BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 3RD OCTOBER 2012
AT 6.00 P.M.

COMMITTEE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

MEMBERS: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Leader), Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP
(Deputy Leader), Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, M. A. Bullivant,
C. B. Taylor and M. J. A. Webb

AGENDA

1.   To receive apologies for absence

2.   Declarations of Interest

3.   To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on
5th September 2012 (attached) and 26th September 2012 (To follow) (Pages
1 - 8)

4.   Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 10th
September 2012

      (a)   To receive and note the minutes
      (b)   To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes

5.   Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 20th September 2012 (To
follow)

      (a)   To receive and note the minutes
      (b)   To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes

6.   To receive verbal updates from the Leader and/or other Cabinet Members on
any recent meetings attended in an ex-officio capacity (Pages 9 - 10)

7.   Proposed Revised Arrangements for Performance Reporting

8.   Disabled Parking Review (Including Blue Badge Holders) (Pages 11 - 62)

9.   Tenancy Strategy (Pages 63 - 84)

10. Belbroughton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (Pages 85 - 148)

11. Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance 2012 (Pages 149 - 260)

12. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting

13. To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt information:-

"**RESOLVED**: that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part, in each case, being as set out below, and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

Item No.   Paragraph(s)
   14   3   "

14. Disposal of Council Assets at Hanover Street Car Park and George House (Pages 261 - 286)

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

24th September 2012

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Access to Information

The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 widened the rights of press and public to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. Recently the Freedom of Information Act 2000 has further broadened these rights, and limited exemptions under the 1985 Act.

- ➢ You can attend all Council, Cabinet and Committee/Board meetings, except for any part of the meeting when the business would disclose confidential or "exempt" information.
- ➢ You can inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting.
- ➢ You can inspect minutes of the Council, Cabinet and its Committees/Boards for up to six years following a meeting.
- ➢ You can have access, upon request, to the background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to six years from the date of the meeting. These are listed at the end of each report.
- ➢ An electronic register stating the names and addresses and electoral areas of all Councillors with details of the membership of all Committees etc. is available on our website.
- ➢ A reasonable number of copies of agendas and reports relating to items to be considered in public will be made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet and its Committees/Boards.
- ➢ You have access to a list specifying those powers which the Council has delegated to its Officers indicating also the titles of the Officers concerned, as detailed in the Council's Constitution, Scheme of Delegation.

You can access the following documents:

- ➢ Meeting Agendas
- ➢ Meeting Minutes
- ➢ The Council's Constitution

at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Declaration of Interests - Explained

Definition of Interests

A Member has a **PERSONAL INTEREST** if the issue being discussed at a meeting affects the well-being or finances of the Member, the Member's family or a close associate more than most other people who live in the ward affected by the issue.

Personal interests are also things relating to an interest the Member must register, such as any outside bodies to which the Member has been appointed by the Council or membership of certain public bodies.

A personal interest is also a **PREJUDICIAL INTEREST** if it affects:
  ➢ The finances, or
  ➢ A regulatory function (such as licensing or planning)
Of the Member, the Member's family or a close associate **AND** which a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of the facts would believe likely to harm or impair the Member's ability to judge the public interest.

Declaring Interests

If a Member has an interest they must normally declare it at the start of the meeting or as soon as they realise they have the interest.

EXCEPTION:
If a Member has a **PERSONAL INTEREST** which arises because of membership of another public body the Member only needs to declare it if and when they speak on the matter.

If a Member has both a **PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST** they must not debate or vote on the matter and must leave the room.

EXCEPTION:
If a Member has a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting at which members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter, the Member has the same rights as the public and can also attend the meeting to make representations, give evidence or answer questions **BUT THE MEMBER MUST LEAVE THE ROOM ONCE THEY HAVE FINISHED AND CANNOT DEBATE OR VOTE.**
However, the Member must not use these rights to seek to improperly influence a decision in which they have a prejudicial interest.

For further information please contact Committee Services, Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, B60 1AA

Tel: 01527 873232 Fax: 01527 881414
Web: www.bromsgrove.gov.uk   email: committee@bromsgrove.gov.uk

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER 2012 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Leader), Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP (Deputy Leader), Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, M. A. Bullivant and M. J. A. Webb

Officers: Ms. S. Hanley, Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mrs. S. Jones, Mr. M. Bough, Ms. D. Sunman and Ms. R. Cole.

27/12   **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor C. B. Taylor.

An apology for absence due to illness was also received from the Chief Executive.

28/12   **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor D. W. P. Booth and M. J. A. Webb each declared a Disclosable Interest in agenda item 8 relating to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust Strategic Asset Disposal to 2017, on the basis they are members of the BDHT Board as representatives of Bromsgrove District Council.

29/12   **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2012 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

30/12   **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 16th July 2012 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

31/12   **WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meetings of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 28th June 2012 and 11th July 2012 were submitted.

RESOLVED that in each case the minutes be noted.

32/12 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 12th July 2012 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

(The recommendation contained within these minutes was considered at a later stage of the meeting as part of minute no. 45 /12)

33/12 **VERBAL UPDATES FROM THE LEADER AND/OR OTHER CABINET MEMBERS ON ANY RECENT MEETINGS ATTENDED IN AN EX-OFFICIO CAPACITY**

Councillor M. J. A. Webb reported that he had recently attended a meeting with the Chairman of Bromsgrove Sporting to discuss the Club's activities within the District.

34/12 **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT HOUSING TRUST STRATEGIC ASSET DISPOSAL TO 2017 REPORT**

The Cabinet considered a report on the proposed Development Programme of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) together with the Trust's Strategic Asset Disposal Strategy to 2017. The report advised Members of the implications of both the Development Programme and the Disposal Strategy and the impact of these on the delivery of affordable housing within the District.

It was noted that BDHT were seeking the Council's support for the Strategy prior to submission to the Homes and Community Agency (HCA). The Strategy included the disposal of up to 30 units of accommodation which would be likely to result in a loss of stock from rural areas within the District.

It was reported that HCA would expect the bid from BDHT to include resource contributions from other public bodies, these contributions could include the retention by BDHT of the full capital return on the disposal of stock with the total capital sum to be reinvested by BDHT in affordable housing. This would be a significant contribution by the Council as under the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer Agreement dated 29th March 2004, the Council was entitled to "claw back" 50% of the price received from disposal of such stock.

Members considered the situation in detail, in particular the potential loss of social housing within rural areas which needed to be balanced with the Councils priority to enable the development of affordable homes within the District. In view of the likelihood of there being no further grant available from the HCA after 2015, in order for BDHT to develop their target of an additional 200 affordable housing units between now and 2017 they would need a contribution of a sum of £4,000,000 from the sale of existing stock.

It was noted that sections 3.17 and 3.18 of the report outlined the measures which would be taken to mitigate the disproportionate loss of stock within the

rural areas. Members also took account the likely adverse impact on homelessness of the Welfare Reform proposals.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED:
(a)   that the Business Plan/Development Programme which BDHT propose to submit to the HCA in which they seek the support of this Council for the delivery of an affordable homes programme to 2017 be noted; and
(b)   that the disposal of up to 30 units from BDHT's property stock up to a value of £4,000,000 be approved on the basis that the sum is reinvested into an affordable homes programme in Bromsgrove District in support of the Strategy.

35/12   **COUNTYWIDE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY FOR WORCESTERSHIRE**

The Cabinet considered a report on a draft revised Countywide Joint Homelessness Strategy.

It was noted that the Strategy which had been developed jointly by the six District Councils within Worcestershire, was required to consider how austerity measures could adversely impact on homelessness and what measures were appropriate to mitigate the impact of these. A Homelessness action plan for Bromsgrove to supplement the Strategy was currently being developed.

It was reported that a stakeholder event had been held in July 2011 which had been central to the development of the Strategy.This had been followed by a survey of both customers and stakeholders. It was noted that the promotion of partnership working with customers and other agencies was central to the strategy to achieve maximum efficiency in view of reductions in government funding.

Members felt that the Strategy was well written and it was

RESOLVED:
(a)   that the report be noted; and
(b)   that the draft Countywide Joint Homelessness Strategy and action plan attached to the report be approved and that delegated authority be given to the Deputy Chief Executive and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to agree any final minor changes to the Strategy arising from the consultation process.

36/12   **FLY POSTING POLICY REPORT**

The Cabinet considered a report on a proposed Fly Posting Enforcement Strategy.

It was noted that the Strategy consolidated the various legislation relating to the issue into one easily accessible document.

It was reported that in line with the approach taken on other environmental enforcement issues it was intended to adopt a "five stage" approach to enforcement ranging from providing advice to undertaking prosecution if that should prove to be necessary. It was also intended to undertake a public information exercise as part of the launch of the Strategy with a view to reducing the instances of fly posting prior to the five stage process.

Members raised the issue of fly posting in relation to local small scale charitable events and were informed that a common sense approach would be taken including provision of advice to organisers of such events that they ensure any advertisements are removed in a timely manner following the event.

RECOMMENDED   that the Fly Posting Strategy together with the associated policies attached as an appendix to the report, be approved.

37/12 **LAND DISPOSAL POLICY REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report on a proposed Minor Land Disposal Policy together with associated fees and charges.

Whilst the Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources already had authority to determine applications for the purchase and lease of small areas of land owned by the Council in accordance with the Assets Management Plan, the policy was intended to clarify the position, including the fees to be imposed. Clearly, applications which fell outside the policy would continue to be referred to Members for determination.

RECOMMENDED:
(a)   that the Minor Land Disposal Policy attached as an appendix to the report be approved, subject to the amendment of the wording in the second paragraph to read "the relevant Ward Member will be consulted accordingly" ; and
(b)   that authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Resources to progress any applications which fall within the Minor Land Disposal Policy and that the Scheme of Delegation be amended accordingly.

38/12 **FINANCE MONITORING - QUARTER 1 2012/2013**

The Cabinet considered a report on the Council's financial position for April to June 2012.

It was noted that at the end of Quarter 1 there was an underspend of £25,000 in respect of the revenue budget. In relation to the overspend in respect of Environmental Services, it was noted this was due to lower income than projected and that an action plan to address this shortfall would be considered as part of the Quarter 2 report. In addition, in response to a query from Members, the Executive Director Finance and Corporate resources undertook to check the position on Planning Development Control fees.

RESOLVED:
(a)   that the current financial position in respect of revenue and capital as detailed in the report be noted;
(b)   that £50,000 be released from the ICT Refresh Reserves Budget and be approved for planned capital expenditure in respect of the purchase of XP Sunray Servers and additional corporate electronic storage capacity; and
(c)   that the virement detailed in the appendix to the report relating to the allocation of savings be approved.

RECOMMENDED:
(a)   that £70,000 from the revenue budget be approved for capital expenditure for the purchase of Sunray devices, Upgrade to Office 2010 and new ESX Servers; and
(b)   that the capital budget in respect of Sanders Park be increased by 35,000, to reflect the funding of £20,000 received from the County Council and the grant of £15,000 from the Rotary Club for the further improvement of the quality and range of facilities at the park.

39/12   **MONITORING OF WRITE OFFS - QUARTER 1 2012/2013**

Members considered a report on the action taken by officers in respect of the write off of debts during Quarter 1 of 2012/13.

There was discussion on the level and profile of the outstanding debt.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

40/12   **LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME REPORT**

The Cabinet considered a report on the proposals for Localisation of Council Tax Support and the need to undertake consultation with key stakeholders prior to implementation of the new scheme on 1st April 2013.

It was reported that from 2013/14 the Council would only be reimbursed 90% of the cost of granting Council Tax Benefit. If no action was taken, a shortfall of £61,000 would fall on the Council which would need to be met through other savings. The Council is required to adopt a new scheme for Council Tax Support by 31st January 2013.

It was noted that the Government had made some changes to the Council Tax Regulations and it was proposed that any savings made through these changes be utilised to offset the reduction in grant. The report outlined that the general approach which had been taken by the District Councils in Worcestershire was to attempt to meet half of the financial gap by way of the use of revisions to the Council Tax Exemptions currently available in order mitigate the impact of changes on residents.

It was noted that section 3.8 of the report set out the proposed changes which would form the basis of the necessary consultation with key stakeholders and partners such as Parish Councils, Citizens' Advice Bureau and Registered

Social Landlords. Taxpayers would also be invited to comment and press releases would publicise the draft scheme. It was noted that following the consultation period the scheme would need to be approved by Cabinet and Council.

RESOLVED:
 (a)   that consultation on a Local Council Tax Support Scheme and technical reforms to Council Tax be undertaken with the public and key stakeholders for a minimum period of 8 weeks on the basis set out in the report; and
(b)   that it be noted that following the consultation period a further report on the Scheme and technical reforms will be submitted to Cabinet for recommendations to the Council .

41/12   **BUSINESS RATE POOLING BACKGROUND REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report on Government proposals for the local retention of Business Rates growth from April 2013 and the options for "pooling" business rates with other Authorities which would reduce the impact of volatility in rating income and generate growth through collaboration. It was anticipated that groups based around the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) could reinforce the LEP wide economic strategy. It was possible however to remain independent of a pool.

Members were reminded that Bromsgrove had previously expressed an interest in pooling with the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP and the Worcestershire LEP as at the time expressions of interest had been required, a financial appraisal with comparison of the two LEPs had not been available.

It was reported that the timetable for decision on pooling arrangements had now been amended by Government and a decision was required by 10th September 2012. Information on the potential benefits and risks of participating in each LEP pool was considered by Cabinet.

Members felt that participation in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP offered a greater benefit to the Authority in terms of potential growth and economic development. It was recognised that the details of the impact of pooling arrangements would be dependent upon the terms of the Local Government Finance Settlement, which would not be available until December 2012 or January 2013.

Following detailed discussion it was

RECOMMENDED:
(a)   that the Council participate in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP pool;
(b)   that it be noted that the detailed impact of the pooling arrangements will be dependent on the Local Government Finance Settlement for Bromsgrove which will not be available until December 2012 or January 2013 and that until this information is received a final decision will not be made; and

(c)   that recognising the situation outlined in (b) above, officers be tasked to work through the detailed financial impact of the pooling arrangements in the context of the financial settlement when received, and that in the light of this, the final decision in relation to the pooling arrangements be delegated to the Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Group Leaders.

42/12   **BROMSGROVE PARTNERSHIP'S ANNUAL REPORT 2011/2012**

Cabinet considered the Bromsgrove Partnership's Annual Report 2011/12 which set out the work of the Partnership over the past twelve months.

RESOLVED that the Bromsgrove Partnership's Annual Report 2011/12 be approved.

43/12   **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

That under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items of business the subject of the following minutes on the grounds that they involve the disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, the relevant paragraphs being as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so.

Minute No	Paragraph
44/12	3
45/12	1 and 4

44/12   **BDHT STRATEGIC ASSET DISPOSAL TO 2017**

No further discussion was required on this item.

45/12   **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SHARED SERVICES BOARD HELD ON 12TH JULY 2012 AND 23RD AUGUST 2012**

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Shared Services Board arising from the minutes of the meetings held on 12th July 2012 (Revenues – Shared Services Business Case) and 23rd August 2012 (Post Room Transformation and Service Redesign Review).

Revenues – Shared Services Business Case

RECOMMENDED   that the business case for a shared Revenues Service be approved for implementation

Post Room Transformation and Service Redesign Review

RECOMMENDED   that the Post Room Transformation and Service Redesign Review be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.45 p.m.

Chairman

THERE ARE NO ENCLOSURES FOR THIS AGENDA ITEM

Page 9

This page is intentionally left blank

BROMSGROVE DISTRICTCOUNCIL

CABINET
<div style="text-align:right">3 October 2012</div>

DISABLED PARKING REVIEW

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Michael Webb
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Guy Revans
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Key Decision

1.   SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1.1   Currently disabled users of BDC car parks pay for their car parking but receive an additional hour free car parking.

    1.1.1   In pay and display car parks disabled users purchase a ticket from the ticket machine in the usual way and place this along with their blue badge on the dashboard. The Parking attendants then allow an additional hour.

    1.1.2   On the pay on foot car parks (Recreation Road South and Churchfields Multi Storey) customers who register with the Council for a disabled person's smartcard receive the first 90 minutes for 40p, and then the usual tariff applies after that.

1.2   Officers were asked to form a working group to compile a report to look at the issue of granting free parking to disabled users and this has resulted in three options emerging (as set out below) with the fourth option being no change:

    1.2.1   Offer free car parking to disabled users in all BDC 'Pay on Foot' and Pay and Display' car parks.

    1.2.2   Offer an annual permit for a fee of that allows disabled users to park in BDC Pay on Foot' and Pay and Display' car parks. Whilst also retaining the existing extra one hours parking for those who do not wish to purchase a permit.

    1.2.3   Offer the first hour of parking free of charge for blue badge holders and then charge the normal rate after that one hour period.

1.3   Members should note that the working group consisted of the following people, Cllr Michael Webb, Cllr Luke Mallett, Guy Revans Kevin Hirons Fiona Scott, Rebecca Dunne, Heidi Windheuser, Tim Deakin and Christine Baxter. Additional support was given by Emily Humphies from the County Council. All of the group have commented on and accepted the survey questions, survey results and income estimation methods listed in appendix 1, 2 and 3.

CABINET   3 October 2012

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   That Members decide which of the 4 options listed below they want to adopt.

2.1.1   Option 1: Offer free car parking to disabled users displaying their Blue Badge in all BDC 'Pay on Foot' and Pay and Display' car parks (except the car park at Bromsgrove train station)

2.1.2   Option 2: Approve the principal of introducing a permit scheme (at a cost of around £80 per anum) that allows disabled users to park in all BDC 'Pay on Foot' and Pay and Display' car parks. (except the train station). This fee would be subject to an annual increase in line with the rate of inflation. The existing arrangement of offering disabled drivers an additional hour free of charge would still apply for those who chose not to purchase a permit. The annual renewal of permits would be the drivers responsibility the council will not send reminders as this would increase administration costs further. Both of these would be actively promoted.

2.1.3   Option 3: Offer the first hour of parking free of charge for blue badge holders and then charge the normal rate after that one hour period. This new practice would be actively promoted

2.1.4   Option 4: No change to current arrangements. However the additional hours free parking would be actively promoted. In addition a further survey to be carried out in the future to assess if the needs of the community has changed. Precise timings and frequency to be agreed between the Head of Service and the Portfolio Holder.

3.   KEY ISSUES

3.1   Financial Implications

3.1.1   Information regarding the number of Blue Badge holders using the 'Pay and Display' car parks is very limited. The absolute maximum revenue that could be generated from disabled bays if they were filled continuously during opening hours (assuming each user purchased the maximum ticket and 65% subsequently used the additional free hour) would be approximately £250,000. However, the actual revenue generated is likely to be less than this figure, since the spaces are not always filled.

3.1.2   Officers agreed that as there was not one single accurate method of calculating the actual income generated from disabled users of the car park that a number of different calculations would provide the best estimate of a range of possible incomes. For the purposes of this report officers have looked at four alternative methods of estimating the current income received from disabled users of the car parks. Please refer to Appendix 3 for the detail methodology and calculations.

3.1.3   The results of the four estimation methods suggest a range of between £23,000 and £46,000 for the revenue generated from disabled parking bays. However, since these are estimates we would recommend considering a higher figure when using this information for budgeting purposes. Therefore for this report officers have used an income figure of £50K which is considered to be acceptable by members of the Working Group.

3.1.5   **Option 1**

3.1.5.1   It is estimated that the loss of revenue by providing free disabled car parking in all BDC Pay and Display and also Pay on Foot car parks is believed to be in the region of £50K. In addition to this there would be the cost of changing the parking order, car park signage and publicity.

3.1.6   **Option 2**

3.1.6.1   The Council is currently undergoing a huge regeneration programme within the town centre that will potentially have wide reaching implications for parking generally both to our disabled and wider community members.

3.1.6.2   It is difficult to estimate the possible take up rate of a permit scheme as this will depend on a number of different factors. However by using the car park usage data from the survey and assuming a hour stay at 80p we can deduce the following costs shown in the table below

Frequency of Bromsgrove Car Park Use (Base: 466 Respondents)

Frequency of visit	Number of Responses	Based on a one hour visit over a year at 80p	Total per year for groups of respondents
Daily (5)	15	£208	£3120
Several Times a Week (3)	227	£125	£28375
Once a Week	151	£42	£6342
Rarely (Once a month)	55	£10	£550
Never	18	£0	0
Total	466		£38387

3.1.6.3   By dividing the total figure £38387 by the total number of respondents 466 we get a possible average spend of £82 per year. It would therefore seem reasonable for the purposes of this report to base our figures on a permit cost of £80 per year

3.1.6.2   Issuing permits to Blue Badge holders if taken up by 300 disabled users paying £80 per anum would give the council an income of £24,000. The remainder say 500 regular users paying under the existing system with a weekly stay of 2 hours (inc 1 hour free) would generate perhaps £24,800.

3.1.6.5   There could potentially be a loss in revenue dependant on the number of people taking up the permit scheme and the duration of their stay per visit. Additional costs will also be incurred in processing payments, issuing permits changing the parking order, car park signage and publicity.

3.1.6.6   One permit and one smart card will be issued to the Blue Badge holder upon receipt of the fee. Replacement permits or smart cards will be charged at £5.

3.1.7 **Option 3**

3.1.7.1   Data from the parking system indicates that around 63% of all car park users park for one hour or less it is therefore reasonable to assume that by offering the first hour free would result in a reduction of income around £30K. In addition to this there would be the cost of changing the parking order, car park signage and publicity.

3.1.7.2   Please note that this option would be extremely difficult to administer and enforce as it would require the recording of all blue badge holder vehicle registration numbers and time of arrival on every visit to the car park by our Parking Attendants.

3.1.8 **Option 4**

3.1.8.1   There are no additional financial implications with this option

3.1.9 Please note that any shortfall in budget will have to be found from either; balances, increased parking charges or other sources

3.1.10 Cost of changes to the Parking Order officers estimate would be in the region of £2000

CABINET

3.2   Legal Implications

3.2.1   Bromsgrove District Council operates a system of providing off   street parking for residents under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.   This legislation allows the Council to designate off street car parks (section 32) and regulate their operation, including the levying of charges, through a local car parking order (section 35). The current parking order in force is the District Council of Bromsgrove (Off-Street Car Parks) Order 2011.

3.2.2   Were Members minded to agree to either Option 1, Option 2 or Option 3 the current parking order would need to be updated to reflect the changes. The process for updating the order is prescribed by the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and requires the Council to give notice of proposed changes in the car   parks affected and by issuing a notice in the press. There is a 21 day consultation period following which the final order can be granted. Different rules apply in the event that any objections to the proposals are received.   Provided there are no objections the normal length of time needed to amend the car parking order is approximately 6 to 8 weeks.

3.3   Service / Operational Implications

3.3.1   In accordance with national guidelines the Council provides a number of disabled parking bays for holders of a blue badge. At the moment this is 6% of the total number of off street parking spaces per car park.

The table below sets out the numbers of spaces per car park and the percentage of disabled spaces available within Bromsgrove.

Off-Street Spaces

	Standard	Disabled	Total	Disabled spaces (%)
Churchfields	272	18	303	6.6
Hanover Street	136	9	135	6.6
Hanover Street Temp.	65	4	69	6.2
New Road	52	4	59	7.7
Parkside	88	6	94	6.8
Recreation Road North	31	3	35	9.7
Recreation Road South	268	19	295	7.1
School Drive	114	9	127	7.9
Stourbridge Road	74	5	79	6.8
Windsor Street	61	4	65	6.6
Bromsgrove Station	84	5	89	6.0

3.3.2   In addition to off street parking, under the blue badge scheme disabled drivers may park on restricted roads (such as double yellow lines) and within on street disabled bays at no cost for up to three hours when displaying a valid disabled badge and time card. The time restriction is currently enforced by the police authority traffic warden.

