

MENDIP LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT - CONSULTATION REPORT

OCTOBER 2021



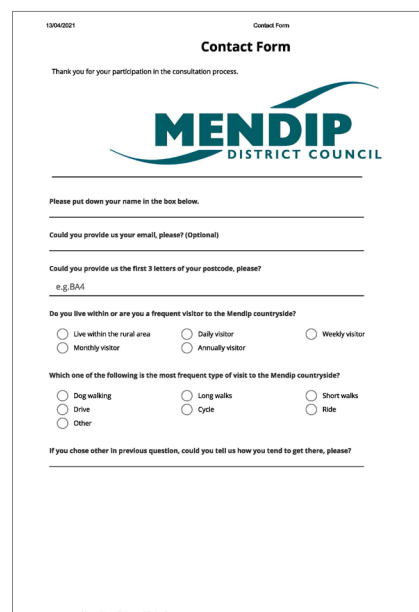
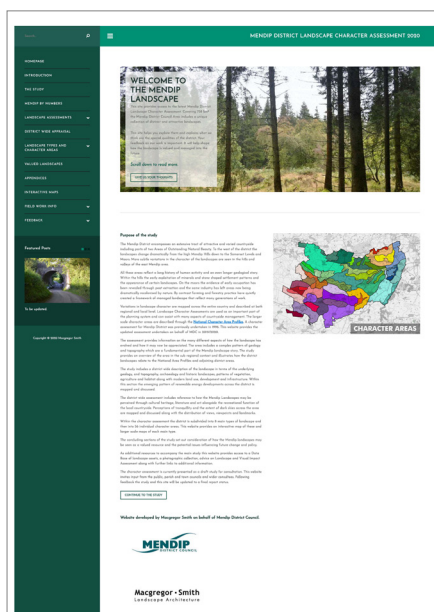
Front cover photograph : provided by Batcombe Parish Council

CONTENTS

- 1.0 INTRODUCTION
- 2.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSE OVERVIEW
- 3.0 COMMENTS, PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS AND RESPONSES
- 4.0 RESPONSES RELATING TO THE LCA B2.5 – LITTLE KEYFORD AND BLATCHBRIDGE
- 5.0 PARISH COUNCILS AND COUNCILLOR COMMENTS
- 6.0 THE MENDIP HILLS AONB PARTNERSHIP
- 7.0 THE FROME AND DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY (ADDITIONAL COMMENTS)
- 8.0 THE COUNCIL OF SOUTHERN CAVING CLUBS
- 9.0 RAILS TO TRAILS AND HORSE SOCIETY
- 10.0 GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS
- 11.0 PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANCY COMMENTS
- 12.0 THE EIGHT SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS
- 13.0 FAVOURITE WALKS, VIEWS AND HIDDEN GEMS
- 14.0 VALUED LANDSCAPES
- 15.0 CONCLUSIONS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Draft Mendip Landscape Character Area was issued for consultation in October 2020. The study was available to view on a dedicated website, with the link being provided from the Landscape Character page of the council's website. The consultation was advertised in a bulletin that got sent to parish councils and Members, as well as in a planning policy newsletter that was also sent to parish councils. The newsletter could also be viewed by any interested parties on the council's website.
- 1.2 The format of the consultation invited direct comments on the study to be submitted either via the website or as direct email responses to the MDC planning team. The website was structured to invite responses from the parishes separately from other respondents to allow for the geographic spread of responses to be mapped out on a parish by parish basis.
- 1.3 Specific reference was made for comments on the Eight Special Characteristics identified within Section 7 of the LCA study. It was envisaged that respondents may have views on the aspects suggested by the study or the number of special characteristics set out. The website allowed people to express views from strongly agree to strongly disagree over the merits of the different characteristics or suggest additional aspects which may be of value to them.
- 1.4 The town and parish council version provided an additional option to confirm the degrees to which the respondents felt the eight different aspects are reflected within their respective area. It was envisaged that with a good level of feedback it would be possible to map the views on this topic across the district.
- 1.5 As a way of engaging the general public in the process the consultation included the opportunity for people to locate their Favourite Walk, View or Hidden Gem. It was envisaged that a range of locations could be identified as a snap shot or illustration of the levels of interest in different areas. As part of this people were asked to describe what the different places / views or gems meant to them. Again it was envisaged that if a sufficiently large number of responses were received then some level of interpretation into mapping across the district may have been feasible.
- 1.6 The consultation ran to mid-March 2020 with the last comments received 16 March 2021. The website consultation pages are reproduced in Appendix A in this report.



2.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSE OVERVIEW

- 2.1 In total some 60 comments were received via email / letter responses directly to the MDC planning team. A further 2 sets of simple comments were submitted via the website.
- 2.2 The majority of all the responses were from the general public (42 no.) and a large proportion of these (36 no.) were evidently using the consultation as an opportunity to register objections to a potential development proposal located on the edge of Frome. Several of these responses were provided as direct copies of one another or making the same points. All these have been read and considered as individual correspondences, but the points raised have been pooled into one collection for the purpose of the review of the document and this report (the individual points have been summarised in the spreadsheet at Appendix B). While these comments are focussed on a proposal that is unrelated to the scope of the LCA study the points and sentiments raised have been considered in terms of how they may inform the wider landscape assessment. At the same time, the aspects of more subjective assessment have been taken in the context and reviewed with a view to how they relate to the wider collection of district landscapes.
- 2.3 Seven responses were submitted on behalf of formal and non-statutory consultees. These included the Mendip Hills AONB Partnership, the Frome and District Civic Society, two recreational access groups and the Council of Southern Caving Clubs. Two responses were received from professional consultancies, the Landscape Partnership Landscape Architects and Gleeson Strategic Land.
- 2.4 All correspondence from private individuals has been anonymised for the purposes of this report. The responses from councillors, organisations and third-party consultants are included with the details of the correspondents.
- 2.5 The website generated separate responses to the different topics as set out above.
- 2.6 The response to the eight special characteristics pages on the website was limited to a single parish council and this highlighted that the councillors had found the questionnaire too confusing. The response from members of the public provided some 29 responses to the special character section. Of these two made specific reference to the Frome development and others made generic comments on the concern for loss of countryside to town expansion. Across this topic almost all respondents provided some level of added detail as to why they were interested in the landscapes providing some interesting points of view.
- 2.7 The call for Favourite Walks, Views and Hidden Gems again provided a modest number of responses via the website. In addition, a few further locations were suggested in the direct email correspondences. The locations and descriptions provided are set out in a later section of this report.
- 2.8 It is noted there is a potential overlap between the website response and direct emailed comments.

3.0 COMMENTS, PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS AND REPONSES

- 3.1 Given the geographic spread of the district, unsurprisingly the majority of the comments received concentrated on only discrete parts of the study or specific locations or topic areas. Only a few correspondents related their input to the study as a whole. A few commended MDC for finding the resources to undertake this work.
- 3.2 The majority of comments were suggesting adjustment to text or to assessments of specific areas/topics. Many useful comments providing alternative views or additional points to consider have led directly to adjustments to the study text or graphics. All the communications have been worked through and where appropriate the study has been adjusted. Some comments were reflected by a number of consultees and members of the public; the frequency of particular points being raised is noted. In some instances, the points have been considered but the suggested amendments have not been made. With some other comments the points have been read through but are not considered to sit within the scope of the study.
- 3.3 To provide the information on how the comments have been addressed the tables provided at the end of this report provide summary of the comments and a list of the sections and page numbers amended.
- 3.4 For the correspondence where a more detailed record of the comments or explanation of adjustments made are necessary these are set out under the headings below supplemented by the detail in table form in Appendix C (Tables C.1 & C.2).

4.0 RESPONSES RELATING TO THE LCA B2.5 – LITTLE KEYFORD AND BLATCHBRIDGE

- 4.1 As noted above some 40 respondents raised concerns over the potential extension of development on the south west side of Frome. The area identified in the study as one of a series of areas described as the Frome Fringe Landscapes (LCA's B2 – B2.1 – 2.5).
- 4.2 The majority of these responses were from members of the public (36), three were from district or town Councillors; Helen Kay – MDC Keyford Ward, Rob Collett MDC Frome Market Ward and Michael Dunk FT College Ward. A response on this topic was also provided by the Frome and District Civic Society (John Peverley); the latter response included a number of additional general points which are addressed separately below.
- 4.3 Among the responses a question was raised on why the Frome area included these areas where similar small interface character areas were not identified for the other main settlements. These LCA areas are essentially the same as those identified in the previous 1996/7 study and all areas where the landscape character is to some extent influenced by the close proximity of the built-up area of the town and or the main town bypass. Within this it is noted that some may have stronger interrelationship with the town edge than others and bearing in mind that character area boundaries are recognised as being frequently transitional areas. From the updated assessment it was felt that these character areas still had merit; the town is the largest settlement area by a significant margin and the bypass creates a corridor (defined as an LCA in its own right) that is offset from the urban edge. With regard to area B2.5 this adjoins land that has been developed in recent years and where further allocations for future housing have been established through the local plan. The areas of existing new housing overlooking the LCA do present some issues where the integration into the landscape has not been very well addressed in the past, which consequently have some influence on the character of this area.
- 4.4 Many points were made on the perceived value of the B2.5 area as a landscape easily accessible from the town offering recreational routes, views and opportunities to experience nature and tranquillity. The link between access to green space and nature and general health and wellbeing was also noted within these comments with some reference to the value of the area experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. The presence of the listed buildings was also noted as part of the area interest.
- 4.5 The accessibility of the area was noted in the assessment text including reference to the Sustrans route out of the town linking to the Longleat estate (para 6.3.73); the level of access into this area is similar to many other locations on the other edges of the town and the other Mendip settlements. The importance of the environment for health and wellbeing and the rights of way network were highlighted in Section 9 of the study under suggested considerations for the district's Green Infrastructure approach (para 9.31). The assessment text has not been amended in relation to the comments on access.
- 4.6 Several comments noted the views to the wooded ridges to the south of Frome (LCA's B1.1, B1.2 and B1.3) along with the visibility of Cley Hill and Alfred's Tower. While the wooded backdrop had been referenced within the study the views to the hill and tower have been added into the assessment text (para 6.3.71 and Key Characteristics Table).
- 4.7 A number of the responses suggested the area provided a degree of tranquillity or challenged the assessment reference to the area not being tranquil due to the proximity of the town edge, bypass and railway. Clearly tranquillity is a relative and subjective perception and can be influenced by not only noise but also visual intrusions. Within the assessment for the district as a whole the areas where a deep sense of tranquillity could be found were noted as relatively limited; as noted below even some of the AONB areas are exposed to degrees of background noise. As noted in Section 5.9 the assessment reviewed the degrees of tranquillity mapped by the CPRE across England. The mapping provided indicates the area around Frome as a large area of low or moderate tranquillity and this was borne out in the field work experiences. In the context of the long views out from the LCA area to the wooded backdrop of the land to the south and although the area is quite noisy it would be fair to note while the railway and bypass are often in view there is a degree of visual tranquillity provided.

4.0 RESPONSES RELATING TO THE LCA B2.5 – LITTLE KEYFORD AND BLATCHBRIDGE

- 4.8 Other comments raised concern that the presence of fly-tipping was noted in the assessment and although the issue may be transitory this could be taken as a diminishing the value of the landscape. Where significant issues of fly tipping were noted in this and other character areas this has been included in the assessment as it clearly impacts on the enjoyment of the landscape and can also highlight the kind of pressures farmers / land managers may be dealing with in areas close to the towns (it was noted that in some areas the necessary anti tipping signage and ad hoc measures to block gateways also has an influence on the character of an area). In this respect the LCA Study is not only envisaged as a planning document. The text has been adjusted to note the current situation (as at March 2021) after a clearance operation has clearly occurred and a point on the blocking off of field gateways added (para 6.3.73).
- 4.9 Overall, it is relevant to note that in highlighting objections to further development within this character area many correspondents picked out one or more of the 8 special characteristics of the Mendip area. In fact, all 8 aspects were referenced as aspects that people wished to highlight as important to them in their appreciation of the local area. This is also noted in relation to the consultation response on this topic below (Section 12.)

5.0 PARISH COUNCILS AND COUNCILLOR COMMENTS

- 5.1 A small number of Town and Parish councils provided feedback on the study. These included;

Batcombe PC Clare Glaisher & Mary Comley
Litton PC - David Raynes
Wanstrow, Cloford, Leighton & Weston PC
Wells City Council – Adrian L’Anson
Witham Friary PC
Upton Noble PC – Parish Chair

Alan Townsend Ward Cllr

- 5.2 Also as noted in the section above Councillor’s Helen Kay, Michael Dunk and Rob Collett provided comments concentrated on the area Little Keyford and Blatchbridge area B2.5.
- 5.3 Several of the parish comments provided useful points of detail for their respective areas leading to text amendments to the study. Batcombe and Westcombe Parish suggested part of their parish should be considered as a ‘Valued Landscape’ providing a detailed description of the area and its interests (See section 14 below).
- 5.4 Other parish areas noted disappointment that specific villages did not get a direct mention in the relevant sections. These have been reviewed, in general the assessment aimed to highlight those settlements which illustrated interesting interrelationships with their natural landscape settings. The study text has been amended to include where appropriate.

6.0 THE MENDIP HILLS AONB PARTNERSHIP

- 6.1 The MH-AONB-P provided a response that took in all sections of the study but naturally focused more on the central Mendip area. The majority of their comments related to minor corrections to the wording to give the full title of the AONB or an updated reference for the current AONB management plan; these points have been corrected in the study.
- 6.2 Other points raised related to the national status of the AONB and the duty to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the designated area and how this duty can extend to proposals outside of the boundaries of the designation to include its setting. The Partnership have usefully highlighted the point that these areas of National status landscape have been identified as needing to be at the heart of the drive for nature recovery.
- 6.3 The Partnership have noted a few points of concern in relation to the study text on the relative number of important views and on the topics of tranquillity and dark skies.
- 6.4 In relation to the views the wording has been changed to clarify the original point that the number of popular views that people may travel to as a destination or attraction in their own right are relatively limited. In addition it is now noted that the Mendip ridge provides spectacular views from many rights of way etc within the MDC area.
- 6.5 In relation to tranquillity, it is evident that the Mendip Hills AONB area contains some truly tranquil locations; and the MH-AONB-P noted its endorsement of the assessments of deep tranquillity on sections of the south western slopes (in particular the the Draycott and Westbury Slopes, Ebbor Gorge and the Upper Axe area).
- 6.6 The Partnership queried an assessment of reduced tranquillity on the Mendip plateau and surrounding areas (Particularly LCA A1, A2 and A3). The work did note that across the MDC area as a whole there are good opportunities to experience more tranquil and isolated landscape but also that there are extensive areas of the district where there is a low persistent level of background road noise (ref Section 7 Box 6). The experience within the district is much better than in other parts of the country but it is identified as a concern that even within the AONB's there is a degree of noise intrusion which reduces the sense of isolation and totally unspoilt enjoyment. On the high Mendip plateau there are a number of strategic roads often with very straight alignments on which traffic speeds are relatively high this helps to generate relatively constant noise which can travel across the open plateau area. Within the Harptree / Chewton Edge area the assessment noted a generally quiet level but still some background noise other than near to the A39 which carries relatively heavy traffic volumes (the B3114 does also). While the background noise issue is noted it is very much the case that the wide range of other attributes that combine to make the hills special mean the area still fully merits its designation as part of the national status AONB.
- 6.7 The detailed correspondence and study adjustments/responses are set out in Appendix C.2

7.0 THE FROME AND DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY (ADDITIONAL COMMENTS)

- 7.1 Alongside their comments on the Little Keyford area the Civic Society provided comments on Section 9 and Appendix 4 of the study.
- 7.2 In relation to Section 9 the study set out a list of suggestions for future development of the District's Green Infrastructure Strategy (Core Policy 6 of the adopted local plan). The Civic Society noted their expectation that the suggestions are considered for inclusion when the policy is next reviewed. The study text has not been adjusted but the comment is highlighted here for MDC to consider in due course.
- 7.3 Appendix 4 of the study provides some additional guidance on the subject of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). Within this the text notes that LVIA's should be prepared by Chartered Landscape Architects or other suitably qualified and experienced professional in accordance with best practice guidance published by the Landscape Institute. The Civic Society suggest that the reference to 'other suitably qualified' professionals should be deleted from the appendix and makes reference to LI guidance. The GLVIA3 guidance simply refers to landscape professionals but is not explicit on any restriction on who can undertake LVIA work. This is further clarified by the current LI website guidance that confirms as follows:-
- 7.4 *"These guidelines are available for all to use without restriction; one does not need to be a Chartered Landscape Professional to undertake an LVIA although Landscape Professionals are likely to be the best versed in their application. In the context of Public Inquiries the holistic perspective that Chartered Landscape Professionals take, coupled with the broad scope of their interests and status recognised by Royal Charter means that they should be able to make a particularly convincing contribution to the examination of LVIA."*
- 7.5 On the basis of the LI advice it would not be appropriate to make this adjustment as the Council would have no basis to insist on this restriction.
- 7.6 The Civic Society usefully highlighted additional Institute guidance on the topic of the reviewing of submitted LVIA's (LI - Technical Guidance Note 1/20 (10 Jan 2020). This reference has been added to the appendix.

8.0 THE SOUTHERN CAVING CLUBS

- 8.1 The Southern Caving Clubs provided some detailed comments helping to explain some of the special features of the Karst landscape. They raised a number of interesting and important points on the long-term protection of some of the natural and man-made surface features.
- 8.2 Specifically, they noted that in 1988 a survey identified some 2245 shakeholes 'of varying size and depth'; they also noted that a subsequent review 20 years later confirmed more than 60% of these had been filled and the ground levelled. They noted that MDC had accepted the features were important and had been put into the councils GIS system to be identified for planning and other purposes. On a similar point the correspondence notes the loss over time of the surface evidence from areas of historic mining. Areas around Green Ore and Hillgrove are noted as having been reclaimed. This GIS layer has not been reviewed for this LCA study but it is suggested that the information be recovered and made available as part of the District Landscape Database. [Also note it is understood work is ongoing in relation to an update of the District/County RIG sites which could be informed by this data].

9.0 RAILS TO TRAILS AND HORSE SOCIETY

- 9.1 Various comments on the local rights of way network and multi user paths were provided by the general public and from representatives of interest groups. The Rails to Trails and Horse Society made similar comments on the lack of routes for all forms of users including disabled and equestrians. The importance of improving the connectivity of the former railway line routes was included in these. The general points have been noted in text changes although some of the points raised go beyond the scope of this study.
- 9.2 It is understood work is ongoing on measures to improve the district PROW network which may well address many of the concerns raised.

10.0 GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

- 10.1 The public comments included a number of additional suggested favourite walks, views and hidden gems. These have been incorporated into the appropriate section below. Others repeated comments on the accessibility to areas via the rights of way network similar to those raised by the Horse Society and Rails to Trails organisations. The points in the shorter letters have been covered in the study adjustments to other correspondent's. Two longer submissions require fuller responses to identify changes made or explain the rationale for no adjustments. These are reproduced in the detailed responses table in Appendix D at the end of this report.

11.0 PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANCY COMMENTS

- 11.1 The comments provided by professional consultancies included a query on the boundary position of an area within the Batcombe Downs and Valleys from the Landscape Partnership. This has been reviewed and the boundary outline adjusted.
- 11.2 The second response from Gleeson Strategic Land provided a range of comments relating to various sections. The detail of these are set out in tabulated form in the section below.

12.0 THE EIGHT SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS

12.1 The web page consultation on the suggested 8 special characteristics of the MDC area attracted some 29 responses. Two of these made specific references / objection comments to the potential for development on the edge of Frome (LCA B2.5).

12.2 The majority (19 out of 29) of responses confirmed the list of 8 characteristics was 'just right'. 2 suggested the list was too long of these one suggested an additional quality of 'Nature and Environmental Benefits'. 5 others suggested the list may be too short. These and others suggested the following potential additional points to be considered.

- Public rights of way are the infrastructure to enjoy all these [the other characteristics] – they need a separate category.
- Supporting mental well being and positivity
- Educational potential of landscapes and potential to address climate change
- The stone walls of the area
- The district small and medium sized towns and many small rural villages. This characteristic has traditionally been protected by greenbelt legislation [*]. It is essential this is not diminished nor undermined.
- The importance of the landscape and surrounding green areas that provide a tranquil setting for residents and wildlife alike that should be allowed to remain and not destroyed by developments.
- Unmolested Countryside
- River valleys and Drainage - need a special category. many people walk along river banks like along Vallis Vale and rivers can feature large in the landscape both the river itself and its valley. For example while out walking recently I have been surprised, interested and delighted to see flooding on the River Frome and River Parrett banks/floodplain.. Furthermore drainage systems have important natural function that should be valued more in planning terms (not engineered away) although I appreciate this may not be obviously visible to the observer and by its very nature this study is orientated to what is visible in the eye of the beholder.
- Specific reference to the rivers and levels would seem appropriate.

[Note:- *The MDC area has only ever included a very small section of the Bath Bristol Green Belt the planning protection of the countryside has arisen through the general presumption (reflected in local plan policy over the years) against development in the open countryside]

12.3 Further points included;

- Reiteration of previous points on the need for improved conditions and links for equestrian users
- The contribution of wildlife interest to the enjoyment of the landscape
- Reference to a new long distance path the Glastonbury Water Way – pilgrimage route
- Agreement on the 'Biodiversity Potential' but highlighting the need for landscape measures to increase biodiversity and address climate change
- Reference to the location of traveller sites
- Prevention of motorcycle use of minor lanes

12.4 Many other responses also cited these characteristics either as part of objections to development (in LCA B2.5) or as part of wider commentary on the study.

12.5 Within the Gleeson Strategic Land consultation response comments are provided in relation to Section 7 of the LCA Study. A question is raised on the website scoring mechanism suggesting there may be a degree of 'inbuilt' bias. Of the 32 public responses the vast majority of respondents scored all 8 characteristics as over 50 and did not offer a strong distinction between the different suggested characteristics. However, given the small sample size of consultation responses on this topic it is not suggested this scoring would be given significant weighting in the further discussion on the suggested characteristics. The consultation response also questioned the potential overlaps between criteria on a number of points as follows:

12.0 THE EIGHT SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS

“Several of the criteria are also duplicating each other. These are: Criterion 1 – ‘Valuable collection of distinct and interesting landscapes – as a collection there is a value in the landscapes greater than the sum of the its parts’ and criterion 5 – ‘Continuous Landscape - there is a continuity of landscapes across the district providing the sense of an area dominated by rural undeveloped countryside’ is double counting very similar [1] or the same issues whilst criterion 4 – ‘History - the district landscape includes a rich historical story that links across the whole collection’ and criterion 8 ‘Rich cultural Heritage and Recreational Resource - the district landscape accommodates, inspires and attracts people for events, creative interest and as a cultural resource. The area includes a comprehensive network of recreational routes and the settings for adventure’ appears to be double counting the history / cultural heritage aspects of the landscape[2*]. These criteria need to be reconsidered.*

There is also seems to be a bias towards ‘valuing’ the landscape character areas a collective (whole) when the purpose of the exercise is surely to differentiate between character areas in determining what makes one area of greater value than another.”[3]*

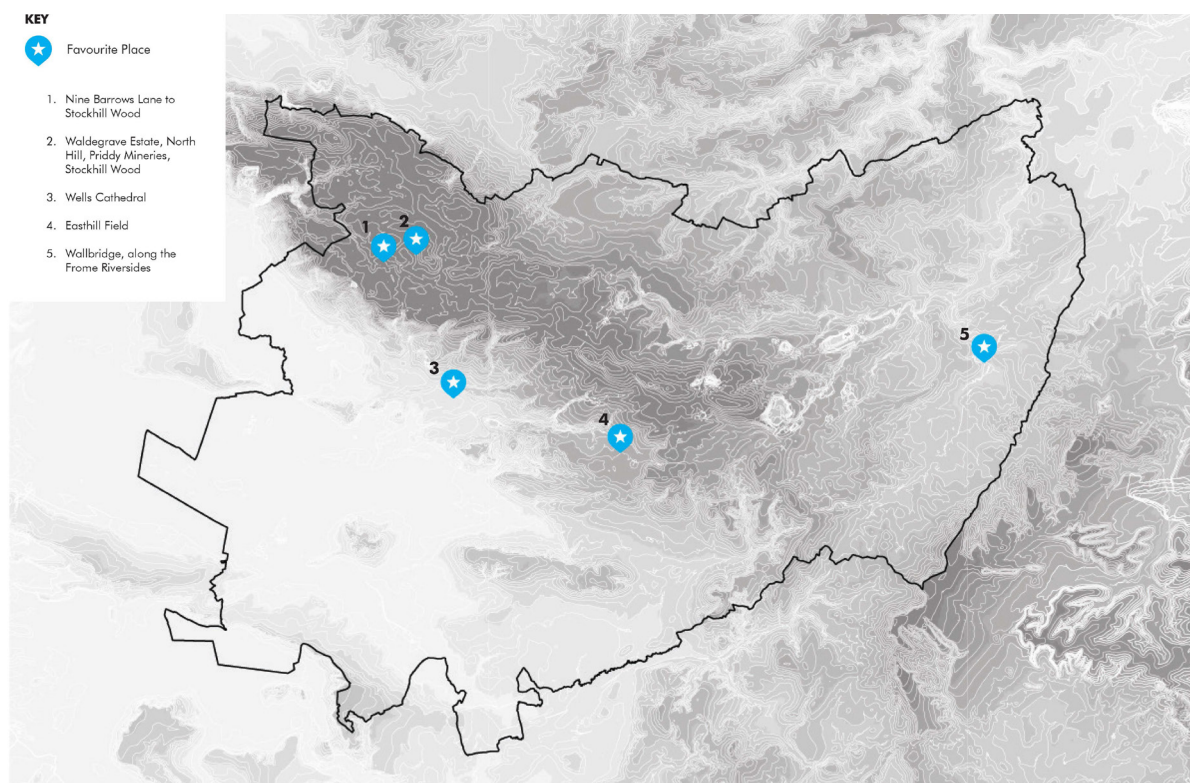
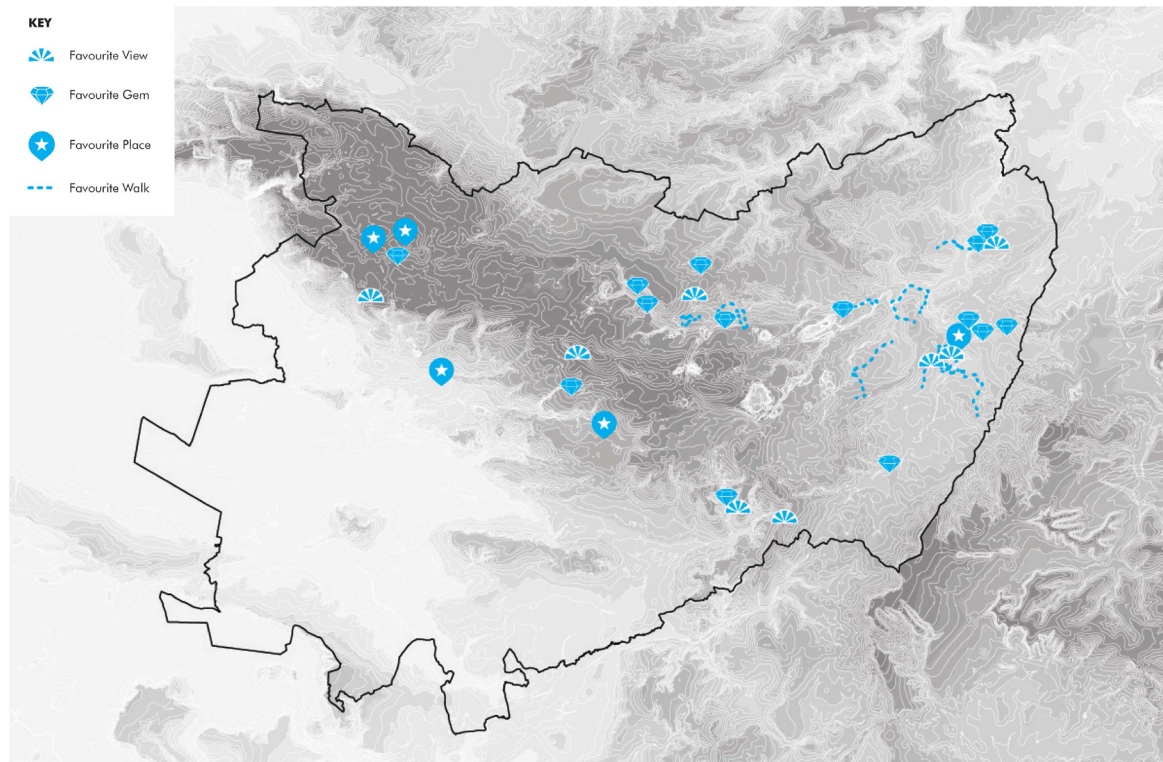
[1*] – In drafting the study these two aspects were considered as two separate aspects. Firstly there is a collection of distinctly different character areas – as identified by the 56 different areas set out in the study. Secondly and irrespective of the different character the whole district area is notable for the sense of a continuous landscape experience across the full DC area.

