



8

ANTICIPATING, MANAGING & MONITORING CHANGE

Upper Milton View from Old Bristol Road

8.0 ANTICIPATING, MANAGING AND MONITORING CHANGE

8.1 A normal expectation would be that Landscapes do not change radically from one generation to the next. This update to the 1997 assessment has found that the basic pattern and extent of the district's landscape character areas have not really changed that much in the last 23 years. As set out in section 1 there are some specific aspects where localised changes in development over this timescale are notable. In some locations the period has been sufficient to see a distinct difference in the maturity of mitigation planting to the quarries and highway schemes of the late 1980's and early 90's.

8.2 More subtle change has been identified in the general loss in biodiversity over a longer timescale across the UK. This has been tracked as most significant in the post war period and the effects within Mendip appear to be consistent with this wider trend. With more gradual processes such trends can lead to the significance of these changes being missed by the nature of a 'shifting baseline' (the perception that each generation may notice some change but not appreciate the overall scale of this from one generation to another).

8.3 Within the Mendip area there are some aspects where substantial changes over time may have had positive outcomes for the landscape; such as the cessation of coal mining and lead processing. The legacy of these industries remains in some places as interesting and even attractive industrial heritage assets. The changing fortunes of these industries and the way in which the landscape has reclaimed such sites does illustrate the potential benefit of a resilient landscape.

