key part of the consultation process for the study. On the basis of a generally supportive, albeit modest number of consultation responses, the list suggested has not been changed in this final version of the study.

This Appendix provides an assessment on the general degree to which each of these landscape qualities are judged to relate to the individual character areas, in a simple scale of not applicable/poor up to exceptional. The judgements were applied across the district generally at the scale of the individual character areas. For the larger character area of the Mendip Plateau this was subdivided into West, Middle and East.

Once each area was considered in relation to each of the main headings set out, the combined conclusions were mapped across the district as illustrated in the Figures at the end of this appendix.

It should be noted this is an overview of the relative distribution of the landscape qualities and represents a broad-brush view of the relative landscape values. As most of the landscapes and local circumstances vary considerably, even within the character areas, these assessments will include areas where the landscape value is significantly higher or lower than the general assessment of the wider whole. While this exercise may well assist with a view over relative values, detailed policy and site specific project decisions may well need to develop more specific assessments. Where appropriate or practicable the landscape qualities headings used here would be expected to form the basis of future assessments.

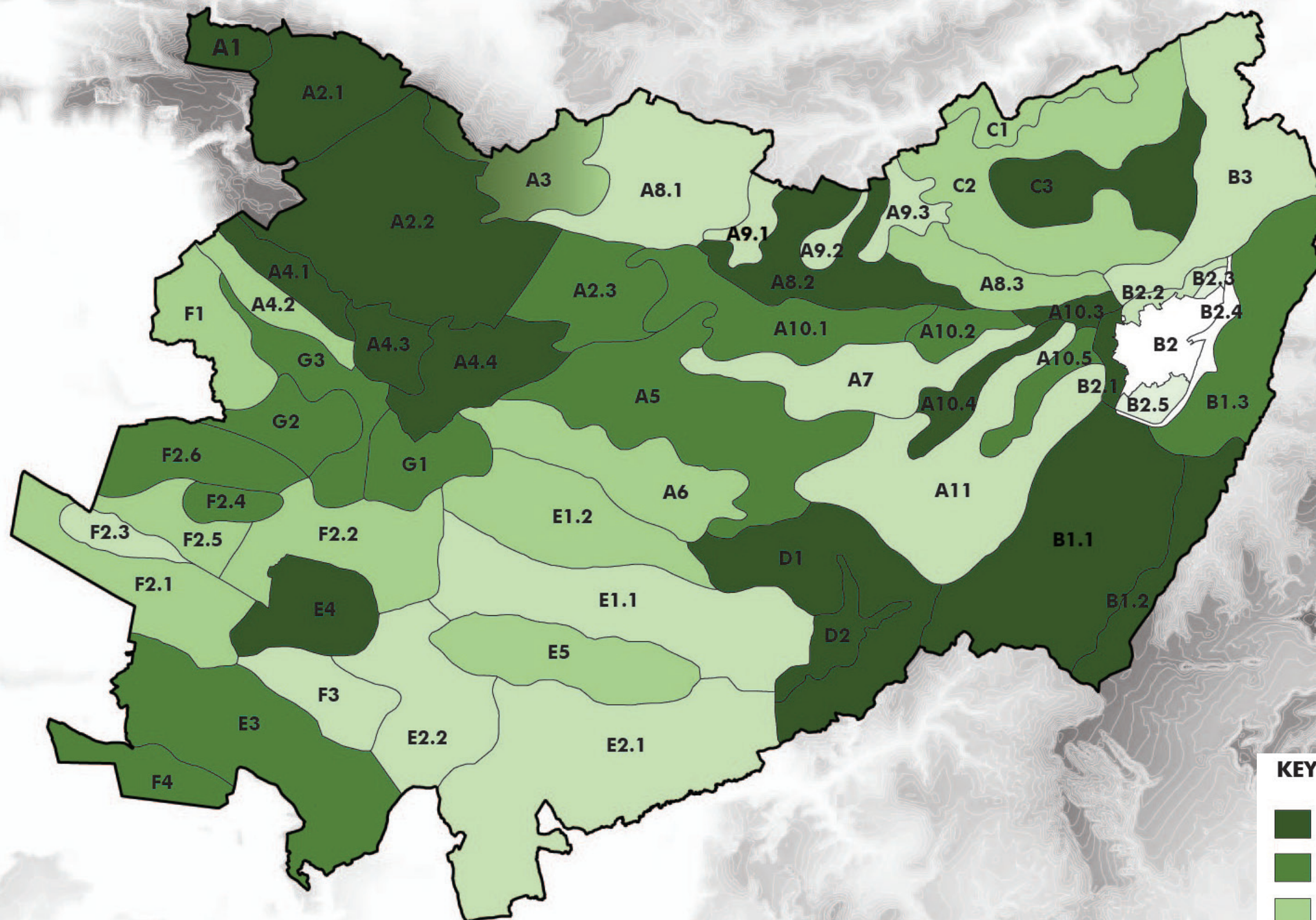
LANDSCAPE VALUE APPRAISAL



KEY

-  **Very High Value**
-  **High Value**
-  **Moderate Value**
-  **Low Value**
-  **Not Applicable**