[2*] History and culture are identified as two separate aspects which may overlap are actually distinctly different.

[3*] In compiling the character assessments the process has highlighted how the various LCA’s fit together as a collection and how many areas inter-relate. One of the defining qualities of the district does seem to be how the predominantly rural character of the areas, as a whole, provides a sense of place and extensive resource, which should be seen not just as individual areas, but also a sum of its parts.

13.0 FAVOURITE WALKS, VIEWS AND HIDDEN GEMS

- 13.1 While only a modest number of responses were received to this part of the consultation people had taken time to provide descriptions of both the places and their reactions to them. In all some 35 responses were received detailing 9 walks, 5 places, 8 views and 13 gems. In reviewing the website the mechanism for logging walks did not work very well and this may have discouraged more responses.
- 13.2 The website allowed people to upload photographs of their nominated places and some very high quality photographs were provided. The images and a selection of the commentaries are set out below.



13.0 FAVOURITE WALKS, VIEWS AND HIDDEN GEMS....

EASTHILL FIELD, FROME : SITUATED BEHIND THE CEMETERY, FROME

A treasured remnant of Easthill Parkland, a designated Ancient Parkland, and open green space of Local Interest, an untouched ancient piece of beautiful land, with veteran trees, grassland and thickets. Home to a multitude of species of creatures, including rare bats, lizards and mammals, which are currently left undisturbed in their habitats. Its biodiversity, peaceful beauty. The veteran trees are stunning and insects, birds and mammals can be seen daily using the site. It is a unique piece of land with a historical background around nowhere else in Frome. Its location close to Rodden Nature Reserve acts as a corridor for foraging and roaming wildlife which is important for all species.



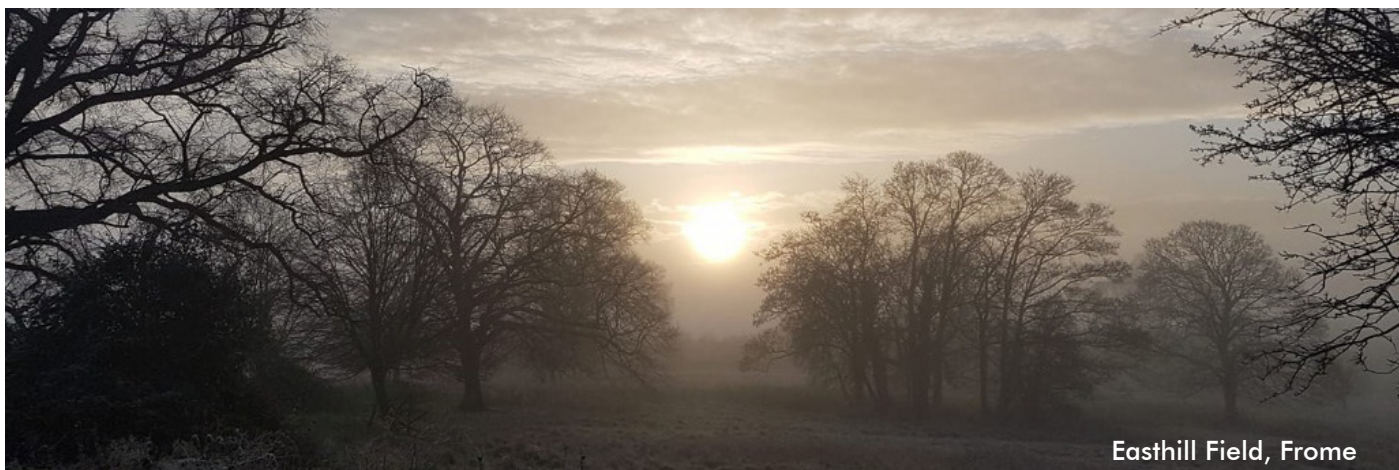
LAND SURROUNDING EASTHILL CEMETERY, Frome For providing specialised and varied habitats providing an increasingly disappearing home for a wide range of species, many of which occur only in these habitats, particularly insects, lichens and fungi which depend on dead and decaying wood. As such Easthill is recognised as Wood-Pasture and Parkland Priority Habitat (UKBAP)

For its potential to inspire and educate about the rare and complex biodiverse wildlife habitat for future generations.



EASTHILL ANCIENT WOOD PASTURE

I have a very busy life as a teacher and carer for my parents. I find peace and pleasure in wild places and their flora and fauna, Easthill lifts my spirits and fills me with the joys of life. I am also really concerned about the loss of biodiversity I have seen in my own lifetime and want to celebrate this hidden gem that provides a home for so much biodiversity so close to Frome.



Easthill Field, Frome

13.0 FAVOURITE WALKS, VIEWS AND HIDDEN GEMS ...

CRITCHILL MANOR ESTATE (OLD GOLF COURSE)

Beautiful countryside, river walk and industrial heritage

RIVER PATH FROM THE RETREAT TO THE FIELDS SOUTH OF FROME

Right up close to nature without leaving town. Wild swimming in walking distance from home.

MELLS RIVER

Special place attractive river woodlands interesting history, wild flowers and fungi.



STARTS AT UNDERHILL BY COLEFORD BRIDGE

Really good wildflower meadows both on the route out and route back. Going close to some very attractive stretches of the river and passing the tufa waterfall. Plenty of wildlife to see, maybe Roe Deer, Grey Squirrels, Woodpeckers and if you are very lucky a Dipper at Ham Bridge. The Hucky Duck (canal aqueduct) and an interesting streetscape in Lower Coleford.



WALK IS UP THROUGH LEIGH WOODS FROM COLEFORD AND BACK DOWN TO THE RIVER.

Favourite walk because of the accessibility from home without needing transport except feet and the flora which is varied. The woods are used by local people mainly and are quiet. The bordering fields are also full varied flora, butterfly orchids, early purple and ragged robin, ladies smock. There are badgers, fox and deer



THE TUFA WATERFALL NEAR WHITEHOLE HILL.

A "constructive" waterfall, where calcium carbonate rich water from a spring near Whitehole Farm cascades down steps of tufa towards the Mells Stream. There are quite a few interesting tufa features* in East Mendip, but this is the most impressive, closest to home and a great place to stop on a very pleasant walk.

*https://cdn.buglife.org.uk/2019/08/Mendips-Bryophyte-Survey-Report_compress_-FINAL_JAN-2015_1RCO.pdf

13.0 FAVOURITE WALKS, VIEWS AND HIDDEN GEMS ...

BECKINGTON - LULLINGTON - ORCHARD LEIGH ESTATE AND RETURN

Sorry - too difficult to sketch! The scenery, wildlife (birds of prey), sheep, the River Frome, the lovely old village of Lullington, the beautiful Orchardleigh estate, the Church of St Mary's on the island. On the north side of the river take the footpath up to Stubbs Lane ("the Beckington Loop" and return to Beckington village centre via Castle Corner and the church.



THE DIPPY IN FROME, ACROSS THE SOUTHERN FIELDS TOWARDS LONGLEAT AND RODDENBURY HILL FORT. Views across the fields all the way to Cley hill with ever-changing skies, tranquility and peace and a 'green lung' for the town. The views, the fresh air, the sense of timelessness, the trees, the wild flowers, the sense of tracing the seasons and the years, knowing that others love this route.



BECKINGTON (CLIFFORD VIEW)

Beautiful unspoilt river valley and associated wildlife. Uninterrupted views over the Mendip Hills towards Faulkland. Ancient farmland.



HAM WOODS QUARRY

An old disused limestone quarry in ancient woodland. It is close to the line of the Somerset and Dorset Railway near the Ham Woods Viaduct.

We found this quarry when walking the East Mendip Way. We are interested in disused East Mendip Quarries in general, but this one is special. It has a remote and mysterious feeling to it (no road, just the railway). In addition there is an amazing mix of woodland and limestone grassland species and including one usually found in dune slacks.

<http://www.somersetrareplantsgroup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Pyrola-rotundifolia-subsp.-maritima-2020-03-26.pdf>



EGFORD, FROME

Amazing views over the valley, and the fields are planted so we get to see changes every time we go as things grow. Good walk for extending into the woods, and I've seen the most incredible sunsets from here.

13.0 FAVOURITE WALKS, VIEWS AND HIDDEN GEMS ...



AN OLD OAK TREE CHILCOMPTON PARISH A10.1

An oak tree growing on sloping pasture land. One of the main branches grows across to the ground uphill of the trunk and it has an exceptionally broad canopy.

It's a really striking tree, close to one of our favourite footpaths, though sometimes we do the walk to see the tree.

HOLCOMBE OLD CHURCH chosen because of all the memories it holds - picnics with children, blackberry picking, dog walking, warm spring sun. The history it holds in its walls.

UPPER NETTLEBRIDGE VALLEY

It is impossible to choose one "gem" as this whole valley is special. It includes the hamlets of Ashwick, Neighbourne, Benter, Upper Benter and T'other Side the Hill. It is bounded to the east by the A367, to the north by the B3356 / Sweetleaze Lane, to the west and south by Gurney Slade Bottom / higher ground in the A5 LCA. I'm mapping it at a crossroads where all roads lead you somewhere special. The whole area has a very remote and tranquil feel to it. There are many really quiet, winding lanes and footpaths to explore, each one with views across the valley - an intricate landscape with trees and pastures, hamlets and signs of early coal pits and mines. There is abundant wildlife, with a "hot spot" in Cockles Fields, an SWT nature reserve and part of a Scheduled Monument for medieval coal mining remains. A place to get lost in, literally as well as metaphorically.



NINE BARROWS LANE, PRIDDY

Horse ride over Waldegrave estate

Have ridden here most of my life, over 50 years. Fantastic unchanging landscape rich in history and heritage.

14.0 VALUED LANDSCAPES

- 14.1 As set out in earlier sections, the consultation process has demonstrated an unsurprising and obvious concern that many people have for the protection of their local environment. While the level of general responses has been quite low, the concern shown for just one area perceived to be under threat illustrates how communities may be galvanised to respond and the very wide range of issues that people connect with landscape. Within many of these responses the background intrusions of existing development, roads and other infrastructure are often set-aside in preference for the benefits of easy access from the town, views and the basic condition of the area as farmland. The presence of natural features, opportunities for sighting wildlife or the function of the area as natural green space on the doorstep of the town were highlighted for health and well-being. Even where these aspects can be seen as relatively low key and to a degree compromised in contrast to other more remote parts of the district there is an evident interest in their protection.
- 14.2 The walks, views and gems responses provided more of a celebration of a few locations dispersed across the district (the responses are noted as concentrated in the north for no obvious reason). Again, even though only a small sample of responses the wide range of comments on what people value is of interest. Within both sets of responses, the importance of landscape for wildlife was a recurrent theme; suggesting concern for nature for its own sake and as an aspect providing particular enjoyment (a small number of responses noted connections between landscape, climate change and the nature emergency).
- 14.3 With both aspects it should be noted the sample sizes of respondents are very small and cannot be relied on for more comprehensive decision making.
- 14.4 A small number of comments specifically related to Valued Landscapes. Batcombe Parish Council suggested an area to the north of Westcombe could be considered as 'Valued Landscape'. The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership and Gleeson Strategic Land included specific reference to the LCA study Section 7 - Valued Landscapes and the draft Appendix 3 (the latter was excluded from the general consultation although a draft was available on an early version of the website).
- 14.5 The Gleeson response included the point that "GSL acknowledge that parts / landscape areas of Mendip will have 'value' but the identification of landscape value needs to be applied proportionately ensuring that the identification of valued landscapes is not over used. There could be a risk of over-valuing the genuine quality of landscape areas in the plan and decision-making process". They also highlighted a recently published draft Technical Guidance Note from the Landscape Institute (TGN 02/21 Landscape Value and Valued Landscape – published by the LI in January 2021 and as a final note in May 2021). [The term Valued Landscape is identified within the study as having a particular meaning within the realms of national planning guidance NPPF – see paras 7.1.2 – 7.1.10 – this point is also explained in greater detail in TGN 02/21].
- 14.7 The TGN note includes a comprehensive summary of the history of the assessment of landscape value and the policy and guidance for designations across the UK. As set out with TGN 02/21 and within Section 7 of the MDC study, previous guidance from the LI included a list of possible range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes. These are set out in the study with reference to the GVLIA3 – Box 5.1 which provides a list of 8 bullet points that have been used in various assessments and planning discussions around the country. The factors are set out in quite general terms and are open to interpretation in relation to different landscapes; the point is made within the accompanying text in GVLIA3 that 'the list is not comprehensive and other factors may be considered important in specific areas'. Within the new draft document these factors have been reiterated with a few changes and a fuller explanation of the indicators and examples of evidence.

14.0 VALUED LANDSCAPES

The new list from TGN 20/21 is;

- Landscape condition;
- Natural Heritage;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Associative;
- Distinctiveness;
- Recreational;
- Scenic;
- Perceptual;
- Spatial function.

- 14.8 The list is again clearly indicated as not an exhaustive list but a range that could be considered (para 3.4.2).
- 14.9 These factors (and indeed the extant guidance of Box 5.1 from GVLIA3) could be used to undertake a detailed local assessment of any one particular area if this was required for a specific purpose (eg local plan designation, allocation or development proposals). The Mendip LCA Study was not intended to undertake any such localised assessments but did request consideration of landscape value across the district as a whole and in particular with reference to the possible value of the areas of undesignated landscape outside of the two AONB's.
- 14.10 The TGN under a note on terminology confirms that Landscape Qualities / Special Qualities are defined as characteristics/features of a landscape that have been identified as being valued. These are often identified in relation to the national designated landscapes of the National Parks and AONB's (Special Qualities is noted as a statutory expression used for all such areas in England and National Scenic Areas in Scotland). These descriptions often provide a much simpler clear statement of the landscape interest of these areas, and can relate to extensive tracts of landscape; the Special Qualities of the Mendip Hills AONB as a prime example. These are set out on the AONB Partnership webpage as 'The 12 special qualities you need to understand and experience on the Mendip Hills. Individually they are important, together they are what makes Mendip an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. <https://www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk/exploring/special-qualities/>
- 14.11 The Gleeson response suggested the 8 Special Characteristics described in the LCA study should be more closely aligned to the LI factors (and or reviewed in the light of the new draft guidance). This is missing the point that the 8 aspects described within the study are broad ranging descriptions that have been drawn up with a view over the whole district and help to explain how many areas of different character may still have common aspects of value. From the work on the district wide appraisal and the individual character areas (Sections 5 and 6 of the study) it became apparent that there is a whole district collection or story and the MDC boundary neatly contains areas that have many interrelationships; as such the district does have an identity (as noted in the local plan introduction the area is defined by its landscapes). These descriptions are also specifically intended to summarise the different aspects in a format that is more accessible to the public than the LI factors (in much the same way as the AONB's).
- 14.12 In line with the terminology noted in the TGN the description of the 8 Special Qualities has been renamed as 8 Landscape Qualities. This will be discussed further with MDC planning team prior to the final production of the LCA.
- 14.13 Within the unpublished Appendix 3 the 8 Special Characteristics were considered in relation to a judgement made as to how well they were reflected in each of the individual character areas. It is evident that not all characteristics would be found in every area and that some (more extensive) areas

may have pockets of landscape that either conform or are widely divergent from the characteristics. The judgements on each aspect were drawn together into a broad summary assessment and mapped across the 56 areas. This exercise was anticipated to be further refined with the results of the public consultation, but in the position of only modest numbers of responses this has not been possible. The appendix remains as the judgement of the Macgregor Smith team but is not intended to provide a definitive guide to 'Valued Landscapes' within the district.

- 14.14 The concern expressed in relation to over-valuing the quality of the landscape is not relevant as the LAC study has not sought to define areas of 'Valued Landscape' as a designation. The 8 Characteristics (or Qualities) are retained in the study as broad summaries of the main attributes that can be identified across the District's landscapes and should be referred to any further studies of individual areas.
- 14.15 In this context the area suggested by Batcombe PC has not been identified by this study as a Valued Landscape (although it has been noted as one of the hidden gems as also suggested by the Parish.
- 14.16 Interrelated with this point the Mendip Hills AONB Partnership noted that 'Landscape Capacity' is another useful concept in considering the potential effects of development or other change. This is particularly relevant to considerations of landscape and visual impact where the actual value or quality of a landscape may not be the only consideration for policy or decision making. It is possible that some areas of low or moderate landscape value may also have limited capacity to absorb development, for example open expansive areas of heavily managed arable farmland maybe more susceptible to visual intrusion than a more complex landscape with rolling topography and strong tree cover. A note on landscape capacity has been added into the guidance set out for LVIA within Appendix 4 of the study.
- 14.17 One further point made within TGN 20/21 is important to note in that landscape does not have to be a 'Valued Landscape' to still have value; "Everyday landscapes may nevertheless have value to people" (reference to Appendix 3 para A3.2.5.1 & Appendix 4 para A4.1.6.1 appeal decision Bayley Gate Farm, College Road Cranfield Appeal 3190779).

A4.1.6 if a landscape is not a valued landscape can it still have value?

A4.1.6.1 At the appeal in relation to Bayley Gate Farm, College Road, Cranfield Appeal 3190779 neither the council's nor the appellant's landscape architect considered that the site was a valued landscape. Nevertheless, the inspector concluded that this did not mean it had no value, stating:

27.'The site does not form a valued landscape for the purposes of paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), a position accepted by both parties. That however does not mean that it has no value and although it may not be rare or have significant conservation interest or have any known associations it is very representative of the wider landscape, has a pleasant and attractive scenic quality and is in good condition. Its arable nature, strong boundary hedge and tree treatment ensure that it, along with the surrounding fields, narrow country lanes, bridleway and public rights of way create a strong rural character.' 67 (Emphasis added)

15.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 15.1 At the outset of the MDC Landscape Character Assessment Update project it was agreed the study should be subject to consultation prior to finalisation. As an update the work was based on well established LCA areas that have been reviewed and generally found to remain current. The updated study has attempted to include additional information and some broader consideration of the district landscapes as a whole. The work was formatted and included information intended to be of interest to a wider audience than the normal users of LPA character assessments. The consultation process was in part aimed at gathering any additional detailed information possible and peoples views across the district. It was also intended that the exercise should raise the profile of the study with local people as a resource of interest or value and potentially a means of engaging people in discussions on the landscape in the future.
- 15.2 As part of this the study has been widely circulated to the local towns and parish councils and a comprehensive list of identified stakeholders. The formal responses from these has been limited, it is understood that although the consultation remained open for several months many organisations have been focused on addressing issues in the community related to Covid-19 and the post pandemic recovery. Despite this a number of respondents have taken considerable time to review large parts of the study and while only a few have responded to the full scope of the content, collectively much of the study has been covered. We are grateful for the time and comments that have been submitted and have attempted to take on board points where we can or respond to the detail of all those provided within this report.
- 15.3 The public response included the unexpected objection to a development proposal unrelated to the LCA study. As the potential for development is outside the scope of this work this consultation is not the most effective vehicle for such objections. All the points have been read and have been summarised in this report; which will itself be included as part of the study. Many of the sentiments raised have been noted as an indication of the many different ways in which landscape may be seen as important. In particular the point that many objectors related comments on the value of their local area to the 8 Special Characteristics of the district; this is taken as an endorsement of that part of the study. If nothing else the opportunity taken for these objections made via this consultation has raised the public awareness of the Landscape Character Assessment study at least within Frome.
- 15.4 The detail of points amended are recorded in the Appendices to this report. The amended document will be uploaded to the LCA Website as before. In line with suggestions received the graphic mapping of the areas has also been provided as a higher resolution file to be available for download from the website.
- 15.5 The consultation has had the benefit of input from a number of parties with understanding of National status landscapes, policy, development pressure and LVIA processes. This has provided useful checks and challenge to some key areas of the study output. These have been reviewed and where appropriate adjustments made. Not all comments have led to adjustments but it is hoped this report provides the detail of how topics have been suitably aired.
- 15.6 The topics of the 8 Special Characteristics and landscape value are areas where continued discussion with officers and councillors may be relevant. The new guidance from the Landscape Institute is a useful resource but was issued in a draft form only. The LI consultation period was very short and it maybe a final version is imminent. The document in its final form may be useful for further debate or to guide future decision making.
- 15.7 From the general overview of the study it is evident that there are some issues ahead in terms of balancing the need for landscape and environmental protection and the requirement for essential development land (Government policy and national planning guidance determine land has to be made available for economic and sustainable development). These pressures are likely to be compounded by the complex issues of the necessary responses to climate change and the nature emergency (as

15.0 CONCLUSIONS

recognised by MDC) and other changes faced by the countryside (including Ash dieback). The range of consultation responses neatly illustrate the potential for some issues and views to be diametrically opposed. The concerns to protect areas from development on one hand and the developer view of the risk of extensive areas of Valued Landscape on the other being the most obvious case in point. As noted in the main study there is also the potential for some required mitigations or adaptations for climate change to have a landscape or visual impact.

15.8 The function of the character assessment is in part to provide a neutral resource to inform further baseline studies for future policies and proposals. It is evident from the work that the Mendip area contains a good collection of attractive and accessible landscapes. Some of these would clearly be defined as 'Valued Landscapes' others may be less significant in terms of interest or quality but may have less capacity to absorb change (and as noted in para 14.17 above much of the district if not classed as Valued would still be considered to have value).

15.9 The study has specifically emphasised the benefit of comprehensive landscape and visual impact assessment as a means to help objectively assess and address change. A number of consultation responses have included reference to the Appendix 4 suggested guidance for MDC on this topic with minor suggested adjustments. The appendix includes a specific point in relation to the difficult balances that may need to be reached in future planning under the heading of '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".

(Similar points are set out within Section 9 – paras 9.16 – 9.18. The study also noted the potential benefits of building up the District's Green Infrastructure resource which would help address future pressures – see Section 9 para 9.22 – 9.41).