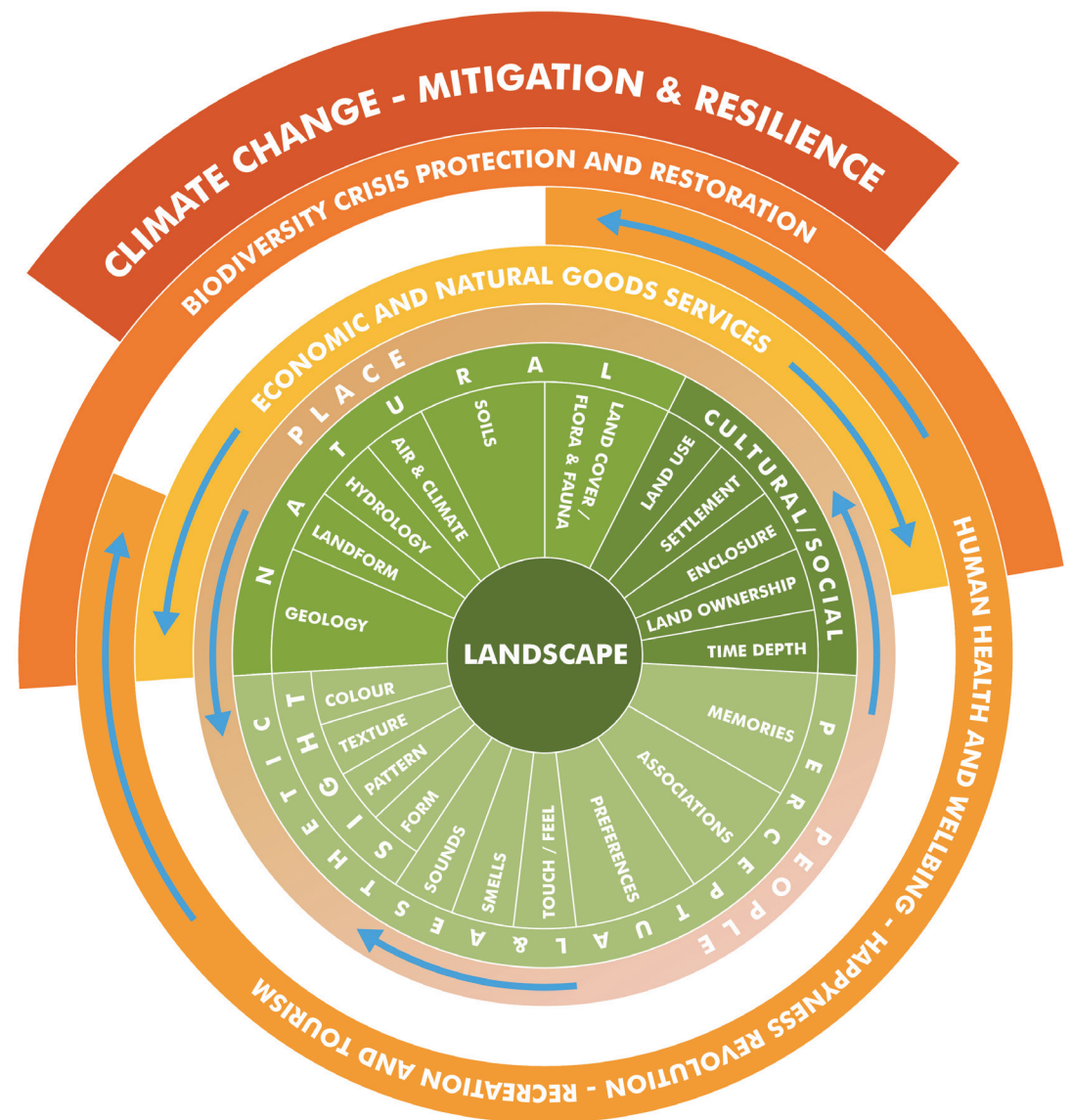


8.4 The rate and range of changes that are now anticipated are set to have many more profound impacts than those seen from the recent decades. Mendip District Council, the County and neighbouring authorities have formally recognised that the changes occurring in climate and biodiversity are a crisis that needs urgent attention. The council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency in 2019 along with a commitment to take care of the environment, leaving it in a good condition for generations to come. Crucially the council have committed to lead the way for Mendip to be carbon neutral by 2030.

8.5 It is evident that Landscape is absolutely in the front line of both the effects and the potential solutions to the challenges arising from both aspects of the Climate and Ecological Emergency. With an appreciation of how people interact and benefit from landscape it is important to recognise how such impacts and the management of change may relate to people's health, well-being and prosperity.

8.6 Applying the 'Ecosystem Services' holistic approach to defining landscape, helps illustrate how the different aspects need to be considered in the round. The potential issues and opportunities facing the Mendip Landscapes are set out below with Climate Change as an overarching theme. The other aspects are set below as three key interrelated strands;

- Biodiversity and Biosecurity
- Health and Wellbeing
- Economic Development



Issues	Consequences	Wider Implications	Mitigation & Management
Climate Change and Carbon Neutrality by 2030			
Climate Change Effects			
Climate change	Shifts in seasonal patterns impacts on growing seasons, species breeding & food reserves.	Climate change expected to compound biodiversity crisis.	Emphasis on reinforcing ecological network and resilience
Warmer wetter winters	Raised ground and soil water levels – potential impacts on tree rootzones. Invasive / non-native species (including pest / diseases) more able to over winter. Implications for farm/soil management stocking levels	Implications for forestry species selection and planting seasons	Species selection / consideration of soil protection and management – UK Forestry Standard includes the Governments approach to sustainable forestry and response to climate change. *note significance of soil carbon in consideration of CO₂
Hot dryer summers	Wildfire risk rises significantly (exponentially) with higher summer temperatures	Some more natural sites with rank grassland and scrub vegetation could be most at risk and most damaged by wildfire. Grassland fires occur most frequently in areas of high public access.	Raise awareness with land managers risk assess key sites. Combination of mitigation strategies with catchment management to retain more water in landscape can assist in risk reduction.
More extreme weather events;			
Winds	Increased risk of storm damage to tree and woodland stock. Potential need for more regular precautionary felling of high risk trees.	Potential for concern over key tree groups, roadside planting and veteran trees may lead to general loss of significant trees.	Wider encouragement of new generations of planting to maintain treescape and for positive management of veteran trees
Heavy Rainstorm Events	Localised flooding and storm damage	Mendip sits at head of several river systems effects.	Potential for catchment management projects within MDC area likely to extend beyond DC boundary. Karst geology may limit scope for major benefit.