3.3.3   For the two "Pay on Foot car parks the Council operates a system of issuing smart cards to disabled users. Currently 1287 disabled users are registered with the 'Pay on Foot' car parks and have smart cards, but records show that only 793 of them actually use the cards.

3.3.4   Information regarding the number of Blue Badge holders using the 'Pay and Display' car parks is very limited. For this reason the figures reported and used to calculate financial implications are based on data from the pay on foot car parks and limited survey work by the car parking staff during January/February 2012 and Data gathered by the Labour Group in January 2012

3.4   Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.4.1   Meetings have already taken place with invited community members and their comments have been considered when writing this report.

3.4.2   The above meetings however represented the views of only a limited number of people and therefore it was considered appropriate to carry out a more detailed consultation. Officers have distributed a questionnaire to over 1200 blue badge holders to get their views (Appendix 1). The results and analysis of this survey can be found in Appendix 2

3.4.3   Members should note that officers were not able to access the Blue Badge holder database due to data protection issues. Therefore the group agreed to use the shopmobility (564) and smart card (444) databases together with a number of known organisations (200) to whom the survey could be sent.

3.4.4   In addition to the above the survey was advertised on the Council's website and within the local papers. A drop in session was also arranged at the Council House for residents to find out more information about the survey.

3.4.5   As a result of the restricted database options available to officers it must be noted that it is possible that a large proportion of the recipients of the survey may well be existing car park users.

4.   **RISK MANAGEMENT**

4.1   There is a risk of negative publicity regarding this report if either option 2, option 3 or option 4 is agreed

4.2   There will be a negative financial implication to the revenue income if either option 1 or option 3 is agreed. This could anywhere between £23 and £74K.

4.2   There may be a negative financial implication to the revenue income if option 2 is agreed. This will depend on the number of times disabled customers use the car parks and the duration of their stay. The parking data is not available to undertake an accurate prediction.

4.3   It will be extremely difficult to monitor and enforce Blue Badge holder parking if option 3 is agreed.

5.   **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Blue badge car park survey questionnaire

Appendix 2 – Survey Results

Appendix 3 – Income calculation methods

6.   **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Bromsgrove District Council (Off-Street Car Parks) Order 2011

7.   **KEY**

        N/A

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Guy Revans
email: g.revans@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel.:   01527 64252 ext 3292

Name: Kevin Hirons
email: k.hirons@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel.:   01527 881705

Survey Questionnaire

CABINET

APPENDIX 2

Survey Results

<u>**APPENDIX 3**</u>

Income calculation methodology

Blue Badge Car Park Users Survey

Bromsgrove District Council is carrying out a full review of 'Blue Badge' parking including accessibility and charging. We would welcome your views/participation in this survey.

About You

1. Do you use Bromsgrove Car Parks?

☐   ☐

Yes   No

2. Do you drive yourself or does someone drive for you?

☐   ☐   ☐

Drive myself   Driven by someone   Both

3. Do you use the BDC Shopmobility?

☐   ☐

Yes   No

4. Do you use the 'BURT' Bus?

☐   ☐

Yes   No

> BURT is short for Bromsgrove Urban Rural Transport a safe, secure service for people who are unable to use public transport. Any resident of Bromsgrove District can register to use BURT if they have difficulties with personal mobility, or if suitable public transport is not available. You must be registered with BURT in order to book a journey. Further conditions apply, please contact call 0800 917 9144 for details.

5. Do you use Bromsgrove Town Centre for shopping?

☐   ☐

Yes   No

6. If not shopping, what is the main reason for you parking in Bromsgrove Town Centre?

_____
_____
_____
_____

7. Is there a usual day you like to visit the Town Centre?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun

☐	☐
No set day	n/a

Your use of parking in Bromsgrove

8. How often would you use Bromsgrove Car Parks?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Never	Rarely	Once a week	Several times a week	Daily

9. Do you ever choose to park in the town centre at a location / car park other than a BDC Car Park?

☐	☐
Yes	No

If yes, please state other location and why you use that facility _____

_____

10. Do you find sufficient Disabled Car Parking spaces?

☐	☐	☐
Yes	No	Sometimes

11. Do you use the extra free hour offered to Blue Badge holders?

☐   ☐   ☐

Yes   No   Wasn't aware of this offer

12. Which Bromsgrove District Council Car Park do you use most often?

☐ Bromsgrove Station   ☐ Recreation Road North

☐ Churchfields   ☐ Recreation Road South

☐ Dolphin Centre   ☐ School Drive

☐ Hanover Street   ☐ Stourbridge Road

☐ New Road   ☐ Windsor Street

☐ Parkside   ☐ Do not use any of the above

13. Do you prefer 'Pay on Foot' i.e. 'Asda' car park or 'Pay and Display' Car Parks?

☐   ☐   ☐

Pay on Foot   Pay and Display   No preference

Ease of access

14. Do you find the disabled car parking spaces to be at the most convenient location for you?

☐   ☐

Yes   No   *If no, please state reason* _____

_____

_____

15. Do you find the Payment Machines easy to operate?

☐   ☐

Yes   No   *If no, please state why and which car park* _____

_____

16. Do you find the position of the Pay Machines suitable?

☐   ☐

Yes   No   *If no, please state why and which car park* _____

_____

17. Do you find parking difficult in any other areas of Bromsgrove District Council area?

If so please state where: _____

Cost of parking

18. Does the cost of car parking for Blue Badge holders in Bromsgrove DC car parks stop/reduce the frequency of your visits to the Town?

☐   ☐

Yes   No

Why? _____

_____

19. Does the cost of car parking for Blue Badge Holders in Bromsgrove DC car parks mean that you shop elsewhere?

☐   ☐

Yes   No

20. Which other places/towns do you visit for shopping?

_____

_____

21. Why do you choose to shop at there?

_____

_____

Any other comments

22. Is there anything Bromsgrove District Council could do to that would encourage you to use the Car Parks more regularly?

_____

_____

_____

23. Is there an area in the Town Centre you would like to park, but are currently unable to?

_____

_____

24. To help us understand the different needs of Blue Badge holders within the district, please complete these optional questions:

Age of Blue Badge holder _(please tick)_

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+

25. If you would like to receive feedback on the results of this consultation, or would like further information regarding parking, Shopmobility or BURT, please tick the relevant box:

I would like:

☐   ☐

Feedback   Further information *please state* _____

26. Please fill in your contact details:

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____

Blue Badge number: _____

Thank you for taking the trouble to complete this survey. Please place the questionnaire in the enclosed pre-paid envelope and post it back to the Council by the 8th July 2012.

This survey and the information contained within will be used only for the purposes of the parking review. The information will not be forwarded to a third party.

14 June 2012

«Title» «First_Name» «Surname»
«Address_1»
«Address_2»
«Town»
«Postcode»

Dear «Title» «Surname»

Blue Badge Parking in Bromsgrove – Your feedback is important to us!

Bromsgrove District Council is holding a cross political party scrutiny exercise into blue badge parking across the District. This will include looking at ease of use of the service, location of spaces and costs etc.

As a Blue Badge holder in Bromsgrove, I write to personally ask for your input to help shape the service for the future. If you could spare 5 minutes to complete the enclosed survey and return it to us, it would be very much appreciated.

The completed survey should be placed inside the prepaid envelope enclosed and posted to us prior to the closing date of 8th July 2012.

If you would like to discuss this personally with me, I can be contacted via the Council House.

Thank you in advance for assisting us with this survey.

Kind regards,

Michael Webb
BDC Portfolio Holder

Encs   Questionnaire and Pre-paid envelope

This page is intentionally left blank

Blue Badge Car Park Users Survey – July 2012

Contents

Executive Summary

About the Survey and Respondents (see page 6)

- Approximately 1208 surveys were sent out to Blue Badge Holders:
  - 564 recipients were identified from Shopmobility records. It is noted that these people are more likely to already visit the town for shopping.
  - 444 from the pay on foot Blue Badge data base (Smartcard). It is noted that these people are more likely to be existing car park users and already visit the town for shopping.
  - The other 200 recipients were identified through various other organisations with links to people with disabilities.
  - The questionnaire was also available on line and from the Customer Service Centre.
- A total of 474 responses were received - a 39% response rate.
- The majority of respondents (78%) were aged 65+, with a further 18% aged 45-64.

Level of Car Park Use (see pages 8 to 13)

- Most respondents to the survey (94%) stated that they *do* use BDC Car Parks, and 92% said they use Bromsgrove Town Centre for shopping. Other than shopping, the most common reason for parking in Bromsgrove Town Centre was to go to the bank.
- The frequency of visits to the town is quite high with almost half of respondents stating that they visit several times a week and a further third stating they visit once a week.
- A third of respondents said they chose to park in areas other than the BDC car parks, most commonly in short stay spaces or disabled bays closer to the town centre (on The Strand and Church Street).
- The most common reason for parking outside of BDC car parks (favoured by over half of those providing an answer) was to find spaces closer to the desired location, thus limiting walking distance with several Blue Badge Holders commenting that they have difficulty walking the distance between BDC car parks and the town centre shops. Fewer respondents (40%) chose alternative parking because it was free or because they thought car parks were too expensive. This indicates that the distance to walk was slightly more influential than the cost of parking.

Bromsgrove Parking Systems (see pages 13 to 17)

- 65% of respondents said they make use of the free hour parking offer to Blue Badge Holders, with 26% stating that they were not aware of the offer.
- Most people prefer pay on foot (57%) over pay and display (14%) parking systems.
- The vast majority of respondents felt that disabled parking spaces are in the most convenient location (87% agree), that payment machines are easy to operate (92%) and that their position is suitable (85%)

The Cost of Blue Badge Parking (see pages 17 to 19)

- Half of all respondents stated that the cost of parking does not stop or reduce the frequency with which they visit Bromsgrove Town Centre – and half said that it did.
  - o 169 respondents provided a reason as to why the cost of parking stops or reduces the frequency of their visits to Bromsgrove Town Centre, of which a total of 151 (89.5%) provided reasons related to the charge to park (saying things such as it is too expensive, it's free elsewhere, Blue Badge Holders shouldn't have to pay or because it used to be free)
  - o 25 respondents provided a reason as to why the cost did not stop / reduce the frequency, 6 of which stating it was because they had no choice but to use the car parks due to the limitations of their disability.
- Similarly, half of respondents stated that the cost of parking for Blue Badge Holders means that they shop elsewhere – and half that it does not.

Other Areas People Chose to Shop and Why (see pages 19 to 22)

- The most popular other areas that respondents chose to shop were: Redditch (favoured by 52% of respondents), Droitwich (26%), Worcester (26%), out of town supermarkets (25%), Merry Hill (18%) and Kidderminster (17%).
- When asked why they chose to shop in other areas, respondents indicated that availability of free parking is equally as important as the choice / variety of shops.
- It can be broadly concluded that people are more likely to choose to shop in Redditch, Worcester, Merry Hill and Birmingham because there is a better choice of shops, whereas they go to Droitwich, out of town supermarkets or Kidderminster to use the free parking.

Other Thoughts on Bromsgrove District Council Parking (pages 23 to 25)

- Despite the responses to previous questions indicating that the variety of shops was equally as important as free parking when choosing a place to shop, when asked "is there anything BDC could do to encourage you to use car parks more regularly?", more respondents identified free parking for Blue Badge Holders (37%) than any other reason (note: respondents were not presented with multiple choice answers to this question, but were free to write anything they felt was appropriate).
- The vast majority of respondents (67.7%) stated that there wasn't anywhere that they would like to park but were currently unable to. However, where people did provide an answer most stated they would like to be able to park closer to the High Street (11%) especially on Windsor Street or around Church Street and Chapel Walk.

Introduction

About the Survey

The Blue Badge Car Park Users survey was conducted by Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) in July 2012.

564 postal surveys were sent out to Blue Badge Holders who had been identified from Shopmobility records. It is noted that these people are more likely to already visit the town for shopping. A further 444 were sent to those registered on the pay on foot Blue Badge data base (Smart Cards). It is noted that these people are more likely to be existing car park users and already visit the town for shopping. Roughly 200 surveys were also sent out to those identified through various other organisations with links to people with disabilities. The questionnaire was also available online and from the Customer Service Centre. The estimate for total surveys sent out is approximately 1208.

The preferred method of identifying Blue Badge Holders from Bromsgrove District would have been to use records held by the Worcestershire Hub (where residents can apply for their Blue Badge) – but this was not possible at the time at which the survey was sent out. This is acknowledged as a limitation of the survey.

It is noted that the method of identifying participants for the survey is likely to affect the results.

When analysis was conducted a total of 474 surveys had been returned to Bromsgrove District Council – this provides a response rate of 39%.

About the respondents

Age

The majority of respondents (78%) were aged 65+, with a further 18% aged 45-64. Just 4% were aged 44 or below. There were 5 respondents in the 0-14 category – in most cases the survey had been filled out by a parent or carer on behalf of the Blue Badge Holder.

Where they live

Though 90% of total respondents to the survey who provided an address lived within Bromsgrove District, there were a total of 44 returned surveys from residents living elsewhere. Of those:

- 14 lived in Wychavon (mainly in Droitwich or the Wychbold area)
- 11 lived in Redditch
- 4 in Wyre Forest
- 1 in Worcester City

14 respondents lived outside of Worcestershire, most in Birmingham (e.g. Rednal, Kings Norton, Northfield) though two were from Cleobury Mortimer, one lived in Stourbridge and one in Stoke on Trent.

Of those who lived within Bromsgrove District, the vast majority lived in close proximity to Bromsgrove town centre with 70% having home addresses in the wards of Sidemoor, Catshill, St Johns, Charford, Marlbrook, Whitford, Norton, Slideslow or Stoke Heath.

Figure 1 shows Bromsgrove district and the immediate surrounding area, and the home location of respondents to the survey.

Figure 1: Map of Blue Badge Car Park Users Survey Respondents
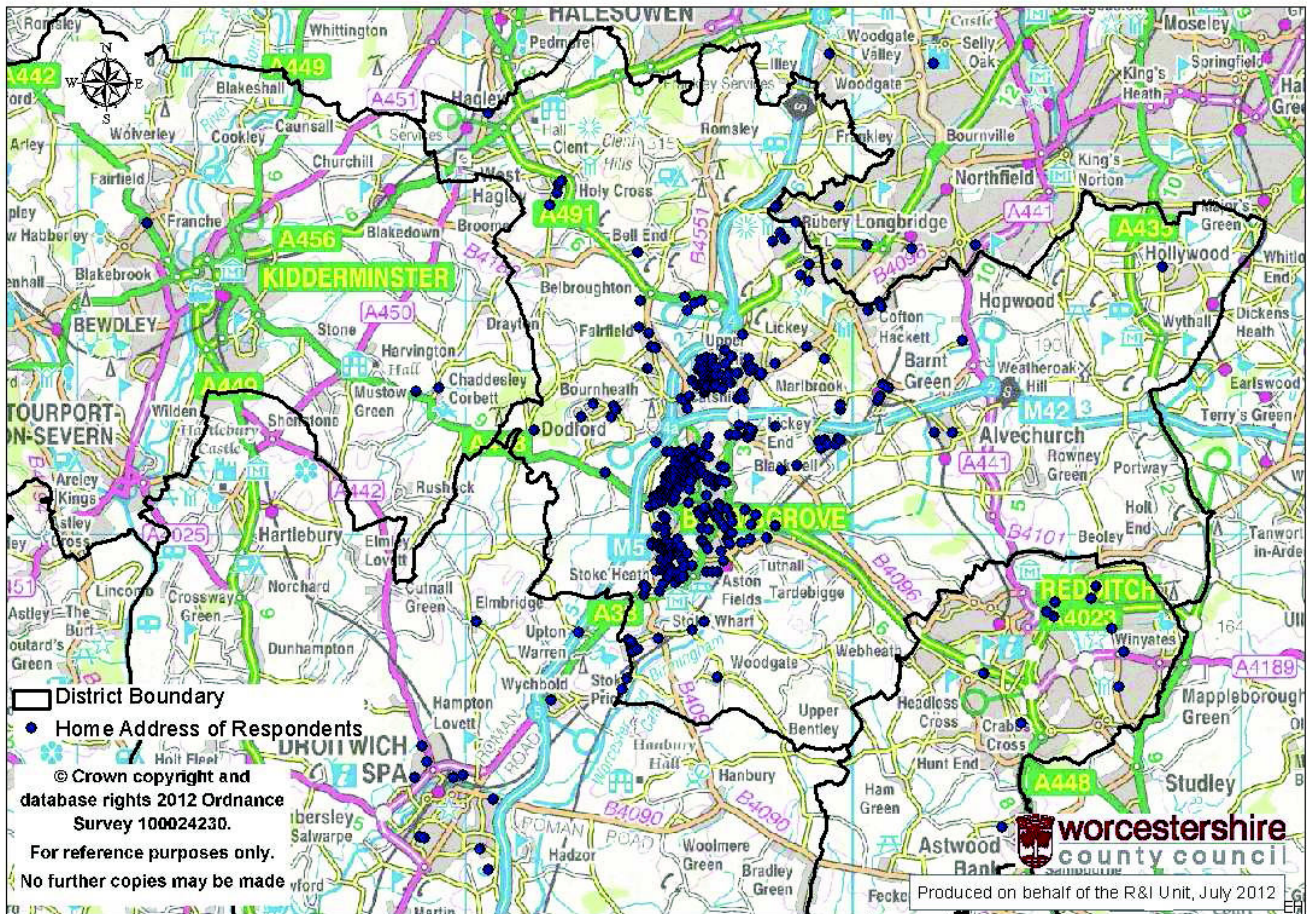
About the analysis

Only 68% of survey respondents included their Blue Badge number in their response. However, this is not necessarily an indication of the number of respondents who were actually Blue Badge Holders. The section where respondents were asked to provide their Blue Badge number was not a mandatory part of the survey, and was on the very last page. Respondents were not asked "are you a Blue Badge Holder?".

Preliminary analysis indicated very little difference in the responses to the survey questions when looking at total respondents versus those who provided a Blue Badge number. Therefore, unless otherwise stated, all analysis in this report is based on total respondents to the survey.

Results

Question 1: Do you use Bromsgrove Car Parks?

94% of the 465 respondents who provided an answer to this question stated that they do use Bromsgrove Car Parks.

Question 2: Do you drive yourself or does someone drive you?

Figure 2: Pie Chart of Question 2

Q2. Do you drive yourself or does someone drive for you?
(Base: 466 Respondents)

27%
39%
34%

- Both
- Drive Myself
- Driven By Someone
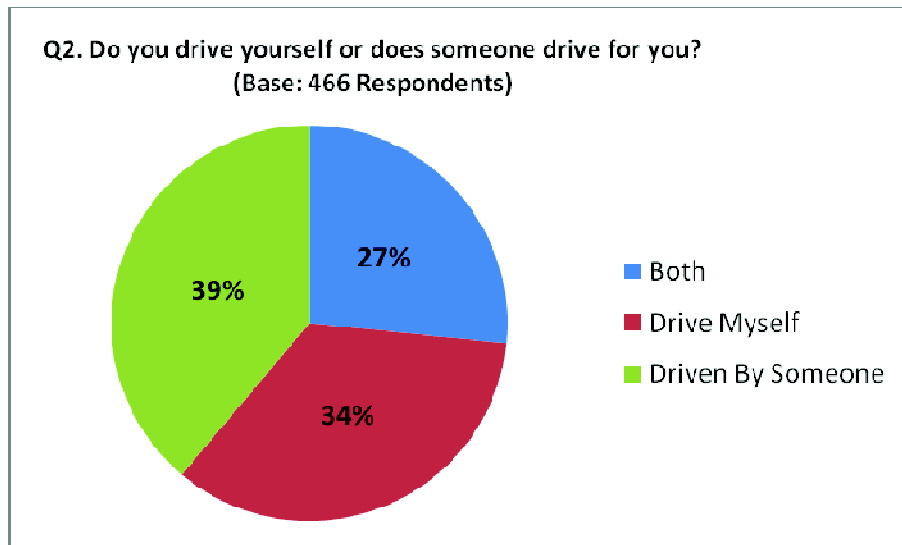
Though slightly more respondents said they were driven by someone else than the other options in question 2 (39%), the split was fairly even with a further 34% stating that they drive themselves.

Q3. Do you use BDC Shopmobility?

Q4. Do you use the 'BURT' Bus?

Roughly a quarter of respondents (120 respondents or 26%) had used shopmobility. However, just 19 people in total said that they used the BURT Bus (see figure 3). 444 respondents stated they did not use BURT.

Figure 3: Bar Chart of Questions 2 and 3
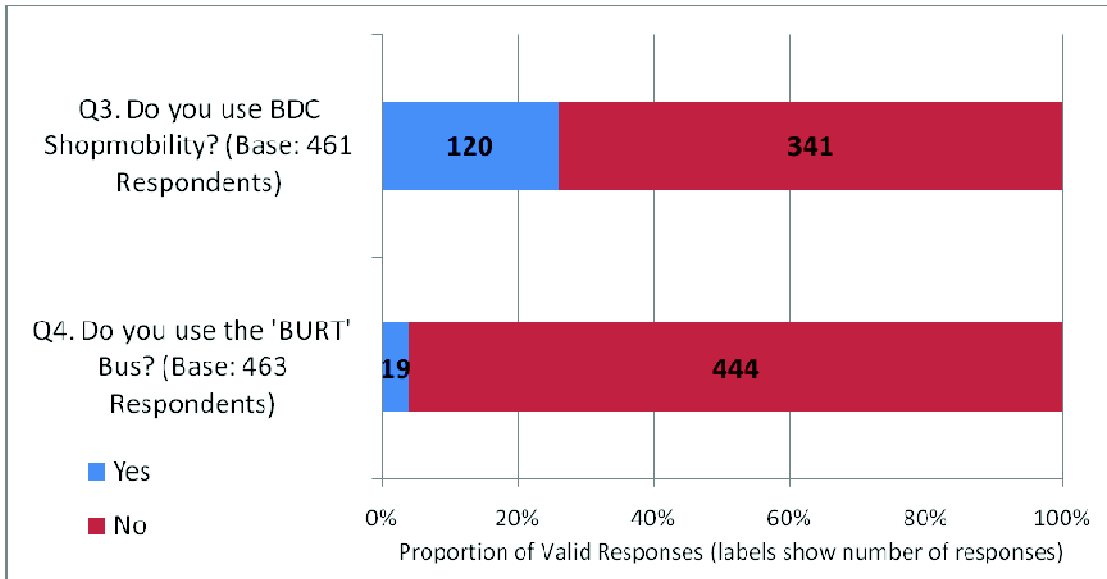
Q5. Do you use Bromsgrove Town Centre for Shopping?

92% of respondents said that they did use Bromsgrove town centre for shopping, with just 38 respondents saying they didn't.

Q6. If not shopping, what is the main reason for you parking in Bromsgrove Town Centre?

Banking (including visiting the building society) was the most commonly stated reason for people to visit Bromsgrove, other than to shop. The full list of the reasons provided can be viewed in figure 4.