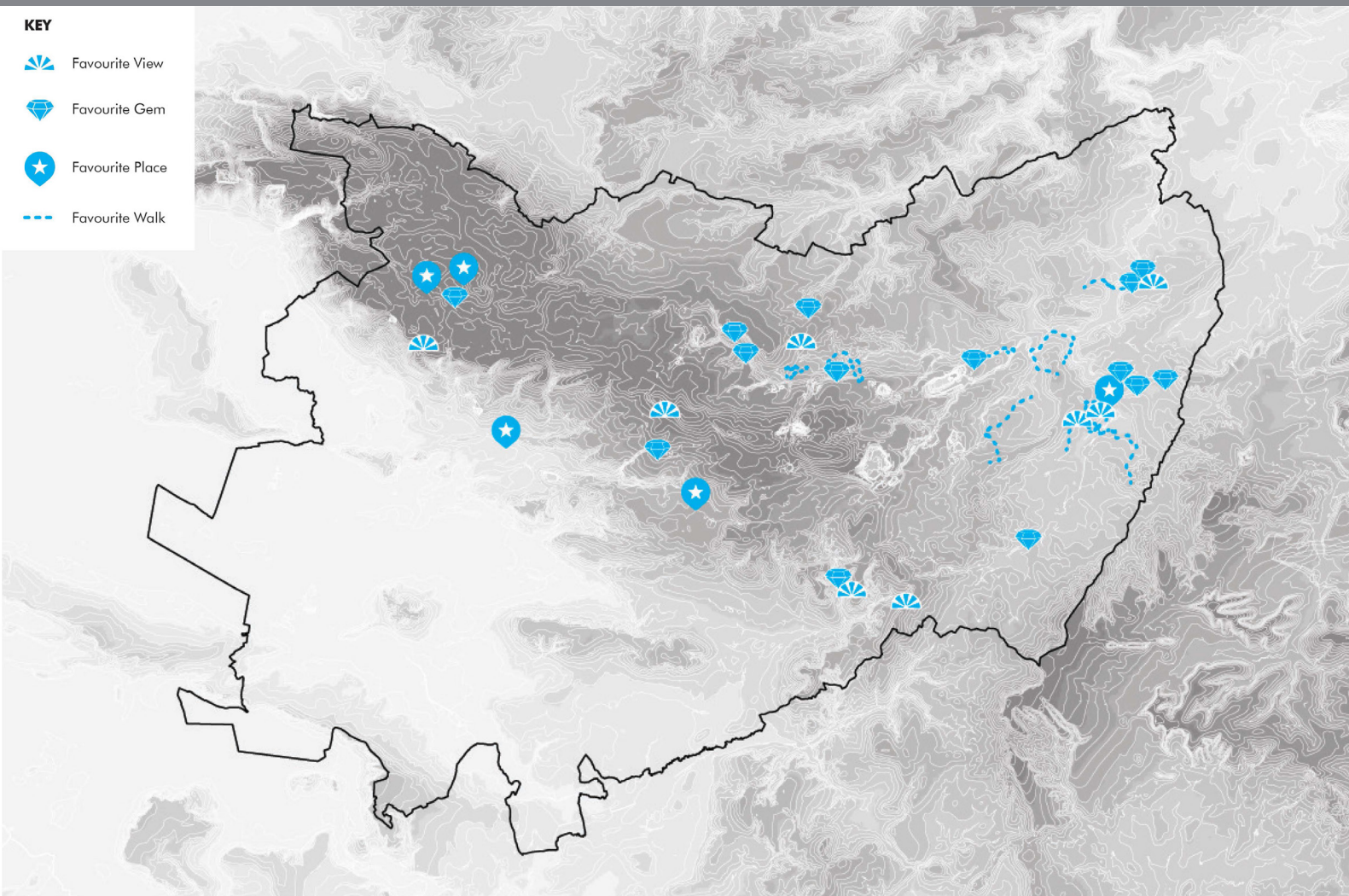
15.10 The study concluded with some suggested public engagement projects (section 9 paras 9.42 – 9.50). Within these the idea of the search for Favourite Walks, Views and Hidden Gems was suggested as developed for the consultation stage. The feedback to this while only generated by a modest number of respondents has been exciting with some impressive photographic content provided. Due to the limitations of the character assessment consultation process and perhaps the Covid pandemic it is thought this feedback may have only scratched the surface of the potential interest that local people would have in the MDC Landscape Story. As a final recommendation it is suggested this part of the consultation could be extended or rerun to good effect.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	-	Website Consultation Pages
Appendix B	-	Summary of all comments received
Appendix C	-	C1 - Town and Parish Council/Councillor’s Feedback C2 - AONB Partnership Comments C3 - Other Detailed Consultation Responses
Appendix D	-	Post Consultation Amendments

MENDIP LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT - CONSULTATION REPORT

OCTOBER 2021



APPENDIX A : WEBSITE CONSULTATION PAGES

[HOMEPAGE](#)
[INTRODUCTION](#)
[THE STUDY](#)
[MENDIP BY NUMBERS](#)
[LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENTS](#)
[DISTRICT WIDE APPRAISAL](#)
[LANDSCAPE TYPES AND CHARACTER AREAS](#)
[VALUED LANDSCAPES](#)
[APPENDICES](#)
[INTERACTIVE MAPS](#)
[FIELD WORK INFO](#)
[FEEDBACK](#)
[Featured Posts](#)


To be updated.

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WELCOME TO THE MENDIP LANDSCAPE

This site provides access to the latest Mendip District Landscape Character Assessment. Covering 738 km² the Mendip District Council Area includes a unique collection of distinct and attractive landscapes.

This site helps you explore them and explains what we think are the special qualities of the district. Your feedback on our work is important. It will help shape how the landscape is valued and managed into the future.

[Scroll down to read more.](#)

[GIVE US YOUR THOUGHTS](#)

Purpose of the study

The Mendip District encompasses an extensive tract of attractive and varied countryside including parts of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. To the west of the district the landscapes change dramatically from the high Mendip Hills down to the Somerset Levels and Moors. More subtle variations in the character of the landscapes are seen in the hills and valleys of the east Mendip area.

All these areas reflect a long history of human activity and an even longer geological story. Within the hills the early exploitation of minerals and stone shaped settlement patterns and the appearance of certain landscapes. On the moors the evidence of early occupation has been revealed through peat extraction and the same industry has left areas now being dramatically recolonised by nature. By contrast farming and forestry practice have quietly created a framework of managed landscape that reflect many generations of work.

Variations in landscape character are mapped across the entire country and described at both regional and local level. Landscape Character Assessments are used as an important part of the planning system and can assist with many aspects of countryside management. The larger scale character areas are described through the [National Character Area Profiles](#). A character assessment for Mendip District was previously undertaken in 1996. This website provides the updated assessment undertaken on behalf of MDC in 2019/2020.

The assessment provides information on the many different aspects of how the landscape has evolved and how it may now be appreciated. The area includes a complex pattern of geology and topography which are a fundamental part of the Mendip landscape story. The study provides an overview of the area in the sub regional context and illustrates how the district landscapes relate to the National Area Profiles and adjoining district areas.

The study includes a district wide description of the landscape in terms of the underlying geology, and topography, archaeology and historic landscapes, patterns of vegetation, agriculture and habitat along with modern land use, development and infrastructure. Within this section the emerging pattern of renewable energy developments across the district is mapped and discussed.

The district wide assessment includes reference to how the Mendip Landscapes may be perceived through cultural heritage, literature and art alongside the recreational function of the local countryside. Perceptions of tranquillity and the extent of dark skies across the area are mapped and discussed along with the distribution of views, viewpoints and landmarks.

Within the character assessment the district is subdivided into 8 main types of landscape and then into 56 individual character areas. This website provides an interactive map of these and larger scale maps of each main type.

The concluding sections of the study set out consideration of how the Mendip landscapes may be seen as a valued resource and the potential issues influencing future change and policy.

As additional resources to accompany the main study this website provides access to a Data Base of landscape assets, a photographic collection, advice on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment along with further links to additional information.

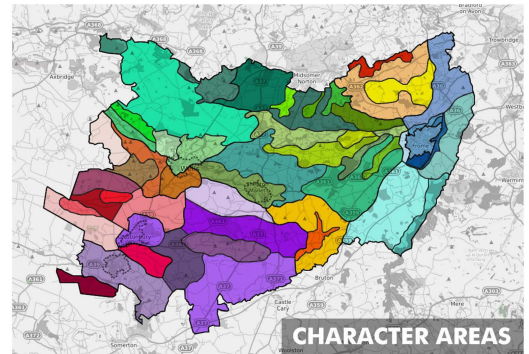
The character assessment is currently presented as a draft study for consultation. This website invites input from the public, parish and town councils and wider consultees. Following feedback the study and this site will be updated to a final report status.

[CONTINUE TO THE STUDY](#)

Website developed by Macgregor Smith on behalf of Mendip District Council.



Macgregor • Smith
Landscape Architecture



[HOMEPAGE](#)[INTRODUCTION](#)[THE STUDY](#)[MENDIP BY NUMBERS](#)[LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENTS](#)[DISTRICT WIDE APPRAISAL](#)[LANDSCAPE TYPES AND
CHARACTER AREAS](#)[VALUED LANDSCAPES](#)[APPENDICES](#)[INTERACTIVE MAPS](#)[FIELD WORK INFO](#)[FEEDBACK](#)[Featured Posts](#)

To be updated.

Introduction

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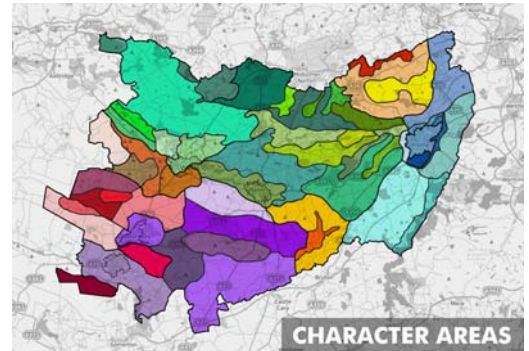
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[CONTINUE TO THE STUDY](#)[DOWNLOAD INTRODUCTION IN PDF](#)

HOMEPAGE

INTRODUCTION

THE STUDY

MENDIP BY NUMBERS

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENTS

DISTRICT WIDE APPRAISAL

LANDSCAPE TYPES AND
CHARACTER AREAS

VALUED LANDSCAPES

APPENDICES

INTERACTIVE MAPS

FIELD WORK INFO

FEEDBACK

Featured Posts



To be updated.

Consultation

Thank you for visiting our consultation page. This is your opportunity to give us your feedback on the updated landscape assessment for the Mendip District area.

The main study is broken down into a series of subsections that can be accessed via the [homepage](#) of this website. A series of other maps and resources are also included [at the bottom](#) of that page. The study provides information on the wide range of landscapes found across the extensive Mendip District area. The work will be used for many different purposes including local planning and countryside management decisions. It is also intended to provide a useful resource for those interested in the local landscape and a record of the state of the district's landscapes in 2020.

Comments on any part of the study or this website are welcome. We are keen to gather many responses on the Special Characteristics of the District and the locations that people most enjoy. Additional information on the area and your views on the work and any particular findings, will help complete the project as a comprehensive study.

To give us your views and take part in the mapping of favourite walks, views and hidden gems please click as appropriate below.

If you are responding

- As a [member of the public](#) please click [here](#)
- On behalf of a [Parish or Town Council](#) please click [here](#)
- On behalf of an [organisation](#) please click [here](#)

Please note your name and any organisation represented maybe recorded against the comments received as part of a transparent process.

Comments may also be lodged via this [link](#) email or by post. (See below)

Contact Details

Email: planningpolicy@mendip.gov.uk

Please insert **Landscape Character Assessment Consultation** in the subject line.

OR

Post to Mendip District Council

Cannards Grave Road

Shepton Mallet

Somerset BA4 5BT

[GO BACK](#)

HOMEPAGE

INTRODUCTION

THE STUDY

MENDIP BY NUMBERS

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENTS

DISTRICT WIDE APPRAISAL

LANDSCAPE TYPES AND
CHARACTER AREAS

VALUED LANDSCAPES

APPENDICES

INTERACTIVE MAPS

FIELD WORK INFO

FEEDBACK

Featured Posts



To be updated.

Public Feedback

Introduction

Your views are important and will help to complete the Landscape Character Assessment. We are very keen to gather a wide range of feedback to this project. Any general comments on the study or this website are very welcome.

Your observations on how the area has changed or may continue to change in the future would be valuable. How do you enjoy the landscapes of this area how often do you visit?

Feedback on the assessments of how the District area breaks down into distinctly different landscapes would be interesting as would any additional information you think would help explain the landscapes we see today.

General Comments and additional information can be provided via the message box at the bottom of this page.

There are two topics on which we would like you to take part in our on-line survey.

1. The Eight Special Characteristics

As part of the Landscape Assessment Study we have identified 8 special qualities of the Mendip District landscapes. We are interested in your views on this list and how you think these apply to the parts of the district you call home or like to visit.

The 8 special characteristics are described [here](#) - click link to find out more and give us your thoughts

2. Favourite Walks, Views and Hidden Gems

As part of our study of the Mendip Landscapes we are keen to gather your views on what makes this district special and what local people value most from the diverse collection of places.

Where are those places which lift your spirits or blow you away?

Are there places you value as part of your daily routine or where you go for a long walk, jog, cycle or ride. What makes these special - is it just the type of landscape - woodlands, open farmland or the hill tops you head for or do you seek out places for special interests such as bird watching, climbing or biking?

Do you head to particular viewpoints or just enjoy a glimpsed view that tells you you're nearing home?

Mendip has a rich collection of fantastic natural and historic features that tell a story or provide the destination for a good walk. Some well-known, others not so, where are the real gems or hidden treasures?

- [Favourite Walks/Places to Go](#)
- [Favourite Views](#)
- [Hidden Gems](#)

We are hoping for a good level of interest and feedback to these pages. As locations are submitted we will update the [map](#) and you can see if you have added to multiple recommendations for a highly valued place or told us of a place that no one else has found.

If you can, tell us about what makes your nomination special to you or your family. We would love to build up some testimonials for the special places of Mendip.

To comply with GDPR regulations we will not collect or publish data that would identify you unless you wish to make formal representations to the study or be sent updates on the consultation responses. If you would like to be notified of the completed landscape character assessment please fill in the form below and provide contact details.

Contact Details

Email: planningpolicy@mendip.gov.uk

Please insert **Landscape Character Assessment Consultation** in the subject line.

OR

Post to Mendip District Council

Cannards Grave Road

Shepton Mallet

Somerset BA4 5BT

Contact Form

Contact Form

Thank you for your participation in the consultation process.



Please put down your name in the box below.

Could you provide us your email, please? (Optional)

Favourite Walks/Places to Go

long weekend walks, short daily dog walking circuits, high hills or river valleys? Where are the best walks in Mendip – help us build a district heat map Tell us about what makes these your favourite routes – how often do you go, how far do you travel to get there, how far do you walk (or jog or ride – even if you don't walk the walk we would still like to hear from you!!).



Can you tell us your post code, please (the first three characters will do)?

Name Your Walk or Where do you Start?

Can you identify the area (parish, village, location) or Landscape Character Area, please ?

Can you give us a short description (270 characters max)

Is it a place or a route?

☐ Place

☐ Route

Can you mark it on our map? Click the map to start your trace.

(if you are viewing with a mobile device please click on the map – some devices not supported – please provide a start and end point in notes and we will upload manually). Please click onto 'a link' to your right to view the district boundary. [a link](#)

51.189679 -2.538741 0 0

**Can you trace your route on our map? Click the map to start your trace.**

(if you are viewing with a mobile device please click on the map – some devices not supported – please provide a start and end point in notes and we will upload manually). Please click onto 'a link' to your right to view the district boundary. [a link](#)

51.189679 -2.538741 0 0

**Can you tell us what makes this route special for you?**

How often do you go?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Once a Month
- ☐ Once in a while

How do you travel to get to this place?

- ☐ Car
- ☐ Bike
- ☐ On foot
- ☐ Other

If you chose other in previous question, can you tell us how you get to the place?

Do you want to provide a photo for the record.

[Click here to upload file. \(< 10MB\)](#)

How far do you travel to get to this place? Please approximate your answer in km.

Is there anything else to add? *Please enter the start and end point manually if you did not trace the path on the map above.

Favourite Views

Mendip has a great selection of hills, vistas and landmarks – where are your favourites. Are these remote hilltops with open panoramas or the glimpsed view that enlivens a local journey. How do the many landmarks of Mendip feature in your views. Are there significant intrusions that have appeared in your views you can tell us about?



Can you tell us your post code, please (the first three characters will do)?

Name Your View?

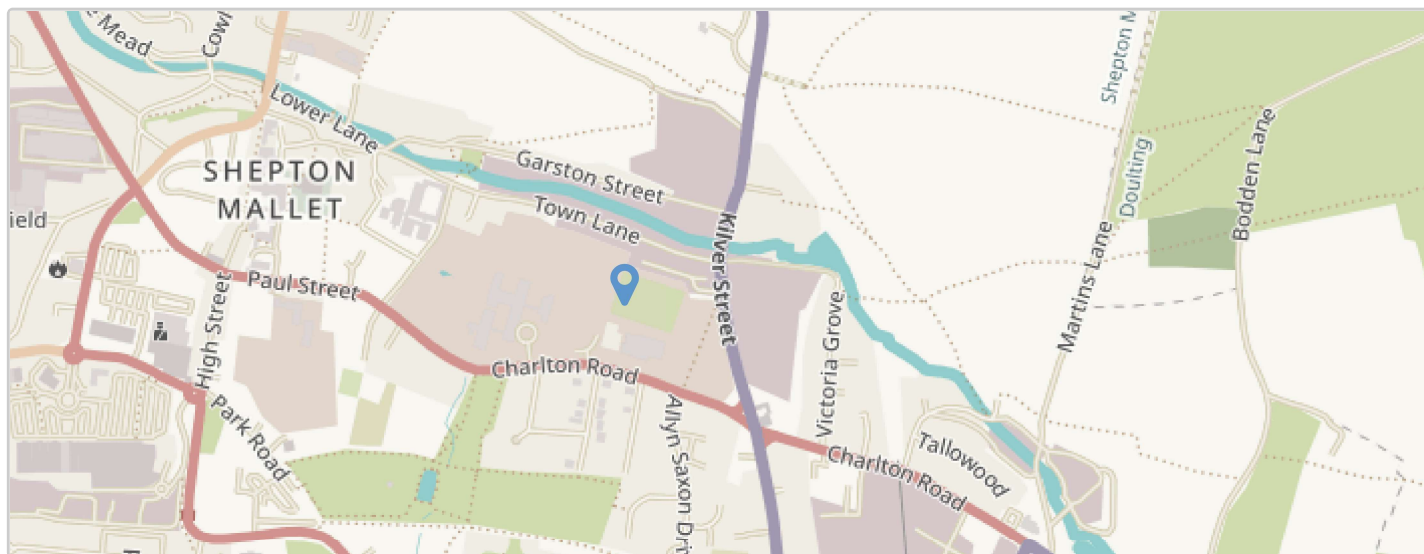
Can you identify the area (parish, village, location) or Landscape Character Area, please ?

Can you give us a short description – including viewpoints and landmarks (270 characters max)

Can you locate your viewpoint on our map? Click the map to mark your spot.

If you are viewing with a mobile device please click on the map – some devices not supported – please provide a point in notes and we will upload manually. Please click onto 'a link' to your right to view the district boundary. [a link](#)

51.189679 -2.538741 0 0



Can you tell us what makes this view special for you?

Do you want to provide a photo for the record.

Click here to upload file. (< 10MB)

View from a footpath, formal viewpoint or road?

- ☐ Footpath
- ☐ Formal Viewpoint
- ☐ Road
- ☐ Other

If you chose other in previous question, please tell us more.

Is there anything else to add? * Please enter details of the view if you have not marked it on the map.

Hidden Gems

Tell us about those special places that make an impression or draw you out time and again



Can you tell us your post code, please (the first three characters will do)?

Name Your Gem, Place or Treasure?

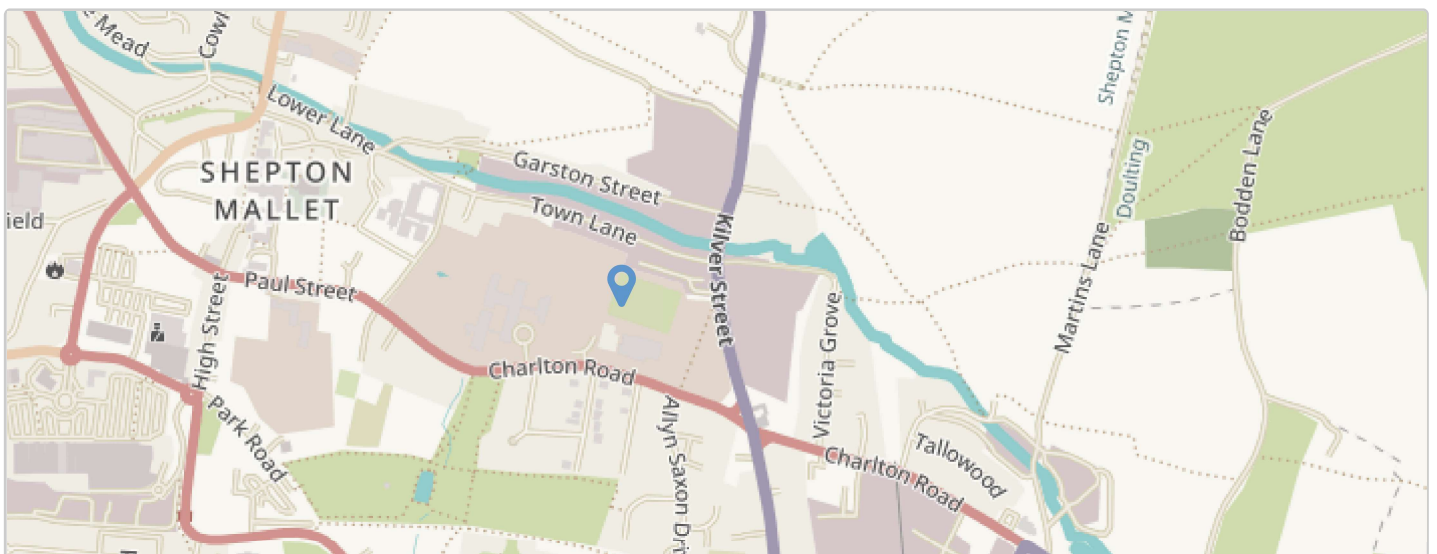
Can you identify the area (parish, village, location) or Landscape Character Area, please ?

Can you give us a short description. (270 characters max)

X Marks the Spot - can you locate your gem on our map? Click the map to mark your spot.

If you are viewing with a mobile device please click on the map – some devices not supported – please provide a point in notes and we will upload manually. Please click onto 'a link' to your right to view the district boundary. [a link](#)

51.189679 -2.538741 0 0



Can you tell us what makes this feature or place special for you?

How far do you travel to get there? Please approximate your answer in km.

Do you want to provide a photo for the record.

Click here to upload file. (< 10MB)

Public Consultation - Comments

Thank you for your participation in the consultation process.



Please put down your comments in the text box below.

Contact Form

Thank you for your participation in the consultation process.



Please put down your name in the box below.

Could you provide us your email, please? (Optional)

Could you provide us the first 3 letters of your postcode, please?

e.g.BA4

Do you live within or are you a frequent visitor to the Mendip countryside?

- | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| ☐ Live within the rural area | ☐ Daily visitor | ☐ Weekly visitor |
| ☐ Monthly visitor | ☐ Annually visitor | |

Which one of the following is the most frequent type of visit to the Mendip countryside?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ☐ Dog walking | ☐ Long walks | ☐ Short walks |
| ☐ Drive | ☐ Cycle | ☐ Ride |
| ☐ Other | | |

If you chose other in previous question, could you tell us how you tend to get there, please?

[HOMEPAGE](#)[INTRODUCTION](#)[THE STUDY](#)[MENDIP BY NUMBERS](#)[LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENTS](#)[DISTRICT WIDE APPRAISAL](#)[LANDSCAPE TYPES AND
CHARACTER AREAS](#)[VALUED LANDSCAPES](#)[APPENDICES](#)[INTERACTIVE MAPS](#)[FIELD WORK INFO](#)[FEEDBACK](#)[Featured Posts](#)

To be updated.

Consultees - Parish & Town Council

Consultation Form

Your or your council's views on the study as a whole, specific aspects or character areas and the eight Special Characteristics would be very welcome.

The attached word file link below provides a formatted response to assist, but can be supplemented by other correspondence.

We are very keen to obtain a response to the 8 Special Characteristics of the Mendip District area from all the Towns and Parish Councils if we can. These may be submitted via the online questionnaire - this asks for your views on how the Characteristics reflect the Mendip area as a whole and then how well each is reflected in your local area.

Please click [here](#) fill in the online questionnaire for the eight Special Characteristics.

Please click [here](#) to download the response form in word.

We would like to add additional resources and links to the website to provide more local information in neighbourhood character area studies or local parish histories. **If you can provide a link or PDF copy of any such information, please include this with your response.** (Links may be copied into the word file or sent by email.)

We are also keen to gather as many individual responses to the Characteristics and Favourite Walks and Hidden Gems as possible. We would be grateful for any sharing of this link to the wider public and individual responses from Town and Parish Council members this can be done via the public consultation section of this website. Please feel free to join in on the mapping of these special places via the [public consultation page - Favourite walks, views and Hidden Gems - link to public page](#).

Contact Details

Email: planningpolicy@mendip.gov.uk

Please insert **Landscape Character Assessment Consultation** in the subject line.

OR

Post to Mendip District Council

Cannards Grave Road

Shepton Mallet

Somerset BA4 5BT

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CHARACTER AREAS](#)[VALUED LANDSCAPES](#)[APPENDICES](#)[INTERACTIVE MAPS](#)[FIELD WORK INFO](#)[FEEDBACK](#)

Featured Posts



To be updated.

The Eight Special Landscape Characteristics

Introduction

As part of the Landscape Assessment Study we have identified what we think are 8 special characteristics of the Mendip District Landscapes. We are interested in gathering a wider view of how other people react to or value the local landscapes. We would like to have your views on how this list reflects the district as a whole and how you think these apply to the parts of the district that you either call home or like to visit.

Landscape can be important to people for very many different reasons; some may be valued just as a place for a regular dog walk others may be much more inspirational or even spiritual. Please tell us what the Mendip Countryside means to you or what makes somewhere special.

Here are the characteristics proposed for the area:

- **Valuable Collection of Distinct and Interesting Landscapes** • as a collection there is a value in these landscapes as a sum greater than the sum of its parts.
- **Geological and Geomorphology** • the district landscapes encapsulate a complex geological history.
- **Biodiversity Potential** • the biodiversity interest provides specific contributions to the appearance and interest of the landscape.
- **History** • the district landscapes include a rich historical story that links across the whole collection.
- **Continuous Landscape** • there is a continuity of landscapes across the district providing the sense of an area dominated by rural undeveloped countryside.
- **Tranquil, Isolated and Semi Natural Landscape Resource** • the district landscapes include many different aspects of peaceful and strongly natural landscape.
- **Views and Landmarks** • exploring most parts of the district presents constantly changing good quality views. Within these, key features recur as interest and orientation points.
- **Rich Cultural Heritage and Recreational Resource** • the district landscapes accommodate, inspire and attract people for events, creative interest and as a cultural resource. The area includes a comprehensive network of recreational routes and the settings for adventure.

For more information, please refer to [Section 7](#) of the report.

Please let us know your thoughts about these categories by filling in a [questionnaire](#) or email us at planningpolicy@mendip.gov.uk.