Issues	Consequences	Wider Implications	Mitigation & Management
Response to Climate Emergency			
Tree planting programmes. For example;- Nov 2019 - UK Government pledge to increase quantum of trees planted via the Woodland Carbon Guarantee Scheme	Potential for step change in extent of woodland planting across the district. Potential to reinforce character and add to landscape resource or for some LCA's to more fundamentally change. Potential to support restoration of historic parkland landscapes and farmland (hedgerow and open field trees). Opportunities to extend woodland cover alongside and linking existing woodland and other habitat including ancient woodland.	Potential for planting to occur within areas of more marginal farmland with greater historic character / interest or nature conservation potential. Potential for domination of areas by inappropriate species / style of planting. Opportunity for areas of woodland created with public finance support to provide wider public access.	Planting as part of the Governments Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme requires projects to follow the Carbon Code which in turn refers to the UK Forestry Standard. Opportunities to enhance biodiversity and public access through greater support and information for landowners. Opportunities to deliver greater tree cover within and around development proposals.
Greater emphasis on renewable energy	Renewed demand for wind and solar farm projects and hydro schemes across the district.	Implications for landscape and visual impact – including effects on tranquillity and sense of remote unspoilt landscapes.	Further schemes within the district may well be essential to deliver Council object for Carbon neutral position by 2030 but projects would now have cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact. [NPPF Para 151 refers to cumulative Landscape and Visual impact of renewable energy projects]
Soil management * Soils contain largest proportion of terrestrial carbon Poor soil management through overstocking, extensive cultivation or working in wet weather causes degradation of soils. Soils may also be lost during development work.	Loss of a finite non-renewable resource (soils form over near geological timescales).	Loss of soil carbon potentially more significant than carbon release from clearing supporting vegetation. Growing concern over long term soil viability Connection with climate change – long periods of wet weather restrict optimum soil moving conditions.	Raising awareness on issues with land managers. Importance for control of soil management through development. Reference to the need for soil resource and management plans within planning approvals.

Issues	Consequences	Wider Implications	Mitigation & Management
Transport Existing Sustrans routes provide good popular facilities. Extent, condition and connectivity of cycle routes important for long term use.	Key existing asset for health and wellbeing below – potential conflicts with desired levels of use and various user groups including biodiversity interests.	Disused lines represent potential sustainable for transport links for both recreational use and commuting.	The network of disused railways are identified within local plan as potential sustainable transport routes. Projects to bring forward new sections of network would require funding. Some sections of network may be in private ownership.
Peat Extraction The Independent Committee on Climate Change has indicated the need for a change in land use to deliver the Government target by 2050 [statement Jan 2020] including the restoration of lowland peatlands.	Some limited extraction within the peat moors currently still occurs. Many areas have been passed over to the wildlife trusts and are now managed as wetland reserves.	The cessation of extraction and the restoration of peat deposits suggests expansion of the nature reserve function of the moors and levels.	As minerals are County function issues would be managed through the County Minerals and Waste Plan. 2030 target shared by SCC.
Quarrying The implications for the quarrying industry arising from the UK 2050 target may have consequences within the MDC area.	Further discussion with quarrying industry over their carbon emissions may confirm potential landscape related issues. Possible implications from changes in extraction methods or rates, transport and water extraction and active life and after uses.	Reduction in lighting impact may arise where energy use considerations lead to more efficient security and safety lighting.	County waste and mineral planning process
Biodiversity and Biosecurity (Landscape related issues & Interrelationship between Climate Change, Biodiversity and Biosecurity Issues)			
Emphasis on ecological network NPPF, County and Wildlife Trust encouraging consideration of ecological networks.	Landscape features existing and potential key part of networks – protection and reinforcement likely to have positive landscape implications.	Engaging public with work helps to connect people and landscape.	SWT also promoting consideration of nature conservation at ‘Landscape Level’ through the Living Landscape Projects for the Mendips and the Levels and Moors.
General pressure for agricultural efficiency leading to decline in landscape quality	Landscapes losing layer of essential interest and becoming more amorphous	Loss of essential biodiversity. Pressures may increase with economic uncertainty or increasing economic challenges.	Support for measures to promote stewardship