LANDSCAPE VALUE APPRAISAL & CHARACTER AREAS



KEY

- Very High Value
- High Value
- Moderate Value
- Low Value
- Not Applicable

APPENDIX IV

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LVIA WITHIN THE MENDIP DISTRICT LANDSCAPES

View towards Meare and the Mendips from Sharpham Park near Street

APPENDIX 4.0 : RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LVIA WITHIN THE MENDIP DISTRICT LANDSCAPES

GENERALLY

As part of the landscape assessment project MDC are seeking to improve the consistency and standard of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA) submitted to the Authority alongside planning applications. The District view LVIA as an important tool in the design and planning process.

Assessments can assist with the design development process in that issues are recognised and addressed early

Accurate and comprehensive assessments help to clarify issues and allow pre-app and application processes to be progressed more efficiently

Clear well-presented assessments help the public and other agencies engage with application process as part of a positive consultation process.

LVIA may form a part of a wider Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as part of an Environmental Statement (ES) (these would be referred to as LVI Assessments. Alternatively, the authority may require a stand-alone assessment in which case this would probably be expected as a LVI Appraisal. The subtle distinction being in the legal requirement for EIA to identify 'significant' effects (reference GLVIA3).[1] Stand alone assessments may be appropriate where there may be local landscape sensitivities or concerns that need to be properly considered even though a full EIA is not required.

Consideration of landscape and visual effects will be important on many applications in the rural landscapes of the district and on the edges of the built up areas. They may still apply even in situations where existing development on or adjoining proposed development sites has an impact; LVIA may help recognise how schemes can be improved or existing impacts lessened as part of good site planning and design.

The authority expect that all LVIA studies would be undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect (member of the Landscape Institute) or other suitably qualified and experienced professional with an understanding of the best practice guidance. The current guidance being the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact, edition 3 (GLVIA3 – produced by the Landscape Institute in conjunction with IEMA – April 2013).

The majority of assessments received by the Authority will be reviewed by Planning Officers as opposed to Landscape professionals. The Authority may well seek external landscape consultant reviews of submitted assessments. To assist the both the Authority and members of the public it is expected assessments will be drafted with clear non-technical language with clearly explained methodologies and justified conclusions.

Useful guidance is also provided by the Landscape Institute on the topic of reviewing landscape and visual impact assessments (LVIAs) and landscape and visual appraisals (LVAs) [2].



SIGNIFICANCE

It is recommended that standard proformas and fixed standard assumptions are avoided in the preparation of assessments within the Mendip area. Particular care should be taken to consider the determination of 'Sensitivity' and 'Significance' in EIA LVIA's; the simple presence or absence of designations such as AONB or SLF do not confirm a landscape may not be valued or sensitive to change. Consideration should include reference to the Eight Landscape Qualities of the MDC collection of landscapes.

BASELINE ASSESSMENTS

This study provides information on a range of landscape aspects. Landscape Character areas are defined as broad areas, within which the degree that the identified character may be seen will vary. The assessments provided are a guide to the characteristic features and perceived character of each area; more local / site specific considerations of project areas



Turbines at Shooters Bottom / Chewton Mendip

APPENDIX 4.0 : RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LVIA WITHIN THE MENDIP DISTRICT LANDSCAPES

will still be important elements of an LVIA. Other aspects of the baseline landscape conditions provided in this study include the layers of natural, heritage, cultural and social interest, tranquility and dark sky mapping and recreational access.

The visual amenity of the district is generally high and the assessment includes reference to various views, viewpoints and landmarks. Among the Eight Landscape Qualities of the district the continuity of good generally unspoilt landscapes along all the main strategic routes is noted. This means that the main road corridors, although often heavily trafficked, should be considered sensitive viewpoints. Average daily traffic data for the main strategic routes is provided in graphic form here to assist with this aspect of baseline assessment.

The district has a good network of rights of way and minor lanes; these vary from some which are heavily used and others which offer more remote and isolated experiences; both types would be considered relatively sensitive (as the number of users diminish the sensitivity of individuals to small intrusions may well increase). Very few overgrown barely used paths within the district were noted in this study.