[GO BACK](#)

Proposed 8 Landscape Characteristics - Public

As part of the Landscape Assessment Study we have identified 8 special qualities of the Mendip District landscapes. We are interested in your views on this list and how you think these apply to the parts of the district you call home or like to visit. If you are particularly drawn to or enjoy the Mendip District Landscape for any one or several of these reasons please give us your feedback on how this list represents your views. If you think we have missed an aspect of value we really want to understand your perspective. Please tell us what you think.



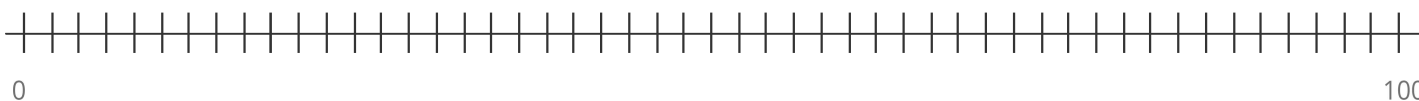
Can you tell us your post code, please (the first three characters will do)?

Please rate how much do you agree / disagree with the following landscape characteristics?

0= Strongly Disagree; 50=No View; 100 = Strongly Agree

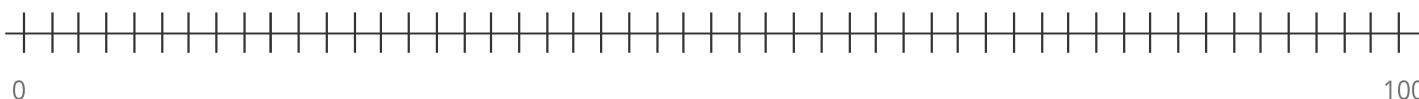
1. Valuable Collection of Distinct and Interesting Landscapes - as a collection there is a value in these landscapes greater than the sum of its parts.

0= Strongly Disagree; 50=No View; 100 = Strongly Agree



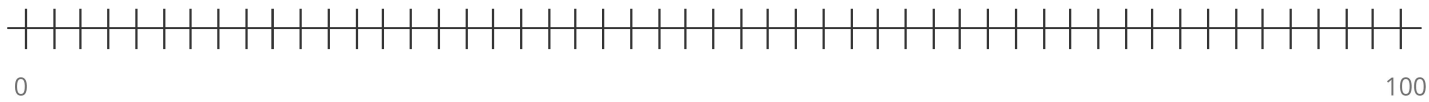
2. Geology and Geomorphology - the district landscapes encapsulate a complex geological history.

0= Strongly Disagree; 50=No View; 100 = Strongly Agree



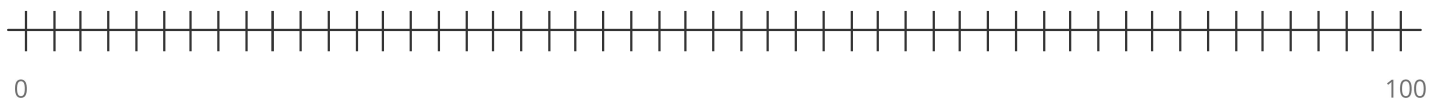
3. Biodiversity Potential - the biodiversity interest provides specific contributions to the appearance and interest of the landscape.

0= Strongly Disagree; 50=No View; 100 = Strongly Agree



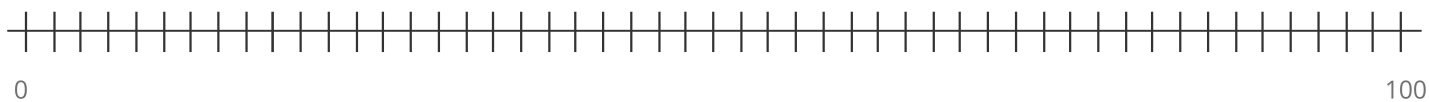
4. History - the district landscape includes a rich historical story that links across the whole collection.

0= Strongly Disagree; 50=No View; 100 = Strongly Agree



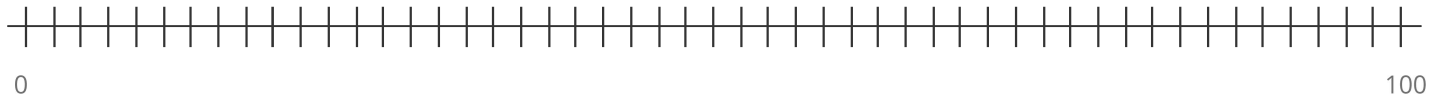
5. Continuous Landscape - there is a continuity of landscapes across the district providing the sense of an area dominated by rural undeveloped countryside.

0= Strongly Disagree; 50=No View; 100 = Strongly Agree



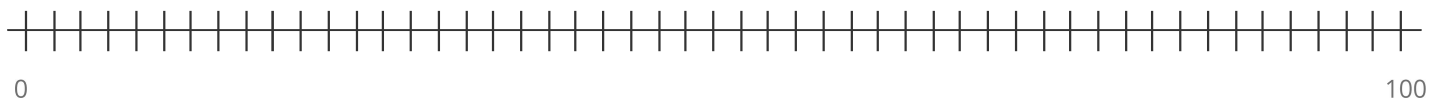
6. Tranquil, Isolated and Semi Natural Landscape Resource - the district landscapes include many different aspects of peaceful and strongly natural landscape.

0= Strongly Disagree; 50=No View; 100 = Strongly Agree



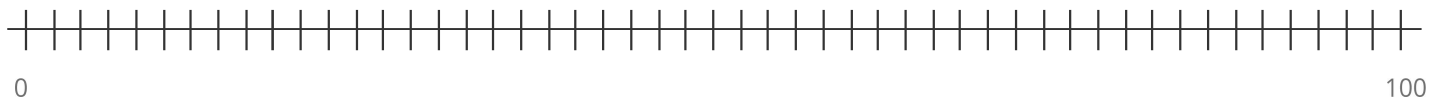
7. Views and Landmarks - exploring most parts of the district presents constantly changing good quality views. Within these key features recur as interest and orientation points.

0= Strongly Disagree; 50=No View; 100 = Strongly Agree



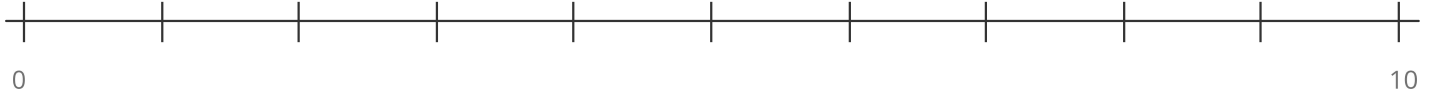
8. Rich cultural Heritage and Recreational Resource - the district landscape accommodates, inspires and attracts people for events, creative interest and as a cultural resource. The area includes a comprehensive network of recreational routes and the settings for adventure.

0= Strongly Disagree; 50=No View; 100 = Strongly Agree



How well are these qualities reflected in the area where you live?

0= Not at all; 50=No View; 100 = Very well

**What aspects are most important to you / your area?**

Is the list of characteristics just right, too long or too short?

- ☐ Too long
- ☐ Too short
- ☐ Just about right

Is there a quality we have missed

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, could you tell us more?

Is there anything else you want to add?

[HOMEPAGE](#)[INTRODUCTION](#)[THE STUDY](#)[MENDIP BY NUMBERS](#)[LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENTS](#)[DISTRICT WIDE APPRAISAL](#)[LANDSCAPE TYPES AND
CHARACTER AREAS](#)[VALUED LANDSCAPES](#)[APPENDICES](#)[INTERACTIVE MAPS](#)[FIELD WORK INFO](#)[FEEDBACK](#)[Featured Posts](#)

To be updated.

Consultees

Responding on behalf of an organisation

Consultation Form

Your or your organisation's views on the study as a whole, specific aspects or character areas and the eight Special Characteristics would be very welcome.

The attached word file link below provides a formatted response to assist, but can be supplemented by other correspondence.

If your responses on the 8 Special Characteristics can be submitted via the online questionnaire below that would assist.

Please click [here](#) to download the response form in word.

Please click [here](#) fill in the online questionnaire for the eight Special Characteristics.

We would also welcome individual responses to the Characteristics and Favourite Walks and Hidden Gems via the website. Please feel free to join in on the mapping of these special places via the [public consultation page - Favourite walks, views and Hidden Gems](#).

Contact Details

Email: planningpolicy@mendip.gov.uk

Please insert **Landscape Character Assessment Consultation** in the subject line.

OR

Post to Mendip District Council

Cannards Grave Road

Shepton Mallet

Somerset BA4 5BT

MENDIP LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT - CONSULTATION REPORT

OCTOBER 2021



APPENDIX B : SUMMARY OF ALL COMMENTS

APPENDIX B - SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION:									
Resp No.	Respondant	AREA	REF	GENERAL COMMENTS ON OVERALL LCA STUDY	PARTICULAR AREA OR CHARACTERISTICS CONNECTION TO VALUED LANDSCAPE	TYPOS / ERRORS / COMMENTS ON SPESIFIC POINTS	REF TO FAVOURITE WALKS, VIEWS OR HIDDEN GEMS	OTHER COMMENTS	NAME OF RESPONDER
		Comments on LCA B2.5 Little Keyford Substantial number of comments focused on area due to concern over potential extension to built up area of Frome			Note: many comments repeat points made by others. Frequent references to 8 special characteristics - all 8 noted at least once. Text for LCA B2.5 (and other sections of B2 reviewed with minor text changes made - see detailed comments table).		References to favorite walks, views & gems added to consultation mapping.	Note: frequent references to the value of the area for mental health and post Covid recovery relevant to general awareness of value of natural environment.	
1	MDC Cllr Helen Kay Frome Keyford Ward	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5		Please see attached my comments on chapter 6.3 especially re B2.5 which is heavily used by people in my ward. Also see attached some better photos of the area B2.5. These are also views that I value. And some information about Keyford Farmhouse I forgot to say in the written submission here that there used to be a deerpark here too near to the footpaths FR 14/39 and FR 14/40. And that both these footpaths give views out to Cley Hill. The format for responding to this part of the consultation is mostly very user friendly and potentiallyinteresting re using digital maps etc (though I couldn't make them work) and it seems a pity that we haven't publicised this more to get people really engaged across the whole district			... concered that LCA has not been adquately publicised	Cllr Helen Kay
2	MDC Cllr Michael Dunk Frome Market Ward	LITTLE KEYFORD BIRCHILL LANE	B2.5					The real question now facing Frome is: How can it maintain the boundary between town and countryside as it exists now, simply extending down to meet the bypass to the South of Frome would seem logical but doing this would sacrifice the landscape of a part of Frome that I, and many others, feel is a key part of the setting of a settlement like Frome. Anyone who has walked or cycled out of Frome along Little Keyford Lane will be instantly transformed into a distinctive landscape by a narrow country lane, the point is that Frome stops and another type of landscape starts. This is not limited to area B 2.5 but also the other boundaries to the West	Michael Dunk Cllr Mendip
3	Cllr Rob Collett Frome Town Council College Ward	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5	Same email as Jo Kirk. Dear Planning Policy, I wish my support of comments to be registered, endorsing Cllr Kays' concerning the LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT consultation, regarding Area B2.5 LITTLE KEYFORD AND BLATCHBRIDGE. The countryside included in Area B2.5 is of great importance to me because I regularly visit it. I know that Mendip District council have already allocated some significant parts of B2.5 for housing and other development. I was opposed to this urban expansion. I am now very concerned about further spread of the built up area into irreplaceable farm land that is so valuable to me and hundreds of other regular users. During the Covid 19 Pandemic the lanes and footpaths of the Little Keyford, Blatchbridge and Tytherington area have been a lifeline for walkers, cyclists and others seeking fresh air, exercise and relief. There is a growing mass of academic and other research evidence that proves how important the green world around us is to our mental and physical well-being. I urge you, therefore, to highlight in your Asessment of B2.5 the following 'Valued Landscape' points: 5. Continuous Landscape - despite river, rail and road barriers, this landscape is part of a bigger whole that includes Longleat woodlands and the flatlands towards Truddoxhill. The Cranborne Chase Dark Skies Reserve is just two miles away and all artificial light from building at B2.5 will detract from it. Any loss of green fields at B2.5 will have a wide impact on the opposite side of the River Frome Valley as B2.5 is visible from far and wide, such as from Cley Hill. 6. Tranquil, Isolated And Semi-Natural Landscape Resource - the area defined as B2.5 has already been de- graded to some extent by new housing that spills over the skyline and this will be made worse once the land already allocated for development is built on. However, that does not make the remaining countryside worthless. There are still plenty of opportunities here to seek solace in greenery, surrounded by birds, bats, butterflies etc as is shown by the large number of people who come to this area to enjoy a bit of relative peace and quiet. 7.Views And Landmarks - looking from East to West, Area B2.5 affords splendid views of the National Trust's Cley Hill, Longleat Woodland, Gare Hill and Alfred's Tower, all clearly visible from the lanes and public rights of way that criss-cross this valuable landscape. Finally, may I refer to the Landscape Character Assessment's mention of flytipping in Area B2.5. This is a problem in all lanes around Frome and is by no means worse in B2.5. Mendip District Council's contractors do not adequately control the problem, typically depending on complaints from the public. This is not beyond resolution. Regular weekly (or more frequent) patrols by collection vehicles would solve it. It should be noted that local people in B2.5 report flytipping and also collect litter, reflecting their love of and concern for the preservation of this special countryside.					Cllr Rob Collett

MENDIP CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Resp No.	Respondant	AREA	REF	GENERAL COMMENTS ON OVERALL LCA STUDY	PARTICULAR AREA OR CHARACTERISTICS CONNECTION TO VALUED LANDSCAPE	TYPOS / ERRORS / COMMENTS ON SPESIFIC POINTS	REF TO FAVOURITE WALKS, VIEWS OR HIDDEN GEMS	OTHER COMMENTS	NAME OF RESPONDER
4	Frome and District Civic Society John Peverley	LITTLE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE - comments from Frome & District Civic Soc.	B2.4 B2.5	On page 2 of Appendix 4, it states that Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA's) should be prepared byChartered Landscape Architects "or other suitably qualified and experienced professional" in accordance with bestpractice guidance published by the Landscape Institute: https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/technicalresource/landscape-visual-impact-assessment/ <i>We would like to see the words "or other suitably qualified and experienced professional" deleted from the text.</i> The Landscape Institute has also published guidance on how local planning authorities should review LIVIA's that are submitted to them, see: https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstituteorg/2020/01/20-1-Reviewing-LVIAs-and-LVAs-Final.pdf and <i>we strongly recommend that Appendix 4 should mention this guidance</i>		For Character Area B2.4, in para 6.3.23 (page 193) it mentions "glimpsed views of the railway" from the Frome bypass, but many of the trees on the railway embankment have recently been felled by Network Rail, so this statement will need to be amended. For Character Area B2.5 (pages 194/195), where the Selwood Garden Community is proposed to be developed, in the Key Characteristics box, there is no mention of listed Keyford House and its surrounding area of mature woodland, and in the "Special Features" box, the first bullet point should have been included in Character Area B2.2 and the second bullet point should have been included in Character Area B2.1. When these two entries have been correctly relocated, there will be no entries under "Special Features". Character Area B2.5 has an intrinsic value in retaining a soft green edge to the town and separating it from B2.4 the bypass and infrastructure corridor, which otherwise might become a de facto hard edge. <i>Point raised - querying the two versions on the internet in period when corrections made to website version - all comments noted irrespective of before or after correction points raised do not impact on corrections.</i>		<i>Para 9.34 lists 14 suggestions for improving Mendip's green infrastructure strategy in Core Policy 6 of the adoptedLocal Plan. We expect that when this Policy is next reviewed, these 14 suggestions are considered for inclusion.</i> <i>Note - highlighted point for MDC</i>	John Peverley
5	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD	B2.5		Continuous landscape - visible far and wide Tranquil, Isolated,and Semi Natural Landscape Resource : greenery, views and wildlife, peace and quiet Views and Landmarks : views of Salisbury Plain, Cley Hill, Longleat, Alfreds Tower			Should preserve for future generations - no concreting over green is on edge of town. Concerned of spread of built up into green fields. Lifeline to walkers, cyclists, and others seeking fresh air, exercise or relief from being stuck indoors	Brill Household
6	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD	B2.5		Biodiversity - flora and fauna Historical Landscapes Tranquil Recreational Resource		Paths along river, particularly wild area bet Wallbridge and Adderwell, and fields directly South of Frome.	Don't need a car Suitable for walking and jogging Good for mental health Social contact Sense of living in countryside	Alison Murdock
7	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD	B2.5				Walk along Little Keyford Lane to the 'Ski Ramp' from The Mount in Frome Views across to Cley Hill and Longleat	Social contact Daily exercise - part in Lockdown. Easily accessible green space	Anne Hills
8	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD	B2.5	SOMERSET GARDEN COMMUNITY				Spesific objection to Somerset Garden housing development proposal	Beverly Jones
9	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD	B2.5		"Landscape, landmarks and historical elements along with recreation aspect and also wildlife ... are important part of life and vital ..." Tranquility - green and open spaces Biodiversity - wildlife important not destroyed		Views To Blatchbridge and Longleat amazing. Blatchford views in opposite direction wonderful	These green spaces, woodland walks, historical features, natrual landscapes, peace and tranquil sapces are more important to us than you will ever know - need to be allowed to developed natrually and cannot be destroyed by development	Carol Ward
10	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5		Continuous landscape - southern boundary out to Longleat and Stourhead Views and landmarks Tranquil History - Integral part of Ancient Forest of Selwood	Mention of fly tipping - not relevant to report as problem for all areas of Mendip ?			Caspar Searle
11	Public	KEYFORD AND BLACKBRIDGE AREA	B2.5					No more house developments .. Keep countryside intact	Dr Cecile Denham
12	Public	Consultation response not spesific as to area being referred to but assume this is referencing an objection to development at Little Keyford - B2.5	B2.5	The list in the assessment addresses many of our views about the area. It's a wonderful place to "get back to nature" and experience relatively untouched English countryside; a rare and precious commodity in the current age. The area provides a rich environment for walking, cycling and generally experiencing the great outdoors without constant risk of encountering vehicles. There are wonderful views of our countryside and it's a great place to view wildlife without constant pressure from ambient noise and traffic. Lovely tracks lead across the countryside providing a stimulating environment for folks to explore and enjoy. The current pandemic has highlighted the value of nature. This part of England is precious to us all and should be preserved for future generations to enjoy, rather than being concreted over. Valuable Collection of Distinct and Interesting Landscapes - as a collection there is a value in these landscapes as a sum greater than the sum of its parts. Geological and Geomorphology - the district landscapes encapsulate a complex geological history. Biodiversity Potential - the biodiversity interest provides specific contributions to the appearance and interest of the landscape. History - the district landscapes include a rich historical story that links across the whole collection. Continuous Landscape - there is a continuity of landscapes across the district providing the sense of an area dominated by rural undeveloped countryside. Tranquil, Isolated and Semi Natural Landscape Resource - the district landscapes include many different aspects of peaceful and strongly natural landscape. Views and Landmarks - exploring most parts of the district presents constantly changing good quality views. Within these, key features recur as interest and orientation points				Rich environment for walking, cycling and get back to nature". Wonderful views and wildlife. Should be preserved for future, not concreted over.	Dr Chris Hawkins

MENDIP CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

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13	Public	Response refs FROME BYPASS Assume area B2.5	B2.5					"....how important this green area between Frome and the bypass is to myself and the innumerable people that I see walking and cycling it. This has been especially the case this pandemic year but this area will always have a value as a green lung for the town and a safe buffer between us and the heavy traffic on the main road"	David Yelland
14	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD BLATCHFORD TYTHERINGTON	B2.5	Continuous Landscape ~ to the Longleat woods and the River Frome floodplain towards Withan Friary, . The Cranborne Chase Dark Skies Reserve is a mere 2 miles away and all artificial light from building at B2.5 will detract from it. Any loss of green fields at B2.5 will have a wide impact on the opposite side of the River Frome Valley as B2.5 is visible from far and wide, such as from Cley Hill. Tranquil, Isolated And Semi-Natural Landscape Resource ~ new and projected housing that spills over the skyline does not make the remaining countryside worthless. There are still plenty of opportunities here to find comfort in 2 the 'natural world' as is shown by the large number of people who come to this area to enjoy a bit of relative peace and quiet on a daily basis. Views And Landmarks ~ splendid views of the northernmost escarpment of Salisbury Plain, Cley Hill, Longleat Woods, Gare Hill and Alfred's Tower,	We think that your descriptions undervalue this land and landscape. It should not be viewed as of lesser value or as being so despoiled as to be good for nothing but building on	We take exception, therefore, at the multiple mentions of fly-tipping with regard to Little Keyford and Blatchbridge (6.3.69, 6.3.72 and in the B2.5 chart). Fly-tipping is, in fact, a problem in all lanes around Frome and other Mendiptowns and is by no means worse in B2.5. There is no mention of fly-tipping at all in sections B1.2, B1.3 or B2.4. We know from personal experience that this is erroneous.		 "life-saver for walkers, cyclists and others seeking fresh air, exercise and relief from the four walls ofhome. There is a growing body of evidence that proves how important being outdoors amongst greenery is to mental and physical health"	Duncan Skene & Pat Scott
15	Public	RIVER FROME VALLEY	B2.5	Continuous landscape - views			 wider views towards Longleat, Cley Hill, Stourhead estate, Trudoxhill, Buckland Dinham and Orchardleigh.	"... vital that any further housing and commercial development is kept to the absolute minimum so thatFrome residents can remain physically and mentally healthy with easy access to field paths, fields, hedgerows and the glorious views. "walking public footpaths in the area as a health and recreation resource."	Elaine Pugsley
16	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5	Continuous Landscape - Longleat woodlands and the flatlands towards Truddoxhill. Tranquil, Isolated And Semi-Natural Landscape Resource - There are still plenty of opportunities here to seek solace in greenery, surrounded by birds, bats, butterflies etc as is shown by the large number of people who come to this area to enjoy a bit of relative peace and quiet. Views And Landmarks - looking from East to West, Area B2.5 affords splendid views of the National Trust's Cley Hill, Longleat Woodland, Gare Hill and Alfred's Tower,				...lifeline for walkers, cyclists and others seeking fresh air, exercise and relief. There is a growing mass of academic and other research evidence that proves how important the green world around us is to our mental and physical well-being.	Fiona Puleston (NB same comments as Duncan Skene & Pat Scott above)
17	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD	B2.5					Little Keyford Lane (with the bridleway south of the bypass), Sandy's Hill Lane and Mount Pleasant are an extremely popular route for walkers and cyclists. These, together with the current residents' cars, can just about manage on these narrow twisty lanes. More traffic would simply be dangerous and unacceptable, and not sustainable.	Geoff Pell
18	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5					Little Keyford, Blatchbridge and Tytherington areas have been a lifeline for many walkers, cyclists and others seeking fresh air, exercise andadmiring the excellent views.	Harold and Helen Shaw
19	Public	LOWER KEYFORD	B2.5					We walk and cycle in the fields and lanes surroundinglittle Keyford several times a week. This is part of the proposed Selwood garden community development andwithout this area in our doorstep our lives will be genuinely impacted . We benefit enormously by having this openand beautiful land so close to Frome and many of us will suffer without it.	Hester Privett
20	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5		Continuous Landscape - The views are part of a wide landscape looking out to Cley hill and the Longleat estate. Biodiversity - The hedgerows and fields are full of wildlife such as owls, bats, mice and many others Recreation resource			I consider this area to be important to me and the people of frome as it is the land that currently connects the townto the countryside, it is constantly used by walkers, runners, cyclists as a route out too Blatchbridge andTytherington.	Jake Spurgeon
21	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5		Continuous Landsscape Tranqui, isolated, Semi-Natural Resource Views and Landmarks (Same comments as Fiona Puleston)	Fly Tipping : This is a problem in all lanes around Frome and is by no means worse in B2.5. It should be noted that local people in B2.5 regularly do report flytipping and also collect litter,reflecting their love of and concern for the preservation of this special countryside			Dr Jo Kirk