Issues	Consequences	Wider Implications	Mitigation & Management
Biosecurity Issues Include significant arboricultural pests and diseases			
Ash Die Back (See additional information at end of this section)	Substantial risk to key species representing major component of district woodlands and hedgerow trees.	Implications for major landscape features including Mendip Woodlands SAC and general character of treed farmlands. Increasing numbers of mature trees falling will raise public/highway safety issues. Extensive loss of woodland trees risks step backwards in CO ₂ objectives.	Monitoring extent in mature tree stock. Management of dangerous trees may require temporary restrictions on access in areas badly affected. Public information on management and risks. Replanting/restocking on large scale.
Oak Processionary Moth To date this invasive species has been found in several sites in the south east with no sightings in the southwest.			
Health and Wellbeing			
Countryside Access There is generally good level of public access to the countryside via the existing PROW network. There are some localised areas where access from built up areas or the quality of landscape close to the built-up area is poor. Fly-tipping occurring near towns	Localised areas of poor access occur where network is limited or routes end at main roads Access out from housing areas often relies on historic rights of way with no enhancement to make better connections. Quiet back-lanes well suited to recreational access become less attractive to users where tipping occurs.	Poor levels of access and less attractive conditions in key areas limit scope for landscape to deliver full potential of health and wellbeing benefits.	Management of the PROW network Needs to be maintained. Public access to countryside highlighted as part of essential planning gain for new developments. Monitoring and enforcement of fly-tipping legislation.
Active Recreation Mendip area offers wealth of active landscapes – full value of resource may not be appreciated. Some key locations likely to be increasingly valued by various groups.	Potential conflicts in the interest and enjoyment by various user groups.	Value of network may be diminished if conflict perceived between groups. Moderate levels of activity provide sense of secure environment overly high levels of use reduce sense of tranquil / less busy environment for people to enjoy out from urban areas.	Significant benefits from promoting and extending wider network and managing various user group needs.

Issues	Consequences	Wider Implications	Mitigation & Management
Accessible Natural Green Space Important component of local landscape opportunities for enhancing wellbeing	Areas of semi natural landscape character especially valuable but also susceptible to change.	Increasing the carrying capacity / extent of accessible naturalistic landscape helps spread pressure and potential community benefits.	Recognition of value of the informal and natural landscapes of the district. Scope to extend via woodland planting projects undertaken in response to climate emergency.
Tranquility Degrees of tranquility exist throughout the district (not just in open countryside).	Extent of tranquility also valuable and vulnerable to change	Implications for planning and approval of renewable energy developments in particular in the more remote and tranquil settings.	Recognition of tranquility as essential component of landscape character and visual amenity. LVIA for proposals to consider relative tranquillity
Visual Amenity Vistas, views, existing landmarks and general visual amenity essential component of MDC area. Overall condition of area as a rural district (assumed**) important to residents	Wide spread distribution of view points across the district with vey many representing sensitive views in LVIA terms. General landscapes even from busy roads important in this context.	Cumulative impact of development becomes a consideration	Guidance for LVIA
** public consultation on the LCA may assist with more direct evidence on general value of wider landscapes			
Economic Development Mendip District landscape provides an economic resource both in traditional terms and in form of Ecosystem Services			
Quality of MDC environment represents major asset in terms of the cultural and social setting for the district population, the perceptual and aesthetic attraction of the countryside and the local historic and natural interests.	As an asset the district landscapes are of value in their own right but also as a resource that provides a good environmental setting for the community and for the economic benefits of recreation and tourism.	The benefits of recreation and tourism industry are also of wider regional significance.	Recognition of the value of the distinctive good quality landscapes as key part of the economic well-being of the district.
Other aspects of natural capital provide range of other services many of which underpin local economic development and employment.			