In respect of recreational access views it should be noted the district benefits from having a good selection of long distance paths, cycle trails and open access land which attract local and tourism users. In addition, the remaining former railway lines are identified as future sustainable transport links in the Local Plan. In relation to even general paths in more average areas of rural landscape, the proximity of Mendip to the urban populations of Bristol, Bath and North Somerset means there is in the order of 1m people in the local area with potential interest in this landscape.

Within the outputs from this study as much information as possible has been collated into GIS format and clear mapping to assist with the production of comprehensive baseline

assessments. These files and the graphic output from this study is intended to be freely available for this use. While this information has been compiled in good faith the Authority will have no responsibility to third party users of this data.

For a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment the following topics are recommended as a check list to ensure all aspects of potential interest or value in the landscape are covered;-

Context – is there a wider context in which the development site or proposals sit – proximity to built up areas / strategic roads, position within the collection of Mendip landscapes

Physical Landscape Features – are there any topographical, geological/morphology, drainage, tree or vegetation cover, built or designed landscape elements that may be of value (intrinsic value irrespective of character or by public perception).

Landscape Character – how does the site/setting relate to the NCA and LCA's listed in this study, physical characteristics and perceptual aspects (including tranquility, remoteness, isolation, or semi natural character).

Tangible interests such as wildlife or flora, heritage, cultural interest, events, social space that may add to users experience or local sense of value.

Recreational function with reference to the districts network of PROW, Accessible woodlands, reserves, open access land, shared cycle / pedestrian routes and national cycleway links, back roads and minor lanes, rivers and lakes and occasional areas of private land that are used for recreational pursuits.

Under the same heading access for pedestrian and cycle users to make connections for other types of use such as the daily walk to school or commute can be included.

Designated status – formal designations or wider expressions of value that would confirm the location as a Valued Landscape

Visual Amenity - Views, Viewpoint's, Viewers and Landmarks



Pylons near Upper Godney

APPENDIX 4.0 : RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LVIA WITHIN THE MENDIP DISTRICT LANDSCAPES

CAPACITY AND SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE

As part of a baseline study consideration should be given to the capacity of the landscape to accept proposed forms of development and/or the susceptibility to impacts that may be particularly related to the type of development envisaged.

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

All assessments will be expected to show consideration of both landscape and visual impacts, as separate albeit related issues. Landscape effects should be considered in terms of irrespective of any public perception and those which may be perceived from public places or by sensitive parts of the population (e.g. this could include private residential areas). This consideration is of particular relevance to the renewable energy sectors.

Wind turbine developments may be perceived to have predominantly visual impacts; but as evidenced by the existing installations in the area they may still impact on aspects such as landscape character. This may be on the sense of tranquility (both noise and visual), remoteness or isolation and the District's semi natural settings. Several of these attributes relate to blocks of land between main roads, so if a development is encountered mid walk through a block or character area that effect could diminish the experience of a whole walk.

Large solar developments may be seen as having predominantly landscape effects as they are often not so visible, but similar concerns over tranquil (visually unspoilt), remote, isolated semi natural settings occur. In addition there are often localised visual intrusions often at gateways where close quarter views directly into installations open up to minor lanes or footpaths. While sometimes only a short view the lack of attention to this issue or effort to address creates the sense of an unnecessary or easily avoided impact which may be perceived as more

intrusive. The visual impact of additional overhead powerlines and plant should also be factored in.

Even hydro electric developments which often have a very small footprint and by definition are sited low in any topography; can have both landscape and visual impacts.

There are examples of unsightly engineering structures appearing in very natural riverscapes and appearing totally out of place. Considering potential impacts irrespective of public views should encourage more elegant engineering, developers of such structures should not assume they will never be seen. Access to rivers for angling and kayaking is subject to change over time; the River Frome has been used for regular kayaking for more than 30 years. Changes to water levels or flow may also impact on such recreational use; the availability of semi natural landscapes for adventure activities is again noted within one of the Eight Landscape Qualities of the District.

COMBINED AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Some developments may only present a range of minor effects. None of which on their own would be considered as significant. Despite this in the more sensitive locations assessments should acknowledge the potential for combined effects on several different aspects to result in a diminished landscape resource overall.

The cumulative impact of many small or moderate developments can degrade both landscape and visual amenity. Again this is of particular relevance to the renewable sector. The existing distribution of both solar and wind development across the Mendip district is already frequent. Most long views particularly in the east Mendip area include more than one of the larger turbines, along with the Pen Hill Mast and occasionally the various telecom towers. In two locations there are pairs of similar turbines which mean that while individually they are not always in view there is a constant presence of the structures in the local views. This frequency of recurrence in views means that while some are so distant that individually



Solar Farm Installation Sleight Lane near Dinder Wood

they would be insignificant, the repetition of intrusions starts to become an issue.