MENDIP CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Resp No.	Respondant	AREA	REF	GENERAL COMMENTS ON OVERALL LCA STUDY	PARTICULAR AREA OR CHARACTERISTICS CONNECTION TO VALUED LANDSCAPE	TYPOS / ERRORS / COMMENTS ON SPESIFIC POINTS	REF TO FAVOURITE WALKS, VIEWS OR HIDDEN GEMS	OTHER COMMENTS	NAME OF RESPONDER
22	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5	... lack of consideration given to sub-area B2.5 Little Keyford and Blatchbridge in the Mendip LCA. I kindly ask that the documents are reviewed and updated in line with my and, no doubt, others' intimate knowledge of the areas in question. Update your documentation to reflect the high-value nature of this area of Frome and avoid the potential licence to destroy it by undermining its character in this loose assessment Valuable Collection of Distinct and Interesting Landscapes - As a collection, there is a value in these landscapes as a sum greater than the sum of its parts. The area may be hemmed in by roads but there are quiet lanes that offer a different character when walking, riding or biking along them than from above or seen from afar. The distinct landscapes are all natural and the views of neighbouring Cley Hill and Cranbourne Chase are clear. Geological and Geomorphology - The district landscapes encapsulate a complex geological history. Much of the soil in the area is marked down as Grade 3A under MDC's own evidence base used int he original Local Plan Part II. This soil, while currently used to produce food for livestock, is invaluable for potential future food production at a time when much productive arable land is being lost to development. Biodiversity Potential - The biodiversity interest provides specific contributions to the appearance and interest of the landscape. In particular, this area is part of the migration and feeding routes of Greater Horseshoe Bats from Mells. There are slow worms here and plenty of British birds that live within the natural hedgerows and trees that have been here for hundreds of years. You only have to walk along Little Keyford Lane across the bypass to see that, when left to its own devices, nature comes back in abundance here. History - The district landscapes include a rich historical story that links across the whole collection. Grade II Listed Keyford House and neighbouring Keyford Farm were both once part of the larger Longleat Estate. Keyford House has a covenant on land in the area and currently relies on a traditional 'drock' to drain run-off water into a nearby field. Many buildings in Little Keyford date back to the 1800s and there is a clear sense of history in the stone walls and smaller features of these buildings and the lanes that join them. Continuous Landscape - There is a continuity of landscapes across the district providing the sense of an area dominated by rural undeveloped countryside. Looking from the higher vantage points, the fields are continuous across to West Woodlands and beyond. The bypass is relatively well-hidden by trees and so the views appear uninterrupted for several miles to the south-east. Tranquil, Isolated and Semi Natural Landscape Resource - The district landscapes include many different aspects of peaceful and strongly natural landscape. Despite the aforementioned bypass and even the encroaching trading estate, the current assessment that the area is 'not tranquil' is factually incorrect. Anyone with a decibel meter and five minutes to spare would discover just how quiet and peaceful the area around Little Keyford Lane really is. The large hedgerows and mature trees (mixed with birdsong) make this a very peaceful spot indeed (even more notable given the high number of visitors here on an average day, let alone during lockdown when fewer cars were on the roads). Views and Landmarks - Exploring most parts of the district presents constantly changing good quality views. Within these, key features recur as interest and orientation points. As mentioned above, there are views of Cley Hill, the River Frome and West Woodlands - all of which should be protected for residents and those enjoying peaceful recreation here. Rich Cultural Heritage and Recreational Resource - The district landscapes accommodate, inspire and attract people for events, creative interest and as a cultural resource. The area includes a comprehensive network of recreational routes and the settings for adventure. People choose to come to Little Keyford from all over Frome - for walking, running, cycling and horseriding. It is a key rural route out of town where most other parts of Frome are overdeveloped and hazardous. It is one of the few places where people can walk for miles in several directions and meet very few cars (Longleat directly east; Tytherington, Marston and beyond due south). I kindly ask that the documents are reviewed and updated in line with my and, no doubt, others' intimate knowledge of the areas in question. The cursory assessment in your current documents pays scant regard for the true character of this historic area					Joe Hannam Maggs
23	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5				The lanes in this area provide the links for people to enjoy this landscape. They are a source of exercise, leisure and solace for the numerous walkers, runners, cyclists, horse riders, bird watchers and horse riders who enjoy the ,relative, traffic-free nature of the lanes. If the area were to be built upon it would have a negative effect on the view. More buildings lead to more traffic. This,inevitably, would deter people from using the lanes for leisure and exercise. The likely result would be that the majority of people would drive out from their homes to find a quiet area to enjoy rather than setting out by foot or bike to the lanes towards Tytherington or Friggles Street, East Woodlands and Lane End.	Reference to the challenges that so many people face regarding domestic abuse, stress, mental health, limited mobility, loneliness et cetera. I don't think it can be underestimated how important a simple, easily accessible resource of fresh air, tranquility and exercise is to many people. This has been even more true during this difficult year of lockdowns and social distancing. This area goes a long way to fulfilling this need for people, and is such a valuable resource because it is so easily accessed from anyone living on the south side of Frome. I think it would be a great loss to general well-being of the people of Frome if this area were compromised.	Julian Crawley
24	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5	I wish to express my concerns regarding the landscape character consultation of Area B2.5, Little Keyford and Blatchbridge. I am aware that Mendip District Council has allocated some of this farmland already for development and I'm opposed to the proposal of further building and the permanent loss of the green fields. It will have a hugely detrimental effect on the views to Cley Hill, Longleat, Alfred's Tower and beyond.	I would particularly like to draw your attention to points 5,6 and 7 when considering the 'Valued Landscape' for local people. The 'Continuous Landscape' (point 5) will be effected. The recent developments near Asda and near Christchurch School do not fill me with confidence that enough will be done regarding how new buildings fit within the landscape. Certainly, I do not believe that a significant new building development can enhance the environment. Point 6 addresses the 'Tranquil, Isolated and Semi-Natural Landscape Resource'. If more of the land is built upon, then the area would no longer fit this definition. I accept that some building proposal has already been agreed, but there may still be a chance for people to enjoy the remaining semi-natural landscape and peace and quiet if the building on the land remains limited. Point 7 refers to 'Views and Landmarks'. Area B2.5 has outstanding views of Cley Hill, Longleat Woods and Alfred's Tower. It's one of the reasons the lanes are used for leisure. The proposed buildings could obscure the view from various viewpoints in the area. At the very least, it will negatively effect the foreground and middle ground views towards these landmarks. It is for these reasons, and the inevitable traffic increase, that I would like you to consider the landscape and environment in Area B2.5 and reject any further building proposals.		The lanes in this area provide the links for people to enjoy this landscape. They are a source of exercise, leisure and solace for the numerous walkers, runners, cyclists, horse riders, bird watchers and horse riders who enjoy the ,relative, traffic-free nature of the lanes. If the area were to be built upon it would have a negative effect on the view. More buildings lead to more traffic. This,inevitably, would deter people from using the lanes for leisure and exercise. The likely result would be that the majority of people would drive out from their homes to find a quiet area to enjoy rather than setting out by foot or bike to the lanes towards Tytherington or Friggles Street, East Woodlands and Lane End. During the Covid 19 pandemic the lanes and footpaths in the area have been even busier with pedestrians and cyclists partly because exercising locally has been encouraged. This positive habit is likely to continue as long as the character of the landscape is maintained.		Kiernan Edwards
25	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5		I would like to express my concern at the possibility of loss of green landscape in ref to Area B2.5 Little Keyford& Blatchbridge Frome. This has always been important to me not only visually but has brought much enjoyment when physically walking it's lanes and walkways. Never has this been more significant than in this past year with COVID restrictions. It has provided a lifeline to aid the mental and physical well being of many Frome residents and will continue to do so long after COVID has become less prevalent. The destruction of this green picturesque area will be devastating not only to present but future generations in Frome.				Lynne Angel

MENDIP CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

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26	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD BIRCHILL LANE	B2.5				The lanes in this area are very quiet, they are narrow, you can sense their age & history just like the fields, the farm land which they border. You can hear blackbirds & song-thrushes as you walk, robins, starlings. This is even before you’ve reached the fields with their red campion, cuckoo flowers & rosebay willow herb. necessity for our well being both physical and mental		Mary Longford
27	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD BIRCHILL LANE	B2.5		- Appendix 4 appears to be missing from the list of files available for download. Note:- ref to Appendix 4 in main consultation response - information in summary table on page 195 is incorrect. Says the area looks out Orchardleigh. Error corrected during consultation period And area not tranquil due to train line and bypass. This is subjective and incorrect - many locals would support that this is a tranquil area supported by the highly accessible local countryside, views across to Cley Hill and Longleat, and local wildlife. Tranquility is noted as subjective - in the context of the wider LCA study area is not particularly tranquil - further discussion on this topic in consultation report. - it calls the fields between the edge of Frome and the railway line / bypass “fringe landscape which marks a boundary with the wider countryside” which is inaccurate and not true. There is an ecosystem of wildlife including owls, rabbits, otters, and other birds of prey, amongst many other flora and fauna. In landscape terms there are areas in B2.5 which do form part of a fringe landscape as the transition between the built up area and wider countryside. - landscape value appraisal for “little keyford and blatchbridge” as low to moderate appears incorrect and not in-line with similar local area. For instance Marston Gate has been ranked high, in part due to views and value of walking for local people. This can be argued the same for Keyford and Blatchbridge, which provides extensive area for recreation and walking for the south of Frome residents - as well as beautiful views over to Clay Hill and Longleat. Value judgements picked up from early website version of Appendix 4 - further discussion on landscape value beyound scope of this study. Has this analysis measured footfall as it seems entirely subjective. This area has been fundamental to many hundreds if not thousands of residents over 2020 and the pandemic / lockdown. The assessment is primarily concerned with landscape character irrespective of levels of use. - there is no declaration of interest by the company conducting this survey and analysis. What assurance can be given of its independence from 1) the council - who is under pressure to deliver more housing and 2) developers - who profit from activity around new house builds and 3) other parties such as local residents or farmers that could sway decision making. I think this is imperative and currently not recognised in any of the documentation. The Authority requested confirmation that bidding consultants declared any conflict of interest prior to commencement.			Michael Hallett	
28	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD BIRCHILL LANE	B2.5		Continuous Landscape - this landscape is part of a bigger whole and is visible from far and wide, for instance from Cley Hill. Tranquil, Isolated and semi-natural landscape resource - some of this area has been built on and more is to come, but the remaining countryside is valuable. There are still plenty of opportunities here to enjoy the greenery, views and wildlife. Many people come to this area to enjoy a little peace and quiet. Views and Landmarks - Area B2.5 has great views of Salisbury Plain, Cley Hill, Longleat Woods & Alfred’s Tower, all clearly visible from the lanes and public footpaths that cover this valuable landscape			During the pandemic the lanes & footpaths of the Little Keyford, Blatchbridge & Tytherington area have been a lifeline for walkers, cyclists & others seeking fresh air, exercise & relief from being stuck indoors	Muir Mackean
29	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD BIRCHILL LANE	B2.5		Continuous Landscape - this landscape is part of a bigger whole and is visible from far and wide, such as from Cley Hill. Tranquil, Isolated and Semi-natural Landscape Resource - some of this area has been built on and more is to come, but the remaining countryside is valuable. There are still plenty of opportunities here to enjoy the greenery, views and wildlife. Many people come to this area to enjoy a bit of relative peace and quiet. Views and Landmarks - Area B2.5 has great views of Salisbury Plain, Cley Hill, Longleat Woods and Alfred’s Tower, all clearly visible from the lanes and public footpaths that cover this valuable landscape.			... a lifeline for walkers, cyclists and others seeking fresh air, exercise and relief from being stuck indoors.	Paul Cowlishaw
30	Public	LITTLE KEYFORD BIRCHILL LANE	B2.5			... I don’t think the photograph included in the description does the area justice in any way (Better Photos were attached to email?) Equally I don’t think the description you have included in the consultation does the area justice either.	been equally gushing at the vistas that appear over the gateways looking across in the direction of CleyHill, Longleat and over the bypass towards East Woodlands/Maiden Bradley	Comment ismade about thre area being identified for housing. It would be an absolute tragedy of huge propotion if any of thisarea was given over to urban sprawl. The trees and hedgerows that can be seen in all directions are massivelyimportant for nature and wildlife, providing important corridors for such wildlife. Letter from Cllr Ros Wyke says ... “We will establish cycle paths and walking routes to promote healthy lifestyles”” and ...“Your Council is on a mission tobuild a fairer, greener and more vibrant Mendip” ...	Pauline Bucknall
31	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5		The document essentially characterises the land beyond The mount towards the bypass and railway as low value. It is described as not being 'tranquil ' due to the road and rail noise' and thus suitable for development. I strongy disagree ...			a precious source of stress relief and a place where people can exercise safely in a place with beautiful views all the way to Cley hill and the Longleat area. Needed for well being .. fresh air and exercise, socialise and enjoy nature (and please remember that this land is next to one of if not the most deprived areas of the town	Dr Rona Cowan

MENDIP CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

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32	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5					The amount and variety of wildlife is amazing.: deer, foxes, hedgehogs, rabbits, pheasant , partridges, sparrow hawks, owls, rooks, ravens, bats, and all the usual small birds. The area is a real sanctuary for the people of Frome. The number of cyclists, walkers and runners is growing all the time. In our new world of tackling climate change, all these things are vital.	Sally Fleming
33	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5	Email with detailed comments on B2.5 and other nearby LCA areas - full text set out in consultation report with detailed responses / confirmation of points taken up.					Sally Greenhalgh
34	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5		 escape to the tranquility of the tree-lined Little keyford and Blatchbridge lanes where you feel in a different world ... History - There are many stone cottages and old farmhouses along these lanes providing a connection to the past. Walking out towards Little Keyford Lane we pass an ancient convent, a farmhouse dating back to Tudor times, a Jacobean Manor House, a Georgian country house Also Biodiversity comments			So for me this area is all about connections: to nature to self to the past to each other A vitally important landscape	Sally Mellors
35	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5		I love this part of the world and so it is with great dismay that I consider the SGC plans. I know houses are badly needed, but I think building on greenfield sites should be a last resort, and then only the very minimum number of houses possible. If anywhere, the flatter area to the north-east of Frome would be more suitable. The land around Little Keyford and Blatchbridge is beautiful, with only a few dwellings dotting the rolling fields. When we walk our dog in the area south of the bypass, we can look north towards Frome and barely see the town - instead you see a green landscape. This will be ruined forever if the town sprawls south, and builds on land which only a few days ago was badly flooded. Please preserve all the wonderful natural heritage I've mentioned above, and block any plans to mass-build around Frome.		Going for walks in the woods at East Woodlands, including the beautiful ancient forest at Roddenbury Hill Fort - Walking and mountain biking in the woods around Gare Hill, and the glimpses through the trees of the fields to the west, and back towards Frome - Dog walks in the fields, lanes and footpaths around Tytherington and Blatchbridge, including the rarely visitedstretches of the River Frome - Cycling through the lanes south of Frome, linking Trudoxhill, Upton Noble, Witham Friary, and East Woodlands with areas further afield - Horningsham, Batcombe, Kilmington. I find the largely empty roads, remote houses and hamlets, hedgerows, copses and rolling dairy fields really do make my heart sing, changing through the seasons and weather, but a constant reminder of the beauty of this part of England and of God's Earth. - Dog walks in and around Mells, in the wonderfully eerie and evocative ancient woods and glades along the River Mells		Sam Wilson
36	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5		Valued Landscape points 5,6 and 7 , This area is beautiful. Walkers, runners, cyclists, horse riders, families use this area and many stop to admire the view as they come to the end of Keyfordfield Cottages. During the Covid lockdown numbers of people benefiting from this countryside have significantly increased but have always been high. It certainly is a ' Tranquil, Isolated and Semi-natural Landscape Resource '. It is the view, the space and wide aspect that creates such a wonderful atmosphere. It certainly forms part of a ' Continuous Landscape '. Furthermore the view and space extends to and includes Cley Hill, Longleat Woods and Alfred's Tower. Such wonderful features form part of the ' Views and Landmarks ' and should be taken into consideration				Sara Edwards
37	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5		This green area is so valuable in its natural state and is a hugely popular route for locals to stretch their legs into the countryside. Infact its highly regarded and become very popular with cyclists, horse riders, joggers and those that simply want to experience a very pleasant walk of intricate country lanes, far reaching views, beautiful hedgerows that are forever changing with the seasons and an abundance of wildlife. Its value has been even higher over the last year and ...				Sarah Truscot
38	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5		... particularly value the character of the River Frome, the obvious defining element of the character of the UpperFrome Valley- sections B 1.1, B2.5, B2, B2.2, C3. By character I mean not only its situation in the landscape (especially its beautiful meanders through meadows), and its largely unspoiled appearance, but also its ecological and water quality. Restoring, preserving and enhancing its traditional character and protecting it from further incursions by developers and industrialised farming and rewilding the river environs seem very important for the future.		enjoy walking between Spring Gardens and Blatchbridge, including the “ hidden gem ” water meadow between Wallbridge and Adderwell which is very special.		Simon Keyes
39	Public	LITTE KEYFORD BLATCHBRIDGE	B2.5		The experience of walking in nature, with rustic surroundings & nature cannot be supplemented by tarmac paths, lit up areas & houses blocking views of the area, this is all removing the benefits to mental health & well being of walking in local countryside. whether its Whatcombe fields, the Cheese show or the fields near the Mount, Blatchbridge, these are enjoyed by many. Frome does not have the infrastructure (schools, hospitals & public transport) to get around without using a car). Therefore, it is important to be able to walk to countryside & recuperate				Stella Shepherd
40	Public	SELWOOD GARDEN COMMUNITY & LCA	B2.5		Continuous Landscape - there is a continuity of landscapes across the district providing the sense of an area dominated by rural undeveloped countryside. This applies equally to the outskirts of Frome, which can be seen for the most part as a clearly defined hill town. To fill in the fields as the SGC plans would negate the ambiance and specific nature of Frome entirely.				Steve Ehrlicher

MENDIP CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

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		Comments unrelated to LCA B2.5. Note all comments reviewed against relevant sections of text. Amendments generated or response set out against detailed points in detailed response table.					REF TO FAVOURITE WALKS, VIEWS OR HIDDEN GEMS - favourite areas added to consultation mapping exercise.		
41	Public	WADBURY VALLEY					Wadbury Valley and walk from Frome into Vallis Vale,along Egford Brook and Mells River through Great Elm. Shame Fussells Ironwork closed off.	Makes life worth living around here	Chris Smaje
42	Public	GENERAL						Many parts of the beautiful landscape is not accessible for horse riding. ... access to the beautiful views and landscapes is disjointed and poorlyconnected. Gates are often broken and very difficult to open and equally important to close. Please improve the access for all users of the countryside. On a horse you can get very close to nature, animals, birds and their habitats. Please improve the connectivity.	Lynn Myland
43	Public	The Downs, Slopes and Valley Heads and The Upper Alham Valley.	D1 D2		Key Characteristics of LCA Physical and Natural Characteristics : Areas of unimproved grassland comprising diverse species. Special features : Small historic villages. Landmarks, Views and Viewpoints: Secluded landscape with numerous points offering attractive visual amenity. Land Use/management /human influences: River includes a ford across the river Alham North of Westcombe. Perceived Characteristics : Small villages within a tranquil and sparsely populated agricultural landscape. 6.5.20 & 6.5.21: The landscape is intersected by numerous, mainly single track, minor and unclassified lanes, with relatively few PROW offering more tranquil views of the landscape		Favourite views are numerous within Batcombe: The access roads from Cranmore to the North; from the West via Stoney Stratton through Westcombe; from A359via Hincombe Hill from the South East into the village all provide spectacular views at various high points along the routes. In addition a particular point on the road adjacent to Valley View Farm one can see Glastonbury Tar, and Hinckley Point beyond to the west; Cranmore Tower to the North and Alfred's Tower to the South East. All viewed across open countryside. Travelling along the bridleway between the Alham Road and Batcombe Lodge there are extensive views of beautiful countryside to the West. Each and every PROW and Lane in the Parish gives numerous opportunities for memorable views, attributable to the physical rural landscape created by natural biodiversity, largely unimproved agricultural land with relatively insignificant development, or interference from the sparse human population. This combination allows enjoyment by residents and visitors alike and justifies the highest level of protection for its preservation in the future		Mary Comley
44	Public	General		Commentary from member of public who also notes they representat Frome & District Chamber of Commerce - on planning policy and planning matters - not clear if comments are made in private cappacity or on behalf of CoC. Questioning application of character area divisions - as 'conceptual framework'. LCA follows accepted standard practice. Spelling comments - picked up in text amends Comments on historical commentary re Upper Frome Valley (6.3.15) - reviewed for text amends.	Comments on Frome Fringe areas B2 - see detailed comments section. Relating to paras - 6.2.8 - 6.3.73	It would be helpful if the photographs where identified (and located on the maps). As a local resident I think I can place some of them, but I very much doubt whether many people would be able to do that.			Neil Howlett
45	Rail to Trail.org	General		VALUED LANDSCAPES SECTION Reference to value of off road routes and need to promote sustainable transport				Detailed comments on potentail sustainable transport links plus map attached	Sonia Kundu.

MENDIP CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

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46	WANSTROW CLOFORD LEIGHTON WESTON TOWN PARISH COUNCIL	WANSTROW CLOFORD LEIGHTON WESTON TOWN	A11	Wanstrow Parish Council lies in the SE Farmlands landscape unit (A11) and includes the villages of Wanstrow, Cloford, Leighton and Weston Town. Wanstrow itself is on the A359 but the central axis of the village runs across this main route and is unspoilt by through traffic. At one end of the village the Grade II* listed church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, together with the separately listed chest tombs in the churchyard, and adjacent listed Manor House and smaller houses in Church Street form a quiet enclave.		We note that, although the hamlets of Cloford and Leighton are noted (in para 6.2.171), there is no mention of the larger village of Wanstrow itself. The area around Wanstrow has its own character as it is nestled within a horseshoe of low hills, mostly wooded, which is quite distinct from the general description of unit A11 as “elevated and open Mendip farmland landscape” (Para 6.2.167) and gives the village a feeling of enclosure within a rural setting. The many springs in these surrounding hills give rise to the Nunney Brook which, contrary to the impression given in para 6.2.169, does not start in Cloford. Wanstrow itself is on the A359 but the central axis of the village runs across this main route and is unspoilt by through traffic. At one end of the village the Grade II* listed church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, together with the separately listed chest tombs in the churchyard, and adjacent listed Manor House and smaller houses in Church Street form a quiet enclave. Seen from the surrounding hills the village nestles in a hollow within a well-wooded landscape that is largely unspoiled despite the intrusion of the A359 and the occasional quarry trains snaking around the settlement. It’s a pity your assessors seem to have missed it, and we think this omission should be rectified in the final version			Kate Egan Parish Clerk Wanstrow Parish Council
47	BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL	BATCOMBE				6.5.8 should read Alham NOT Aldham. 6.5.17 Westcombe House is mentioned, however it no longer exists; it was demolished in the 1950’s and the remaining part, the remaining stable block is the only residence there. This is not clear in the text			Mary Comley Chairman Batcombe Parish Council
48	BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCILLOR	BATCOMBE		I live in Westcombe and would like to propose the area to be considered for as ‘valued landscape’. The reason being is that the lane starting at the War Memorial is Westcombe runs right through to Higher Allam Farm and then connects to the Batcombe/Cranmore road. The boundary I propose would be the Allam River to the East, Smalldown Way to the west, the Road through Westcombe to the South, A Footpath from Higher Allam to Small Down Lane to the North. NB SERIES OF PHOTOS included in email - Westcombe War Memorial, Shepton Mallet, Somerset 1447432 Historic England AND tree with a Tree Preservation order on it			Right from the outset the lane has outstanding views through pasture land on to the iron age burial ground higher up on the left. The walk itself is an ancient track with beautiful farmland on either side enjoyed by many walkers and riders. Many people who stop by our gate express a view that it is one of the most beautiful walks and experiences to behold in Somerset. It is one of the hidden gems of Mendip. I would say that wouldn’t I but please see the photos below which is the first view one would see when leaving Westcombe.	In conclusion I suggest the land that encompasses everything from the War Memorial in Westcombe running North, the land either side of this track and down to the Allam River running North all the way to the Ford at Lower Allam Farm and on to Higher Allam. Then running West on the footpath that leads up to Smalldown Way which runs back into Westcombe and leads back to the War Memorial. In this boundary would include the numerous walks, the ancient iron age burial ground viewed from the photograph and the River Allam	Clare Glaisher Batcombe Parish Councillor
49	WITHAM FRIARY PARISH COUNCIL	WITHAM FRIARY		“Witham Friary is now a very rural farming village 5 miles SW of Frome. However it was once the site of the first Carthusian monastery in England and the site of the Frome Haul of 70,000+ Roman coins found a few years ago on the east side of the village, close to a Roman road that passes through. WF enjoys wonderful views of the surrounding countryside, which contain the headwaters of the River Frome. We wish to preserve its rural and historical character as far as possible. The particular areas/buildings we would want to protect from any future development include: the Church and its churchyard; the Carp ponds of the old monastery; the Reading Rooms, the Footpaths that radiate from the village and the Playing field, around which most of the community’s activities revolve. If a map showing these features would be helpful, please advise.”					Hugo Brooke Chairman Witham Friary Parish Council.
50	Comments on CENTRAL MENDIP AND EAST MENDIP Council of Southern Caving Clubs	CENTRAL MENDIP AND EAST MENDIP			 a disjointed online document significant features of a karst landscape are barely noted. The accuracy of the document and the proof reading leave a lot to be desired. “Also they should not be considered to be fully comprehensive due to time limintations.”	REFER TO EMAIL - for detailed comments Section 5 - Area 1 Statements about caves are inaccurate.. Not enough emphasis on this being a karst environment which defines the nature of the landscape. sinkholes (not spelt ‘sink hole’), see email for full comments all the shakeholes identified in the survey were previously accepted by MDC to be important landscape features and were put onto the MDC GIS so they could be identified for planning and other purposes. This resource needs to be recognised. Section 5 - Area 2 see email for full comments ... The text mentions ‘smaller cave systems’ suggesting the caves that are presently known are of less importance that those on central Mendip, however this is far from the truth			Graham Price Conservation & Access Officer Council of Southern Caving Clubs graham@speleo.org.uk