Issues	Consequences	Wider Implications	Mitigation & Management
Agricultural and Forestry Sectors major elements of district economy and employment –	Changes in economic conditions and support for sectors may impact on ability of landowners to contribute to landscape protection.		Need for monitoring of trends in land management / agricultural production in relation to landscape character.
Critical issue for economic development will include the provision of land for development	Potential for conflicts between development and landscape resource as either direct loss of areas of distinct character indirect influence on wider character or loss of visual amenity. Existing aspects of resilience in the landscape demonstrated by elements of historic development. Elements of varied landform and strong tree cover may provide opportunities to absorb and appropriately mitigate.	Developments with landscape mitigation and clear environmental objectives embedded at the outset of master planning and design process can offer potential for development that balances Landscape and Visual Impact with positive gains. Opportunities may exist for building in resilience for future change.	Rigorous Landscape and Visual Impact Processes and ambitious sustainable master planning can assist in delivering positive development opportunities.

8.7	A number of common themes are drawn from this summary.	8.10	Aspects of the Mendip landscape provide an existing framework that may help with appropriate responses and create a resilient landscape. At the same time some elements of this framework may be vulnerable and need more interventions or positive management to protect.		soil management may be able to provide common opportunities for wider gains.
8.8	The potential scale of change even from individual issues is significant; the combined effects of these on land use and landscape character represents very substantial change to the district's landscape resource. The implications and ability to leave any control over such change may be hard to predict but are likely to be of major public interest.	8.11	With the scale of some land use changes that may be needed there may be issues in terms of the management of the distribution of proposed mitigation measures to avoid more sensitive locations or conflict between interests.	8.13	In formulating policy and managing changes to the best effect there are well established sources of appropriate guidance. The Mendip landscape resource offers many different opportunities for mitigation of both climate and biodiversity issues; but there is also scope for measures to conflict. For some aspects there would be real benefit in specialist advice on such topics as soils, forestry and agricultural management where there is potential to draw in good scientific backup to the direction of policy making.
8.9	Of the issues identified, the spread of Ash Die Back disease within the district, is probably the most immediate threat to the collection of Mendip landscapes. This is likely to have a profound effect within a matter of a few years, and presents significant tree safety issues - further discussion on this issue is set out at the end of this section.	8.12	With many issues come opportunities; these may be to deliver other landscape or wider environmental benefit. The restoration of historic landscapes or features and the extension of existing woodland patterns may be easy early wins. Public access, biodiversity enhancement, new planting or water and	8.14	The Landscape Review 2019 stated that National Landscape AONB's and National Parks should be at the heart of nature recovery with a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature. The experience of the AONB partnerships and the contribution