Figure 4: Bar Chart of Question 6
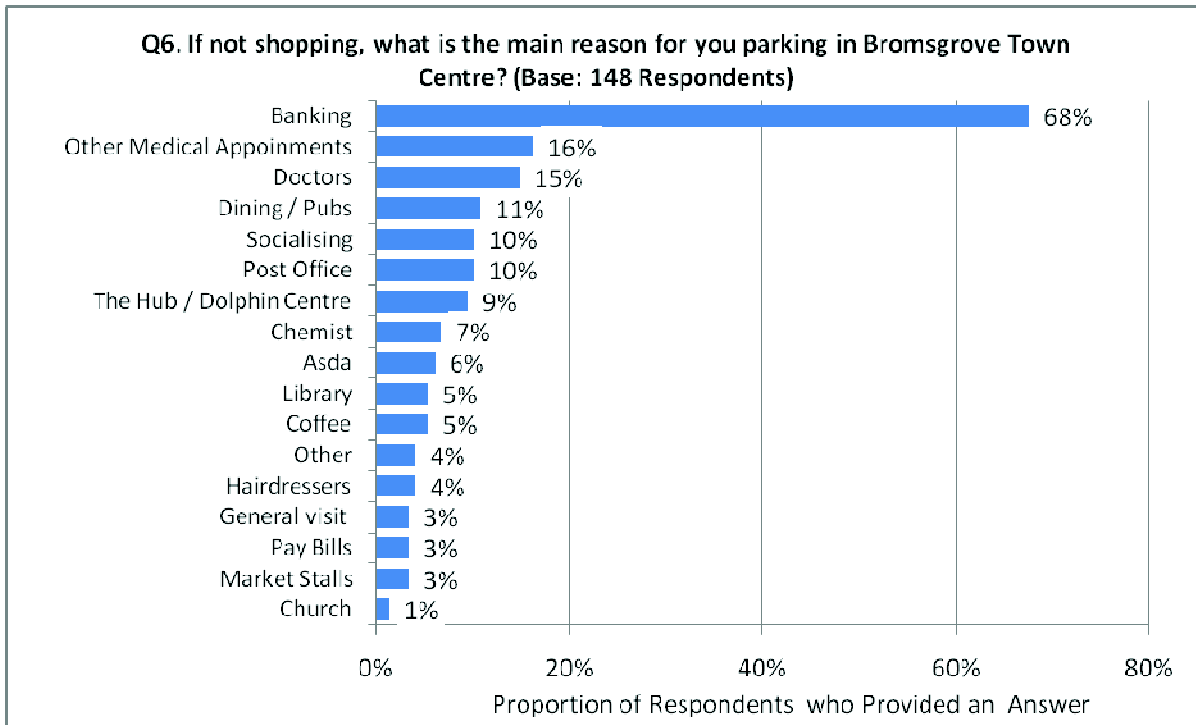
"General Visit" includes people stating they visit Bromsgrove to walk around the town, for somewhere to go, for the scenery or for window shopping. The "Other" category included those visiting to bet, get the bus to Worcester, use shopmobility, go to the solicitors or to the job centre. "Other Medical Appointments" included visits to the opticians, dentist, chiropodist, hospital, for physiotherapy or for a hearing test.

Q7. Is there a usual day you like to visit the Town Centre?
The vast majority of respondents (83%) stated there was no set day when they liked to visit the town centre.

Of those who did provide an answer, Tuesday was the most popular day of the week to visit the town centre (as shown in figure 5). However, it must be noted that the below chart is only based on the responses of 69 people (just 15% of total survey respondents), and so any conclusions drawn from the chart are less likely to provide an accurate representation of the total population than those from questions with a larger base of responses.

Figure 5: Chart of Question 7
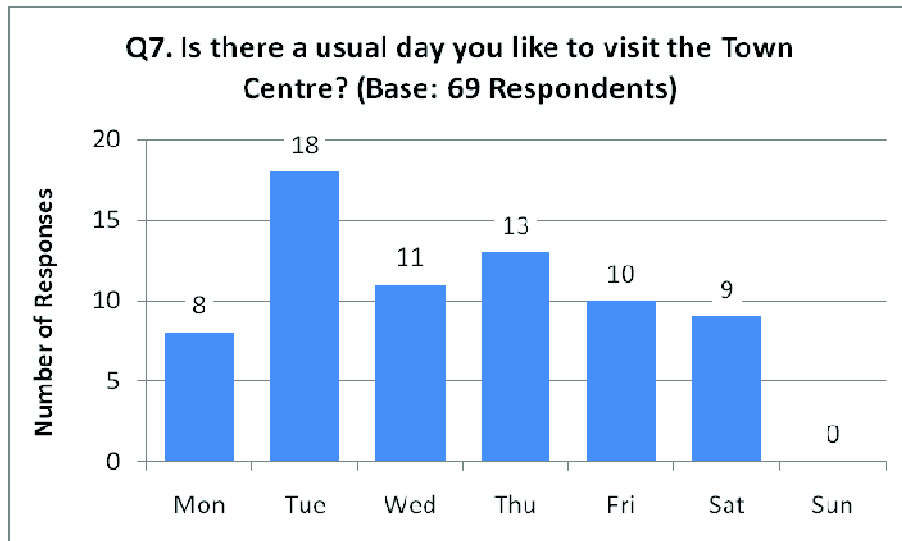
Q8. How often would you use Bromsgrove Car Parks?
Around half of respondents stated that they used Bromsgrove car parks several times a week, with a further third stating they visited once a week. Very few (just 18 people) said they never visited the town, and a further 8 left this question blank - which ties in fairly closely with the 30 respondents who stated in question 1 that they did not use Bromsgrove Car Parks.

*Figure 6: Frequency of Bromsgrove Car Park Use (Base: 466 Respondents)*

	Number of Responses	Proportion of Valid Responses
Daily	15	3%
Several Times a Week	227	49%
Once a Week	151	32%
Rarely	55	12%
Never	18	4%

Q9. Do you ever choose to park in the town centre at a location / car park other than a BDC Car Park? If yes, please state other location and why you use that facility

A third of respondents stated that they *did* choose to park in other town centre locations (from a base of 446 valid responses). This implies that the majority (66%) only park in BDC Car Parks.

A total of 140 respondents provided information on the other locations they choose to park, and 73 provided a reason why. The results as displayed in the two charts in figure 7 below. It is important to note that respondents were not presented with multiple choice answers to this question, but were free to write anything they felt was appropriate.

Figure 7: Chart of Question 9

Q9. Do you ever chose to park in the town centre at a location / car park other than a BDC Car Park? If yes, please state other location (Base: 140 Respondents)

Q9. Do you ever chose to park in the town centre at a location / car park other than a BDC Car Park? If yes, please state why you use that facility
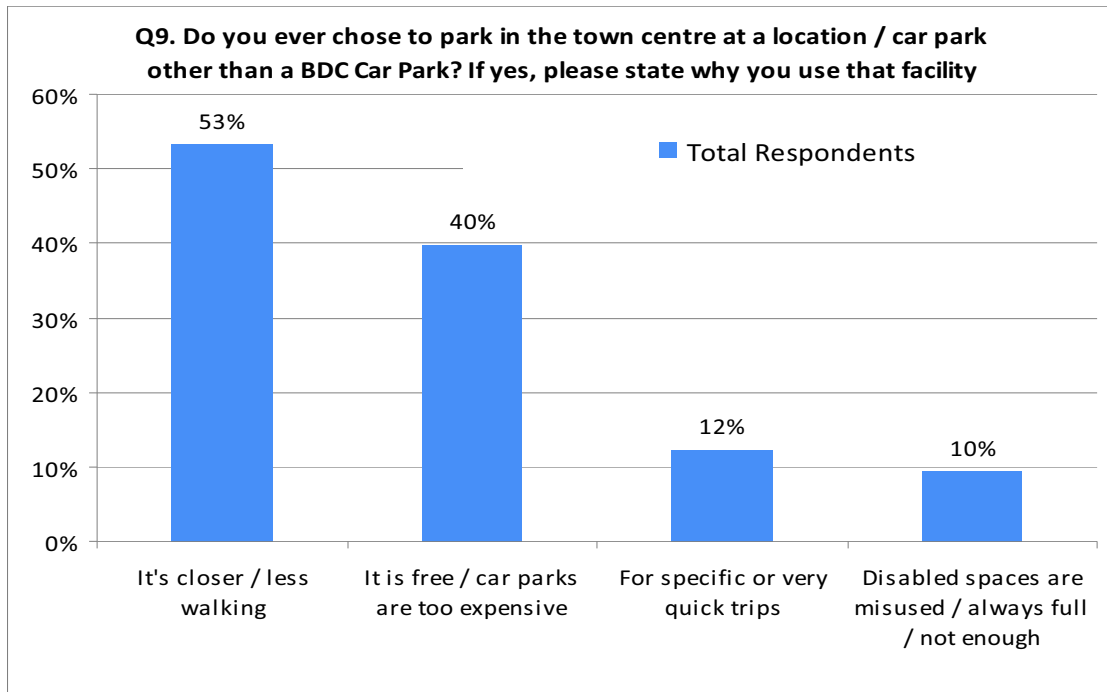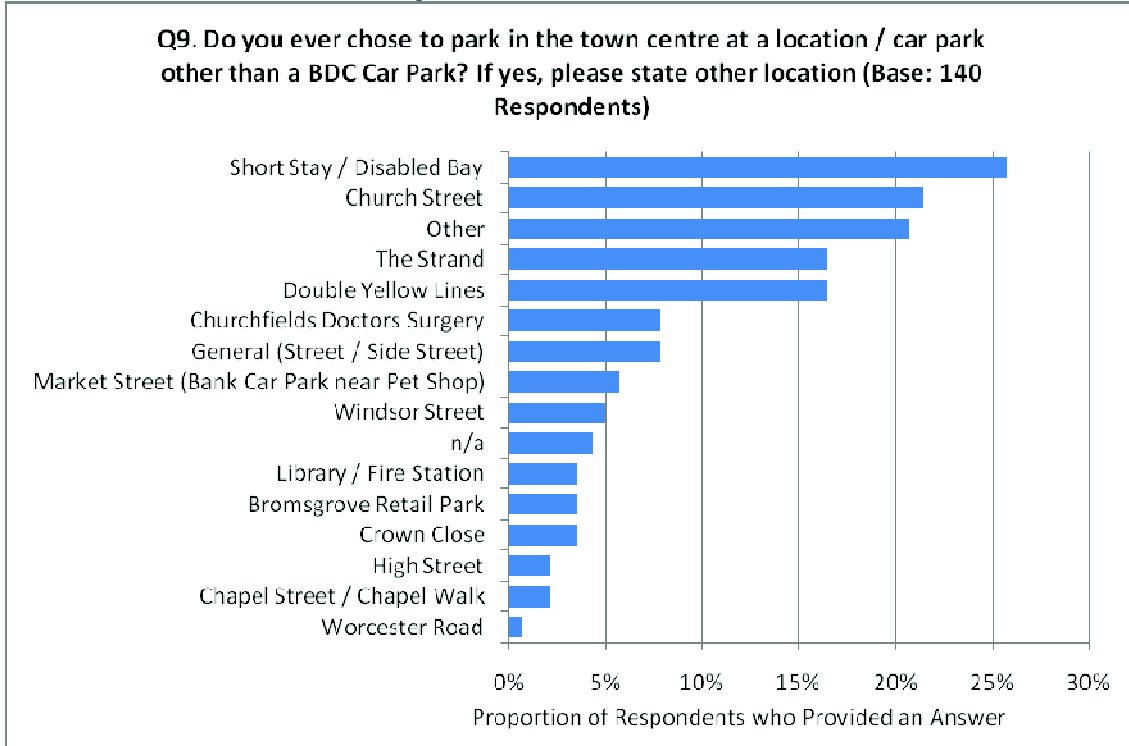
NOTE: Total percentages may add up to more than 100 where people provided more than one area they choose to park, and/or more than one reason why.

Short stay disabled bays were the preferred alternative parking location for respondents, especially on Church Street (opposite Korner Kitchen) and on The Strand (outside the Queens Head). Parking on double yellow lines was also a popular alternative, with 16% of the total 140 respondents to this question stating that they preferred to use their Blue Badge privileges to park for free in this way.

The most common reason for parking outside of BDC car parks was to find spaces closer to the desired location, thus limiting the walking distance (favoured by over half of respondents), with many respondents commenting that they have difficulty walking the distance between BDC car parks and the town centre shops. Fewer respondents (40%) chose alternative parking because it was free or because they thought car parks were too expensive.

This indicates that the distance to walk was slightly more influential than the cost of parking.

However, just to reiterate, overall, most respondents stated that they do not chose to park in other town centre locations, indicating that people are generally more likely to park in BDC car parks than elsewhere.

Q10. Do you find sufficient Disabled Car Parking spaces?
Responses to this question were fairly evenly split with 31% answering "yes", 29% "no" and 39% saying "sometimes".

Q11. Do you use the extra free hour offered to Blue Badge Holders?
The majority of respondents (65% of total respondents) said that they *do* make use of the free hour offered to Blue Badge Holders. Although, roughly a quarter (26%) said that they were not aware of the offer.

Figure 8: Chart of Question 11

Q11. Do you use the extra free hour offered to Blue Badge Holders?

Total Respondents (Base: 448 Respondents)

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Was Not Aware of This Offer
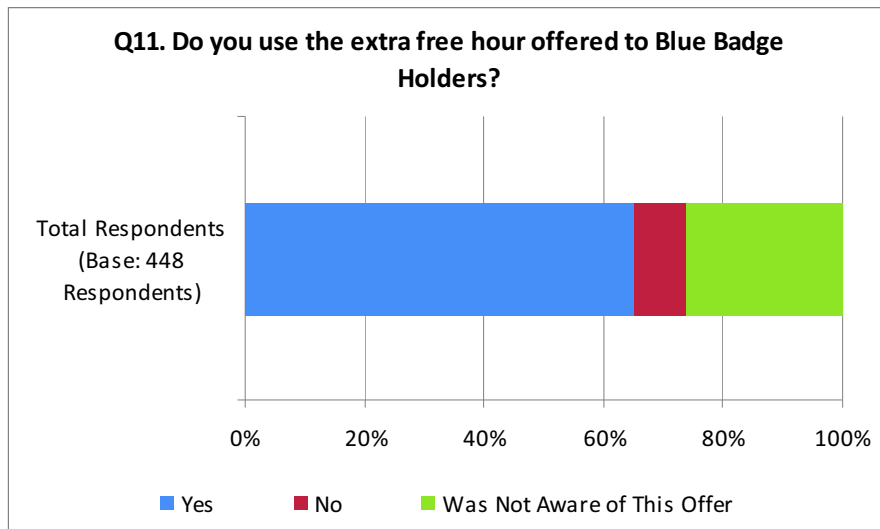
Q12. Which Bromsgrove District Council Car Park do you use most often?
The most popular car park with Blue Badge Holders was Recreation Road South with 50% of respondents saying they use this car park most often. Churchfields multi-storey was also popular (31%) as was Windsor Street (20%).

Please note: 1008 of the 1208 surveys sent out were to known users of either Shopmobility (based in Churchfields) or Smartcards (used for payments in Churchfields and Recreation Road South).

Figure 9: Chart of Question 12
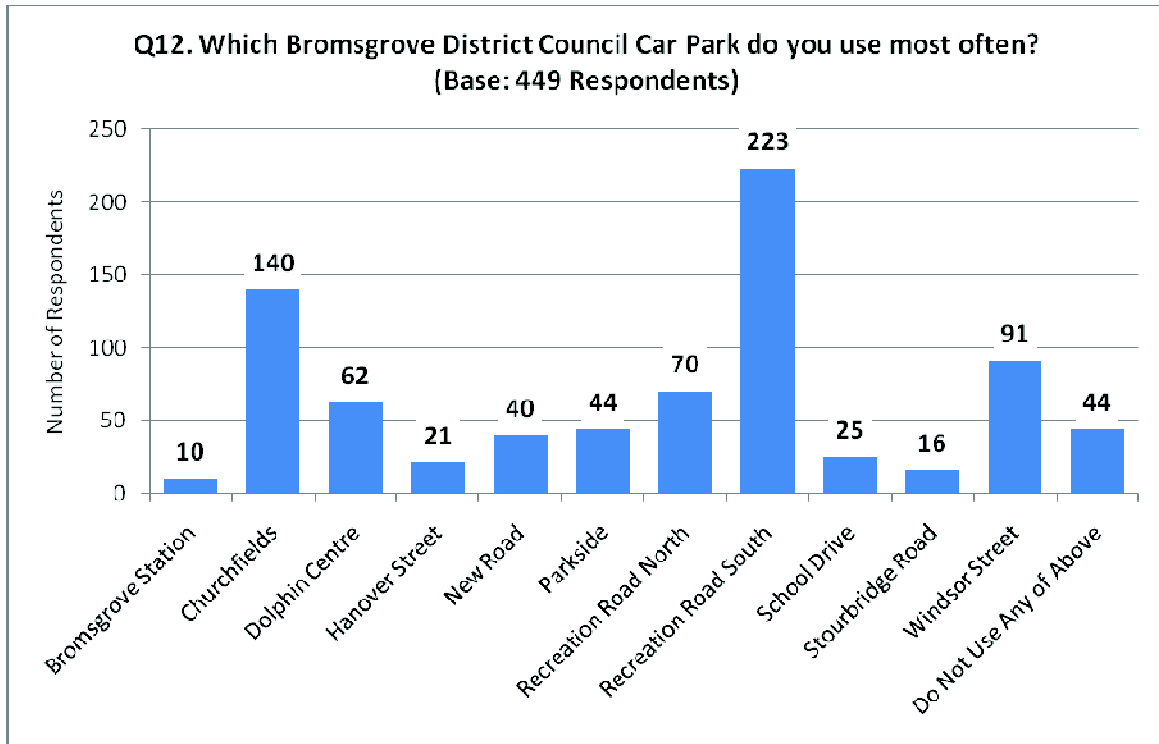
*NOTE: Respondents were able to tick the box for more than one car park in answer to this question, so the number of respondents in the above chart will add up to more than the total number of completed surveys received.*

Just 10% of respondents stated that they did not use any of the car parks listed.

Q13. Do you prefer 'Pay on Foot' i.e. 'Asda' car park or 'Pay and Display' Car Parks?

Figure 10: Chart of Question 13
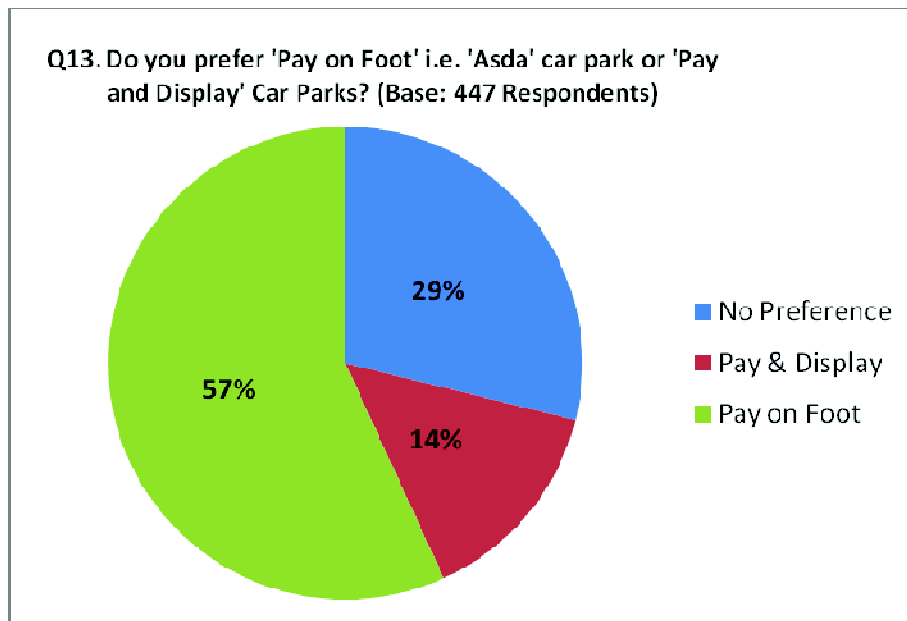
The majority of respondents (57%) seem to favour the pay on foot system with just 14% stating they prefer pay and display. The remaining 29% had no preference. This ties in well with responses to questions 18 and 22 where some people stated that they would like more pay on foot machines, and that they would like to be able to use their smartcard to pay for parking in more areas.

Q14. Do you find the disabled car parking spaces to be at the most convenient location for you? If no, please state reason

Q15.Do you find the Payment Machines easy to operate? Q15(a). If no, please state why and which car park

Q16. Do you find the position of the Pay Machines suitable? Q16(a). If no, please state why and which car park

The results from the above three questions are presented together as there was some repetition in the answers provided.

Figure 11: Chart of Questions 14, 15 and 16 – Yes or No
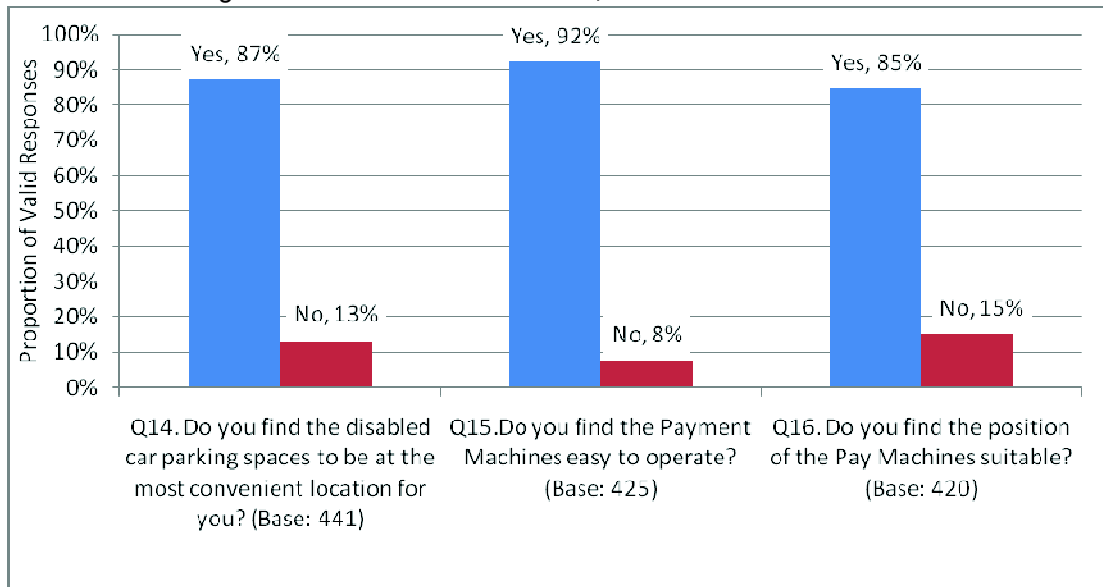
As figure 11 shows, the vast majority of respondents felt that disabled parking spaces are in the most convenient location, that payment machines are easy to operate and that their position is suitable.

The reasons provided by the small proportion of respondents who answered no to questions 14 and 15 are listed in figure 12 alongside the number of respondents who gave each reason. It is important to note that when providing reasons, residents were not presented with multiple choice answers, but were free to write anything they felt was appropriate.

Figure 12: Table of Reasons Provided in Questions 14 and 15

Reasons why disabled car parking spaces were not thought to be at the most convenient location? (Base: 62)		Reasons why Payment Machines were not thought to be easy to operate? (Base: 46)	
Spaces are too far away / it is too difficult to walk to shops	22	Long queues (especially difficult with scooter / wheelchair; thought to be caused by having to put in car registration / out of order machines / not enough machines)	8
There aren't enough spaces	6	Too complicated (too many buttons)	5
Not enough spaces near town (e.g. Queens Head, Church Street)	4	The coin slot is too high	2
Payment Machine is too far away from spaces	3	Because change is needed (don't accept cards)	2
Spaces are not large enough (especially for wheelchair users)	3	Registered Blind	2
Not convenient because blue badge holder have to pay (principle - should be free)	2	"Arthritis in hands makes putting registration In and coins In machine difficult at times"	1
Can't move between car parks on one ticket	2	"Can be difficult to see when the sun is on the screen"	1
BB Spaces are misused (by taxi / deliveries)	2	"Difficult to stand for long enough to sort out change"	1
You have to cross Market Street (dangerous) to get to the High Street	1	"The One Closest To The Spaces Is Very Often Out Of Order (It Is Difficult To Remove The Ticket From The Machine)"	1
The slope at New Road car park is inconvenient / difficult	1	Machines are too far from disabled spaces	1

In answer to the free text question 16, "do you find the position of the Pay Machines suitable?", the most common complaint provided related to the location of the pay stations in Recreation Road South:

- 17 people stated that the position of the machines was fine if they were visiting Asda, but those people who park in the disabled bays then go over the crossing in to the town centre, then had to walk all the way to Asda to pay the ticket.
- Seven people also stated that when parking in Churchfields, the distance to the pay machine was too far, and that there should be an additional machine in the multi-storey car park itself. This was especially problematic to people who forgot to pay when outside the supermarket then had to walk back to the store.
- It was suggested that more machines spread out across the car park would be beneficial.