The larger turbines and PV sites have been mapped for this study on a GIS layer. This is available to download for assessment work (MDC offer no guarantee of accuracy on locational info and note that this resource may not be constantly up to date).

LANDSCAPE STRATEGIES AND MITIGATION

Given the generally good condition of landscapes across the MDC area it is recognised that some developments will generate some aspects of harm to the landscape resource. As sites in more sensitive locations come forward it should be expected that the landscape design response will need to be more ambitious to address such effects.

Good understanding of potential adverse impacts can lead to positive ideas on how to avoid or reduce or the level of harm. On larger developments it would be expected that as part of the design process and/or development of a Design and Access Statement (DAS) a Landscape Strategy would be included. These would link with the expectation for Open Space and Green Infrastructure as would be covered by Local Plan Policy DP16. These would normally include explanation of the open space provision and allowances of strategic landscape and public realm, and design approaches for play, parking, streetscapes, biodiversity, Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS), Cycle and pedestrian access/circulation, biodiversity enhancement, hard and soft landscape (and even edible landscape).

Such Landscape Strategies or DAS documents would normally directly connect to any mitigation measures arising from LVIA assessments. Imaginative and multifunctional design

approaches and mitigation ought to be seamless. Sometimes a substantial adverse impact may be seen to become far more tolerable if obvious attempts are made to either offset or to mitigate the situation.

Landscape Strategies and Mitigation proposals should be developed with an understanding of the wider issues that the District's landscapes face (refer to section 8). The Council are seeking measures to address the dual issues of the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency. The spread of Ash Die Back is also identified as an immediate major issue for the area. In this situation there is potential for more ambitious mitigation measures to also assist with the wider objectives that seek to rebalance these wider environmental concerns.

Net gains in tree cover is an ambition that will be set back by Ash Die Back. Mitigation for the loss of diseased trees is sometimes suggested as a 3:2:1 approach. Replace one mature tree with a least 3 saplings, a semi mature tree with 2 and any younger trees on a like for like basis [Devon County Council Action Plan].

Could be set out as alternative ratios if a net gain in tree cover is considered appropriate.

As part of the management of CO2 emissions the role of soils needs to be recognised (soils are thought to represent the largest store of terrestrial carbon). Measures to protect site soils within landscape or mitigation strategies for larger development projects is therefore appropriate.

Opportunities to improve the network of Public Rights of Way (PROW) and cycle routes may offer aspects of enhancement that could be seen to offset other aspects of harm. (Note if there are few existing routes identified in a simple baseline assessment any impact may be assessed as neutral, without highlighting the potential for positive net gain).

It is envisaged that with the urgency needed to deliver real reductions in carbon dioxide emissions more renewable projects may need to be accommodated. Given the existing coverage identified and the potential for cumulative impacts there will be some aspects of landscape and visual impact will not be possible to directly mitigate. As part of a more ambitious approach to mitigation other means of offsetting may have to be considered as a last resort response. Given the point that such installations occur on rural land holdings there may be scope for wider public access, tree/woodland planting or other forms of significant habitat creation / management to be delivered by condition as an alternative.



Warren Farm Turbine from Maesbury Castle Scheduled Monument

APPENDIX 4.0 : RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LVIA WITHIN THE MENDIP DISTRICT LANDSCAPES

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Comprehensive LVIA and ambitious imaginative mitigation are key to gaining support and raising public confidence. Assessments that down-play potential effects do not convince. In circumstances where necessary development will have adverse effects clearer presentation of the expected benefits (social, economic or environmental) may also help to convey the rational for such harm being acceptable.

As part of positive public engagement, particularly in the climate and energy debate; clearer information on expected output and post construction monitoring is one way of helping people appreciate the need for change and how potential impacts can and will be managed.

By way of an example of how a positive engagement can add to landscape interest; the small-scale hydroelectric project on the river Frome at Tellisford, includes a public display board charting the output for visitors on the footpath past the former mill building. This creates interest and a direct explanation of how the natural changes in water level influence the output from the site.

(Public data from other renewable sites and what that means in terms of energy produced and CO2 emissions saved is scarce. Within Section 5 of the main report overall comparisons of the existing renewable generation within the district is estimated from peak output figures to help the general understanding of how the landscape impact of these sites relates to the number of dwellings supplied)

REFERENCES FOR APPENDIX 4.0

- [1] *GLVIA3 (Landscape Institute Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment - Third Edition)*
- [2] *Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs) Technical Guidance Note 1/20 (10 Jan 2020)*