	these areas can make to the condition of the wider district landscapes should be noted. Also within the AONB areas with the changes to agricultural support the statutory AONB Management Plans will provide the framework for farm payments via the new Environmental Land Management Scheme. As these measures come into practice the AONB experience may well offer benefits to the wider area.		at the same time areas of accessible landscape may be more valued for regular recreation.		are often the most successfully integrated into their locality.
8.15	Engagement with the people who live in, work and use the Mendip landscapes will be important to gaining support for major change. Public engagement with positive measures aimed at tackling the issues may help people appreciate how these large-scale issues may be addressed and how they in turn may be able to contribute to the process.	8.18	In almost all situations it is evident that greenfield development would have some impact on landscape character and characteristic landscape features. This may be initially the loss of existing elements such as trees or hedges or the indirect change to their context. With areas where there is already a good framework of established landscape, while the initial impact maybe acknowledged as harmful it can be the case that new development may be achieved with a greater sense of place or better environment than elsewhere.	8.21	Further guidance on the subject of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments is provided by the Landscape Institute's Guidelines (GLVIA3) [8.1] in Appendix 4.
8.16	Alongside the anticipated issues arising from the Climate and Ecological Emergency the district will need to continue to deliver opportunities for economic development. In particular with the UK national targets for new housing land will continue to be required for residential development. As identified within this study the existing extent and presence of major settlements across the district are limited. This is both in the physical extent of around 2.6% of the district being urban and the perception that the built-up areas are suitably well contained and separated.	8.19	In developing proposals, it is important for all aspects of how a landscape may be enjoyed or valued or how the landscape resource may be enhanced. For small projects this may be done as simple site analysis and with consideration of the issues. On larger schemes a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal or Assessment (LVIA) may be necessary. The opportunities for wider environmental gain such as improving biodiversity and/or public connections to wildlife, natural drainage or improvement of pedestrian/cycle may not be immediately connected as landscape issues but are nonetheless relevant to a comprehensive landscape assessment.	8.22	In an area such as Mendip district where there are universally valuable aspects of landscape it will be the case that development will cause aspects of harm; in this circumstance it is evident that landscape mitigation measures may need to be more ambitious to ensure new developments deliver appropriate net gains. Where suitable balance between harm and opportunity can be achieved a high standard of environmental design would form the basic requirement for sustainable development.
8.17	Within the general setting of each of the existing settlements there are areas where the proximity of existing suburban development has an obvious impact on landscape character and quality. In most circumstances the degree of perceived tranquility will clearly be diminished by the proximity of development;	8.20	As a minimum all assessments should consider the physical landscape features of a site, the landscape character of the local area (as defined by the LCA descriptions of this study) the more immediate site landscape character, any aspects of natural, heritage, cultural or social interest or value the landscape may have and then the views and visual amenity of the area. Those developments which actively seek to create positive gains in the landscape condition	8.23	Given the issues and imperative that the climate and biodiversity issues are addressed monitoring expecting more from development may now be more essential than ever before. [In this context the requirement for new developments to deliver biodiversity net gains is an important step forward].

MANAGING AND MONITORING CHANGE

- 8.24 Many of the issues identified here arise from much broader scale even global, changes and often involve complex interactions. The potential measures to reduce or mitigate potential effects are also likely to be challenging and will involve various different types of solution. While this study is undertaken on behalf of the District Council many aspects go well beyond either the planning system or the other responsibilities of Local Government. Likewise, the other agencies with influence and interests in the topics raised have limited remits and resources.
- 8.25 Section 9 sets out how the Council's planning policy currently relates to the landscapes of the district and the potential benefits of strategic objectives and Green Infrastructure planning. As the council have set ambitious objectives for achieving carbon neutral status by 2030 achieving this may well require support and involvement of other agencies, non-government organisations and landowners and the public. The creation of the networks needed for this could also assist with wider discussions and delivery on the issues identified within this section.
- 8.26 To deliver positive influence in a situation where substantial change is expected it is important to be able to monitor and take stock of how the environment is being reshaped. As part of this study the areas of all the previous and current Landscape Character Areas have been digitised and set up as GIS layers. This will allow more accurate future review of the individual LCA's and with the previous study provides now a record of the 20 – 25-year past horizon. Alongside this a data base many of the important attributes of the landscape noted in this study have been measured and set out within a

data base. This allows for the different aspects of landscape to be 'filtered' and the overall total of key issues to be identified. For example, the extent of land managed for nature conservation with public access, the areas of open access land or the areas of accessible woodland can be drawn out. This data base is included within the web-linked pages of this study and will remain as a resource for future monitoring and up dating of this work.