Five people also mentioned that when parking in the disabled bays in the Dolphin Centre, which are conveniently near the entrance, they have to walk into the centre of the car park to get a ticket, which was thought to be too far for some, with others mentioning difficulties with the slope of the car park.

Other general comments included that the pay machines were too far away from spaces in all car parks, that queuing was difficult with a mobility scooter, that some machines are too high (difficult in a wheelchair). For a full list of comments made in answer to questions 14, 15 & 16, please contact ehumphreys@worcestershire.gov.uk

Q17. Do you find parking difficult in any other areas of Bromsgrove District Council area? If so please state where:

It is important to note that respondents were not presented with multiple choice answers to this question, but were free to write anything they felt was appropriate.

A total of 71 people (15% of the total respondents to the survey) provided an answer to question 17. This indicates that 85% of respondents did not find parking difficult in other areas of Bromsgrove.

Most people either gave a location *or* a reason why they did find parking difficult, so it is not easy to match up specific issues to specific areas of the town. In general, answers were widely varied, but a few patterns did emerge – though it must be noted that these patterns are based on the opinions of just a few people and so should not be used as an indication of the thoughts of the entire Blue Badge Holder population.

Overall, 21 people stated that they found parking difficult in other areas due to a lack of spaces. Specific areas mentioned include: Church Street, Crown Close, Dolphin Centre, New Road, Parkside, Rubery, Sanders Park and the train station.

- 10 people stated they found it difficult to park in Windsor Street, four of those because there were not enough spaces.
- 10 people stated they found it difficult to park on Church Street, four of those because there were not enough spaces.

Other responses to this question were very limited.

**Q18. Does the cost of car parking for Blue Badge holders in Bromsgrove DC car parks stop / reduce the frequency of your visits to the Town? Why?**

Figure 13: Chart of Question 18: Yes or No
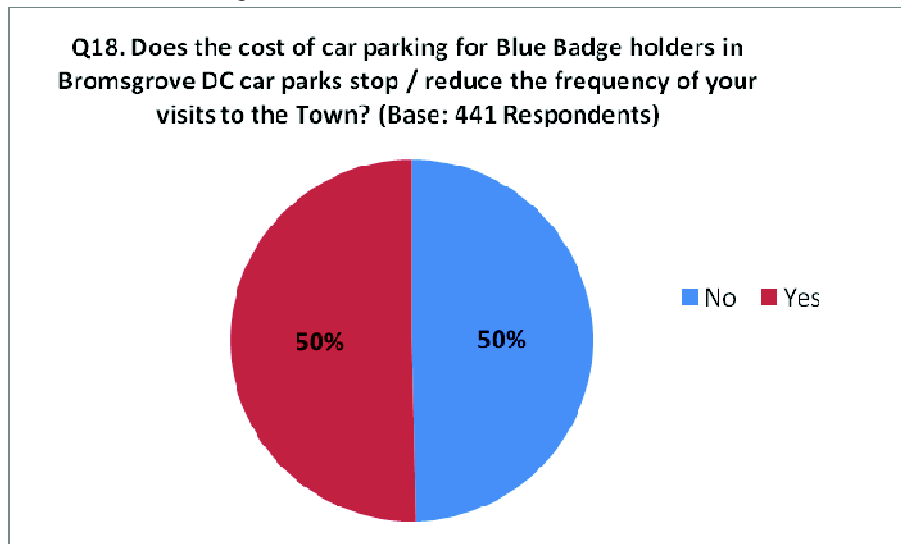
Answers to this question were split evenly, with half of all respondents stating that the cost of parking does stop or reduce the frequency with which they visit Bromsgrove Town Centre, and half saying it did.

Figure 14: Chart of Question 18: Reasons Why
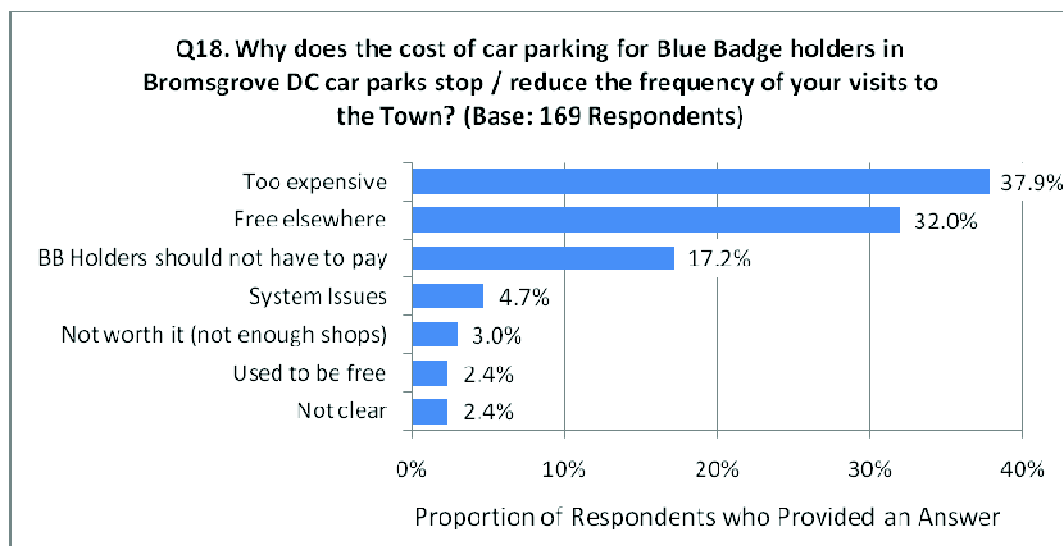
Of the respondents who stated that the cost of parking *did* stop of reduce the frequency of their visits to the town, a total of 169 people further provided a reason for their answer in the free text section provided.

- The most common reason was that the cost of parking is too expensive (38%) – specifically for pensioners or those on reduced income (such as those unable to work due to their disability)
- A close second was the fact that parking for Blue Badge Holders is free elsewhere (32%), for example in supermarkets, on double yellow lines or in neighbouring districts (32%).
- A further four (2.4%) people said that they didn't use the car parks anymore because they used to be free in Bromsgrove – indicating that they used to park there, but no longer do since charging was introduced.
- 17% felt that Blue Badge Holders should not have to pay for parking, either because they have no choice but to use their cars as they can't walk very far; because it takes them longer to shop; or because they already pay for the Blue Badge so should not have to pay again to park. This caused some respondents to avoid BDC car parks on principle.
- Five people (3%) stated that the cost of parking was not worth it because there were not enough shops.

Eight people stated that they didn't use the car parks because of "system issues". These issues included:

- Having to use two or three car parks to get what they wanted, moving between those closest to the shops they needed
- Finding the system confusing
- One respondent felt frustrated that they could only use the smartcard in Recreation Road, feeling it would be better if it could be used in all car parks, whereas one other stated that they didn't like the pay on foot system
- One stated that they thought supermarkets should refund parking (as some other shops do)
- One thought that the day time charges were ok, but that it was too expensive to park in the evening.
- One stated they would prefer an annual pass.

Just 25 people provided a reason as to why the cost of car parking *didn't* stop them from using BDC car parks. Of those:

- Six stated that it was because they had no choice – being disabled, they have to use their car to shop as they can't walk from home, and so they have little other choice but to use the car parks provided.
- Five people stated that they thought the cost was reasonable, and two thought that it was right that Blue Badge Holders should have to pay, just like everyone else – though it was noted that free parking might help to attract more visitors to the town.
- One person thought that having to pay to use disabled spaces helped to prevent misuse of spaces.
- One person also said that close proximity is more important than cost.

Q19. Does the cost of car parking for Blue Badge Holders in Bromsgrove DC car parks mean that you shop elsewhere?

Figure 15: Chart of Question 19: Yes or No
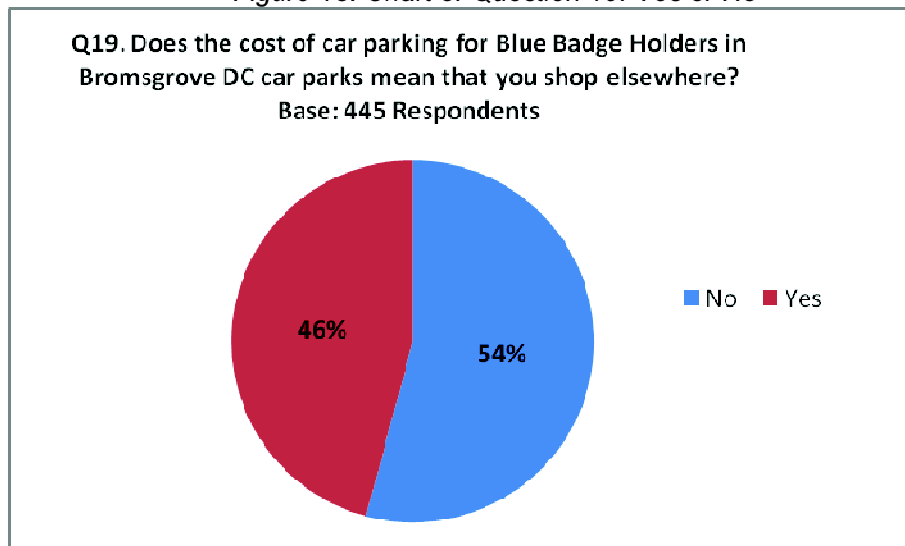
In a similar result to that of question 18, just over half of respondents (54%) stated that the cost of parking for Blue Badge Holders does *not* mean that they shop elsewhere. Leaving just under half (46%) who state that is does.

Q20. Which other places / towns do you visit for shopping?

In question 19, 204 respondents stated that the cost of parking causes them to park elsewhere – that is just under half (46%). However, regardless of the answer to question 19, 379 people (80% of total respondents) provided a list of other places or towns they visit for shopping (Q 20) and 371 provided a reason why (Q 21). This indicates that those people who do shop elsewhere are not necessarily doing so because of the charge for Blue Badge Holders to park in Bromsgrove. For both questions 20 and 21, respondents were free to write anything they felt was appropriate.

The top 17 other places / towns visited for shopping (those given as answers by 5 or more people) are shown in figure 16

Figure 16: Chart of Question 20
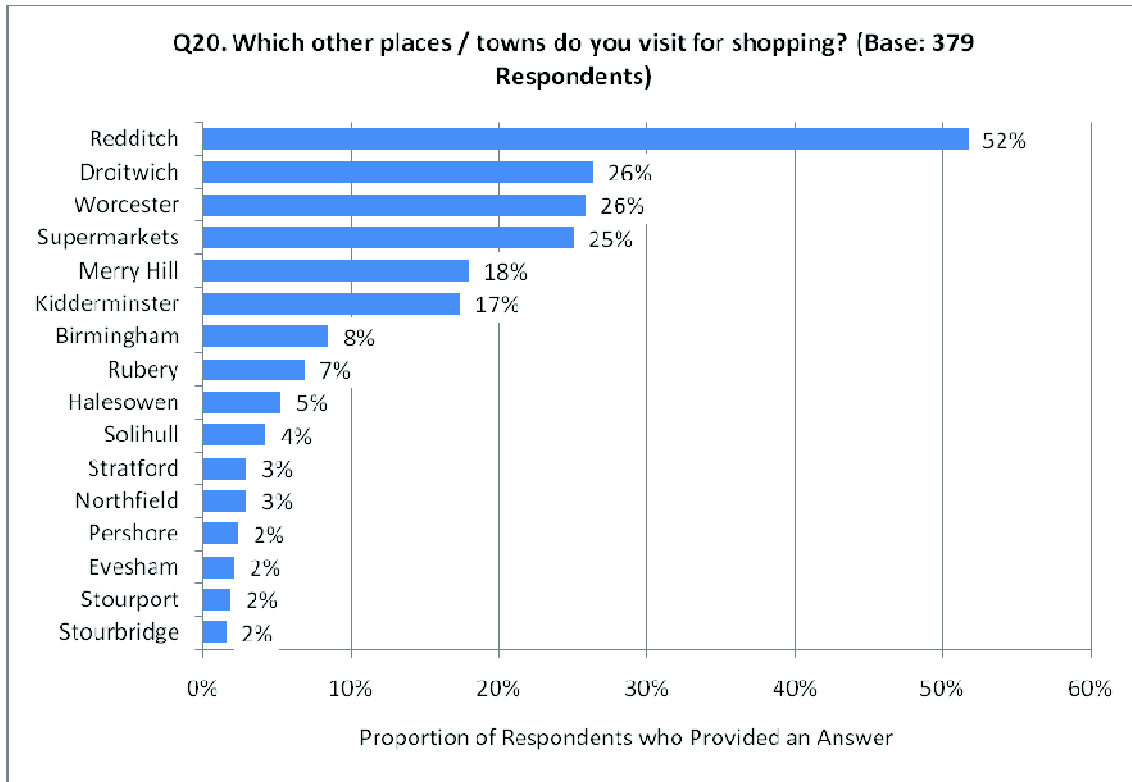
Redditch was by far the most popular answer with half of all those who provided an answer including the town in their list. Droitwich and Worcester were also popular, favoured by around a quarter of respondents, as were out of town supermarkets (who are more likely to provide parking for free).

Other areas listed (by four people or fewer and so not included in figure 16) were: Bewdley, Malvern, Dudley, Oldbury, Harbourne, Webbs of Wychbold, Cheltenham, Wolverhampton, Leamington, Barnt Green, Warwick, Gloucester, Quniton, Coventry and Hagley.

Q21. Why do you choose to shop at there?
The most frequently provided reason for visiting other towns / places to shop was because free parking was available (43.3% of respondents). Though, it must be noted that nearly as many (41.2%) stated that they chose other towns because they had better shops, or a greater variety of shops.

All other reasons were provided by a much smaller proportion of the total respondents to this question, though 12% say that they chose to shop in place that have better disabled access, and 7% stated they preferred shopping centres that were under cover with comments such as "you can get everything you need under one roof".

All the reasons provided and the relative proportions can be seen in figure 17.

Figure 17: Chart of Question 21
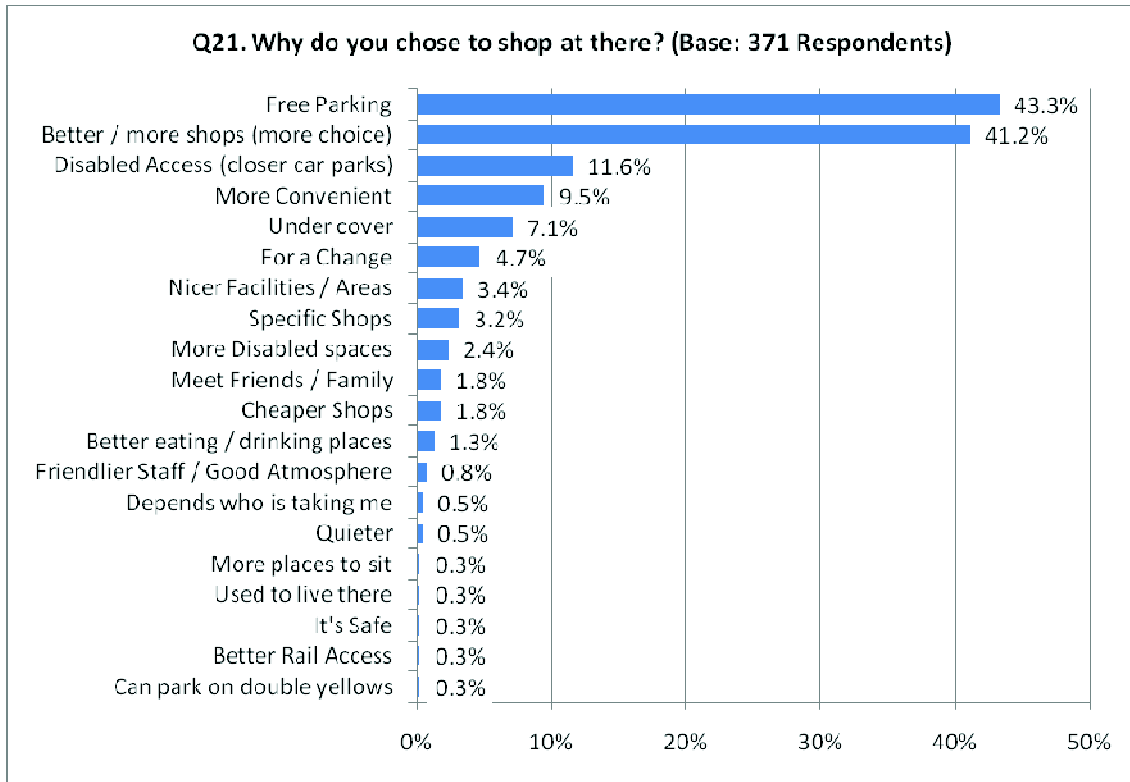
The "More Convenient" category included people choosing to shop in places because they were closer to where they lived, or easier to get to via road or bus / train

Many of the reasons listed in figure 17 have links to accessibility and ease of access. Even where free parking was the main reason, many blue badge holders stated that they liked areas where you could park for free because it meant they could move around car parks to limit the distance they needed to walk to reach the shops they needed. Merry Hill especially was good for this.

In answer to questions 21 and 22 many respondents listed a number of different towns and a number of different reasons why they chose to shop there, without stating which reasons related to which town(s) so it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions as to what attracts shoppers to specific towns / places. However, figure 18 shows the towns / places listed by 30 or more respondents[1], and the top five "reasons why" also listed by those respondents.

So, it is possible to say, for example, that more people who included Redditch in their list of other places they like to shop gave "better shops / more variety" as one of the reasons why they like to shop elsewhere. Hence this method provides *some* indication as to the reasons people favour certain areas.

---

[1] Where fewer than 30 people had given an answer, the proportions related to the reason were skewed by the opinion of one or two people leading to less accurate results.

Figure 18: Towns / places listed by 30 or more respondents, and the top five "reasons why" also listed by those respondents

Town / Place	Top Five Reasons also listed & Proportion				
Redditch Base: 196	Better / more shops (more choice) 60.7%	Free Parking 26.0%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 11.2%	Under cover 10.2%	More Convenient 7.7%
Droitwich Base: 100	Free Parking 56.0%	Better / more shops (more choice) 36.0%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 11.0%	Nicer Facilities / Areas 6.0%	More Convenient = For a Change 5.0%
Worcester Base: 98	Better / more shops (more choice) 53.1%	Free Parking 43.9%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 9.2%	More Convenient 7.1%	Nicer Facilities / Areas = For a Change = Undercover 4.1%
Supermarkets Base: 95	Free Parking 64.2%	Better / more shops (more choice) 15.8%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 11.6%	More Convenient 9.5%	More Disabled spaces 7.4%
Merry Hill Base: 68	Better / more shops (more choice) 55.9%	Free Parking 50.0%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 10.3%	Under cover 10.3%	More Convenient 8.8%
Kidderminster Base: 66	Free Parking 57.6%	Better / more shops (more choice) 47.0%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 7.6%	More Convenient 6.1%	For a Change 6.1%
Birmingham Base: 32	Better / more shops (more choice) 43.8%	Free Parking 31.3%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 15.6%	More Convenient 12.5%	Under cover 12.5%

It seems that people are more likely to choose to shop in Redditch, Worcester, Merry Hill and Birmingham because there is a better choice of shops, whereas they go to Droitwich, Supermarkets or Kidderminster to use the free parking.

Q22. Is there anything Bromsgrove District Council could do to that would encourage you to use the Car Parks more regularly?

It is important to note that respondents were not presented with multiple choice answers to this question, but were free to write anything they felt was appropriate.

Figure 19: Chart of Question 22
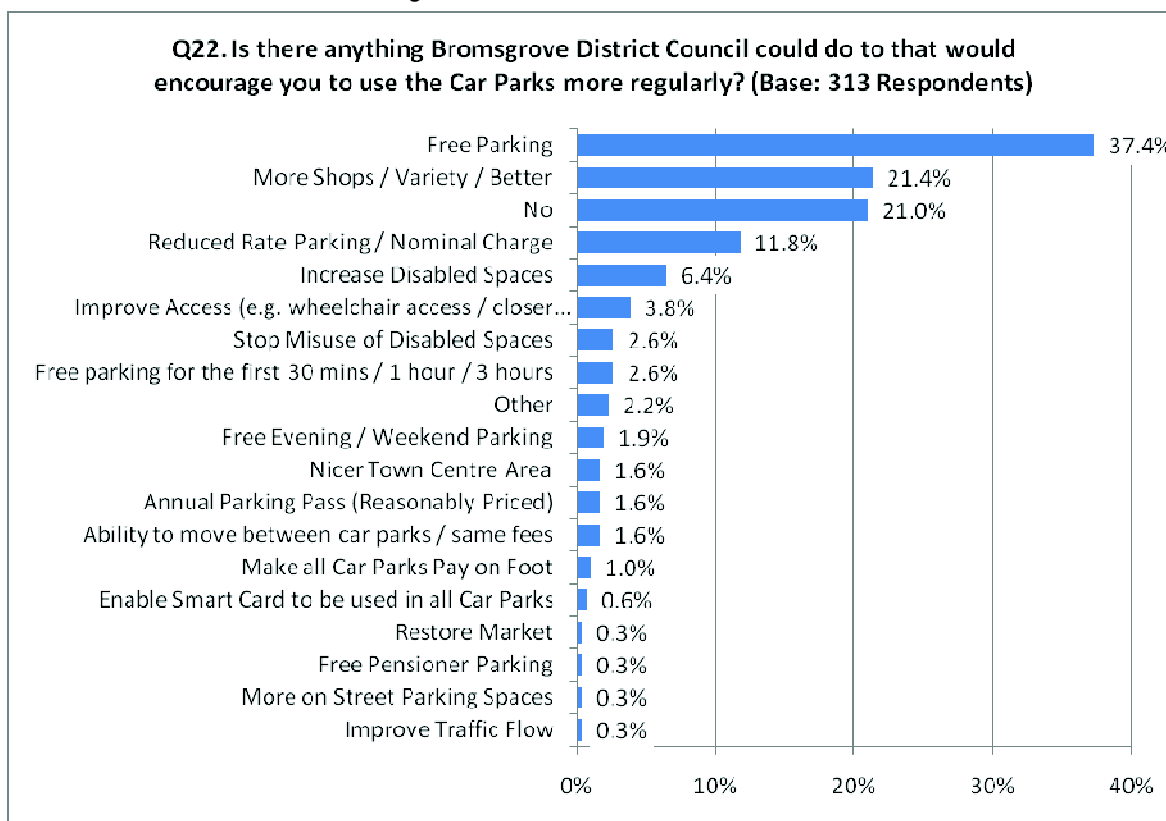
62 people stated that there was not anything that Bromsgrove District Council could do that would encourage them to use the car parks more regularly, and 161 people did not answer this question. That leaves a total of 251 people who did provide a suggestion.