MENDIP CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Resp No.	Respondant	AREA	REF	GENERAL COMMENTS ON OVERALL LCA STUDY	PARTICULAR AREA OR CHARACTERISTICS CONNECTION TO VALUED LANDSCAPE	TYPOS / ERRORS / COMMENTS ON SPESIFIC POINTS	REF TO FAVOURITE WALKS, VIEWS OR HIDDEN GEMS	OTHER COMMENTS	NAME OF RESPONDER
				Although Mendip is clearly a karst landscape it must be recognised that many of the natural features have been modified by man and this is what has shaped the landscape in many instances. On Central Mendip the landscape has been gradually changed from early times by mining activities which have take place over a large area, and more latterly by agricultural activities and forestry which have obliterated many of the historical mining remains. Features that define the karst landscape are continuing to disappear. On East Mendip the landscape has been greatly modified commencing with the enclosure of the land and the change from open forest to farming changes to support this; and more latterly from industrial and quarrying activities.		Section 6 - 6.1 The text says that the most significant caves systems are located around Priddy. This in itself is not accurate Karst is misspelt. Corrected The term 'karst geology' is used incorrectly. Karst is a term that describes the topography. Geology relates to the physical structure of the rock .. see email for full comments			
51	Gleeson Strategic Land GENERAL COMMENTS	General				A key aspect of the outcome of the LCA however is not being consulted upon and that is 'Appendix III – Valued Landscapes' and results of the assessment of value although we are aware that previously Appendix III was available on the Council's (Macgregor Smith) webpage (in August 2020). The Value Conclusions set out in the August 2020 Appendix III are not agreed. The main reason is that the methodology for undertaking the 'value' assessment and ranking of various 'Special characteristics' (and combining them with the GLVIA3 landscape value factors) using the 6 point score is not very clear or transparent and therefore the 'Value Conclusions' reached were not robust. Further work is needed on this matter so that landscape practitioners can replicate the assessment and reach similar conclusions. In addition, more reasoning and justification is required in any event. REFER TO EMAIL - for DETAILED COMMENTS		The Mendip District LCA (MD LCA / Study) appears to be a thorough, comprehensive update of the previous Mendip landscape character assessment(s) and the Council must be commended for finding the resources to complete this work.	John Smith or c/o David Williams CML Gleeson Strategic Land (GSL) / DWLC jnsmith@mjgleeson.com
52	Adrian l'Anson Well City Council	WELLS BOWL SECTION Pages 135-136				Check typos Para 6.1.76 and somewhere else refers to "Stowberry". Para 6.1.81 refers to "St Cuthbert church spire". ?		Wells City Council considered this draft report at their meeting on the 18th of last month and, subject to some typos, were happy with the Wells Bowl section	Adrian l'Anson Well City Council
53	Alan Townsend Ward Cllr	CHARMBOROUGH				A pretty good document. One comment, and apologies if I have missed it, but in Section A 8.2 I could see no reference to the Scheduled Ancient Woodland along Charmborough Lane (Anchor Rd in Highways parlance) at Lipyeate to the northwest of Highbury. This is highly valued by local residents.			Alan Townsend Ward Cllr
54	Upton Noble Parish Meeting Chair	UPTON NOBLE				I followed the link to the study with great interest, and was disappointed to find that the village I represent (Upton Noble, in Mendip) didn't make it onto the maps, which makes it difficult to comment on it on behalf of the community. Is there any reason for this?			Rachel Faulkner Upton Noble Parish Meeting Chair
55	Public	FROME ADDERWELL/ GREAT ELM					With reference to the Mendip Landscape Consultation process - here are 2 Footpaths in fromen which need to be safeguarded and form part of charcter of the town 1 The Footpath along the river - particularly from Adderwell to The Retreat which is a lovley walk along the curves of the river so that the whole river is walkable and we have a facility like Bradford on Avon 2 Completing the Sustrans footpath / cycle way from Frome to Great Elm		Dinah Bardgett 28A The Retreat Frome BA11 5JU
56	Public	SECTION 5.8				I am concerned that the section on access and recreational activity (section 5.8) does not describe or comment on the limitations It would illustrate both the limited and fragmented nature of existing sections of path were they to be highlighted in the map at 5.8.15. The statement about quiet lanes in 5.8.18 needs substantial qualification REFER TO EMAIL FOR FURTHER COMMENTS			Member of the public Mick Fletcher 01749 870 531
57	David Raynes Parish Councillor Litton	DARK SKIES				Maybe in my speed read of the consultation document and study, I missed mention of a "Dark Skies" policy. Much of particularly the Mendip plateau has relatively dark skies but light pollution is creeping up, probably because there seems to be no policy on it. I think there should be. I am very surprised that light pollution and lighting design does not seem to be included in planning guidance.			David Raynes Parish Councillor Litton

MENDIP CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

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58	Horse Access Campaign UK	General		Response to Valued Landscapes section - relating to open access land and PROW Network for disabled and equestrian users. <i>Comments picked up in amended text refer to detailed comment responses</i>					Rachel Thompson Horse Access Campaign UK
59	MENDIP HILLS AONB PARTNERSHIP	AONB Area		Letter reproduced in consultation report.					
60	Johnathan Billingsley Landscape Partnership	Batcombe	D1 & D2			Comment on boundary between D1 and D2 on character area maps in relation to area around Batcombe - boundary appears to have slipped. <i>Agreed - original 1997 boundaries scanned and translated into GIS files some on edges of district were found to have slipped in the process (original mapping at 1:50,000). Outline reviewed and refined for final study.</i>			
Website Consultation Feedback: <i>Note majority of comments on Website consultation related to the 8 special characteristics and the favourite walks, views and hidden gems - the details of which are covered separately within consultation report.</i>									
61	Trails Trust	General		Responding to 8 Special Characteristics: Additional comment on accessibility: Very poor recreational network for disabled people and multi users on horse back and bicycle. <i>Note similar to response by email.</i>					
62	Ditcheat Parish Council	General		Found questionnaire incomprehensible					
	Public comments			General comments noted in other sections of website consultation. On 8 special characteristics and under the walks, views and hidden gems					

MENDIP LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT - CONSULTATION REPORT

OCTOBER 2021



APPENDIX C

- C1 : TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL / COUNCILLOR'S FEEDBACK
- C2 : AONB PARTNERSHIP COMMENTS
- C3 : OTHER DETAILED CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Appendix C1

Mendip Landscape Character Assessment – Public Consultation Report

Town and Parish Council / Councillor's Feedback

Comments / information from Town and Parish Councils	Study Responses
Helen Kay - MDC Councillor – Frome Keyford Ward General note: When you introduce Frome town in section 6.3.35, you really should mention that most of the town is built on a plateau. This is what gives the town its strong urban edge on the west side especially and to a lesser extent on the north and south sides. It is only on the east, especially north east side, that the land is gentler, and it is not a coincidence that the largest 20th century town extension, the Stonebridge estate is built here. The river cuts through this plateau which is why we have a dramatic south east to north west valley across the centre of town and an incised meander on the SE side of town, which is not even mentioned. Specifically re B2.5 which is the area abutting my ward and used heavily by my constituents for leisure activities, for travelling through, and the allotments..... 1) The photo shown in the doc for B2.5 is indeed a well known viewing point at the end of Sandy's Hill Lane where it meets Little Keyford Lane, but you don't do the area justice by showing mostly a muddy field with the hills beyond a rather grey colour! I am supplying a number of photos I took for you to use instead. 2) I agree with FCS response that the listed buildings along Little Keyford Lane should be positively mentioned. It just says in 6.3.71 that there are some "historic character buildings.". (Had they been more positive in the last Character assessment we might not be in a position now of seeing the careless destruction of an 18th century farmhouse by a developer (it was not listed but nevertheless a heritage asset in between the other listed buildings) and we might have more ammunition to get a decent 'buffer zone' between the listed buildings and the new development). I attach a report about Grade 2 listed Keyford farmhouse for example 3) The assessment fails to mention the string of trees (Norway Spruce etc) that sit atop one of the highest points in this landscape and can be seen from all around. I would call these A Local Landmark. In para 4.3.70 it says that "While a tract of landscape is in view there are few identifiable viewpoints in the wider countryside viewing back at the town edge". I am not entirely sure what this means but if it is saying there is nothing much to note looking towards Frome then I beg to differ as these trees are visible. 4) I disagree with the summary of this area in 6.3.71 which says "however, the various routes (lanes and footpaths) eventually lead to development or the bypass reinforcing the sense the area is sandwiched between the two. " This downgrades the landscape here and suggests it is waiting for housing development, has low amenity value, low ecological value and no tranquillity value. Quite the opposite – it is extremely well used by walkers, is an area for bat foraging and dark skies. Out today, people were passing me every 3 or 4 minutes on walks. As someone who has moved from the fringes of Frome near to B2.5 to the fringes of town	As noted in the introduction to the Frome areas the study is more concentrated on the landscape around – the town has been covered by other reports in the past. The way in which the town is for the most part contained already noted but wording adjusted to pick up the point on difference in topography on either side of the town. Photos – MDC to provide copies of the new images provided – happy to include if appropriate. Reference to the house noted (previous reference to walls was considered more relevant to study) This is referring to the point that there are not many locations out beyond the bypass that provide clear views back to the LCA. It is factually correct to note all the routes lead to the road or town the perception we noted was relative to other locations where the opportunities exist to continue to explore more continuous landscape. The comments identify the landscape condition as it

near B2.1, I can confirm they are absolutely equally well used by walkers with perhaps less dogwalkers around B2.5 and more people just walking and cycling for easy routes along the lanes. Therefore Please add in similar statement that you make about B2.1 in para 6.3.46 but take out words in brackets and insert words in italics. “The area appears well used for informal recreation (as a dog walking circuit around the shallower sloping fields). There are also (expansive) panoramic views out to the (west) <i>south and east across the Frome valley</i> that include (looking out) <i>an almost continuous line of hills looking</i> (along the Mendip) <i>towards Longleat ridge, Selwood Forest and Gare Hill.</i> (The three towers of Cranmore, Ammerdown and Alfred’s are all visible along with several of the larger wind turbines at Wanstrow and Chewton Mendip) There are also glimpsed views (from the east Mendip Way back) to the east to (the Westbury White horse) <i>Cley Hill</i> “ You could also add the statement you use for 6.3.45 “this area provides a strong semi natural experience within close proximity to the town”.	currently is. The situation of landscape on the edge of larger settlements is often of a diminished landscape quality but may be seen as of higher than average amenity value. Part of the value of having an updated LCA study is to help objectively identify those aspects which may be seen as important even within areas that face the inevitable development pressure of being on the edge of established settlements to allow accurate assessments of effects and more considered avoidance or mitigation (as suggested within the Appendix 3). Wording adjusted in study to pick up emphasis on informal recreational use. The comment in 6.3.45 was relating to the good connections from the town down into Vallis Vale which offers a stronger degree of semi natural experience.
Clare Glaisher Batcombe Parish Councillor (Postlebury Ward). I live in Westcombe and would like to propose the area to be considered for as ‘valued landscape’. The reason being is that the lane starting at the War Memorial is Westcombe runs right through to Higher Allam Farm and then connects to the Batcombe/Cranmore road. The boundary I propose would be the Allam River to the East, Smalldown Way to the west, the Road through Westcombe to the South, A Footpath from Higher Allam to Small Down Lane to the North. Right from the outset the lane has outstanding views through pasture land on to the iron age burial ground higher up on the left. The walk itself is an ancient track with beautiful farmland on either side enjoyed by many walkers and riders. Many people who stop by our gate express a view that it is one of the most beautiful walks and experiences to behold in Somerset. It is one of the	Area reviewed minor text amendments for this and other comments on Batcome / Westcombe and noted as one of the Hidden Gems within the consultation responses. Discussion with MDC on need / scope for ‘Valued Landscapes’

hidden gems of Mendip. I would say that wouldn't I but please see the photos below which is the first view one would see when leaving Westcombe.



In conclusion I suggest the land that encompasses everything from the War Memorial in Westcombe running North, the land either side of this track and down to the Allam River running North all the way to the Ford at Lower Allam Farm and on to Higher Allam. Then running West on the footpath that leads up to Smalldown Way which runs back into Westcombe and leads back to the War Memorial.

In this boundary would include the numerous walks, the ancient iron age burial ground viewed from the photograph and the River Allam.



Westcombe War Memorial, Shepton Mallet, Somerset 1447432 Historic England

The tree below has a Tree Preservation order on it

		
		
		
Mary Comley Chairman Batcombe Parish Council I would like to make the following observations: not an exhaustive list. Where Batcombe Downs and Valleys is mentioned i.e.6.5, I have noticed a couple of things: spelling mistake: 6.5.8 should read Alham NOT Aldham. 6.5.17 Westcombe House is mentioned, however it no longer exists; it was demolished in the 1950's and the remaining part, the remaining stable block is the only residence there. This is not clear in the text.		Text amendments included

Hugo Brooke Chairman Witham Friary Parish Council. <i>"Witham Friary is now a very rural farming village 5 miles SW of Frome. However it was once the site of the first Carthusian monastery in England and the site of the Frome Haul of 70,000+ Roman coins found a few years ago on the east side of the village, close to a Roman road that passes through. WF enjoys wonderful views of the surrounding countryside, which contain the headwaters of the River Frome. We wish to preserve its rural and historical character as far as possible.</i> <i>The particular areas/buildings we would want to protect from any future development include: the Church and its churchyard; the Carp ponds of the old monastery; the Reading Rooms, the Footpaths that radiate from the village and the Playing field, around which most of the community's activities revolve.</i> <i>If a map showing these features would be helpful, please advise."</i>	Text amendments added
Kate Egan Parish Clerk Wanstrow Parish Council Please find below the response from Wanstrow Parish Council in regard to the Landscape Character Assessment Consultation. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Landscape Character Assessment for Mendip. Wanstrow Parish Council lies in the SE Farmlands landscape unit (A11) and includes the villages of Wanstrow, Cloford, Leighton and Weston Town. We note that, although the hamlets of Cloford and Leighton are noted (in para 6.2.171), there is no mention of the larger village of Wanstrow itself. The area around Wanstrow has its own character as it is nestled within a horseshoe of low hills, mostly wooded, which is quite distinct from the general description of unit A11 as "elevated and open Mendip farmland landscape" (Para 6.2.167) and gives the village a feeling of enclosure within a rural setting. The many springs in these surrounding hills give rise to the Nunney Brook which, contrary to the impression given in para 6.2.169, does not start in Cloford. Wanstrow itself is on the A359 but the central axis of the village runs across this main route and is unspoilt by through traffic. At one end of the village the Grade II* listed church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, together with the separately listed chest tombs in the churchyard, and adjacent listed Manor House and smaller houses in Church Street form a quiet enclave. Seen from the surrounding hills the village nestles in a hollow within a well-wooded landscape that is largely unspoiled despite the intrusion of the A359 and the occasional quarry trains snaking around the settlement. It's a pity your assessors seem to have missed it, and we think this omission should be rectified in the final version.	The LCA generally concentrates on the landscape character of the different areas of the countryside across the district. Settlements are described in terms of how they contribute to the landscape character as either illustrations of how the landscape has influenced human habitation or where the presence of settlements has a clear influence on the nature of the locality – with the extent of the study it has not been possible to identify every village. Having reviewed the point we have revisited the area and added references in to highlight the nature of Cloford including some of the points made.

Adrian l'Anson Wells City Council considered this draft report at their meeting on the 18th of last month and, subject to some typos, were happy with the Wells Bowl section at pages 135 - 136. I have stolen some of the wording in "Perceived Characteristics" to include in the Environment section of the WNP as below. "The 1996 Mendip Landscape Character Assessment has been updated by the Landscape Character Assessment produced in 2020. Both Assessments refer to "The Wells Bowl" and the latest one sets out its "Perceived Characteristics" which include "sensitivity around the urban edge where development adjoins high quality landscape and impacts on a sense of tranquil unspoilt character on the edge of this historic settlement."" Para 6.1.76 and somewhere else refers to "Stowberry". Para 6.1.81 refers to "St Cuthbert church spire".	Text amendments included
Alan Townsend Ward Cllr A pretty good document. One comment, and apologies if I have missed it, but in Section A 8.2 I could see no reference to the Scheduled Ancient Woodland along Charmborough Lane (Anchor Rd in Highways parlance) at Lipyeate to the northwest of Highbury. This is highly valued by local residents.	Text amendments included
Rachel Faulkner Upton Noble Parish Meeting Chair I followed the link to the study with great interest, and was disappointed to find that the village I represent (Upton Noble, in Mendip) didn't make it onto the maps, which makes it difficult to comment on it on behalf of the community. Is there any reason for this?	Text amendments included
David Raynes Parish Councillor Litton Maybe in my speed read of the consultation document and study, I missed mention of a "Dark Skies" policy. Much of particularly the Mendip plateau has relatively dark skies but light pollution is creeping up, probably because there seems to be no policy on it. I think there should be. I am very surprised that light pollution and lighting design does not seem to be included in planning guidance.	The existing local plan does include reference to controlling light pollution and the LCA does highlight this issue ref – Sections 5.9 and 9.14. Specifically reference was made within the draft to the local plan policy DP8. Since publication of the LCA for consultation the Mendip Hills AONB Partnership have published their Dark Skies Position Statement Reference to this is now added into the above Sections (at 9.17).

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020 : C2
AONB Partnership Comments: 10.3.2021

Appendix C2

Responses to Detailed Consultation - Comments From Mendip Hills AONB Partnership

	Mendip Hills AONB Partnership Comments	Study Adjustments/Response
	Overarching Comments The Mendip Hills AONB and the 'setting' of the Mendip Hills AONB The nationally protected landscape of the Mendip Hills AONB covers 198 square kilometres from Bleadon in the west to Chewton Mendip in the east. The AONB partly lies within the North Somerset to the south-west of the wider Bristol area and south-east of Weston Super-Mare. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are some of the UK's most cherished and outstanding landscapes. The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 confirmed the significance of the AONBs and Section 85 places a statutory duty on all relevant authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty when discharging any function in relation to, or affecting land within as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Potential development proposals outside of the boundaries of AONBs that may have an impact within the designated area, are also covered by the 'duty of regard'. The concept of 'setting' is often used to describe the area of land within which activities or changes could affect the associated AONB. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance draws attention to the concept of 'setting' and the Section 85 duty of regard to AONBs stating that: <i>'Land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account.'</i>	

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020 : C2
AONB Partnership Comments: 10.3.2021

	(PPG, Natural Environment (Landscape) section Paragraph: 042 Reference ID: 8-042- 20190721 Revision date: 21/07/2019 Development outside of an AONB is capable of affecting the AONB and as such, the potential for effects on the AONB special qualities and distinctive characteristics are a consideration. Furthermore, PPG Natural Environment states; <i>'All development in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Beauty will need to be located and designed in a way that reflects their status as landscapes of the highest quality'.</i> <i>Where applications for major development come forward, paragraph 172 of the Framework sets out a number of particular considerations that should apply when deciding whether permission should be granted.</i> Paragraph: 041 Reference ID: 8-041- 20190721 Revision date: 21 07 2019 The DEFRA 25 Year Environmental Plan sets out under paragraph 2.2.1 that <i>'Some of England's most beautiful landscapes and geodiversity are protected via a range of designations including National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)...Over the next 25 years we want to make sure that they are not only conserved but enhanced'.</i> Paragraph 2.2.2 further sets out that <i>'In England, a quarter of our landscape is designated in this way, around 10% as National parks and 15% as AONBs. We will make sure they continue to be conserved and enhanced, while recognising that they are living landscapes that support rural communities...'</i>	
Section 1 Paragraph 1.7.2 <i>'The study area overlaps with the District's two AONB's. The Mendip AONB area has a landscape character assessment that pre- dates the main district assessment from 1997...'</i>	The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership consider that as the first mention of the Mendip Hills AONB and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB in order to celebrate the significance and importance of Mendip DC's two AONBs, the wording of paragraph 1.7.2 should be amended to; <i>'The study area overlaps with the District's two Areas of Outstanding natural Beauty (AONBs), namely the Mendip Hills AONB and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB....'</i> <i>'The Mendip AONB area'</i> should be corrected to read; <i>'The Mendip Hills AONB area...'</i>	Noted text adjusted

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020 : C2
AONB Partnership Comments: 10.3.2021

Section 2 Paragraph 2.26 <i>'The availability and sensitivity of views is generally considered as a separate exercise from landscape and landscape character impact assessments (note the Mendip AONB Management Plan lists...'</i>	Whilst we welcome the direct reference to the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan (currently 2019-2024), the Mendip Hills AONB Partnership request that wording of this paragraph should be amended to; <i>...and landscape character impact assessments (note the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan lists...'</i>	Noted text adjusted
Section 3 Paragraph 3.1.19 <i>The value of the Mendip landscape is recognised within in the Management Plan for the AONB; within the stated vision for the area paragraph 1.1.5 notes:-</i>	The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership request that this paragraph clearly identifies to which AONB Management Plan/s is being referred, and suggest the following amendment; <i>' the value of the Mendip landscape is recognised within the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan; within the stated vision....'</i>	Noted text adjusted
Reference for Section 3 AONB Management Plan Jan 2018 - Para 1.4 page 11	The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership note that the AONB Management Plan referenced is 'AONB Management Plan Jan 2018'. The current iteration of the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan is dated 2019-2024. We request that the referenced used for this section should be the current version. We also note that no reference is made to the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Management Plan 2019-2024	Noted text adjusted
Section 4	No comments	
Section 5 '5.6 MODERN LAND-SUE AND DEVELOPMENT'	The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership assume the title should read; '5.6 MODERN LAND-USE AND DEVELOPMENT'	Noted text adjusted
Paragraph 5.8.9 <i>'These areas contrast with other areas that provide a more naturalistic setting where informal parking and minimal signage is provided such as the Forestry Commission Parking areas within the Mendip AONB.'</i>	The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership request that the wording be amended to include Mendip Hills AONB; '...such as the Forestry Commission parking areas within the Mendip Hills AONB'.	Noted text adjusted
Paragraph 5.9 Tranquility and Dark Skies	The Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) under paragraph 1.4 sets out a Statement of Significance on the special qualities	Noted text adjusted

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020 : C2
AONB Partnership Comments: 10.3.2021

	of the Mendip Hills AONB that create the Mendip hills sense of place and identity. These 'special qualities' include: <i>'The dark skies, tranquility, sense of remoteness and naturalness of the area... Views towards the Mendip Hills and the distinctive hill line. The views out and panoramas, including across the Severn Estuary to Wales, the Somerset Levels and Moors and the Somerset Coast...'</i> We wish to highlight that the duty of regard to 'conserve and enhance natural beauty' within the Mendip Hills AONB and that this duty also applies to proposals outside the boundaries of AONBs that may have an impact within the designated area.	
Paragraph 5.9.10 <i>'Within the Mendip AONB area, as an open gently undulating plateau (LCA A2) with some relatively busy and fast roads, the opportunities for experiencing deeply tranquil landscape are also limited.'</i>	The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership request that the wording be amended to Mendip Hills AONB.	Noted text adjusted
REFERENCES FOR SECTION 5.0 [5.1] Mendip AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2014	The date of the Management Plan wording and date needs to be corrected; <i>'[5.1] Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024'</i>	Noted text adjusted
Section 6	No Comments	
Section 7 Box 1. A VALUABLE COLLECTION OF DISTINCT AND INTERESTING LANDSCAPES <i>'As an area the MDC boundary defines this as a coherent collection where the whole story is contained within the extent of the district. The larger part of the Mendip AONB sits within the MDC...'</i>	The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership request that the wording be amended to Mendip Hills AONB.	Noted text adjusted

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020 : C2
AONB Partnership Comments: 10.3.2021

7. VIEWS AND LANDMARKS <i>'There are a small number of well recognised popular viewpoints such as the Tor and Deerleap. Alongside these there are numerous accessible hillforts, hilltops, ridges and hillsides'</i>	The Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) under paragraph 1.4 sets out a Statement of Significance on the special qualities of the Mendip Hills AONB that create the Mendip hills sense of place and identity. These 'special qualities' include: <i>'The dark skies, tranquillity, sense of remoteness and naturalness of the area...'</i> <i>Views towards the Mendip Hills and the distinctive hill line. The views out and panoramas, including across the Severn Estuary to Wales, the Somerset Levels and Moors and the Somerset Coast...'</i> The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership considers that the assessment that there is only 'a small number of well recognised viewpoints' is inaccurate. Not only should viewpoints towards the AONB be taken into account, views out from the Mendip Hills AONB as outlined below should be noted in the '7. Views and Landmarks'. There are a wide range of viewpoints along the West Mendip Way, including Deerleap, Draycott Sleights, Westbury Beacon, above Ebbor Gorge, east of Wookey Hole. In addition, views from the Monarch's Way above Wookey Hole. Viewpoints from above Walcombe, West Horrington, Knapp Hill, Upper Milton, but notwithstanding other viewpoints. We request that 'Views and Landmarks' is amended to reflect the wide range of viewpoints, and the importance of views towards and away from the designated landscape.	The text was referring to well recognised / highly popular view points – such as Glastonbury Tor and Deerleap in the sense of those which attract visitors simply as viewpoints as a destination (as opposed to the views that may be enjoyed as part of a more adventurous walk or other activity). Fully accept there are many other views from and to the AONB. Accept text very clear - text has been amended to distinguish these two points. Text already made clear the views are enjoyed in both directions but further reference to this added.
Section 8 Future Change – Biodiversity and biosecurity	The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership would like it recognised that; As part of the DEFRA 25 Year Environment Plan all AONB teams are producing a Nature Recovery Plan. The Landscapes Review 2019 stated that National landscapes (AONBs and national parks) should be at the heart of nature recovery with a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature. Farming in Protected Landscapes – the statutory AONB management plan will provide the framework for farm payments via the new Environmental Land Management scheme. The emphasis is now on nature recovery, not just conservation. Biodiversity Net Gain requires more rigorous thought and planning as a process.	All points noted

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020 : C2
AONB Partnership Comments: 10.3.2021

Paragraph 8.8 <i>'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. ...'</i>	The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership consider that landscape capacity should be included in paragraph 8.8, where landscape capacity is defined as: Landscape capacity – the degree to which the landscape can accept the proposed development without adverse effects. The National Association of AONBs is currently working with the Landscape Institute on the next iteration of LVIA Third Edition to include landscape capacity, because valued landscapes are maybe part of the landscape resource of a district, but the capacity of the valued landscape where and development must demonstrate its ability to 'conserve and enhance' natural beauty to reflect conclusions of the DEFRA 25 Year Environmental Plan paragraphs 2.2.1 and 2.2.2. (*see overarching comments). Therefore, we request that wording of paragraph 8.8 should be amended to; <i>'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 capacity and resource'.</i>	Noted text adjusted
Section 9 POLICY, STRATEGY, GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS <i>'9.36 The two AONB's have Partnerships with staff units and committees; these have developed comprehensive management plans for both areas of AONB within the district. The existing and future work within these plans would fit within a district wide Green Infrastructure Strategy and avoid duplication.'</i>	The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership welcome, and support the comments in paragraph 9.36, the Partnerships and AONB Units are uniquely positioned as important resources for the facilitation of the nature recovery, not only within the AONBs but district wide through nature recovery networks, and for the management of off-site development biodiversity net gain.	Noted text adjusted
Appendix 3 6.1 Central Mendip	The DEFRA 25 Year Environmental Plan sets out under paragraph 2.2.1 that 'Some of England's most beautiful landscapes and geodiversity are protected via a range of designations including National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)...Over the next 25years we want to make sure that they are not only conserved but enhanced'.	Noted text adjusted

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020 : C2
AONB Partnership Comments: 10.3.2021

	Paragraph 2.2.2 further sets out that <i>'In England, a quarter of our landscape is designated in this way, around 10% as National parks and 15% as AONBs. We will make sure they continue to be conserved and enhanced, while recognising that they are living landscapes that support rural communities...'</i> The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership are concerned that all of the Mendip Hills AONB have been assessed as 'medium' for dark night skies which does not reflect the 'special quality' of dark night skies of the AONB enshrined in the Mendip Hills AONB Statement of Significance. We consider that the Dark Skies appraisal presented by Macgregor Smit should be re-evaluated. We would support the tranquility assessment of Draycott and Westbury Slopes, and Ebbor Gorge and The Upper Axe to be 'exceptional'. However, we are concerned that much of the AONB has been assessed as 'medium' for tranquility, this does not support the 'special quality' of tranquility of the AONB, therefore we do not support the assessment of these areas as 'medium' where Black Down, the Mendip Plateau, the Harptree/Chewton Edge are demonstrably equally tranquil to Draycott & Ebbor Gorge environs. In order to conserve, enhance and promote recovery of this nationally protected and valued landscape as set down in the Glover Review, we request that re-evaluation of tranquility for Black Down, the Mendip Plateau, and the Harptree/Chewton Edge, and re-evaluation of Dark Skies for all Mendip Hills AONB areas.	Note this assessment draws on the mapping undertaken by CPRE and also as noted within the assessment the presence of the illuminated Pen Hill Mast has an impact – but text amended to reflect the AONB P concern. Assessments of tranquillity are by their very nature subjective and subject to variation with different conditions. While we would accept that the AONB does contain some areas of exceptional tranquillity there are also locations that suffer from the traffic noise that is generated from traffic speeds on the areas long straight main roads. Harptree and Chewton Edge are areas which contain some sheltered valleys that are very quiet and unspoilt the villages contain relatively busy roads Assessments reviewed and adjustments made to appropriate points.
LVIA Landscape Value Considerations Special Landscape Characteristics of the Mendip AONB, and Cranborne Chase AONB 6. Tranquil, Isolated and Semi Natural Landscape Resource - the district landscapes include many different aspects of peaceful and strongly natural landscape.	The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership that the special qualities of both AONBs should be listed in full to reflect the importance of these valued landscapes, as supported by the Glover Review. We consider that dark skies should be added to point 6, or as a separate point to reflect this special quality of both AONBs.	Dark skies already noted within point 6. Please note this assessment is addressing the Mendip District area as a whole and as per the MDC brief it was considered important that the assessment considered the landscapes outside of the designations to appreciate the value / interest of these areas alongside the AONB's.