ASH DIE BACK - HYMENOSCYPIUS FRAXINEUS

- 8.27 As noted, Ash Die Back is an immediate issue facing the district's landscapes. The disease is now widespread, within Somerset and some mature trees have already succumbed. Within the next three to five years it is reasonable to expect large scale tree loss across the MDC area.
- 8.28 The disease, *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (previously referred to as *Chalara fraxinea*) arrived in the UK in around 2012. It was identified in woodland trees in Somerset in 2013. As a fungal infection the spores can infect trees either through leaves or twigs or via the base of the tree. Windborne spores are produced from the small fruiting bodies found on fallen ash leaves from previous years. The fungus blocks the vital internal water and nutrient system of the tree stems and the trees die back from the crown. Initially when weakened by the fungus the trees are then highly susceptible to other pathogens such as honey fungus which can accelerate the decline of the larger mature trees. The disease was initially seen in young tree stock but is now present in the larger mature tree population.
- 8.29 From the onset of an infection the decline of trees can be very quick with large mature trees dying within 3 to 5 years after infection. The decline has also been seen to be more acute in trees suffering with the impact of unusual seasonal conditions such as hot dry summers or excessively wet winters.
- 8.30 The experience from other parts of Europe has been that 90% of the Ash trees in an area trees will either die or be severely affected. It is hoped that as a species with some genetic diversity that some specimens may be found to have good resistance.

It will take some time to be sure that individuals that initially survive are indeed resistant for the long term; at best it may be only 1-2 % of the tree stock which show this trait.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHANGE

- 8.31 Ash is one of the most common trees within the district both as a hedgerow tree and within the district's woodlands. The implications for the district are very substantial;
- 8.32 In landscape character terms practically every landscape character area of the district will notice some change. Many areas where there is good coverage of field hedge trees will notice that the majority of these are Ash; resulting in areas that become more open and less visually interesting. There are many locations where solitary roadside, parkland or individual field trees stand out as local landmarks or focal points in the landscape. The district landscapes have a good distribution of such trees that adds significantly to the richness of the landscape collection overall.



View from Hembury Lane near Yarley

- 8.33 There are important woodlands, including many areas of ancient woodland, that are either dominated by Ash or of which it is a major component. The character of these woodlands will be changed initially by dramatic loss of tree cover and in the longer term as the character of the tree cover adjusts with the changes in species dominance.

- 8.34 In the same way that Dutch Elm disease transformed areas of the landscape for a generation then Ash Die Back will do again.

- 8.35 The changes in woodland structure is of particular concern for the designated Mendip SAC woodlands such as Asham Wood and Ebbor Gorge where it will impact on the ecological interest and integrity of these important habitat areas. As noted above many areas of ancient woodland are ash woodland which are therefore by definition of ecological importance. Loss of both woodland trees and individuals will have impacts on other species of both flora and fauna. The function of such trees as roost sites for birds and bats and shade for woodland ground flora will be lost. The populations of bats across, Mendip including those



Old Frome Road near Long Cross (A367)

covered by the SAC protection, may be impacted by the loss of trees that provide navigational aids for territorial and foraging corridors.

8.36 There are areas where screening tree planting for mineral workings and other developments will lose trees and the benefit of these plantations will be lost.

8.37 With the declining condition of trees there will be an increasing risk of limbs dropping off trees onto people, roads and properties. The largest scale health and safety issue may well be where trees adjoin public highways. The County Council as Highway Authority have prepared an action plan that sets out the intended approach to identifying and dealing with trees that pose a risk to the roads across Somerset. This prioritises the larger main roads and highest risk areas or tree groups; but this is in itself a colossal task and will mean that many smaller rural lanes and side roads will not be surveyed for some time. SCC have established a modest budget of £500,000 per year to survey and deal with trees on highway land. The Highway Authority will also notify land owners where they identify trees that pose a risk to the highway (under Section 154 of the Highways Act).

8.38 Areas of public access either on the Public Right of Way (PROW) network or other openly accessible land or is a separate issue but presents risks and expense for many landowners.

8.39 The risks of canopy dead wood or standing dead trees is a year-round issue and will evolve over the coming few years. With the occasional increased severity of storm events as already experienced in the UK this risk is multiplied. Heavy snow falls on weakened trees could also present added issues in a bad winter. A further complication arises for tree

surgeons working with Ash Die Back trees in that in the advanced stages of decline the trees become brittle and so dangerous to climb to undertake controlled sectional felling.