Despite the answers to previous questions indicating that the variety of shops was equally as important as free parking, by far the most common answer to question 22 was to make parking for Blue Badge Holders free. This must be considered alongside the fact that half of respondents stated that the cost of parking did not reduce the frequency or stop them from visiting the town.

17% of people suggested that alternatives to the current charging system might encourage them to use the car parks more regularly:
- 37 people suggested a reduced parking rate or a nominal fee for Blue Badge Holders;
- Eight people suggested making the first portion of parking time free, rather than the last hour (as in the current system), with suggested times ranging from a free first half hour, up to the first three hours;
- Five people suggested the use of a reasonably priced annual pass for disabled parking.

One respondent suggested that making all the car parks "pay on foot" would be especially encouraging for Blue Badge Holders as it would prevent them from having to rush back to their car when a pay and display ticket was about to run out, which is often an issue for those who cannot walk very quickly.

There were also five positive comments in answer to question 22, with people stating that they found the parking in Bromsgrove adequate.

Q23. Is there an area in the Town Centre you would like to park, but are currently unable to?

It is important to note that respondents were not presented with multiple choice answers to this question, but were free to write anything they felt was appropriate.

Figure 20: Chart of Question 23
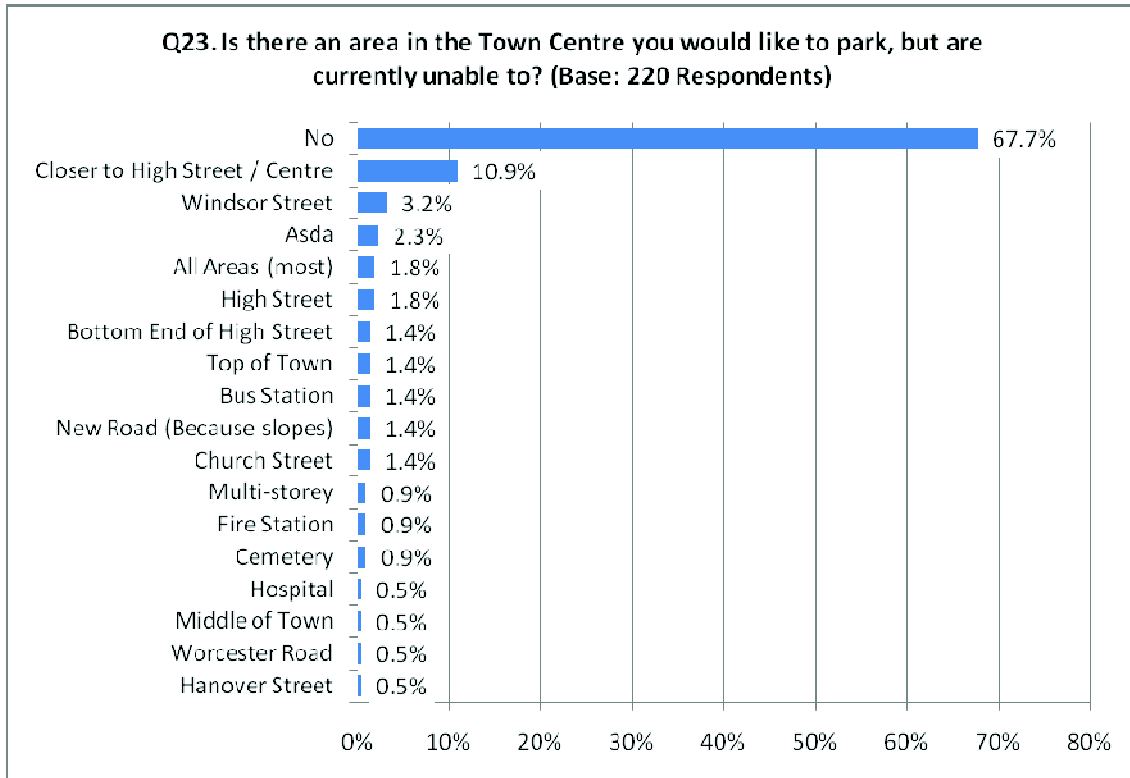
The vast majority of respondents (67.7%) stated that there wasn't anywhere that they would like to park but were currently unable to. However, where people did provide an answer most stated they would like to be able to park closer to the High Street (11%) especially on Windsor Street or around Church Street and Chapel Walk.

Additional Comments

A selection of the additional comments left by some survey respondents are listed in figure 21.

Figure 21: Additional Comments from Respondents

Can You Tell Me Why We Have To Pay More On Windsor Street Car Park.
Have Used Asda And Found Problems The Disabled Parking Is Always Full And The Others Too Far To Walk
Why Is Windsor Street More Expensive & Yet It Is The Car Park Nearest To The Centre Shops Which As A Disabled Person I Pay More Than An Able Bodied Person
Make Parking For Disabled People Free. We Have No Choice To Be Able To Park Further Away & Walk Into Town. Also If It Was Free I Could Move From Car Park To Car Park To Get Within My Walking Distance
Act Sensibly & Re-Introduce Foc Blue Badge Parking I Know Many Who Live In Local Areas Who Avoid Bromsgrove On Principle No Wonder The Town Shops Are Empty 5 People X £100 Week X 52 = £25.000
I Really Don't Have A Problem With Being A Blue Badge Holder And Paying For My Parking As The Bays Are Near To Where I Want To Shop. I Get Really Annoyed When People Complain About Having To Pay.
I Enjoy Shopping In Bromsgrove But Paying For The Car Park Has Put Me Off So I Don't Visit Very Often
Too Expensive To Park Poor Shops
I Used To Use Bromsgrove At Least Twice A Week For Shopping & Banking When The Parking Charges Were Introduced I Stopped Why-Because I Objected To Paying
Banking Etc I Park On Yellow Lines Most Times In Protest At Councils Current Policy Of Charging Blue Badge Holders
Visits To Library. Visits To Antiques Market (Much Truncated Since Councils Act Of Vandalism In Demolishing The Market Hall)
Poor Quality Of High St In General Complete High St An Eye Sore
Not Main Shopping As Having To Pay Parking Fees On Top Of Grocery Bill Makes It More Expensive. We Are Both On Pension And Pay Full Council Tax And Find Unfair.
Town centre car parking is severely restricted & grossly misused. Plus poorly monitored. The pay spaces are very well monitored. Windsor Street and Market Street car parks could quite easily and successfully be converted to barrier access and exit using the pay before you leave format like Asda, but with the 1st hour or 2 for free, incorporating more designated spaces. There is no objection to paying for a sensible service, (Asda is a joke) encouraging more disabled to shop in Bromsgrove instead of going elsewhere.

This page is intentionally left blank

ESTIMATED REVENUE FROM DISABLED CAR PARKING SPACES

Task: Estimate the amount of BDC Car Parking revenue generated by Blue Badge Holders

Approach: Data does not currently exist in the BDC car parking systems to measure the amount of revenue generated by Blue Badge Holders using pay & display car parks (Bromsgrove District Council does not currently record how many pay & display tickets are purchased by disabled car park users making use of the free extra hour of parking), therefore a method is needed to estimate the usage based on the available data.

The absolute maximum revenue that could be generated from disabled bays if they were filled continuously during opening hours (assuming each user purchased the maximum ticket and 65% subsequently used the additional free hour[1]) would be approximately £250,000. However, the actual revenue generated is likely to be significantly less than this figure, since the spaces are not always filled. By estimating the usage of disabled bays, it is possible to provide a more realistic figure for the actual revenue generated, which we have calculated to be in the range £23,000 - £46,000 based on four calculation methodologies[2].

There are a range of methods that have been employed to provide this estimation. Each method has its own strengths and weaknesses so this report presents a multi-methodology approach – utilising a range of different methods to provide a range for the estimated revenue generation.

The four methods described below have made use of available data sets including: total revenue generated by ticket sales across the nine car parks (provided by BDC Finance); site surveys conducted in January / February 2012 which provided data on the actual level of usage in the car parks (i.e. how many spaces were filled at various times of the day); data from Smartcard (used by blue badge holders parking in pay on foot car parks); and the site survey conducted by the Bromsgrove Labour Group.

For each of the methods used:

- The methodology is described step-by-step;
- The outcome (estimated revenue from Blue Badge Holders using BDC car parks in a 12 month period) is stated; and
- The assumptions on which the method is based are summarised.

The outcomes from all methods are summarised in table 1 on page 8. All outcomes are rounded to the nearest £1000, but this should not be taken as a degree of accuracy, since all results are estimates.

All estimates included the following BDC car parks[3]:

---

[1] According to the Blue Badge Car Park Users Survey conducted by Bromsgrove District Council in 2012, 65% of respondents use the additional hour.

[2] It should be noted that this is an estimate based on small samples and therefore the range may be wider than the figures shown.

[3] The free extra hour of parking for blue badge holders does not apply at Bromsgrove Station car park (as the only ticket available for purchase is an all-day ticket) or the Dolphin Centre car park (for permit holders only), therefore these two car parks are not included in the calculations or outcomes in this report.

Page 55

- Churchfields
- Hanover Street
- New Road
- Parkside
- Recreation Road North
- Recreation Road South
- School Drive
- Stourbridge Road
- Windsor Street

For methods 1 to 3 each car park, has been considered individually taking into account the various lengths of ticket available for purchase (e.g. up to three hours in Churchfields, 3 in Windsor Street etc), the number of spaces (disabled and standard), the price of ticket, and the different opening hours.

STEP BY STEP METHODOLOGY

For each of the seven pay and display car parks included in the site surveys

- **Step 1:** Firstly, we worked out how much the council would make if each disabled space in that car park was constantly filled (during car park opening hours) by someone purchasing the average ticket (one hour) and staying for an extra hour free.

- **Step 2:** We know that these spaces are *not* constantly full, so to work out how much revenue is actually generated by these spaces, data from the car park site surveys[4] conducted by Bromsgrove District Council was used to work out the average percentage of the time disabled spaces in each car park were filled when the survey took place. This percentage was then applied to the total figure produced by step 1 (above) to provide an estimated revenue from disabled spaces per car park.

- **Step 3:** The next step was to work out the estimated revenue for disabled spaces (from step 2) as a proportion of the total actual revenue from that car park (as provided by finance). For example, so we can say that roughly 2.5% of the revenue generated from New Road car park was from disabled spaces.

- **Step 4:** Step three was repeated for each of the seven car parks for which usage data was available, and the combined figures were used to work out the average proportion of total revenue that is likely to have come from disabled spaces for these car parks.

- **Step 5:** This average proportion could then be applied to the total revenue from the two pay on foot car parks (which were not included in the site survey) to provide a total revenue estimate for all nine BDC car parks.

OUTCOME

The above method indicates that revenue from disabled spaces accounted for 2-3.5% of total revenue from these car parks in a year, or £32,000 to £46,000.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Site survey data collected from the seven pay & display car parks has been used to estimate usage levels in the two pay on foot car parks (which were not covered in the Bromsgrove District Council site survey). This method assumes that the usage levels in all nine car parks will be similar. We recognise that this may be an underestimation of usage levels as Recreation Road South and Churchfields are the two largest car parks in Bromsgrove, generating the most revenue.

- It has been assumed that the data from the week long site survey is representative of the usage habits of all car park users throughout the course of a year. Figure 1 demonstrates that overall usage levels in this week are broadly in line with the annual average:

---

[4] A total of 330 separate site visits were made to the seven pay & display car parks between 08:00 and 17:00 hrs over a seven day period (27th January to 2nd February 2012).

Figure 1: Weekly Revenue from Ticket Sales in the Seven Pay & Display Car Parks included in the Site Survey, with average for 2011/12. Data points spanning the site survey week (27th Jan to 2nd Feb) are indicated
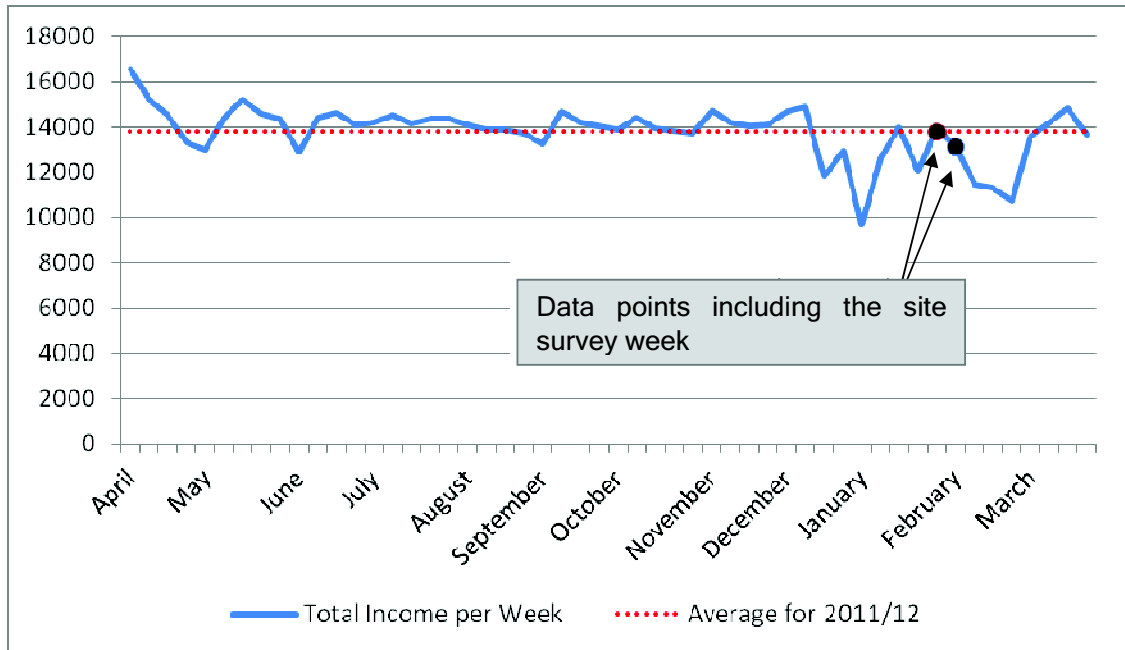
Based on the average revenue from the two weekly figures spanning the survey dates, when the survey was conducted, ticket sales were within 5% of the annual average.

STEP BY STEP METHODOLOGY

- **Step 1:** In order to utilise the free hour of parking in the two pay on foot car parks in Bromsgrove, blue badge holders must use a Smartcard at the payment machines. This data is recorded throughout the year and so we can see exactly how much revenue is generated in these two car parks. The actual revenue generated by Smartcard users for a 12 month period (February 2011 to January 2012) was expressed as a proportion of the total revenue from both Churchfields Multi-Storey and Recreation Road South to provide a "usage" percentage for these two car parks

  - So, in Churchfields, 4.33% of the total revenue from ticket sales came from Smartcard users, and in Recreation Road South, it was 1.58%.

- **Step 2:** These proportions were then applied to the total revenue generated in the seven pay & display car parks to provide an outcome for all car parks as a whole

  - So it was assumed based on the actual data from step 1 that for each pay and display car park, between 1.58% and 4.33% of total ticket sales were generated by blue badge holders.

- **Step 3:** The totals for all nine car parks (using the actual figures from pay on foot car parks, and the estimated figures from step 2 for the pay & display) were then added together to provide an upper and lower limit for all nine car parks.

OUTCOME

The above method indicates that the revenue from disabled spaces in a 12 month period (February 2011 to January 2012) is likely to be between £23,000 and £40,000.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Smartcard data from the two pay on foot car parks has been used to estimate usage levels in the seven pay & display car parks (for which Smartcard data is not available). This method assumes that the usage levels in all nine car parks will be similar. We recognise that this may be an overestimation of usage levels as:

  - Recreation Road South and Churchfields are the two largest in the town, with many more spaces than any of the pay & display car parks

  - Both pay on foot car parks are located right next to Asda, unlike any of the pay & display car parks

  - Churchfields multi-storey is used by the shopmobility scheme and so is likely to be used by more blue badge holders than any other car park.

STEP BY STEP METHODOLOGY

Method four combines methods two and three to provide an estimation based on as much actual data as possible.

- **Step 1:** As in method two, using data from the site surveys conducted in January / February 2012, the average percentage of the time that the disabled spaces were filled was combined with the average length of ticket purchased to estimate the amount of revenue generated from ticket sales in each pay & display car park in a twelve month period. This provides a pay & display car parks total.

- **Step 2:** As in method three, the exact revenue generated from blue badge holders (as recorded under Smartcard use) was provided, giving us a pay on foot car parks total.

- **Step 3:** The pay on foot and pay & display totals were added together to provide the most accurate estimation possible for the total revenue from all nine car parks. The estimate is still presented as a range, as the pay & display figures are still calculated based on an average ticket purchase, so the range provided is one standard deviation either side of the mean.

OUTCOME

The above method indicates that revenue from disabled spaces accounted for 2-3% of total revenue from these car parks in a year, or £30,000 to £40,000.

ASSUMPTIONS

- It has been assumed that the data from the week long site survey is representative of the usage habits of all car park users throughout the course of a year (see figure 1).

- This method improves upon methods 2 and 3 because it calculates each car parks usage level individually removing the need to make the assumption that usage levels are similar across all car parks.

METHOD 4 (USAGE BASED ON BROMSGROVE LABOUR GROUP SITE SURVEYS)

STEP BY STEP METHODOLOGY

- **Step 1:** A site survey carried out by the Bromsgrove Labour Group in January 2012[5] found that *"the likely disabled user % and thus loss in revenue from disabled parkers based …is … in the range of 3.5 - 5.5 %"*

- **Step 2:** These percentages were applied to the actual revenue from all nine car parks over a 12 month period to provide an estimate for the total revenue generated by blue badge holders for all Bromsgrove car parks. This provides an outcome of 3.5-5.5% of total revenue from these car parks in a year, or £48,000 to £75,000.

- **Step 3:** Due to the way in which site survey data is presented, it is not possible to accurately incorporate an adjustment into the above estimation to account for blue badge holders parking for an extra free hour. However, based on the fact that the average ticket purchased in any BDC car park is one hour, and blue badge holders are able to park for free for an additional hour, we don't believe that an adjustment of this nature would reduce the outcome by any more than 50%.

OUTCOME

The above method indicates that revenue from disabled spaces accounted for 3.5-5.5% of total revenue from these car parks in a year, or £48,000 to £75,000 – approximately adjusted to account for the free hour used by Blue Badge holders, this outcome would reduce to £24,000 to £38,000 (equivalent to 1.8% - 2.8% of total revenue)

ASSUMPTIONS

- This method assumes that the site survey is representative of usage levels across the year (as in method 2, figure 1).

---

[5] A total of 16 site visits were made to three car parks between 09:00 and 16:00 hrs over a ten day period, 7th to 16th January 2012

SUMMARY

The absolute maximum revenue that could be generated from disabled bays in Bromsgrove Town Centre is £250,000, assuming that all bays are continuously filled. However, we know that the disabled spaces are not constantly full so we have provided four methods to estimate the likely usage rates of disabled parking bays in order to establish a more realistic revenue figure. The outcomes for each method are summarised in table 1.

Table 1: Summary of the outcomes from the four methods

Method of determining the proportion of ticket sales that come from Disabled Parking Bays	Results	
	Percentage	Equivalent in 2011/12 Actual Ticket Sales
Method 1 (based on the usage levels found in car park site surveys carried out in pay & display car parks, January / February 2012)	2-3.5% of total revenue	£32,000 - £46,000
Method 2 (based on actual revenue generated in pay on foot car parks from those using Smartcards)	1.8-3% of total revenue	£23,000 - £40,000
Method 3 (based on usage levels from pay & display car parks site surveys, and actual usage levels from pay on foot).	2-3% of total revenue	£30,000 - £40,000
Method 4 (based site surveys conducted by the Bromsgrove Labour Group)	1.8 - 2.8% of total revenue	£24,000 - £38,000

CONCLUSION

The results of the four estimation methods suggest a range of between £23,000 and £46,000 for the revenue generated from disabled parking bays. However, since these are estimates we would recommend using a higher figure of £50,000 for budgeting purposes.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET   3rd October 2012

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL TENANCY STRATEGY 2012 – 2014

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Del Booth
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Angie Heighway
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Key Decision	

1.   SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1.1   The Localism Act 2011 introduces a number of housing reforms including the ability for stock holding local authorities and social landlords to grant fixed term tenancies and changes to the allocation of housing and the law relating to homelessness.

1.2   The Localism Act places a duty on the Local Authority to prepare and publish a Tenancy Strategy by 15th January 2013 that sits alongside the Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy and Allocations Policy.

1.3   This Tenancy Strategy has been developed in close consultation with our Registered Providers, stakeholders and Members.

1.4   The Bromsgrove District Council Tenancy Strategy (Appendix 1) sets out the matters to which Registered Providers (RPs) of social housing in the District should have regard when formulating their tenancy policies.

1.5   The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) has produced a draft regulatory framework for social housing in England which takes effect from April 2012. Currently there is a specific expectation that social housing providers shall publish clear and accessible policies which outline their approach to tenancy management, including interventions to sustain tenancies and prevent unnecessary evictions and tackling tenancy fraud. When formulating their policies Registered Providers of social housing should have due regard to the Tenancy Strategy set by the local authority.

1.6   The Strategy now comes before Members for approval.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   That Members resolve that the Bromsgrove District Council Tenancy Strategy (Appendix 1) be approved.

CABINET   3rd October 2012

3. **KEY ISSUES**

Financial Implications

3.2   There are no financial implications for the Council in implementing the Tenancy Strategy.

Legal Implications

3.3   The Localism Act 2012 has placed a duty on Local Authorities to introduce a Tenancy Strategy. This Strategy sets out the matters to which the registered providers of social housing in the District are to have regard to in formulating their tenancy policies relating to:

- the kinds of tenancies they grant,

- the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,

- where they grant tenancies for a certain term, the lengths of the terms, and

- the criteria to consider when reviewing tenancies at the end of the fixed term.

- How disposals of stock should be managed

- How Bromsgrove District Council will give consideration to new government guidance in relation to the allocation of social housing.

3.4   The Regulatory Framework for social housing produced by the TSA requires social housing providers to develop a Tenancy Policy.

Service / Operational Implications

3.5   Although this is a new strategy there are no service or operational implications arising from the implementation of the Tenancy Strategy for Bromsgrove District Council.

3.6   All social housing providers in the District will be required to have regard to this strategy in the formalisation of their own individual Tenancy Policies.

3.7   The Tenancy Strategy is intended to provide guidance to social housing providers, when developing their tenancy policies and practices, upon the Council's aims and objectives to produce lettings that meet local housing need and improve market functioning. The legislation requires the strategy to explain:

- the kinds of tenancies they grant,

- the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,

- where they grant tenancies for a certain term, the lengths of the terms, and

- the criteria to consider when reviewing tenancies at the end of the fixed term.

3.10 The aim of the strategy is to provide the right home, at the right time and in the right place, by making best use of limited stock by offering tenancies not necessarily for life but supporting sustainable communities.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.11 Consultation has taken place with relevant stakeholders in the production of the Council's Tenancy Strategy and Bromsgrove hosted a stakeholder event to facilitate the development the Tenancy Strategy.

3.12 The Tenancy Strategy is intended to be an overarching Strategy for Registered Providers to take into consideration when making decisions about tenancies and allocations. The Strategy makes reference at paragraph 5.16 to Registered Providers making best use of properties adapted for those with physical disabilities, in addition, paragraph 9.1 sets out the Council's expectation that Registered Providers will have regard to the Equalities Act 2010 when framing their tenancy policies.

4.   RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1   There is a risk that fixed term tenancies may result in increased homelessness. We have stated within the Strategy that we expect Registered Providers to make every effort to avoid a household becoming homeless, but ultimately, if no alternative property is found the household may approach the Council for assistance under homelessness legislation.