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020 : C2
AONB Partnership Comments: 10.3.2021

Character aspect: Positive Land Management Assessment	The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership question the assessment of positive land management as 'low', where the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 is an active land management tool specifically for the AONB, which is closely monitored by the AONB Unit and Defra. We therefore question the assessment findings and request that this is re-evaluated as a result of our comments.	The reference is not to the existence of the wider AONB management plan but to how the landscape appears on the ground. At the point referred to the assessment is reflecting the extensive areas of intensely managed agricultural landscape that dominates parts of the main Mendip Plateau (LCA A.2) where the majority of fields are heavily improved grassland. The comments from the Southern Caving Clubs on the loss of Karst features due to ground levelling over the last 20 years is an interesting reflection on this point.
Appendix 4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LVIA WITHIN THE MENDIP DISTRICT LANDSCAPES <i>'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'</i>	The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership consider that the appraisal of tranquility and dark skies attributes in the Macgregor Smit LVIA to be inaccurate for several areas across the AONB, as outlined in comments above. Inaccurate representation has the potential to cause significant harm to the AONB and its setting, which would be contrary to The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 which confirmed the significance of the AONBs and Section 85 places a statutory duty on all relevant authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty when discharging any function in relation to, or affecting land within as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Potential development proposals outside of the boundaries of AONBs that may have an impact within the designated area, are also covered by the 'duty of regard'. And also contrary to NPPF paragraph 170 which states; <i>'170. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</i> <i>a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);'</i> and Paragraph 172 which states;	The recommendations for LVIA are not providing any judgement on these topics in relation to the AONB – we would expect any assessment to be drawn up with specific reference to the areas that could be affected by a proposal as appropriate. The references to dark skies and tranquillity arise from other sections of the study. The dark skies points are amended as above the tranquillity point is maintained in the interests of accuracy as the AONB is not universally tranquil (due to the strategic road routes as noted).

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020 : C2
AONB Partnership Comments: 10.3.2021

	<i>'172. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks '</i>	
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Judith Chubb-Whittle

Mendip Hills AONB Unit Landscape Planning Officer on behalf of the Mendip Hills AONB Partnership.
cc Cllr Nigel Taylor, AONB Partnership Committee Chair; Natural England, Mendip Hills AONB Parish Representative, The Mendip Society

Appendix C3
Responses to Detailed Consultation Comments
From Organisations and General Public

Consultation Comment	Study Amendment / Response
Note:- Where responses are noted as provided by an organisation or commercial representative these are identified – where provided by members of the general public these are anonymised	
Member of the public I am a member of the public with an interest in sustainable transport and countryside access and would like to comment particularly in respect of those aspects. I am concerned that the section on access and recreational activity (section 5.8) does not describe or comment on the limitations of the current network of off-road paths. The total is described as 18 km which is very small in relation to the size of the area. What exists serves a primarily recreational purpose and there is very little that might make a serious contribution to cutting the use of cars for commuting or shopping. It is of concern therefore that any increase in housing would inevitably be accompanied by significant increases in traffic which would degrade the environment through noise and pollution and lead to calls for road 'improvements'. Even the sections of multi-user path constructed to date are not joined up either within Mendip or linked to established routes such as the Strawberry line outside the district boundary even though the Council and local citizens have clear aspirations to do so. The report does not mention the Somerset Circle for example. It would illustrate both the limited and fragmented nature of existing sections of path were they to be highlighted in the map at 5.8.15. Even as a recreational route the existing network is poor – the Sustrans route up by Ebbor Gorge for example is unfeasibly steep for all but the most athletic of cyclists and Sustrans have an aspiration to reroute it as soon as a reasonable alternative can be found.	Text added to confirm consultation responses highlighting the importance of the PROW network noted at para 5.8.16 Length of 18 km acknowledged as modest proportion in <u>amended text</u>. Point made that the existing resource serves primarily a recreational purpose and implications of additional development for traffic growth may suggest need for greater connectivity for green transport. Points are noted but this section of the LCA is more related to the existing situation – section 9.0 is related to policy and importance of Green Infrastructure – ref para 9.34 includes bullet point on off road multi-use recreational and commuting routes. Note – at small scale of district wide map – off road sections do not read well – review mapping Noted but more for future GI / network improvement

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020 : C3

The statement about quiet lanes in 5.8.18 needs substantial qualification. While some quiet roads do indeed form an attractive environment for cyclists (or indeed walkers or equestrians) they tend to be where people do not live. Those living in the villages, for example between Wells and Cheddar, or in major centres, are prevented from accessing such routes because of the dangerous nature of the major roads which are often the only practical means of moving between settlements. While it is right to note that some hardened cyclists make use of major roads they represent a very intimidating environment for anyone not in a car and represent a serious danger to children or the elderly. It is good that the report makes reference to the existence of disused railway lines though it might usefully note that most are protected as transport corridors. The report could highlight their further potential to encourage active leisure and non-car journeys for commuting or shopping, drawing on the council's own work. It is good also that the report mentions the importance in the landscape of iconic railway structures such as viaducts (though does it miss Emborough?) It may be worth emphasising that less dramatic features such as cuttings or embankments are also important and have the potential to be more so; the report contains good pictures that illustrate this potential though better labelling would help. The report might also usefully refer to the threat to these features through the policy of Highways England to demolish or block bridges and the practice of private landowners of using them for dumping waste.	Note – text makes clear that some of these roads are heavily trafficked – point was being made in the LCA report was that the districts main roads are used by recreational cyclists and the importance of the quality of the landscape / experience should not be diminished simply as these are busy roads. The future potential of these routes is noted within Section 9 under GI – text amended at 9.52 to note existing protected status as transport corridors. Emborough viaduct – we understand this feature is not currently accessible via public land or a listed feature so have not specifically referenced this in the report. Not aware of any specific threat to former railway bridges – existing text (ref 9.49) does highlight the potential interest of these structures.
Member of the public Many parts of the beautiful landscape is not accessible for horse riding. ... access to the beautiful views and landscapes is disjointed and poorly connected. Gates are often broken and very difficult to open and equally important to close. Please improve the access for all users of the countryside. On a horse you can get very close to nature, animals, birds and their habitats. Please improve the connectivity.	Text added to confirm consultation responses including the importance of the PROW network for equestrian users noted at para 5.8.16
Sonia Kundu - Rails to Trails . Org We have noted with interest your recent public consultation regarding the valued landscaped within Mendip District. http://macgregorsmith.co.uk/mendip/eight-qualities.html There is indeed a valuable collection of distinct and interesting landscapes within Mendip and we agree that as a collection there is a value in these landscapes greater than the sum of its parts. However, in order for the public to fully recognise and appreciate this value, access for all needs to be given more serious consideration within the planning framework.	Text added to confirm consultation responses highlighting the importance of the PROW network noted at para 5.8.16.

Currently off-road routes across Mendip District are mostly inaccessible to both equestrians and cyclists. Certainly those with disabilities are generally left out of the picture altogether. We would therefore urge you to make safe access for all a planning priority going forward.

As you are no doubt aware, at the national planning policy level the NPPF confirms that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.”

Furthermore, that within the primary concern given to Promoting Sustainable Transport in the NPPF, when considering development proposals a) priority should be given first to pedestrian and cycle movements, b) the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport must be addressed; c) places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles should be created.

Under the section entitled Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities, planning departments must enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure.

In line with the NPPF there is a golden opportunity here to create a route which allows all non-motorised transport users to safely access the rich historical story that links across the whole collection of landscapes whilst adding to the continuity of landscapes and promoting the rich cultural heritage and recreational resource of the area as well as creating potential for increased economic benefit to the local community from boosted tourism; **transforming the disused railways of Mendip District into accessible trailways provides the perfect conduit to achieve all of the above outcomes.**

Attached is a map, the key for which is as follows

- BLUE = disused line (potential trailway)
- RED = active trailways
- YELLOW = national cycle network
- WHITE = bridleways

You will note a dearth of bridleways across Mendip in comparison to surrounding areas. Also that the old Somerset & Dorset Line, for instance, admirably fills a huge gap in the national cycle network. Please do click on the map on our website to see it in more detail. <https://www.railtotrail.org/routes>

Further points on consideration of planning framework beyond the scope of the LCA Study.

The value of the local network of disused lines already highlighted within Section 9.0 under discussion on Green Infrastructure.

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020 : C3

Our organisation is working with both South Somerset District Council and Mendip District Council as well as other trailway groups such as the Strawberry Line and the North Dorset Trailway to bring this route to fruition, identifying the gaps and obstacles and to come up with solutions where possible. Your support in writing this strategy into the Local Plan will greatly further our efforts and ensure that our community driven work can continue unhindered into the future, since this is a project which is more likely to be realised in the long term. Your forward thinking in this regard will benefit our community for generations to come.	
R Thompson MBE - Consultant to The Trails Trust - Co-founder of Horse Access Campaign UK Reference section 7 Valued landscapes 8. States ‘With areas of well recognised open access land’ – yes there are but many areas of open access land are not marked with the OA symbol (most not marked in Mendip Hills AONB), some is completely inaccessible to the public (e.g. on Yoxter Ranges), some despite being adjacent have no way through forcing users to travel on dangerous roads to access one parcel to another ‘Welcoming reserves and woodlands’ – yes welcoming to people on foot only - for example Stockhill wood which is used by many local people on horse-back and by locals and visitors on bicycle – failure to recognise this use / need can give rise to issues as people on foot don’t realise there may be horses or bicycles. Many reserves do not welcome multi use or make provision for disabled people. ‘An extensive public rights of way network’ - about 80% of the rights of way network is footpath – is for use on foot only! (Culturally this is incorrect as many footpaths over the hills are in fact former pack horse routes). The footpath network is often inaccessible to people on foot – Natural England says that 1 in 5 people should not or cannot climb a stile yet in the AONB they are often presented with enormous ladder stiles.	PROW / Access comments Open access areas are identified on OS mapping. The LCA identified that these exist – further promotion and improvement to this access would be beyond the scope of the LCA Study. Concerns over accessibility could be further addressed through GI strategy. Status of paths as either footpath or bridleway is matter of legal status.

The 20% of the network that is designated for multi-use is often obstructed or inaccessible due to lack of maintenance or waymarking, not useful due to being a cul de sac or a route where the designation changes from bridleway to footpath or is too dangerous to use (especially on horseback) due to being approached by busy / dangerous roads or the lack of a crossing point or is also used by 4x4 (even bridleways and RBs which is a criminal offence). ‘and a series of long-distance recreational routes the area is attractive for many forms of countryside recreation’ – yes there are but these routes are all for use on foot, the structures are mostly stiles not gates and in some cases users are forced along dangerous roads and often with no safe crossing point to reach the next off road section (e.g.at Monarchs Way on the B3135 at Tor Hole Chewton Mendip). The rights of way and open space network is connected on Mendip by fast dangerous roads where the national speed limit applies. The minor highway network of unclassified county roads and some C roads could be a much more valuable asset if traffic calmed and drivers educated that the space is shared by vulnerable users. ‘While the wild landscapes provide for escape and adventure there are also many welcoming easy access more inclusive locations. In these the rich human and natural history of the area provides a wealth of interest for interpretation and education.’ This is true – so please can we create a modern network for all users ! ‘Ironically although the quarry industry has a long future ahead compared to coal and peat the latter do not have much of a local record within Mendip’. This doesn’t make sense? In any case the quarrying industry has a fantastic record of dedicating and maintaining a linking network of bridleways (especially in East Mendip) that can be used on foot, horse, bike and disabled tramper are easily accessible to all through five foot gates. Something to aspire to? Much could be done through planning to improve the network of routes and green space infrastructure through upgrading footpaths to multi use bridleways, creating linking routes to avoid main roads and providing crossing points and by mediating the impact that development has on the minor highway and connecting rights of way network. New principles are needed to create a soft green active travel network in the Mendip countryside.	The majority of these points while important to recognise as very relevant to improving countryside access for all are not directly covered by main LCA Study. Additional emphasis added into issues tables in section 8.0 (under health and wellbeing). The point raised within the LCA text was that while the previous coal and peat industries had a substantial impact and contribution to the district in environmental and cultural terms they are rapidly disappearing back into the landscape and that perhaps there is an opportunity to rebalance this aspect of cultural heritage. Text amended to clarify the point. Points on improving the network for all users noted in Section 7 – Box 8
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Member of the public Conceptual Framework The concept of dividing areas up into discrete sections with hard boundaries is problematic. The smaller these areas are the more artificial the concept. As is commonly the case with Frome and its hinterland the artificial boundary of the local authority area does not follow any line which is identifiable as a change in the landscape, how the landscape is used or people's attitudes to it. The only way I know I have left Somerset (Mendip) on a bike is because there is sometimes a road sign and almost inevitably the quality of the road surface improves. Good arguments could be put forward for completely different boundaries; e.g., if I was asked to identify a landscape area one of the first that would come to mind is the high area between Rudge, Rode and Farleigh Hungerford, (6.3.75) extending The West beyond Norton St Philip to Baggridge and Wellow, and down towards Mells. Illustrations It would be helpful if the photographs were identified (and located on the maps). As a local resident I think I can place some of them, but I very much doubt whether many people would be able to do that. Comments 6.2.8 "Karst" not "Kraist" 6. Why is the town excluded from the and landscape assessment? The town and the setting of the town are the connexion between the town and the countryside. 6.3 p.180 <u>Witham</u> Friary not <u>Whitham</u>. 6.3.15 The historical comments are both irrelevant and inaccurate. A penalty for crenelation without a license in 1195 has nothing to do with being executed for murder 250 years later. Fortification of house was more often carried out without a prior licence than with one. It did not necessarily incur Royal displeasure; in most instances you just paid a fine as a fee. It is often easier to ignore bureaucracy and just get on with it. I am pretty certain that Lords Hungerford did the same. Lord Stourton did not incur "Royal displeasure"; The people the Selwood Forest had and the people of Frome have little regard for authority, by all means say that – we don't. 6.3.16 You comment about being "connected by only small often single-track winding lanes" understates their importance. As a cyclist these lanes, being unattractive to motor vehicles and mostly used	The basic premise of landscape character assessment is to identify areas of common characteristics and map these out for analysis – this is undertaken across local authority areas throughout England following well established methodologies. This work for Mendip was based on the previous 1997 study and generally found the original character area boundaries remained current and logical. It is noted that LCA boundaries do not generally represent hard lines of distinct change but more often are transitional interfaces. The Mendip towns have previously been covered by other in depth studies and were excluded from this study brief. We feel these aspects of local history add to the interest of the two historic sites mentioned. Text
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by slow agricultural traffic, are an attractive and a useful way to get from A to B when the main A and B roads are used by much faster traffic. For example, from Frome Lower Keyford Lane crossing the bypass to Tytherington is an attractive way in and out of town to access the countryside and much safer than the main roads. Historically in many places various there a high route across the ridge and a low route in the valley, probably used at different times of the year. In many instances one of these has become diminished since the other was turnpiked, and adapted for carts. There are many other examples, e.g., the lane between a Willow and Norton St Philip. These are important means of access into the landscape. 6.3.18 That should be much greater attention throughout to how members of the public come especially local residents, access these landscaped areas, e.g., if they cycle routes do they use, if they walk, can they walk out of town oh where do they park? . 6.3.33 I assume that the “larger scale commercial business development on the Frome bypass” is Commerce Park. I don't agree that it gives any indication of the proximity of Frome. Both in terms of connectivity, and people's thinking Commerce Park is not part of Frome. It is an entity of its own created by the bypass. (cf. 6.3.57) There is insufficient mention of Cley Hill, which is visible from a very wide area, including and many parts of Frome town centre, in all directions you come up and psychologically a much more distinctive Indicator of the proximity of Frome. 6.3.43 The Lay development, known locally as Colditz, is a prime example of the need for landscape assessments, and for planners, to consider the long view back towards a development, and to understand the local topography. This development of tall houses with a continuous roofline disturbs the approach to Frome in this direction. The neighbouring industrial estate is set below the ridge line and has almost no visual impact from any direction. 6.3.45 This paragraph is a good example of the recognition of how citizens living in a town access the countryside. More the people use the footpaths on a daily basis to access Vallis Vale and the Mells River Valley than use them as the start of the East Mendip Way. 6.3.51 The reason this is a busy back road is because the traffic is diverted this way, including HGVs which are not permitted to travel	amended to refer to simply note some freight family histories connected to both properties. The description at this point is concentrated on the physical character of the road network – as highlighted in other sections of the study the minor lanes are recognised as an important recreational resource. The recreational function of the areas was not explicitly part of the LCA Study brief – nevertheless the importance of access is noted elsewhere in the study. The commercial development referenced is noted as being ‘on the Frome bypass’ as such it is associated with Frome as this is the built up area adjoining and potentially more so to those who live outside of the town as it is one of the most viewed blocks of development on the periphery of the settlement. Additional references to Cley Hill added to this section as one of the local landmarks. While an indicator of the proximity of Frome in some views it is possibly more significant as a marker for Warminster. The value of landscape impact assessments is noted with the provision of an additional guidance note in Appendix 4. Not clear if there is a point being raised here – following para 6.3.46 notes the area being well used for informal recreation / dog walking. No change suggested to LCA description.
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through from town centre. Because of this the road is a very unattractive link between the town and the Colliers Way NCN 24, and act not as a means of getting out into the countryside about an obstruction to doing so. Local efforts are underway to rectify that, and if successful the higher route through Great Elm is likely to be used much more to access NCN 24 and the countryside around Mells and beyond. 6.3.51 The assessment of the views is the car centric. It ignores the views of the valley and the ramparts of Orchardleigh from Innox and Packsaddle when walking in and out of Frome. If this is the area referred to in 6.3.74 that is not clear. In terms of experience this area the Valley between Spring Gardens and Beckington is one area, but it is then difficult to access the valley between Beckington and Rode. 6.1.57 This paragraph notes the “short section of urban cycle way with street lights” but the experienced reality is that it is isolated, dark, and unsafe. Therefore, it is little used it, contributing to the isolation of Commerce Park from Frome. The existence of an apparent route that does not mean that it is used. Too many developments on the edges of towns include such routes which are presented has been attractive and safe in the planning process but experienced as being anything but. 6.3.73 The emphasis should be reversed. These footpaths and lanes already provide access to the countryside that is far more important than any access they may provide to any open space which may be left within housing estates built on the agricultural land the full stop of those faces will in any event be designed for the use of the residents on those housing estates not for the use of the population of Frome. These local access routes are more important to local people than their use as strategic long distance routes. In my experience the local people also use other lanes than those which are designated for such long distance routes, e.g. Little Keyford Lane for access to the area below Marston House , and connections to Gare Hill, Horningsham and Wiltshire. 6.3.77 I question whether the Devils Bed and Bolster can be used as a feature, as it cannot be seen unless you take a footpath and enter a copse.	The area includes only small areas of landscape between roads with short linked paths – hence the description of areas relative to road names. The Orchardleigh Ridge is included within LCA C2 and referenced as included in views from area B2.2. The reference to the presence of street lighting was noting a degree of urbanisation on the lane. The LCA is not commenting on the useability of the route after dark. No change proposed to text – LCA sets out simple statements noting the potential connections between PROW’s and the new areas of POS no judgement on the relative values of either type of accessible greenspace or different categories of access route was intended at this point. The LCA is not suggesting the SM is used as a feature – simply noting it’s presence – which was thought to be interesting connection to the range of other early historical traces throughout the district. It is relevant to note the presence of Bronze Age features found at both the most eastern and western ends of the MDC area.
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**Graham Price - Conservation & Access Officer
Council of Southern Caving Clubs**

Taking into account the time limitations, and the difficulty working with a disjointed online document we have some comments which need to be taken into account. Our comment only refer to the two geographical areas Central Mendip and East Mendip. Any text relating to the other area has not been looked at.

As a general point the document contains many inaccuracies, many significantly important features are missed, and not enough importance is given to many aspects of the landscape and possibly the most important and significant features of a karst landscape are barely noted. The accuracy of the document and the proof reading leave a lot to be desired.

Our interests and knowledge is only relevant to the Mendip Hills and do not cover the whole geographic area covered by Mendip District Council and therefore our comments below roughly cover the document sections indicated but there may be some overlap. Also they should not be considered to be fully comprehensive due to time limitations.

Section 5 - Area 1

Statements about caves are inaccurate..

Not enough emphasis on this being a karst environment which defines the nature of the landscape.

The Mendip landscape exhibits a range of 'Karst' formations such as sinkholes (not spelt 'sink hole'), swallets, caves and resurgence springs and streams.

It is difficult to differentiate between sinkholes and swallets. Swallet would normally be a term defining an active stream sink and abandoned swallet used to indicate one that had once taken a stream. Active swallets are rare and the vast majority of these features on Mendip would be more appropriately termed sinkhole (not usually a term used for these features on Mendip) or more commonly shakeholes, or depressions, or dolines.

Other than dry valleys, not mentioned and a major exclusion are the sinkholes (see above) which should be recognised as one of the primary feature of a karst landscape. The text needs to clarify that 'sinkholes' are in reality the depressions or hollows that actually define a karst landscape. Their importance cannot be understated.

A survey of the central Mendip plateau completed in 1988 identified 2245 shakeholes of varying size and depth. These were and still are to a large extent the most significant feature of the landscape that gives it its identity. Less than 20 years later more than 60% had been filled and the ground levelled. This process is continuing today and quite possibly the most significant feature of the Mendip landscape is rapidly disappearing. The ongoing destruction of the karst landscape is unacceptable and needs to be stopped.

Reviewed: - not clear in what regard the points on the caves are considered inaccurate – various points were sourced from the Mendip Cave Registry and Archive.

Additional references to Karst Landscape added

Noted – text adjusted

As above

Point on the 1988 survey and subsequent loss noted.