8.40 As mentioned, the County Council have identified some sums to address this issue over a number of years. It is understood the figures allow for some traffic management as may be needed for some removals; but no replanting of any areas. The County Council costs will also include the surveying, Land Registry costs and legal work connected to the trees deemed to be on private land.

8.41 The economic costs of the disease will extend well beyond these budget figures to land owners, home owners and many of the trust organisations who are currently managing some sizable areas of the Mendip landscape.

8.42 The final implication is related to the issue of Climate Change in that with the loss of such a large proportion of the district's standing trees there is likely to be a large step backwards in the objective to plant more trees to reduce the District's carbon footprint.



Whatcombe Fields, near Frome



Tree line above the Combe at Nunney

MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION

- 8.43 The County Councils Action Plan sets out steps that the Highways Authority will address the issues in relation to highway safety. Even within this narrow scope the plan makes it clear that other agencies and resources will be necessary. Not least for the task of replanting the landscape. The plan does not directly encompass the County role in looking after the PROW Network, schools or minerals and waste sites.
- 8.44 The Action Plan notes the need to highlight the issues to landowners to ensure highway safety. The plan also includes the wider objective to 'Produce and deliver a comprehensive Communication and Engagement Plan – both internal and external'. This would include information targeted at private landowners, general public, district and parish councils, schools and academies, the forestry commission and voluntary groups.
- 8.45 The County Highways team have chaired some workshop events to raise awareness and discuss potential mitigation approaches with local authority tree officers, landowners and contractors.
- 8.46 Wider public awareness and engagement on this issue would be valuable as it is likely in the coming years many significant trees will be lost. Early discussion of the issue would help forewarn local communities of the pending impacts and allow discussion over replacement planting.
- 8.47 It is possible that some tree stock or even groups of Ash prove resilient to the disease. As these trees become apparent it would be important to monitor their condition and any other risks to their long term condition. The application of Tree Preservation

Orders to healthy trees may be an option but may need to be related to the public amenity benefit of retaining them.

- 8.48 In the longer term it may well be possible to propagate young seedling trees from the surviving stock the use of very local provenance trees at least for replanting any areas of ancient woodland should be considered. To do this may require a wider project to collect seed and establish a certified nursery supply of such trees. It is unlikely that any one contractor or nursery would be in a position to promote this without wider support.
- 8.49 Felling of larger groups of trees or woodland areas may require a felling licence; coordination with the Forestry Commission to ensure woodlands are restocked with appropriate species.
- 8.50 The wider objective for replacing trees within farmland, hedgerows, parklands needs careful consideration to ensure the right choice of trees is made for the location. In order to maintain the sense of the District's landscapes having coherent character across wide areas means that tree species selection should be considered across the LAC areas identified by this report.
- 8.51 The cost and management of replanting must be considered, particularly if the sequestration of CO₂ is not to go into reverse. Some support for landowners and the trusts would be necessary if any early replanting is to be achieved.
- 8.52 With the scale of tree loss that may be expected it will be the case that existing recent developments within the district will become more visible in the landscape. This may be due to the loss of trees within development schemes or on land adjoining. It may be useful to target replacement of these

areas of tree cover as a priority in order to redress this. By the same effect it may also mean that future development proposals have less existing screening to rely on. Where existing vegetation adjoining potential development sites includes a high proportion of Ash this should be discounted in any assessment of potential visibility. Larger compensatory areas of planting may well be an appropriate planning objective to help deliver the long term replacement of the Ash Die Back stock.

- 8.53 The SCC Action Plan notes the potential for positive use of felled trees as biomass for energy production. If this is to be achieved the co-ordination of contractors with energy companies willing to take such loads may well need support to be delivered.

REFERENCES FOR SECTION 8

- [8.1] *GLVIA3 (Landscape Institute Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment - Third Edition)*