There may also be a reduction in the number of properties becoming available due to existing tenants being concerned about the changes to

CABINET   3rd October 2012

tenancies and housing benefits. We will need to effectively monitor this and provide clear advice to residents on the changes.

4.2   There is a risk of repeat homelessness linked to the placing of more people into the private rented sector. We are considering how we assess that the people we place in the private rented sector are able to maintain that type of tenancy with a view to developing a Discharge of the Homelessness Duty into the Private Sector Policy. We will also need to ensure we maintain and strengthen our relationships with private landlords.

5.   APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Tenancy strategy 2012 - 2014

6.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

Localism Act 2011
Regulatory framework for social housing in England April 2010

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: A.Glennie – Strategic Housing and Enabling Officer

E Mail: a.glennie@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DRAFT TENANCY STRATEGY 2012-2014

1. Introduction

1.1 The Localism Act places a duty on the Local Authority to prepare and publish a Tenancy Strategy by 15th January 2013. This Strategy has been developed for Bromsgrove District in its strategic role by working in close consultation with Registered Providers.

1.2 The Localism Act 2011 introduces a number of housing reforms including the ability for local authorities to grant fixed term tenancies, greater flexibility in the allocation of social housing and changes to legislation relating to homelessness.

1.3 The Localism Act (clause 126) will include new powers relating to allocations and flexible tenancies; it requires local authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy that sits alongside the Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy and Allocations Policy.

1.4 Building on our strong and established working relationships within the District, this document has been developed collaboratively between the Council and registered providers and other key stakeholders.

2. Background Policy

2.1 The Government's key housing policy goal is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live. To achieve this, the Government is seeking to:

- Achieve a wide choice of high quality homes both affordable and market housing, to address the requirements of the community,

- Widen opportunities for home ownership and ensure high quality housing for those who cannot afford market housing, in particular those who are vulnerable or in need,

- Improve affordability across the housing market, including by increasing the supply of housing and;

- Create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas, both urban and rural.

2.2 Definitions of Affordable Housing

National Planning Policy (June 2011) defines and includes 3 types of affordable housing:

a) Social housing up until the introduction of affordable rents was the main model provided by Registered Providers (RP's) and refers to housing that is subject to strict rent controls, which are around 50% of the market rents.

b) The new affordable rents which allow up to a maximum of 80% of market rent.

c) Intermediate housing, which includes shared ownership.

It also states that affordable housing should:

- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

- Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be re-cycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

2.3   Delivery of New Homes

Alongside the requirements of the Localism Act the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is agreeing programmes for the delivery of new affordable housing from 2011 through to 2015 with Registered Providers and local authorities.

The level of subsidy provided by the HCA for new affordable homes has significantly reduced and the ability for RP's to deliver new homes with the reduced levels of grant has to be made up in the following ways.

- All new homes built with HCA subsidy are expected to be offered at affordable rents; up to 80% of the market rent.
- In addition RP's are offering to increase rents to Affordable Rent on a percentage of relet properties.
- They have also been encouraged to take a more pro-active approach to managing their stock, including the disposal of stock where this will bring funds to invest in new homes.

3.   **Aims and Scope of the Strategy**

3.1 The aims and objectives of the Strategy are:

- To ensure that affordable housing meets local housing need
- To provide guidance and direction to RP partners in the development of their tenancy policies
- To provide a framework for up to date knowledge of the housing market in Bromsgrove that can then be used to inform policy and practice.
- To indicate to tenants and prospective tenants what they can expect from their tenancy.

The Strategy will provide guidance to RP's in the following areas:

- The kind of tenancies that they grant.
- The circumstances in which different tenancies should be granted.
- The length of fixed term tenancies.
- The criteria to consider when reviewing tenancies at the end of the fixed term.
- How disposals of stock should be managed.
- How Bromsgrove District Council will give consideration to new government guidance in relation to allocation of social housing.

The Tenancy Strategy relates to lettings to all social and affordable rented properties to include adapted and sheltered housing. It does not cover lettings to hostels, temporary accommodation or supported housing.

3.2   Although local authorities are not required to include an assessment of affordability in their Tenancy Strategy, Bromsgrove District Council recognises the importance of ensuring that affordable housing continues to be available and accessible to those who need it most and must therefore remain affordable, as defined locally.

3.3   The Strategy makes reference to the new power to discharge homelessness through the Private Rented Sector. The Council's Homelessness Policy sets out how the Council intends to maximise the use of the Private Rented sector in order to tackle homelessness.

3.4   This Strategy has been developed as a result of consultation with a range of partners and stakeholders, including RPs, Social Care, local councillors and voluntary and community organisations.

4. Bromsgrove District in Context

Bromsgrove District

4.4 Bromsgrove District is situated in North Worcestershire and covers approximately 21,700 hectares. Although located only 22km (14 miles) from the centre of Birmingham, the District is predominately rural with approximately 91% of the land designated as Green Belt.

4.5 The area is well served by motorways and benefits from train and bus connections into Birmingham City Centre and the wider region. The housing market is heavily influenced by Birmingham, with high inward migration from the conurbation.

4.6 The main centre of population in Bromsgrove District is Bromsgrove Town and other centres being Wythall, Hagley, Rubery, Alvechurch, Barnt Green and Catshill and a series of smaller rural villages spread throughout the District.

4.7 The Bromsgrove Vision

The vision of the Housing Strategy is

"The right home, at the right time, in the right place"

This means that we want every household in Bromsgrove to be able to access housing that suits their needs and circumstances when they need it. It is implicit in the vision that we want all housing to reach an appropriate standard, currently the Decent Homes Standard, and that the right home means one that is affordable to the household's budget. However, we do not mean that changing household circumstances should always result in the need to move home. Our vision embraces a much wider approach which always involves a housing options assessment to ensure household needs are met.

How our Housing Strategy Goals Link to Tenancy Strategy Issues & Outcomes

	Housing Strategy Goals	Key Strategic Issues
1	Better use of existing homes	Offering tenancies that meet the households needs but can be reviewed to ensure that best use of stock is achieved. Allocations Policy and Local Lettings Plans support move on opportunities. Fixed term tenancies can help achieve turnover in adapted properties where the adaptation is no longer required.
2	Deliver new housing	Support the development of new homes through affordable rents. Ensure that social rented accommodation is prioritised in new developments not subsidised by HCA.
3	Improve the condition of existing homes	Work with private landlords to achieve suitability standards to enable more housing pathways into the private rented sector.
4	Providing housing related support	Good housing options advice. Link the review of tenancies with support and tenancy sustainment, or pathways into alternative accommodation prioritising homelessness prevention. Make best use of new build opportunities by targeting specific groups ie; older people, lifetime homes, supported housing Monitor access to housing and tenancies by these groups – and

		monitor potential discrimination

Housing is important to everybody and is essential to achieving a good quality of life. This may mean something different to each of us and may vary throughout our lives but generally involves a safe, secure and affordable home with the right support. It is true that many people are able to solve their own housing issues without help and support from councils and other agencies, but the Housing Strategy is about providing the right type of housing and support to those who need assistance.

5. Principles for Registered Providers on Tenancy Policy

5.1 This section will set out the principles that Bromsgrove District Council expects RPs to have regard to when developing their own tenancy policies.

Tenancy Types
Background Information

5.2 The Localism Act enables RPs to let properties to new tenants using fixed term tenancies rather than lifetime assured tenancies. Fixed term tenancies should usually be offered for a minimum of 5 years, unless there is a very exceptional reason to reduce the term to 2 years.

5.3 Fixed term tenancies can be offered at either social or affordable rent.

5.4 RPs are not obliged to offer fixed term tenancies. Lifetime tenancies can continue to be offered.

5.5 At the end of the fixed term, the RP will have the option to review the tenant's circumstances and the conduct of the tenancy and can either terminate or extend the tenancy. RPs are required to develop and publish a Tenancy Policy and the criteria to be taken into account when deciding whether to provide a fixed term tenancy or not and whether to extend or terminate a fixed term tenancy should be clearly set out in this policy.

5.6 Where an RP chooses to terminate a fixed term tenancy at the end of the period, the RP must give notice of their decision 6 months before the end of the tenancy and must also ensure that the tenant is provided with advice and assistance in finding suitable alternative accommodation to ensure that they do not become homeless.

5.7 Existing allocation and nomination arrangements will continue, with properties offered on fixed term tenancies being advertised and let through existing schemes, e.g. choice based lettings schemes.

5.8 RPs will continue to be able to offer introductory tenancies.

5.9 Existing tenants will retain their security of tenure whether they remain in their current home or transfer to another social rent property. However, their security of tenure may change if they move to a property which the RP has chosen to let at affordable rent levels.

5.10   The local authority welcomes the introduction of fixed term tenancies as a means of ensuring that best possible use is made of the limited social housing stock in the District. However, it is essential that the use of fixed term tenancies should not undermine the sustainability of communities and neighbourhoods and care must therefore be taken in determining in what circumstances such tenancies will be offered and what review criteria will be applied at the end of the tenancy.

5.11   The Council considers that, where flexible tenures are to be used, they should be generally offered for a minimum of five years in order to provide stability and security and only in exceptional circumstances offered for the minimum 2 year period. An example of this would be where a homeless household eligible for the full re-housing duty is expecting significant equity due to the sale of their property where the release of this equity would enable them to secure a property on the open market or become eligible for a low cost housing product.

5.12   It is also expected that unless there has been a significant change in circumstances following a review, the tenancy will be renewed for a further period. RP's should ensure that they clearly publish the criteria and conditions they intend to apply to the allocation and review of fixed term tenancies and that this information should be provided to tenants prior to their tenancy commencement. RPs should also make clear whether they intend to terminate fixed term tenancies if any or all of the specified conditions are met and in what circumstances they will renew a tenancy even though some or all of the conditions are met.

Overcrowding and Under-occupation

5.13   Bromsgrove District Council expects landlords to take positive action to facilitate a move to more suitable accommodation where tenants' circumstances change and their current home is too large or indeed where the accommodation is too small.

5.14   The proposed housing benefit restrictions on bedroom size being applied from April 2013 for working age households will add further pressure to ensure that properties are not under occupied. Those who are underoccupying their social housing will be placed into a reasonable preference banding on Home Choice Plus if they make an application to transfer to a smaller property.

5.15   The Home Choice Plus Allocations Policy also awards reasonable preference to families who are overcrowded.

Properties with Adaptations

5.16   It is important that properties with adaptations are used appropriately due to the limited resources available to meet a growing need for adapted properties. Bromsgrove District has a significant number of older residents and this figure is projected to increase. It is therefore important to ensure that if the circumstances or needs of a tenant with an adapted property change, meaning that they no longer require a property with an adaptation then the tenant will be moved to a more suitable property. The adapted property should then be allocated to someone requiring such an adaptation.

5.17 The Home Choice Plus Allocation Policy gives reasonable preference to households occupying an adapted property and wishing to move to a more suitable property.

5.18 Bromsgrove District Council expects RPs to consider the following factors in determining the criteria to be used for allocating and reviewing fixed term tenancies:

- Due to the shortage of social housing in the District, the Council supports the use of fixed term tenancies for properties with two or more bedrooms in order to ensure that this scarce resource can be used most effectively.

- In order to ensure the best possible use of stock, the Council supports the use of fixed term tenancies for properties with specialist adaptations.

- The Council considers that all fixed term tenancies should be renewed unless the household's circumstances have changed to such an extent that the property is no longer suitable for their needs, or they are able to meet their needs through market tenure housing. Examples of this include:

  - The household income or savings exceeds the thresholds specified by the Home Choice Plus allocations policy. This currently stands at income of over £60,000 per annum and/or savings/assets/equity exceeding £50,000 (unless their needs can only be met through housing that is not available as a market tenure)
  - The household is under-occupying their property, particularly in the case of family housing.
  - There have been repeated serious breaches of the tenancy conditions set out at the commencement of the tenancy, and appropriate support has been offered to the tenant to address these breaches, but there has been a consistent failure on the part of the tenant to do so. In the case of rent arrears, the RP should take into account where arrears have accrued as a result of welfare reform. In these circumstances, the Council expects an RP to be flexible in its approach and to assist tenants to find more affordable accommodation within its own stock.

- Where a tenancy is not renewed at the end of a fixed term, the RP should ensure that adequate and appropriate advice and assistance is provided to the tenant to enable them to secure alternative accommodation. This may include assisting them to move within the RP's own stock (either rented or shared ownership) or moving into a market tenure. The tenant should be given a notice period of at least 6 months and the RP should also notify the Council's Housing Options Team of any intended tenancy terminations that may lead to homelessness as soon as notice is given.

- The Council expects that very few, if any, homeless approaches should be generated by an RP terminating a fixed term tenancy, as appropriate advice should have been provided to the tenant. Where a former tenant does approach the Council for homeless assistance, the RP should assist the Council with its enquiries where requested.

- In most cases (unless the property conditions would make it unsuitable), the Council expects that RPs should allow the tenant to remain in their property at the end of a tenancy for a maximum of six months or until a suitable alternative has been found, whichever is the earlier.

- RPs should ensure that tenants are provided with clear and adequate information about the reasons why their tenancy has been terminated, and clear guidance should be provided on the way in which they can request a review of any decision to seek possession.

- Where a household is found to be significantly over-crowded at the time of a fixed term tenancy review and the household does not meet any of the other criteria for tenancy termination, the Council expects that the RP should assist the household to find suitable alternative accommodation within its own stock.

Affordable Rent

Background Information

5.19   The new tenure of affordable rent was introduced in 2010 following the Comprehensive Spending Review and enables RPs who have entered into a contract with the Homes and Communities Agency to charge rents of up to 80% of market rent levels on all new build properties funded through the 2011-15 HCA programme. These RPs may also convert a proportion of their existing properties to affordable rent.

5.20   RPs not in receipt of HCA development funding must continue to let properties at social rent levels. RPs in receipt of funding will also be able to continue charging social rent on existing properties if they choose to.

5.21   Existing tenants remaining in the same home will not be affected by this change. However, they may be affected if they transfer to a new home.

5.22   Properties at affordable rent levels will continue to be eligible for Housing Benefit rather than Local Housing Allowance.

5.23   Existing allocation and nomination arrangements will continue, with properties offered at affordable rent being advertised and let through existing schemes, e.g. choice based lettings schemes.

Bromsgrove Principles

5.24 The Bromsgrove Council expects RPs to take into consideration the affordability calculations included in the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the specific demographics of its operating area in determining the rent levels to set and the proportion of its existing stock that it will convert to affordable rent. RPs should also take into account the availability of affordable and market accommodation in specific areas and the need to ensure sustainable communities in determining rent levels – e.g. some rural areas may have very limited affordable housing stock and introducing affordable rent in these areas may make the stock unaffordable to the majority of local people.

5.25 It is recognised that affordable rent will meet the needs of some of those in housing need in the District. However, it is more likely that this product will assist the wider housing waiting list as opposed to those in significant need, who are likely to have fewer resources available to them. This is because although households in properties charged at affordable rent levels will be eligible for housing benefit, those households on a low income and not in receipt of housing benefit may struggle to afford these rent levels. The Government is keen that benefit dependence and worklessness levels should be reduced and it is therefore also vital that rent levels should not act as a barrier or disincentive to entering employment. In addition, when the Benefit Cap of £26,000 is introduced in April 2013, households may struggle to afford the affordable rent levels; in Bromsgrove, this is particularly true of larger family sized accommodation (3 and 4+ bedroom properties).

5.26 Although Bromsgrove Council must consider the whole housing market and ensure the needs of all households are provided for, the conversion of social rent properties to affordable rent which are then let to households not in significant need will not serve to reduce the affordable housing requirement for the Council, in fact it will increase it.

5.27 The Council therefore expects RPs to carefully consider the affordability of its stock for local people when determining which properties should be converted to affordable rent and, as a minimum, expects that RPs should not convert existing 4+ bedroom properties to affordable rent.

5.28 The Council expects that RPs should publish its criteria for determining which of its existing stock it intends to let at affordable rent levels and should also publish the valuation information it uses to determine the affordable rent level.

5.29 The Council expects that in all cases the affordable rent level should be lower than the local housing allowance level for the District.

5.30 The Council expects that RPs will provide its tenants who are likely to be affected by changes to welfare benefits with appropriate advice regarding how it will impact them and how they can address any resulting affordability issues.

5.31 The Council expects that all affordable rent properties should be advertised through the Home Choice Plus choice based lettings scheme and that the rent level should be clearly indicated on the advert. The RP should also ensure at the allocation stage that the

tenant understands the difference in the rent level prior to them making a decision regarding whether to accept the property.

<u>Section 106 developments</u>

5.32 Due to the large differential between social and affordable rent in the District, the Council considers that there is still a significant requirement for the delivery of new build properties at social rent. The Council will therefore continue to seek social rented housing on sites where affordable housing is secured through a Section 106 agreement.

5.33 The Council also expects that all properties subject to existing Section 106 agreements should continue to be offered at social rent levels and not be converted to affordable rent. The Council will monitor allocations of properties subject to a Section 106 agreement to ensure that they are offered at the correct rent levels.

Mobility in Social Housing

Background Information

5.34 The Localism Act promotes mobility in social housing. All RPs are obliged to participate in a mutual exchange scheme to allow tenants to move more easily.

Bromsgrove Principles

5.35 Bromsgrove District Council recognises the need for tenants to be able to move to be closer to work or family support and supports the Government's efforts to facilitate easier movement within the sector.

5.36 Applicants are able to apply to Home Choice Plus from anywhere within the United Kingdom. However, in order to ensure that Home Choice Plus meets the needs of the local community, reduced priority will be given to those applicants without a Local Connection to Bromsgrove District.

5.37 Local connection will be assessed having regard to the definition of local connection contained in Section 199 Housing Act 1996.

5.38 The following factors as set out in s199 Housing Act 1996 will be taken into consideration in determining whether or not an applicant has a local connection with Bromsgrove District. An application is awarded a local connection if an applicant or a member of their household included in their application:

- has lived in Bromsgrove District by choice for a certain time (usually for six months out of the last 12 months or for three years out of the last five years);
- has close family living in Bromsgrove District, who have been permanently resident for at least the previous five years;

- has permanent employment in Bromsgrove District
- has special circumstances that give rise to a local connection

5.39 In determining permanent employment the policy gives consideration to the Local Government Association guidelines which state that this is employment other than that of a casual nature.

5.40 For the purposes of determining Local Connection, living in Bromsgrove District will not include the following:
- Occupation of a mobile home, caravan or motor caravan where it is not their only or principal home
- Occupation of a holiday letting (which includes a permanent building, hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation) for the purposes of a holiday.
- Resident of a HMP, Bail Hostel or other such accommodation.
- In-Patient of Hospitals/specialist centres

5.41 The Council expects that all RPs operating in the District should participate in a national mutual exchange scheme to enable tenants to move more easily, e.g. Homeswapper In order to encourage and facilitate mobility. The Council also expects that existing social tenants should be allowed to retain their security when they move to a new property.

5.42 The Council expects that RPs should publish a mutual exchange policy, setting out any conditions it may apply to tenants who wish to exchange.

5.43 The Council expects RPs to offer flexibility in allowing exchanges and to clearly explain how tenants' exchange rights will be affected by different tenancy types, including fixed term and introductory tenancies. The Council also expects RPs to offer flexibility to tenants who need to move because they are under-occupying their current home and have faced a reduction in Housing Benefit as a result. This may mean relaxing conditions around the ability to exchange with rent arrears, if this will resolve the household's affordability issues and prevent further arrears from accruing.

Disposal of Stock

Bromsgrove District Principles

5.44 Bromsgrove Council does not wish to see the disposal of housing stock. However, it is recognised that in certain circumstances this may be justifiable providing it allows for future investment within the District in providing more appropriate housing. Agreement will have to be gained from the Council for any disposal of stock in accordance with legislative requirements and stock transfer agreements. This would include any payment in respect of the disposals claw back agreement.

5.45 The Council expects that RPs should have a disposal strategy which clearly sets out their approach to the disposal of stock and how this benefits the organisation and the local authority area(s) in which is operates. The Council also expects that all disposal decisions should

be taken at RP Board level. If RPs wish to dispose of stock within Bromsgrove District, the Council will require them to provide the following information to the Strategic Housing Manager with any request for support for disposal:

➢   Address of property
➢   Type and size of property
➢   Whether the property is currently tenanted and if so, how the current tenant will be assisted to find suitable alternative accommodation
➢   The projected income from the disposal
➢   How and where this income will be used

Local Lettings Plans

Bromsgrove District Principles

5.46   Local Lettings Plans are currently used in order to facilitate community sustainability and good housing management. Local Lettings Plans may be used by RPs in some areas to set out how and why particular properties will be let at affordable rent levels or offered on a fixed term basis.

5.47   Local Lettings Plans should always be developed in partnership with the Council.

5.48   All local lettings plans should be need based and have clear and robust evidence to support this need. The plan should clearly set out what the RP is aiming to achieve in applying restrictions on allocations and how these restrictions will assist to meet these objectives. The plan should also have a set review date, at which time, the RP should assess whether the objectives have been achieved and whether the plan should be extended or amended.

5.49   All local lettings plans should be published by the RP and should also be agreed by the Council before use. The Council will publish all local lettings plans on the Home Choice Plus website and any advert which restricts allocations based on a local lettings plans should clearly reference the title of the plan in order that customers are able to make informed choices about their bidding.

6.   Social Housing Allocations

6.1   Bromsgrove District Council operates a choice based lettings (CBL) scheme to determine how priority should be awarded in the allocation of social housing in partnership with five other local authorities. The sub-regional CBL scheme is called Home Choice Plus.

6.2   The Localism Act 2011 offers local authorities greater freedom in framing their allocations policies which:

•   Allows them to restrict access to waiting lists

- Make it easier for existing social tenants to move to more suitable accommodation
- Allows local authorities to set local qualification categories subject to the overall scheme meeting the needs of those in reasonable preference. Positive qualification criteria might be applied to economically active households and those who contribute to their communities.
- Ensuring that former Service men and women who have urgent housing needs are given 'additional preference' (i.e. high priority) for social housing

6.3 The Government's statutory guidance was published on the 29th June 2012 and a further review of the allocations policy will be undertaken to consider this guidance and what additional changes might be made.

7. Use of Private Rented Sector Tenancies

7.1 Local Authorities will be able to discharge their duty to homeless households with an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector provided the tenancy is for a minimum of one year and is suitable for the household. The Government is developing new guidance on assessing suitability to accompany this new power.

Bromsgrove Principles

7.2 The private rented sector in the District is complex and differs in availability and affordability between different areas. Market research undertaken as part of the Worcestershire SHMA 2012 highlighted a trend of a lettings market restricted by the lack of available property due to both the withdrawal of the buy to let investor from the market and the growing trend for people to remain within their rental property for increasing amounts of time.

7.3 This market research further identified the following district specific trends in Bromsgrove:
- the lettings market remains buoyant with 3 bedroom houses with gardens being in particular demand. Flats are less popular and there is a high turnover rate associated with this property type. There is high demand throughout Bromsgrove and areas close to transport hubs are always popular.

7.4 The Council funds the Step Up and MyPlace private rental sector (PRS) access schemes to facilitate households to enter this tenure and reduce the demand on social housing. There are also various schemes offered by partner and voluntary agencies across Worcestershire, providing PRS access services to specific client groups such as single homeless people and ex-offenders. The Council is working on how more properties could be made available in the Private Rented Sector and how this sector could be better utilised to offer a suitable alternative tenure for those households who would traditionally have

entered social housing. The use of the private rented sector will, however, be determined by the local market.

7.5   Bromsgrove District Council regulates the licensing of 3 storey Houses in Multiple Occupation and licenses are granted to properties achieving the required standards.