All the shakeholes identified in the survey were previously accepted by MDC to be important landscape features and were put onto the MDC GIS so they could be identified for planning and other purposes. This resource needs to be recognised. Section 5 - Area 2 Much of Area 2 comprises a karst landscape that was originally not dissimilar to Area 1. However many of the karst features have been significantly altered as the area has been intensively farmed since the land was enclosed following the Enclosure Act commencing in 1773. A very limited number of shakeholes remain unfilled and need protection. Streams have been artificially kept on the surface to supply water for agricultural needs, water supplies and for industrial purposes, the original swallets having now disappeared.. The location of some are known and ideally need to be excavated. It needs to be recognised that the East Mendip landscape has been significantly altered by people and many of the natural features have disappeared or are difficult to identify. The text mentions ‘smaller cave systems’ suggesting the caves that are presently known are of less importance than those on central Mendip, however this is far from the truth. The area has a cave with a 60m deep shaft being the longest single underground drop on Mendip, and caves with some of the best formations in the country. These sites are of major importance and significance. Section 6 - 6.1 The text says that the most significant caves systems are located around Priddy. This in itself is not accurate in that most of the caves lie to the west of the village. There are also caves of major significance at Charterhouse. There is no ruin in Harridge Wood forming a small cascade - there isn't a stream in Harridge Wood and possibly no ruins. Karst is misspelt. The term ‘karst geology’ is used incorrectly. Karst is a term that describes the topography. Geology relates to the physical structure of the rock. Although mining and mining remains is mentioned it is given nowhere enough importance. Much of the central Mendip plateau has been considerably affected by mining activities and this has significantly shaped the landscape. There are a few areas of mining activity still apparent and these areas need protecting as they are the Mendip landscape and a very important part of it. Large areas of central Mendip now show no sign of past mining activity as the land has been reclaimed for farming purposes. This reclaimed land is not natural and should not be regarded as such and therefore justifies no lesser protection than the areas where mining remains still exist. Areas where all the mining landscape have been obliterated include Green Ore and Hillgrove. The longest known lead mine on Mendip is located at Hillgrove. There are regular collapses revealing shafts at both locations and the importance of	MDC Note Point noted – text adjusted Was not intended to suggest the systems in East Mendip are less significant – they are smaller – text amended Text amended to say near Priddy – the caves in this area are perhaps amongst the most well known. Not clear why this is disputed – the Stream and Keepers Cottage in Harridge Wood are noted in the wildlife trust guide – photos of the cascade included in the study. Note on the map there are two areas labelled Harridge Wood. We are referring to the larger area. Spelling corrected The term used is karst geomorphology which we believe an and acceptable term (consistent with notes on the BGS website). Would agree that mining has had an important role to play in the Mendip story – feel that for a landscape assessment this is made very clear.
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these discoveries should be noted and an opportunity given for them to be fully investigated. They are an importance feature of the landscape and when revealed need to be protected. Section 6 - 6.2 Only one 'small area of ancient woodland' (Ham Wood) is mentioned. Why is Home Wood not also included? The sentence ".... Maesbury and Beacon Hill attracted Bronze Age monuments and Iron Age Forts" is incorrect Maesbury is Iron Ages and Beacon Hill is Bronze Age - incorrectly grammatically stated in the text. The statement "Oakhill has a few more substantial buildings including the former brewery and Oakhill Manor" is partly incorrect and partly misleading. The original Oakhill Brewery buildings were demolished some years ago and replaced with a housing development. The buildings most likely referred to were maltings and not the former brewery. The house currently named Oakhill Manor was never a manor house and has only relatively recently been given its current name, originally being called 'Hillylands'. To name it in the text is misleading, and in any case 'Pondsmead' would be more appropriately included. Slade Bottom is mentioned more than once - where is this - do you mean Stoke Bottom? No mention made of highly significant Ashwick Grove with remains of old house, fish ponds, caves and risings etc What about the mill and abandoned village at Stoke Bottom. What about the abandoned mill and iron works at Stoke Lane Where is the semi ornamental reservoir that is mentioned. There is no such thing as Coleford Coal Canal - this was the Dorset and Somerset Canal - the aqueduct was at Coleford so could be called the Coleford Aqueduct. Although Mendip is clearly a karst landscape it must be recognised that many of the natural features have been modified by man and this is what has shaped the landscape in many instances. On Central Mendip the landscape has been gradually changed from early times by mining activities which have take place over a large area, and more latterly by agricultural activities and forestry which have obliterated many of the historical mining remains. Features that define the karst landscape are continuing to disappear. On East Mendip the landscape has been greatly modified commencing with the enclosure of the land and the change from open forest to farming changes to support this; and more latterly from industrial and quarrying activities.	Note on the loss of evidence of past mining activity noted in section. Ham wood is the largest area – no area identified as Home Wood on the OS mapping at this location. Point noted names switched around to address concern. Noted – although the building appears to be signed as Oakhill Brewery. The EH listing citation only refers to this building as Oakhill Manor. Reference to Pondsmead also added as a significant listed building. Gurney Slade Bottom – text amended Building not identified on EH Listing site As above. Text was referring to Emborough Pond / Lechmere – which has an ornamental boat house and character. Text amended to avoid confusion. The canal at Coleford was a branch off the Dorset and Somerset Canal and is has been referred to locally as the Coal Canal. Text amended to avoid confusion. We believe these points are covered by the existing text and are provided as a summary to the comments set out above.
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Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020 : C3

Professional Consultancy Comment Jonathan Billingsley The Landscape Partnership This is a very helpful resource and updating of the 1997 LCA. We have reviewed this for a specific piece of work related to a proposed development within the Batcombe Downs and Valleys LCA. This was only completed after the formal consultation period by MDC ended at the end of Feb 2021, However the comment below is considered to be of importance in defining the boundaries of LCAs D1 and D2 - see below. Batcombe Downs and Valleys The Boundary between D1 (Downs, Slopes and Valley Heads) and D2 (Alham Valley) is incorrect on the mapping provided, both in Section 6 and in the interactive map. It is possible that the outlines of D1 and D2 have 'slipped' for the intended position. However, as currently shown in the vicinity of Batcombe village D2 only includes the northern slopes of the valley and puts much of the village within D1 including the church, Gold Hill, Mill Land and parts of Millard Hill. This does not reflect the topography or character. The same is the case for the northern extension of the Alham valley with the watercourse lying to the edge or outside the valley. It looks like the whole outline of D2 needs to move to the south-east by c 200m. This would be a closer fit with the boundary on the 1997 LCA mapping.	Noted and mapping reviewed. The study included a review of the overall LCA boundaries from the 1997 work. The original maps were scanned and while the general distribution of character areas were considered to be robust some slippage of areas on the overlay was noted – this area should have been updated in the process and has now been adjusted. In the process the areas included in the deeply incised valley extent has been extended.
Professional Consultancy Comment John Smith or c/o David Williams CMLI Gleeson Strategic Land (GSL) / DWLC General comments or observations: The Mendip District LCA (MD LCA / Study) appears to be a thorough, comprehensive update of the previous Mendip landscape character assessment(s) and the Council must be commended for finding the resources to complete this work. GSL have briefly reviewed the MD LCA but have not carried out a thorough, comprehensive review of the Study and reserve the right to make further comments in the future. A key aspect of the outcome of the LCA however is not being consulted upon and that is 'Appendix III – Valued Landscapes' and results of the assessment of value although we are aware that previously Appendix III was available on the Council's (Macgregor Smith) webpage (in August 2020). The Value Conclusions set out in the August 2020 Appendix III are not agreed. The main reason is that the methodology for undertaking the 'value' assessment and ranking of various 'Special characteristics' (and combining them with the GLVIA3 landscape value factors) using the 6 point score is not very clear or transparent and therefore the 'Value Conclusions' reached were not robust. Further work is needed on this matter so that landscape practitioners can replicate the assessment and reach similar conclusions. In addition, more reasoning and justification is required in any event.	The August 2020 version of the appendix set out the Macgregor Smith judgements of how well each of the 8 special characteristics are reflected across the district having undertaken the district wide study. As such it is recognised as one (reasonably informed) view of the district but there could be other views that would help build up more of a consensus. The Appendix III section was not included in the consultation as it was felt that it would be useful to gather a wider range of views on the 8 special qualities of the MDC area and how these are reflected through the district without the distraction of the Macgregor Smith assessment.

We note that the Council are consulting on the 8 Special Characteristics of the Mendip Area that will form the criteria for assessing 'Valued Landscapes' in Mendip and these are commented on below. We also acknowledge that parts / landscape areas of Mendip will have 'value' but the identification of landscape value needs to be applied proportionately ensuring that the identification of valued landscapes is not over used. There could be a risk of over-valuing the genuine quality of landscape areas in the plan and decision-making process thereby forming additional constraints to future development (given the Councils other planning requirements - i.e. need to identify and maintain a 5 year supply of housing land in sustainable locations). It would be useful if all photographs were labelled as this is not consistent throughout the Study. Sections 1 & 2 Introduction & Previous Landscape Assessments and Study Methods This section of the Study is as expected although reference to Covid-19 will date the document and hopefully the situation will change soon. Section 2.2 refers to the Study Approach and it suggested that it should also refers to Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) as this is referred to elsewhere in the Study (Section 5, 7 and Appendix 4). Section 4 Mendip by Numbers Interesting data setting out scale of different facets of the district and for future monitoring of change but how has the information, contained in Section 4, informed the LCA? All this section could be an Appendix and linked to Section 5. Section 5 District Wide Appraisal This section provides a good description of various topics that relate to the district. Section 5.10 refers to visual appraisal provides a good description of visual amenity within the District but it would have been useful to include greater range of photographs and identify the key, important viewpoints in the district relating to each landscape area or landscape type, which could be used to monitor change in the district. Also by identifying key / important views in the assessment ensures that these views are protected or change to the views can be minimised. Landmarks are listed but there must be other key or representative views which are referred to the commentary in the text which should be included as examples. An example is paragraph 5.10.23 and 5.10.24 where Frome is referred to relation to skyline development but the text refers to other settlements and both housing and commercial developments. Photographic examples of key views should be provided both of the	As set out within the study (Section 7 – para 7.1.12) the consideration of value and quality involve a degree of subjective option and it would help if there is consensus on the attributes that may be seen as important. The suggested 8 characteristics were put forward to assist discussions on this topic. It should be noted the LCA study is provided to help provide baseline evidence as part of the local plan process – however the work is intended to be an objective study that is not directed to find or exclude potential plan allocations. While the GLVIA3 is not strictly relevant to the main study it is a useful reference and has been added to the report. Reviewed but a key aspect of the approach taken to this study is to encourage public interest and digest of the work – as such the Mendip by Numbers section helps illustrate the overall scale of the district and extent of different aspects and will not be moved to an appendix. A good range of photographs are included in the interactive on line mapping. Related comments on the range of views from the AONB Partnership are relevant to this comment. The nature of the views is such that there are a great many views some modest scale panoramas or simple views from remote paths that add to the experience. This means any mapping of key views risks omission or devaluing views not included. It
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impact of these uses but also example of where housing or commercial development are well integrated into the landscape. In addition, the location of the photographs used in the main body of the Study should be plotted on the interactive webmap / fieldwork_Photo / index. The photograph on page 111 is taken from the west of Frome but not included on the photo index so uncertain whether it is taken from a public vantagepoint or not. Overlaying the landscape character area boundaries on interactive proforma index map and photo index map would also be very useful as there does not seem to be an 'even spread' of proforma assessment sheets and photographic information across the District. Proforma and photography appears to be lacking in the more rural areas of the district whilst there is concentration in other locations with little or no explanation of why or what the rationale was in their selection. Section 6 Landscape Types and Character Areas The Section is generally agreed and provides the relevant information on each character area. It is noted that within the main report OS mapping has been used to set out the main character areas and sub-character areas but it would useful if for each sub-character (at the start of sub character descriptions), a similar plan was provided at a larger scale (say using the 1:25,000 OS base), so individual landscape features, contours and field boundaries could be identified so allowing individual areas / land parcels to be searched and LCA boundary lines understood or interrogated. The interactive maps are especially useful but could be better if an Ordnance Survey map base was used for the reason given above. Also some LCA key characteristic descriptions identify 'landmarks, view and viewpoints' but these are not located on any mapping. It would be useful if key or representative views were plotted to avoid any misinterpretation of information in the future. Also see comments under section 5.0 as well. Section 7 Valued Landscapes The Section sets out 8 special characteristics of the district which will form the criteria for assessing the value of each character area in due course. This section refers to Box 5.1 of GLVIA3 guidance which set out the range of factors to consider in determining 'value'. Paragraph 7.13 goes on to state: '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. To assist a discussion on the Mendip area consideration has been given to a potential list of 'Special Characteristics' of the area. These are set out in the Box below and are intended to be a key part of the consultation process for this draft study'. However, as already noted above (See general comments), this value assessment appears to have already been undertaken by Macgregor Smith / The Council without the input from the consultation process and therefore it undermines the purpose of this consultation exercise. We would propose that a further consultation exercise is undertaken to obtain consensus on the criteria and 'value' judgements once they have considered responses to this consultation. The consultation response website includes a template for responding either agreeing or disagreeing with the landscape characteristics using a 0 to 100 scoring range although for several of	is not proposed to provide additional mapping. Interactive mapping points to be reviewed. The mapping options for the interactive mapping to be reviewed but it should be noted that detailed discussions over the boundaries of LCA's should take account of the point that it is rare for the divisions between character to be defined by clear hard lines; more often the boundaries represent transitions between areas. As noted above the key views and viewpoints are not going to be mapped and the text is amended to reflect this point. The GLVIA3 guidance (and more recent draft discussion paper from the LI – see below) confirm the attributes set out in Box 5.1 are not the only possible criteria for defining landscape value. Indeed the recent guidance provides more expanded explanation of the terms used in Box 5.1 and also highlights the potential use of Landscape Qualities as being characteristics/features of a landscape that have been identified as being valued – some times these are referred to as special qualities of special landscape qualities in relation to designated landscapes. The approach is similar to that applied within the AONB areas of the district and are felt to be useful in helping to draw together the assessment as part of a discussion on the value of the district's landscapes. It may be that the term
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the criteria 0 = No view and also 50 = No view whilst 100= Strong agree. There is an inbuilt bias in the scoring or the scoring mechanism needs to be amended and consultation exercise re-run.

Several of the criteria are also duplicating each other. These are: Criterion 1 – ‘Valuable collection of distinct and interesting landscapes – as a collection there is a value in the landscapes greater than the sum of the its parts’ and criterion 5 – ‘Continuous Landscape - there is a continuity of landscapes across the district providing the sense of an area dominated by rural undeveloped countryside’ is double counting very similar or the same issues whilst criterion 4 – ‘History - the district landscape includes a rich historical story that links across the whole collection’ and criterion 8 ‘Rich cultural Heritage and Recreational Resource - the district landscape accommodates, inspires and attracts people for events, creative interest and as a cultural resource. The area includes a comprehensive network of recreational routes and the settings for adventure’ appears to be double counting the history / cultural heritage aspects of the landscape. These criteria need to be reconsidered.

There is also seems to be a bias towards ‘valuing’ the landscape character areas a collective (whole) when the purpose of the exercise is surely to differentiate between character areas in determining what makes one area of greater value than another.

It is appreciated that the draft Mendip LCA was been prepared last year but there is an opportunity to review the ‘valued’ criteria to be used in the light of the recent Landscape Institute - Consultation draft - Technical Guidance Note TGN 02/21 on Valued Landscapes. It is appreciated that TGN 02/21 is draft only but is useful in that it provides a brief history of how landscape has been valued in the UK, suggests an number of criteria for assessing ‘value’, expanding on the GLVIA3 Box 5.1 factors, and suggests the practical application of the factors in coming to a judgement on landscape value. The Mendip LCA Study needs to be more closely aligned to the suggested criteria and definition contained in the draft TGN 02/21. The suggest factors are:

- Landscape condition;
- Natural Heritage;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Associative;
- Distinctiveness;
- Recreational;
- Scenic;
- Perceptual; and
- Spatial function.

The TGN also highlights that there are overlaps between factors and that where this occurs these overlaps should be acknowledged and considered when presenting on the overall value of the landscape. The 8 Special Characteristics suggested by Mendip Council do not acknowledge this overlap and as mentioned earlier further work is needed to explain the methodology of how the valued assessment is to be undertaken, how the ranking works and how judgement are reached. We look forward to the opportunity to comments on the next draft of the MD LCA ‘Valued Landscape Assessment’.

special characteristics ought to be changed to landscape qualities to be more consistent with this latest draft guidance.

As set out previously there are important distinctions between the collection and continuous landscape aspects, the history and cultural heritage and the recreational resource points.

This topic was put forward as a key part of the consultation process and these comments are to be reviewed with MDC in the round to develop the final study output.

The assessment process has taken all the LCA areas of the district and up dated them in a comprehensive exercise. The bulk of the study out put has been to provide the descriptions of the LCA’s (some 56) distinct areas (the update has expanded the assessment to ensure that each area now has a description whereas the earlier work did combine many sub areas into one description). Having done this it has become very apparent that there is a collection of landscapes within the MDC area and that the district boundary contains many areas that have interesting interrelationships such that the value of the whole should not be overlooked.

The new Technical Guidance Note is provided as a draft but is noted as being a useful and comprehensive review of the topic even in its draft state.

GSL acknowledge that parts / landscape areas of Mendip will have 'value' but the identification of landscape value needs to be applied proportionately ensuring that the identification of valued landscapes is not over used. There could be a risk of over-valuing the genuine quality of landscape areas in the plan and decision-making process.

Section 8 Anticipating, Managing and Monitoring Change

(highlighting the issues associated with Climate Change and the Nature Emergency and Ash Dieback)

Generally this is agreed but we would suggest that reference to GLVIA3 guidance is included in paragraph 8.17 to 8.19 and also guidance is provided on what the Council consider to be small projects and larger schemes.

Section 9 Policy, Strategy, Green Infrastructure and Engagement Projects:

Generally this section is agreed however we take issue with para 9.17 to 9.18 which we consider should be more clearly written as to whether it refers to the adopted Local Plan 2014 and allocations in that plan, or emerging Local Plan as the Council are in the process of updating its Local Plan and until that exercise is completed, at that point the Local Plan will make provision for future development. It is agreed that section acknowledges that there will be a need for further 'greenfield' development land (residential and commercial) and that this is likely to be through future local plan reviews and exceptional circumstances as necessary. It is also agreed that the Study is likely to form the basis of sensitivity and capacity studies and we welcome the opportunity comment on these future studies including the proposed methodologies to be used, in due course. However, it should to be acknowledged that there is a balance needed in relation to sustainable development and landscape, particularly where that landscape is not subject to any statutory protection. Allowing for some development in sustainable locations could also allow for land in private ownership to provide public benefits in the form of public open space including country parks etc which could meet a number of the aims and objectives of the Council 'Green Infrastructure' strategy, the Biodiversity Action Plan and other access to countryside proposals.

Appendices

See general comments regarding Appendix III. In the light of our comments on the 8 Special Characteristics the 'Significance' paragraph on page 2 Appendix 4 will need to be revised as well as other references to the 8 special characteristics. It is suggested that specific reference is made to residential and commercial developments under the heading 'Assessment of Effects' as, at the moment, this is bias towards the energy sector. Also an assessment of combined and cumulative effects are not normally required to

The further process of finalising the District Landscape Character Assessment may not lead to any further detailed mapping of valued landscapes. It is noted that within the TGN valued landscapes can be recognised within the decision making process without necessarily relating areas to designations. It is also noted within the TNG that areas may be judged to not satisfy the test of being a 'Valued Landscape' yet may still have value.

Reference added.

Advice on appropriate schemes for assessment can be obtained on a project by project basis.

The Special Characteristics and Appendix III will be reviewed in the light of all comments received in the round.

The reference to energy sector was noted in respect of cumulative

Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020 : C3

assessing non-EIA developments nor as part of a Landscape Appraisal and this needs further clarification. Key viewpoints are referred to on page 5: 'as being identified by this study' although this is not the case and further work is needed – see comments on Section 5 and 6 above. Comments on public engagements are noted but the purpose of an Landscape Appraisal (LVA) or Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is not to justify a development proposal or its acceptability but to identify landscape and visual impacts or effects. This point needs to be clearly explained in this Appendix as it a common misconception of landscape architects that acceptability is one of the purposes of an LVA or LVIA. It is for the decision maker to determine acceptability of a scheme taking in account the planning merits or otherwise of a proposal not the landscape consultant.	effects which appear in the past to have been overlooked. While it is technically correct to note that combined and cumulative effects are not a formal requirement for non EIA developments we would suggest it is still good practice to give some consideration to these points for a robust assessment. While as noted, the final decisions on developments lie with others, the points on public engagement and the work required to help integrate or mitigate development remain as encouragement to Landscape Architects and others to develop imaginative and ambitious proposals to help deliver better quality development.
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Favourite Walks, Views Hidden Gems – identified through general correspondence rather than via website		
Walks, Views or Gems	Commentary	Location
Wadbury Valley Walk	I saw that you were consulting on favourite walks in Mendip and I just wanted to give a shout out for the Wadbury Valley and the walk from Frome down into Vallis Vale and along Egford Brook and the Mells River through Great Elm to Mells. I'm sure I'm only one of many who loves this area, but it's a truly special walk that I do frequently in all weathers and at all times of day and night and it really makes life worth living around here. It's a shame the Fussell's ironworks has been closed off – when it was possible to explore it freely that was the icing on the cake. But we're fortunate to have this area on our doorstep and I hope it will remain in its present relatively undisturbed state.	
Views	Notes from Batcombe PC comments – added to list	
Hidden Gems	Notes from Batcombe PC & Witham Friary – added to list	

MENDIP LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT - CONSULTATION REPORT

OCTOBER 2021



APPENDIX D : POST CONSULTATION AMENDMENTS

**Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020:
Ap.D**

Appendix D – List of Post Consultation Study Amendments

Section / Paragraph References	Nature of change	Points addressed	Origin of Change
Section 2			
Section 2 Para 2.2.2	Text amends / references	Ref to LI GVLIA3 added to text & references	Comment from Gleeson Strategic Land
Section 3			
Section 3 3.1.20 & References Comment repeated on other sections	Text amends / references	Reference to Mendip Hills & 2019-24 management plan	AONB Partnership
Section 5			
Para 5.1.8 + after 5.1.13	Text amends	References to shakeholes & karst features added	Comments from Southern Caving Clubs – concern on loss of Karst features
5.1.16	Text amends	References to Karst features added & Smaller cave systems changed to more	Comments from Southern Caving Clubs – concern on loss of Karst features
5.8.10	Cross reference added		
5.8.14	Text amend	Reference to off road sections of Sustrans routes – noted as modest proportion of overall length of identified routes (18 out of 102 km)	Comment from trails to rails trust
5.8.15	Text added	Confirming consultation responses including the importance of the PROW network for equestrian users noted at para 5.8.16	Numerous comments on value of footpaths, cycleway connections & equestrian access. Comment from trails to rails trust & others
5.9.1	Extra text	Confirming sensitivity of AONB / AONB settings to intrusions irrespective of boundaries	Comments from AONB Partnership
5.9.10	Text amends	Ref to Mendip <u>Hills</u> AONB	Comments from AONB Partnership
5.9.27	Text additional note	Ref to AONB Partnership Dark Skies Position Statement	Comments from AONB Partnership

**Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020:
Ap.D**

Section / Paragraph References	Nature of change	Points addressed	Origin of Change
5.10.23	Text additional note	Ref to dark skies, tranquility & views giving potential for impacts across designation boundaries & connection to duty to protect AONB's	Comments from AONB Partnership
	Text added	Confirming consultation responses including the importance of the PROW network for equestrian users noted at para 5.8.16	Numerous comments on value of footpaths, cycleway connections & equestrian access
References to section 5.0	Ref to AONB management plan		
Section 6			
SECTION 6.1	Maps LCA references up dated		
Mendip Plateau LCA A2 6.1.12 + 6.1.16 Table	Text amends / spelling of Karst	Cave references adjusted. Note on loss of mining evidence added	Comments from Southern Caving Clubs
Section 6.1 Central Mendip Wells Bowl – A4.4 Table	Text amends - spelling	Stoberry corrected to Stoberry in table Reference to St Cuthberts Church Spire	Note from WCC
Section 6.2 LCA - A5 6.2.11	Text adjusted	Maesbury & Beacon Hill swapped around to reflect precise order for Bronze and Iron Age interest	Comments from Southern Caving Clubs
6.2 LCA A7 6.2.39	Text amends	Ref to Oakhill Brewery changed to Oakhill Brewery Malthouse Pondsmead House added to list of significant buildings	Comments from Southern Caving Clubs

**Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020:
Ap.D**

Section / Paragraph References	Nature of change	Points addressed	Origin of Change
Section 6.2 Eastern Mendip LCA A8.2 Chilcompton to Vobster	Text amends	Addition of reference to areas of woodland cover within table	Note Alan Townsend Ward Cllr
Section 6.2 LAC A10.1 6.2.110	Text amends	Reference to Emborough Pond as semi ornamental reservoir changed to historic reservoir / mill pond	Comments from Southern Caving Clubs
Section 6.2 LCA A10.1 6.2.116	Text amends & table refs	Reference to the Canal at Coleford changed & reference to link to K&A changed to Dorset and Somerset Canal	Comments from Southern Caving Clubs
Section 6.2 Eastern Mendip A11 Southe Eastern Farmlands	Text amends	Addition of references to Wanstrow and its contribution to the LCA	Comment from Parish Council. Reference to wind turbines adjusted on review of text for above.
Section 6.3			
Introduction mapping	Settlements Map & Example Settlement Patterns	Addition of Upton Noble & Trudox Hill	Upton Noble parish request + consider these add interest as dispersed historic settlements in remote location.
Section 6.3 LCA B.1 South West Upper Valley 6.3.15	Text amends	Reference to the fate of historical individuals adjusted	Comments from member of public
6.3.14	Text amends & table	Addition of note on Roman Road and Priory reference to deep historical interest in the landscape	Witham Friary Parish Council comments on local history
LCA B1.1			
LCA B2.5 Little Keyford	Text amends & table	1. Ref to views including Cley Hill & Alfred's Tower. 2. Fly tipping refs adjusted 3. Reference to new housing poor interfaces	1&2 Review of text following consultation comments. 3. Review of text following revisit for points 1 & 2 Note Tranquillity aspect of assessment not changed.

**Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020:
Ap.D**

Section / Paragraph References	Nature of change	Points addressed	Origin of Change
Section 6.5 Batcombe Downs and Valleys Areas D1 and D2	Mapping adjusted	boundary refined between D1 & D2	Comments from the Landscape Partnership
Section 6.5 Batcombe Downs and Valleys Areas D1 and D2 Paras 6.5.8	Spelling Text and Boundary amendments	Note Batcombe / Westcombe / Higher Allam Farm – proposal for valley area north of villages to be considered as a valued landscape. No actual VL designation provided by local plan – closest would be Landscape Feature Area. Have reviewed area on site and agree that it is an interesting and attractive area with good views but formal designation would not fit with existing framework of Landscape designations with in MDC. Have included as one of the Hidden Gems .	
6.5.18	Text amendments	Reference to Westcombe house adjusted to clarify the main house demolished some time ago – additional detail on former grounds.	Ref comments from Batcombe PC.
Section 7.0			
7.13	Text amends	Ref to public consultation up dated	
Box 1	Text amends	Hills added to AONB name	Comments from AONB Partnership
Box 6	Text amends	Ref to tranquillity and dark skies within AONB areas	Comments from AONB Partnership
Box 7	Text amends	Ref to range of views within AONB added	Comments from AONB Partnership
Box 8	Text amends	Text reworded to clarify cultural aspects of quarrying and mining Plus comment on public consultation interest in access points	Comment from public
	General text amends to valued landscape section		
Section 8			
Box – page 281	Notes added	Ref to AONB Management plan & expected contribution to nature recovery	Comments from AONB Partnership
Para 8.13/14	Additional para added	Ref to 2019 Landscape Review	Comments from AONB Partnership
8.19	Text amend	Reference to GLVIA	Comment from Gleeson Strategic Land
8.21	Text amend	Reference to biodiversity net gain	Comments from AONB Partnership

**Mendip District Council Landscape Character Assessment Consultation 2020:
Ap.D**

Section / Paragraph References	Nature of change	Points addressed	Origin of Change
Section 9			
Para 9.52	Footnote added	Reference to safeguarding of former railways as future transport / new cycle or footpath links.	
Para 9.16	Additional note	Further reference to AONB Dark Skies Position Statement	Comments from AONB Partnership
Appendix 4 Page 5	Text deleted	Reference to the mapping of key views removed.	Comment from Gleeson Strategic Land – highlighted inconsistency – original intent was to include some key views but concern over potential for other views to be downplayed if not listed.