7.5   The current rent bond scheme operated by the Council is prioritised to assist customers who are at risk or threatened with homelessness regardless of their priority need. However, in consideration of the Homelessness provisions within the Localism Act 2011 the Council has developed a Homelessness policy which sets out how the private sector might be utilised in Bromsgrove to provide accommodation that is suitable and appropriate to meet the needs of homeless households and discharge the homeless duty.

7.6   Any use of the private rented sector in this way will always involve a rigorous assessment of the suitability of this option, including an assessment of affordability, and the Council will only exercise this power where it considers that the private rented sector represents an appropriate solution to a household's housing need. Any decision to discharge duty in this way will be subject to the usual homeless appeal process. The use of this power will be closely monitored to ensure that private rented sector tenancies can be sustained over a medium to long term and do not result in repeat homelessness.

7.7   All properties let through the Council's private rented sector access schemes must be in good repair, warm, secure and free from health and safety hazards. The rent charged should also be at or below local housing allowance levels for the District. Where rent charged exceeds local housing allowance, the Council's agent must be satisfied that the property is affordable for the tenant and that any top up is reasonable.

8.   Governance

8.1   The Tenancy Strategy and principles will be reviewed annually by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group to ensure that it remains consistent with the allocations policy and relevant strategies.

8.2   The individual RP's are responsible for their individual tenancy policies which will be published to provide transparency, enabling local communities to understand clearly how social landlords are responding to local needs and priorities.

9.   Legislation

9.1   In addition to the Localism Act 2011, Bromsgrove District Council expects Registered Providers to have regard to the Welfare Reform Act 2012, the Equalities Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998, Articles 6 & 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and any other relevant legislation in framing their tenancy policies.

10.   Consultation

10.1 This draft strategy will be subject to a consultation period running from 2nd August 2012 until 14th September 2012. Relevant partners, stakeholders and housing applicants will be included in this consultation process and their feedback will be used to develop the final strategy.

This page is intentionally left blank

Belbroughton Conservation Area Appraisal
Cabinet
<div align="right">3rd October</div>

Belbroughton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr. Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Wards Affected	Belbroughton
Ward Councillor Consulted	Yes
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1.1 To obtain agreement to revisions to the boundaries of Belbroughton Conservation Area, in order to include areas previously omitted, which contribute to the special architectural and historic character of the area and to rationalise the boundaries so that they relate to identifiable physical boundaries. Having sought member support for the revised draft appraisal, full consultation and engagement process was carried between 16 July and 24 August 2012.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Belbroughton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, including boundary amendments is approved and its contents endorsed as a material consideration for planning purposes.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

3.1 The cost of producing and consulting on the Conservation Area character appraisal, and future costs involved in advertising the boundary amendments is being met by the existing Strategic Planning team budget. So far only officer time minimal printing costs and £64 for venue hire have been accrued, the costs of placing the formal notices to advertise the change of Conservation Area Boundary are likely to be in the region of £300.

Legal Implications

3.2 The Council has a statutory duty under s69(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate any areas which they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest as Conservation Areas. The Council has a further duty under s71(1) to formulate and prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas.

3.3   If the designation is approved, formal notifications would be sent to each owner/occupier affected by boundary changes and the designation advertised in the Bromsgrove Advertiser and London Gazette. Notifications would also be sent to English Heritage and the Land Registry. There is no statutory right of appeal against Conservation Area designation.

Service / Operational Implications

3.4   There is a statutory requirement under section 69 of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990, that Local Planning Authorities from time to time consider whether there are further parts of its area which should be designated as conservation areas. A district-wide assessment of conservation areas designated many years ago should be considered carefully to see if they are still of special interest or whether the original interest has been eroded by subsequent changes or redevelopment, necessitating boundary changes or even de-designations.

3.5   The Belbroughton Conservation Area review has highlighted some potential boundary   changes against the following criteria:

- It should have a readily identifiable homogenous area of distinct architectural quality and or historic interest, which is desirable to preserve or enhance
- Where landscape features which are an integral part of the historic built environment, they should be included
- Boundaries should be tightly drawn, but where necessary include the immediate setting which forms the heart of the area. They should relate to easily identifiable physical plot boundaries
- Buildings and man made features should be included where they:
  - Have the qualities of age, style, and materials or any other characteristics, which reflect those of at least a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area
  - Contribute positively to the setting of buildings within the conservation area
  - Individually or as part of a group serve as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it stands, or of an earlier phase of growth
  - Have significant historic association with established features of the existing conservation area, such as street layout, burghage plots, or landscape features
  - Posses landmark quality
  - Reflects the traditional functional character of, or former uses within, the area

Belbroughton Conservation Area Appraisal
Cabinet

- o Has significant historic associations with local people or past events
- o A publicly used building where its use and internal space contributes to the character or appearance of the conservation area
- o Have strong sense of place

3.6 There are no proposals to de-designate any parts of the existing Conservation Area. The village is still worthy of Conservation Area status despite the widespread harm caused to unlisted domestic buildings by the replacement of original or earlier timber windows with uPVC white-framed windows.

3.7 There are 15 separate new areas proposed for inclusion in the Conservation Area each one of which satisfies at least one of the requirements listed above. They are as follows:

1) Church Farm Barn and Cow Shed and adjoining buildings and curtilages
Both of these mid-18th century farm outbuildings are listed structures, built of brick on sandstone bases with ornate stone dressings. They have been recently renovated and converted into dwellings and their contribution to the group setting of the nearby listed buildings (Church House and Holy Trinity) has been significantly enhanced. The extension proposal extends eastwards and southwards to Bradford Road including land now occupied by a late 20th century dwelling and a detached house from the 1930s. The proposal consolidates the entry point into the village, linking in with the listed buildings of 7/9 Bradford Road and marking the boundary with arable farming to the south and west. Curtilage buildings sandwiched between the barns and Church House are also included as they contribute to the group value.

2) Land to the Rear of Church House
The existing boundary of the Conservation Area cuts across the formal gardens to the rear of Church House. This should be extended to a clearly defined physical boundary to the rear of the curtilage of Church House at a point where it meets the public footpath entry into the village. The land includes some significant groups of trees, which demarcate the footpath entry into the village.

3) Extension to Holy Trinity Church graveyard
The existing boundary cuts directly across the graveyard. The proposed extension would include the entire graveyard, up to the field boundary on the western edge, beyond which is open countryside.

4) Consolidating boundaries on the N.W. corner of the village

Belbroughton Conservation Area Appraisal
Cabinet

The amendment here is again to rationalise the existing boundaries, which cut across gardens and meadows adjacent to Belne Brook.

5) Land either side of Kidderminster Road
Little Brookfield and Brent Eleigh though both enlarged by modern extensions retain their positive historic merit. Their inclusion marks the north-west boundary of the Conservation Area along well-defined field boundaries.

6) Former chapel off Forge Lane
A straightening of the boundary here would include the Primitive Methodist chapel, a building converted to commercial use which still maintains a strong historical presence. Primitive Methodism was a major movement in England from c. 1810 until the Methodist Union in 1932.

7) Nos. 3 - 7 Hartle Lane
These 3 buildings once constituted the eastern perimeter of the village centre before modern development began to shrink the distance between Belbroughton and Hartle. Coronation House (No. 3) is dated 1902 while the Parish Room at No. 7 was built in the 1930s. Both are largely unaltered contributing positively to the historic village streetscape and the setting of the Talbot public house.

8) 32 and 34 High Street
The proposal here is to include all the rear gardens attached to the dwellings that are within the Conservation Area rather than having the boundary cut across the
gardens as is currently the case.

9) 44 High Street
Former police station now in residential use.

10) 71, 73 and 75 High Street
Minor amendments to the boundary of the Conservation Area are suggested to the rear of the gardens, to accord with garden boundaries, rather than cut across them.

11) 77 and 79 High Street
These late Victorian dwellings set in spacious gardens are significant street features contributing to the character of the street as it sweeps up the hill into the village. The wall to No. 77 is made up of split millstone wheels, a modern reminder of its Belbroughton's past industrial era.

12) Springfield (No. 62 High Street)

This imposing 3-storey painted brick Georgian dwelling, which is grade ll listed, seems to have retained much of its original character. Occupying an elevated position, it is a prominent landmark building overlooking the public green, Belne brook, the entrance to Dark Lane and the former site of Belbroughton Mill. The dwelling, together with its immediate historic surroundings, is an area of significant historic interest, which merits inclusion in the Conservation Area.

13) Belne Cottage and Nos. 3 - 7 Holy Cross Lane
Although Belne Cottage is a mid to late 20th century dwelling it is a good well-mannered example of its age complementing the symmetry of the 3-bay Edwardian cottages next door. Together they help define the entry into the village and merit inclusion in the Conservation Area.

14) Dark Lane
On the south side of Dark lane, opposite the curtilage to Yew Tree House, an outbuilding to Field House Farm presents a landmark frontage which is visible for some distance westwards along the lane towards the junction with Holy Cross Lane. The unusually detailed elevation is an essential part of the cherished scene, giving this western end of Dark Lane as it enters the village a sense of place. The building is of architectural interest with 6 matching slender chimneys, ornate gablets, diaper brickwork and a corbelled brick corner. It contributes significantly to the historic and architectural interest of this north eastern edge of the village environs and should therefore be included in the Conservation Area.

15) Yew Tree House
This listed (grade II) early 19th century stuccoed villa is set in a landscaped parkland setting containing important evidence of the system of millponds, weirs and spillways built along the course of the Belne Brook. The gardens are entered in Richard Lockett's list of locally significant parks and gardens in "A Survey of Historic Parks and Gardens in Worcestershire" and the millponds are intact survivals from Belbroughton's industrial history - the recent loss of the Nash Works millpond enhances their historic significance. The site is a significant feature of historic interest which merits inclusion in the Conservation Area.

3.8   A copy of the appraisal has been attached to this report and includes a set of management and enhancement proposals under Part 2. This is not an absolute list but outlines the main issues which need to be addressed and possible tasks and timescales. The main management issues it is felt need to be addressed are:

- Modern infill
- Former Nash Works

- o Loss of historic detailing
- o Locally listed buildings
- o Gardens and their boundaries
- o Ponds and streams

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.7 The Strategic Planning team has carried out a public consultation exercise to gather views on the proposed boundary amendments and the draft appraisal. Consultation letters were sent to every resident who would be included in the boundary, and an exhibition displayed at Belbroughton Post Office supplemented by full hard copies of the draft appraisal held at the Council House. The deadline for comments to be submitted was Friday 24th August 2012. The public consultation has been carried out in line with current legislation and adopted standards contained in the Bromsgrove District Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The result of this consultation can be seen in appendix 2

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 Risk Register: Planning and Regeneration
Key Objective Ref No: 5
Key Objective: Effective, efficient, and legally compliant Strategic Planning Service
Key Control: Carry out Conservation Area character appraisals and management plans in accordance with national planning guidance
Action: 5.6, Carry out Town Centre and Belbroughton Conservation Area appraisals

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Belbroughton Draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan
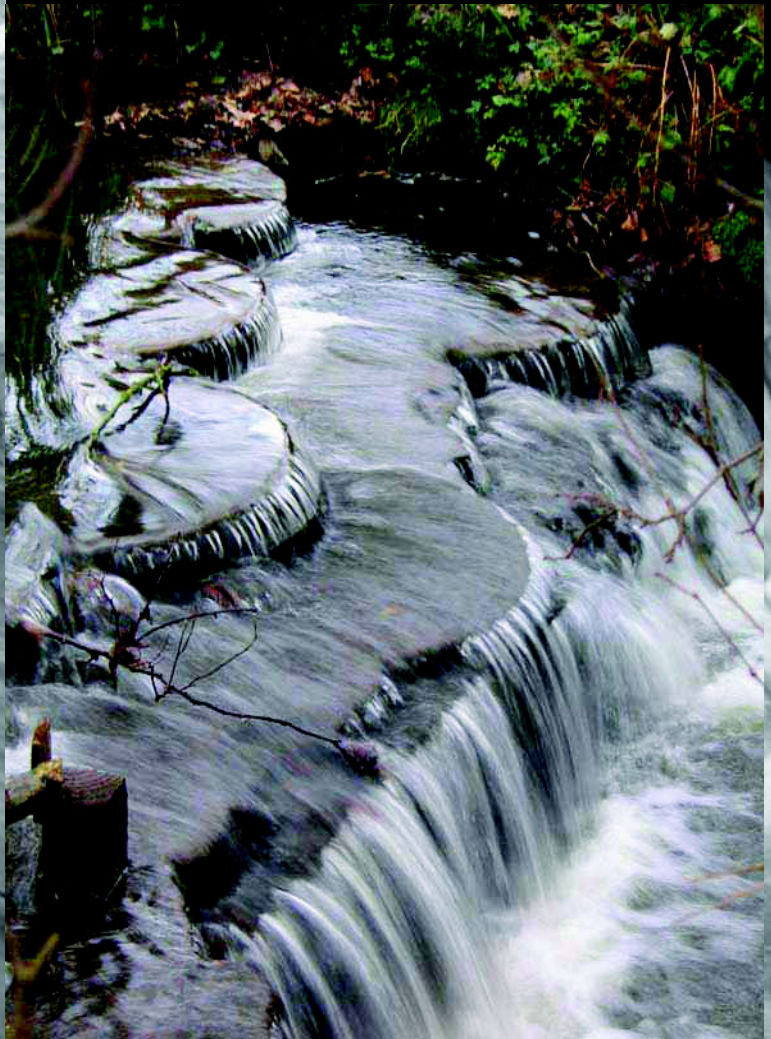Appendix 2 – Response summary table

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: David A. Thomas
E Mail: d.thomas@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: 01527 881343

BELBROUGHTON
CONSERVATION
AREA APPRAISAL AND
MANAGEMENT PLAN

JULY 2012

BROMSGROVE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Contents

CONTENTS continued

Part 2 Management Proposals

This is a consultation draft of the Belbroughton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. Comments are welcome and should be sent to the Strategic Planning Team, Bromsgrove District Council, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove B60 1AA.
Email: conservation@bromsgroveand
        redditch.gov.uk
Telephone: 01527 881326

Belbroughton village sign, replacing an original one erected in the 1930's
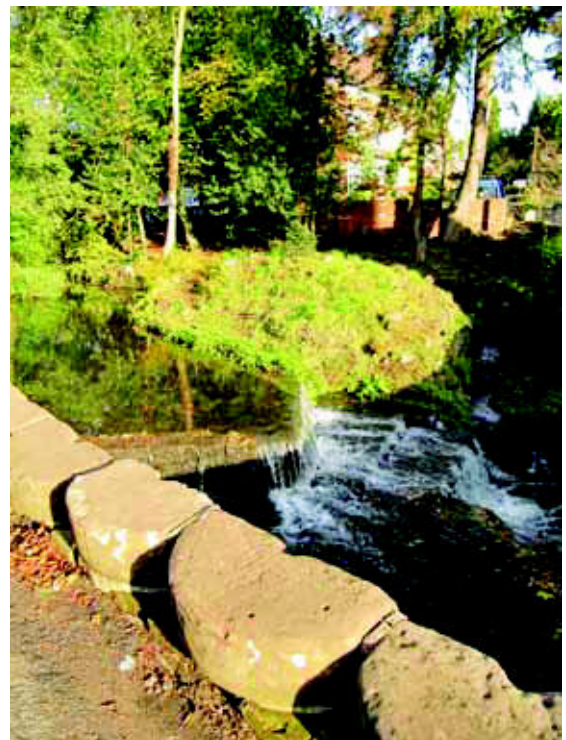
PART 1
CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal is to identify the factors and features which make an area special, based on an in-depth assessment of an area's buildings, spaces, evolution and sense of place. This is the first step in developing a management plan for the continued preservation and enhancement of a Conservation Area. An appraisal evaluates the positive, neutral and negative features of the area and suggests opportunities for improvement. It is not unusual for the boundary of a Conservation Area to fluctuate over time as the area evolves, and an assessment of the current and potential boundaries is normally part of the appraisal process.

1.1 Belbroughton Conservation Area

Originally designated in 1969 the Conservation Area was subsequently extended by Worcestershire County Council in 1975 with the inclusion of Nos. 45-75 High Street, Nos. 7, 9 and 11 Bradford Lane and No. 11 Drayton Road. It was also amended in some places in order to give the Conservation Area logical boundaries as a result of the transfer of information from the original Conservation Area to a more up-to-date base map.

This appraisal of the Belbroughton Conservation Area was carried out in June 2012 in accordance with guidance given by English Heritage in their publication Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (March 2011). As a result it was recognized that the existing Conservation Area boundary had been drawn too tightly and needed to be extended.

Although produced by the Council, local societies and residents were encouraged to contribute to and comment on the draft document. This resulted in a well-rounded assessment of the area incorporating local knowledge, perceptions and suggestions.

The draft appraisal was be made available at a local exhibition held in the Post Office, 24 High Street, Belbroughton where the purpose of the document was explained and local comments collected. There was also a couple of afternoon/evening dates at the Recreation Centre, Belbroughton to enable those preoccupied during the day to comment in the early evening. It was also available on the Council's website, at Bromsgrove Library, the Customer Service Centre in the Dolphin Centre and the Council House, Burcot Lane to ensure that it reached a wide audience.

Map 3 identifies buildings either positive or neutral within the Belbroughton Conservation Area although the number of buildings in each category is by no means exclusive. Positive buildings make a notable contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and are usually good examples of historic buildings having only minor alterations or additions. Neutral buildings make a limited contribution and are generally much more altered historic buildings though they may provide opportunities for enhancement. There are no negative buildings in the Conservation Area which are those properties which detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, where replacement with a new building would be encouraged, subject to compliance with other planning policies.
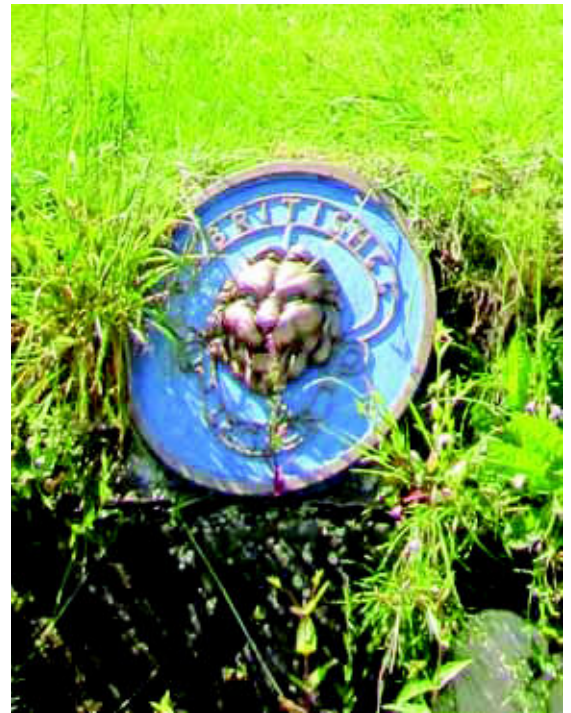
Aerial view of Belbroughton

1.2 Planning Policy Context

A Conservation Area is defined in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act as "an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". It is not the purpose of a Conservation Area to prevent development but to manage change in a positive and proactive way that benefits current and future generations.

Conservation Area status means that a special form of Planning Permission called Conservation Area Consent is required for the total or substantial demolition of any building over 115m3 in size, the demolition of a boundary wall over 1m in height next to the highway, or 2m elsewhere, and the removal of any agricultural building constructed before 1914. There is a general presumption against the loss of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Additional controls are also placed over trees within the area, meaning that an owner must submit a formal notification of works to the Council six weeks before starting work. This gives the Council the opportunity to place a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the site protecting any notable trees from unsuitable works.

The primary legislation governing Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This legislation includes certain statutory duties which the Council as Local Planning Authority must uphold. S69(1) of the Act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate any areas which they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest as Conservation Areas and under s69(2) to review such designations from time to time. The Council has a further duty under s71 (1) to formulate and prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas from time to time.

When assessing applications for development within designated Conservation Areas, the Local Planning Authority must pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Areas under s72(1) of the Act. This does not mean that development will necessarily be opposed, only that this should not be detrimental to the special interest of the wider Conservation Area. Specific guidance relating to development in the historic environment can be found in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the English Heritage guidance document PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide.

The Bromsgrove District Local Plan adopted in 2004 contains a series of specific policies relating to the historic environment (see Appendix 3). These policies help guide the Local Planning Authority when assessing planning applications to ensure that new developments and alterations preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

Belbroughton is located within the West Midlands Green Belt and Core Policy 22 of Bromsgrove District Council's Draft Core Strategy 2 (January 2011) seeks to protect the Green Belt and sets out the types of development which would be acceptable. There is a presumption against allowing inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Also, a Village Envelope is identified for Belbroughton and within this envelope County Structure Plan policy and Local Plan policies apply limiting residential development to suitable infill plots.

1.3 Summary of Special Interest

The special interest of a Conservation Area is defined by more than its appearance and includes the atmosphere, texture, sense of place and setting as well as more obvious qualities such as groups of historic buildings. Notable buildings and the spaces between them set an overall context for an area, but a designated Conservation Area should be more than just a collection of attractive buildings.

Belbroughton is a compact village nestling in a valley and a variety of well-mannered buildings from several periods can be identified with red brick architecture from the 18th and 19th centuries predominating along High Street and in the area focusing on Holy Trinity Church. Near the church, towards the top of Church Hill, lies Old Belbroughton Village School. This was probably built around 1750, originally as a single-storey brick building. As the population of the village increased the school was enlarged but eventually the need for a new building was realised and the old school building passed into new uses. Another building of note both historically and socially is the village hall. This was originally a tithe barn but was converted through voluntary subscription to its present use at the beginning of the 20th century. The building still plays an important role in village life today.

Other indications of village life past are the mill stones evident in the construction of many buildings, none more so than the flight of steps of 5 Church Road, which is formed of old scythe grinding stones, possibly used at the Nash Works which specialized in this manufacture. The village was a national centre for scythe making and the mill pools and forges can still be seen along the course of the Belne Brook which runs off the Clent hills and west to join the River Stour.

There are several village green areas located at entrances to the village as well as a more centrally located village green off the high street. Evidence remains of a deserted medieval village indicating Belbroughton's earlier extent. The street pattern, building styles and views within the village, the sense of enclosure and changes of level combine to give Belbroughton a unique character worthy of conservation.

2 Location and Landscape Setting

2.1 Location

Belbroughton is a village in the Green Belt surrounded by fields which are accessible by well-maintained footpaths. Its proximity to the conurbations of the West Midlands, Kidderminster and Bromsgrove, however, render it sensitive to even the smallest developments. There are several large areas of woodland beyond the village, notably Pepper Wood and Nutnells Wood, as well as abundant clumps of mature ash, oak, chestnut, holly and silver birch.
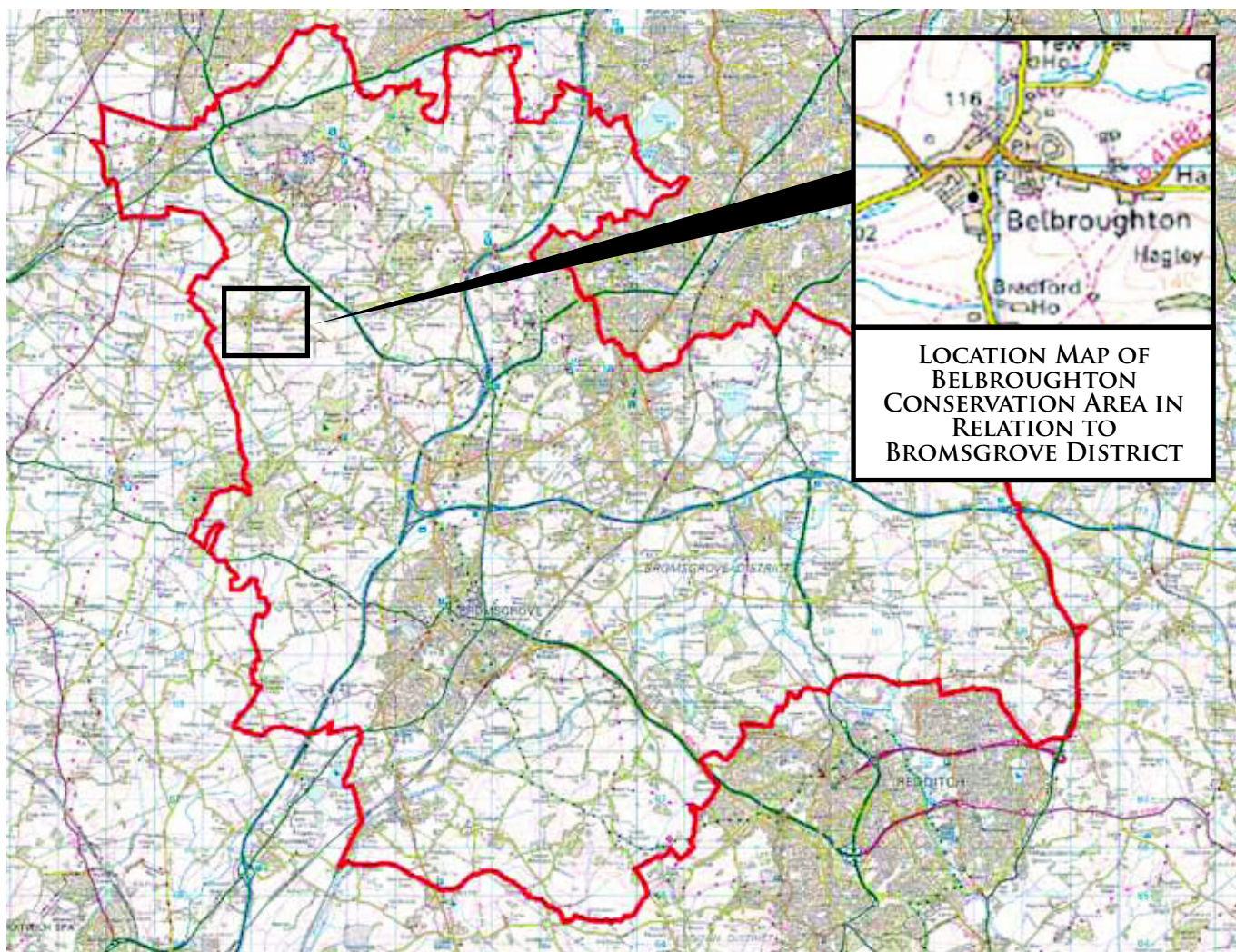
Location Map of Belbroughton Conservation Area in Relation to Bromsgrove District

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorized reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Bromsgrove District Council 100023519. 2012

The A491 Stourbridge Road, which provides access to the M5 and M42, runs a mile away to the east of Belbroughton and the B1488 runs through the village from west to east connecting Belbroughton with Kidderminster, six miles to the west. Bromsgrove lies five miles south-east while Birmingham lies twelve miles north-east. The nearest villages are Clent, Hagley and Chaddesley Corbett while Fairfield and the hamlets of Bell End, Broom Hill and Madeley Heath are separate but within the parish.

2.2 Topography and geology

Belbroughton is a small settlement occupying the lower slopes of the Clent range which forms a natural boundary of hills to the north. Most of the village lies at c.350 feet along the Belne Brook which flows westward through the village and is wooded along certain lengths, forming a notable feature. The village has a rural character and atmosphere being surrounded by mature, rolling landscape given over to pasture, arable and woodland.

The 13th century boundary of Feckenham Forest once enclosed Belbroughton and a few areas of this ancient woodland remain towards Chaddesley Corbett. The village sits on Lower Keuper sandstone and there are visible outcrops on Church Road (near Holy Trinity Church) and on Queen's Hill. This soft sandstone was used in the construction of Holy Trinity though there is little evidence for its use elsewhere. To the south of Belbroughton the predominant rock is Keuper Marl, a softer, more fine-grained rock rarely visible as an outcrop. The free draining soils reflect the nature of the underlying rock, sandy over the sandstone and loamy over the marl.

3 Historic Development and Archaeology

3.1 Early Belbroughton

The name Belbroughton means "farm by the brook" and this farm, or settlement - referred to as Broctune - is first mentioned in a deed of gift by Coenwulf, King of the Mercians in 817AD. In the Domesday Book of 1086 *Brotune* is said to include a church and priest indicating that the settlement was well-established before the 12th century. Fragments of a Norman church survive from this time but the earliest portion of the existing church dates from the 13th century. Most of Holy Trinity is 14th century but much work was carried out at the end of the 19th century by Bodley & Garner, a well-respected partnership of Victorian architects - Thomas Garner was working at Hewell Grange in Tardebigge at this time. It is probable that the early village developed near the church, possibly substantiated by the fact that the only two buildings dating from the 17th century that remain in Belbroughton are both in Church Road, the Church Hall and No. 12 Church Road.

Belbroughton owes its major growth to its development as a centre of tool making, producing scythes, shovels and agricultural edge tools of all kinds, as well as pikes and sword blades during the Civil War. The earliest mention of scythe-smiths was in 1564 and there are records of a blade mill in Brian's Bell in the 16th century. The industry was well established in Belbroughton by the beginning of the 17th century with leases of mills and forging tools being passed down from father to son. Towards the end of the 16th century and into the early part of the 17th century sheep rearing and grain production increased alongside metal working as a dual industry. At this time, or soon after, coal replaced charcoal as the main fuel for smelting iron ore.

3.2 18th century Belbroughton

In 1751 a firm of Birmingham gunmakers, Farmer and Galton, negotiated with local landowners to secure sites for additional forges. As Belbroughton had a ready supply of water power a financial investment of £5,000 was made. During the Napoleonic War it is likely that gun barrels were ground at Galton's Mill as Farmer and Galton had lucrative government contracts. Towards the end of the 18th century there was a plan to link the Stourbridge and Dudley canal system with Worcester via Holy Cross and Bromsgrove but the project never materialised because it would have meant taking water from the mills in Belbroughton thus depriving them of their power and the village of its livelihood.

3.3 19th century Belbroughton

Scythe and agricultural tool making flourished in the 19th century when the industry was dominated by the Waldron family. In 1874, however, the business in the centre of the village was acquired by Isaac Nash who employed 105 men and 6 schoolboys in 1881. Between c.1850 and 1950 the Nash scythe works and outlying mills were the predominant source of employment in Belbroughton alongside more traditional agricultural work. The employment this created must have helped develop the economy and physical extent of the village.
The higher density of buildings dating from the 18th and 19th centuries along High Street, in contrast to the older and lower density plots near the church, may owe something to the localized influence of the scythe works. Belbroughton in the 19th century was not only a centre of manufacture but also a small market centre holding agricultural fairs twice yearly.

3.4 Modern Belbroughton

Increased mechanization in agriculture, coupled with cheaper imports, brought about a gradual decline in scythe making as the century progressed. In 1930 the Nash Works employed 130 men but in 1968 the site was finally shut down. Modern development in the village, which has doubled its size, is almost entirely residential in character and reflects the attractiveness of the village as a location for commuters travelling to work in the nearby urban centres. There are new dwellings along Hartle Lane - which have almost joined Hartle to the village centre - the Glebe, and in Pinchers Close and Woodgate Way. Since 1975 additional houses have been built on Nash Lane and the Glebe Fields. A row of houses at Yew Tree Avenue, off Holy Cross Lane, is detached from Belbroughton village.

3.5 Archaeology

The majority of archaeological assets recorded in Belbroughton are mills associated with the post-medieval manufacture of scythes, hay and chaff knives and edge tools. Yew Tree House, a grade II listed early 19th century stuccoed villa is set in a designed landscape containing important evidence of the system of millponds, weirs and spillways built along the course of the Belne Brook. Earthworks associated with the deserted medieval settlement of Belne have been recorded north of Bell Hall, one mile east of Belbroughton. Bell Hall is also the location for a heavily restored Norman chapel. Within the Conservation Area there are a significant number of listed buildings, the majority of which date to the 17th and 18th centuries.

4 Architectural Quality and Built Form

4.1 Plan Form

The plan form of the village reflects its evolution over time in response to various factors. In particular there is a distinction between the group around the church, almost certainly the oldest part of the village, which has a strategic position overlooking the Belne Brook valley. The larger part of the village is on lower ground, close to the brook and originating, at least in part, from water-powered corn milling and metalworking sites which date from around the 12th century and possibly earlier.

Holy Trinity, a grade II* listed 14th century church with a fine recessed spire, stands at the centre of a loose grouping of larger houses in their own grounds and cottages facing an informal open space. Two separate routes (Church Hill and Church Road) lead downwards towards High Street, a linear arrangement with a higher density of development and picturesque, varied frontages on both sides of the street. This feels like a distinct part of the village, and is itself subdivided by a sharp change of level at its southern end (Queens Hill) where it descends to meet the Belne Brook.

A larger settlement spreads around this historic core, particularly on its east side where modern housing has been built. Of historic interest, although not included within the Conservation Area boundary, is the line of former industrial sites and mill ponds that extends up the course of the Belne Brook and forms part of a pattern of long established industrial activity in the area. Some of these sites are incorporated into private grounds retaining their significance as historic and architectural features. Nash Works, the key industrial site within the village, has been partially cleared of buildings.

The experience of visiting Belbroughton tends to be one of moving across thresholds into distinct areas of village streetscape, rather than arriving at a single focal point. The main streets come into view rather suddenly at the entrance to the village, and viewlines further into the settlement tend to be shortened by bends, changes in level and boundary walls. Within each area there is an attractive unity of form, scale and materials, and the diverse character of the village is unified by its linking elements; raised foot paths, brick boundary walls, mature garden planting and numerous cuttings through the sandstone bedrock which is left exposed at various locations.

The existence of larger houses at the entrances to the village and within a kilometre or so radius of the church is another distinctive feature. Larger plots close to the church may have an origin in pre-Conquest estate boundaries.

4.2 Key views and vistas

Views within the Conservation Area are generally enclosed, offering an intriguing sequence of contrasting spaces, small in scale, which are further complemented by the small scale of the buildings.

The village has a complex spatial form relative to its size. The impression of the village when seen from the surrounding countryside - a compact settlement grouped around a landmark church - is misleading. Once within the boundaries of the village the spire of Holy Trinity is largely hidden from view. The important landmarks are buildings at junctions - Belbroughton has four significant meetings of routes within its boundary (see Map 3) - the topography, which divides the village between upper and lower areas, and proximity to the river.

The result is a village streetscape which is experienced in parts rather than as a whole, with the separating elements being changes in level, bends in the road and distinctive 'pinch points' where the road is enclosed by walls, hedges and cuttings in the bedrock. These features are almost entirely positive in their impact, framing views from one space into another and making this one of the more interesting villages in the district to explore on foot.

Village gateways occur at the main entry points into Belbroughton and are characterised by small groups of cottages set close to the road, farm buildings and larger properties in their own grounds. Mature trees, garden walls and high hedgerows are conspicuous. Bends in the road interrupt sightlines into the village, reinforcing the sense of distinct spaces at the village entrances. The overall spatial character is low density with a mix of properties at the edge of the road and larger, high status buildings set back some distance and partly hidden by trees and property boundaries. Small well-tended grassy areas are features at the Bradford Lane and Holy Cross Lane entrances to the village. Between Holy Cross Lane and Dark Lane a number of original mill ponds and spillways are preserved in the grounds of Yew Tree House.

4.3 Prevailing and former uses

The population of Belbroughton in 2001 was 2,380 and many villagers commute either to Birmingham, Kidderminster, Stourbridge, Worcester or Bromsgrove. Scythe making, for which Belbroughton was once the national centre, continued as the mainstay of the local economy until 1968 when the Nash Works finally closed. Employment within the village is limited and restricted to agricultural, retail, light manufacturing, hospitality and service industries. Facilities on High Street include a butcher's, a convenience store and a post office-buildings in residential use now predominate. A redundant telephone kiosk on the corner of Pinchers Close and High Street was purchased by the Parish Council from BT and has served as a book exchange and library since June 2011.

Belbroughton has three public houses and a club: the Talbot, Ye Olde Horseshoe and the Club are on High Street and the Queens is at the bottom of Queens Hill. The only church in use is the grade II* Holy Trinity standing on high ground at the top of Church Hill. Since the Conservation Area was first extended in 1975 there has been some limited house building against its eastern and northern boundaries:

- ■ on land off Hartle Lane (formerly a scrap yard)
- ■ as infilling west of The Glebe
- ■ on land adjacent to the Nash Works and Mill Pond

The church seems to have had a significant influence on the early development of the village, most noticeably in the area immediately surrounding it. Here, the settlement pattern is unusual, less dense than might be expected and characterised by larger plots and substantial houses, for example, the Old Rectory (c. 1762) and Church House (late 18th century).

There is evidence that both the Old Rectory and Church House occupy older sites. These were redeveloped during the course of the 18th century when the church living was owned by St John's College, Oxford. Both properties were rebuilt, enlarged and then fronted with fashionably-detailed elevations. No. 19 Church Hill is a late 18th century house which seems to reflect the same aspirations, and the group around the church provides an interesting contrast with the more typical and humble village-dwelling type represented by Bellem Cottage.

Alongside the rural population, Belbroughton developed a significant industrial sector based on the manufacture of agricultural, then military, equipment. The existing corn mills were supplemented by scythe making works, linked by millponds, weirs and spillways along the course of the Belne Brook. Much of this built fabric has since disappeared save for a red brick two-storey range on the former Nash site and a number of millponds. Important archaeological evidence of Belbroughton's history currently lies outside the boundary of the conservation area.
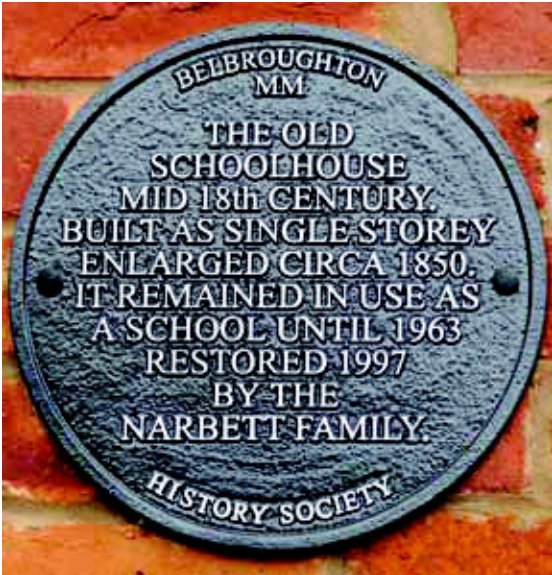
The village expanded significantly as a result of the local metalworking industry, particularly in the vicinity of High Street. This area is characterised by a higher density of development, comprising 19th century brick residential terraces and commercial frontages. 19th and early 20th century photographs show a thriving commercial thoroughfare with a wide range of businesses, including a number of inns. The appearance in the village of relatively well-paid industrial workers no doubt helped support local shops and other businesses though many of these have now been converted to residential use.

Expansion in the 19th century also produced some distinctive religious and institutional building types. The Primitive Methodist chapel off Forge Lane, now being used as offices, is a small-scale example of the kind of religious non-conformity often associated with manufacturing areas. On Church Hill, the original schoolhouse building - now a residence - was usurped in 1873-4 by J. A. Chatwin's patterned brick Ruskinian building, on Bradford Lane. A terrace of former almshouses, later converted to the village workhouse (1823-4), was once in use alongside the Old Schoolhouse and at No. 19 Church Hill, in the late 19th century, there was a home for Waifs and Strays - both of these buildings are now in residential use. The rectory tithe barn on Church Road was converted (1912-5) by William Weir into a village hall and a central timber bay window was added.

During the 1970s shops along the high street were beginning to thin out as more and more people acquired cars and made journeys further afield both for work and to visit the new supermarkets and shopping centres being built in surrounding towns.

4.4 Overall character

There is a mix of styles and types from the last 200 years with older buildings surviving in places. The handful of properties which predate the 18th century are local land marks rather than buildings which characterise the village.

Holy Trinity Church is the oldest and most dominant building in the village visible from the surrounding countryside and, despite its 19th century alterations, still recognisably medieval. It sets few surviving precedents though and the local sandstone from which it was built is only used now in garden and retaining walls.

Timber framing would have been a more widely-used building technique. Bellem Cottage is a picturesque box frame survivor from the 17th century, probably a single farmhouse to begin with under a thatched roof subsequently divided into separate dwellings and now a single residence again. The former tithe barn, a little further up Church Road, is a more substantial survival from the same period, with cross braces added to the post and truss framing. Given the late date of both buildings, it is unclear if the brick infill to the timber panels is the original material or a replacement for earlier wattle and daub.

Red brick architecture, the dominant form in the village, divides between several imposing 18th century buildings - which made early use of the material and adopted fashionable architectural details - and the smaller scale early Victorian housing which tends to be terraced in form and more modest in its detailing.

Brick-built terraced housing appeared in the village in the later 18th and 19th centuries, much of it along High Street to the back of the pavement or set back behind front gardens. At the high street's southern end there are two-storey properties that still have 18th century characteristics - dentilled eaves, string courses, stone lintels over the windows and moulded, classical frames to the doorways. Beyond the junction with Hartle Lane the detailing is more conventional, but is still an unusual mix of single and double-fronted properties where the larger houses show wooden framed and pedimented doorways. To the east of Church Hill there are two terraced groups of buildings set against the slope at right angles to the road with mature garden areas to front and rear.

There were 15 additions to the Conservation Area Boundary in 2012 including 3 to the Church Hill Zone, 2 to the Belne Brook/Queens Hill Zone and 4 to the High Street Zone. The remaining 5 additions constitute an entirely new character zone - the Yew Tree Zone.

4.5 Zone 1: Church Hill

Belbroughton's oldest open space is a loosely defined area with a variety of buildings ranged around the edges of a rising landform and subdivided by property boundaries. It has a central grassy space, and is anchored by a number of landmark buildings:

- ◼ Holy Trinity Church
- ◼ the three-bay Old Rectory of c. 1762
- ◼ the Church Hall, a 17th century former rectory barn
- ◼ No. 19 Church Hill (late 18th century)
- ◼ the mid 18th century Old Schoolhouse
- ◼ former 18th century almshouses

The space is given coherence by the consistency of materials; all elevations facing the green are hand-made brick, apart from the church which is reddish local sandstone. The pattern of open spaces and their boundaries, including the churchyard and extended cemetery, are also visually unifying features.

4.6 Zone 2: High Street

The linear form of the street, running along the slope at a single level for much of its length, is a distinctive feature in the village streetscape. Its character is subdivided at the junction with Hartle Lane where there is a bend and narrowing of the street width. This junction is a focus for commercial premises, including two historic inns, and feels like the centre of the village. The longest section of continuous frontage is along the street's north side and is characterised by attractive 19th century brick terraces with small front gardens. The south side has a lower density of development with some modern infill - housing and car parking - which reduces its visual appeal. Former fields, orchards and allotments to either side of the High Street have been infilled with modern housing. On the west side this has separated the High Street from the former site of the Nash Works, although Forge Lane survives as a narrow vehicular access route.

4.7 Zone 3: Belne Brook and Queens Hill

This area, like Church Hill, is a loose group of different building types. Although less unified visually - the group includes a stone cottage, a painted brick courtyard building and an 18th century brick pub called the Queens - the area has a visual focus around the crossing point of the Belne Brook. This is the only part of the village where the brook is a conspicuous feature (apart from its brief appearance near Yew Tree House) at Ram Alley and where it emerges again at the Drayton Road exit.

4.8 Zone 4: Yew Tree House

This area is dominated by the grade ll listed Yew Tree House, an early 19th century stuccoed villa set in a landscaped parkland setting containing important evidence of the system of millponds, weirs and spillways built along the course of the Belne Brook. The gardens are entered in Richard Lockett's list of locally significant parks and gardens in "A Survey of Historic Parks and Gardens in Worcestershire" and the millponds are intact survivals from Belbroughton's industrial history - the recent loss of the Nash Works millpond enhances their historic significance.

4.9 Key unlisted buildings

Currently, there has been no local list drawn up for Belbroughton. A large number of unlisted historic buildings, however, can be found in the Conservation Area. They are marked in green on Map 3 and are considered to make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Examples include:

- the red brick Victorian school on Bradford Lane decorated with courses of blue brick
- the Old Schoolhouse on Church Hill
- the former parish workhouse, Nos. 22 - 26 Church Hill
- Nos. 4 - 8 Queens Hill
- Majority of properties fronting High Street and Church Street
- The Horseshoe Inn
- The Talbot
- No. 3 Hartle Lane
- The former Primitive Methodist Chapel off Forge Lane, now in commercial use
- Outbuilding to Field House Farm, Dark Lane

4.10 Building materials

The most visible building materials are orange-red brickwork and a mix of clay tile and blue slate roofs. As in many other villages and towns in the region, these have been the typical building materials for most types of residential and commercial property since at least the 17th century.

The outcrop of sandstone on which the village sits would seem to have provided a source of local building stone, though there is little evidence that it was widely used apart from in the construction of Holy Trinity Church. Timber framing with wattle and daub infill panels and thatched roofing must have been Belbroughton's characteristic building type from the middle ages until well into the 17th century. These materials have almost entirely disappeared from the village streetscape - thatch has long gone, there is no visible medieval timber framing and much of the stonework in the church is Victorian replacement of the original.

The most conspicuous timber-framed buildings - Bellem Cottage and the Church Hall - are both 17th century, with brick infill replacing the earlier wattle and daub. From this period onwards brick became more fashionable, durable and economic to use as a building material. In the 18th century the material would be used to build some of the most prestigious properties in the village, such as The Old Rectory and Church House. The visibility of brick is increased through its use in boundary walls, a feature of the village in places, for example, opposite the Horseshoe Inn on High Street.

With a couple of notable exceptions at the edge of the village the decorative uses of brick are mostly restrained. On Bradford Lane, the school built in 1874 has been turned into a local landmark by the use of varied architectural forms and distinctive blue brick patterning. On Dark Lane, within the proposed boundary of the Conservation Area, an outbuilding of Field House Farm has been enriched with stepped buttresses, chimneys and patterned brickwork. 19th century photographs show that the nearby Belbroughton Corn Mill (demolished in the 1930s) had similar detailing.

Surviving industrial buildings on the site of the Nash Works and other later 19th century buildings make use of an engineering type of brick, which nevertheless complements the earlier work through its use of a soft orange red shade rather than the darker reds often associated with the material.

A distinctive by product of the scythe making process is also visible in walls, steps and path surfaces throughout the village; the sandstone grinding stones which were supplied from Alveley in Shropshire and used in the Nash Works until the 1930s. These flat, circular stones are reused either whole, as flags, or split in two and used in walling with the flat, split surface turned outwards.

4.11 Public realm, green spaces and trees

Belbroughton has a number of well-tended grassy areas which contribute to the amenity and appearance of the village. The space around the church is ancient in origin, and its history and long standing public significance is marked by the remains of a medieval cross, and the presence of mature trees including chestnuts, yew, pines, maples and flowering cherries. Open space elsewhere in the village has been provided on cleared sites and purchased land as the village expanded on lower ground to the north. Belbroughton's rich endowment of trees, both within and along the approaches to the village, has helped to preserve a sense of rural environment aided by expanses of allotments and a comprehensive network of established footpaths linking the village with the surrounding countryside.

Level areas of open ground are relatively scarce in Belbroughton's valley side location, and most accessible sites are occupied by private plots. Public space on sloping sites has been made more usable by building up the slope behind low retaining walls, and raising the landscaped area above the adjoining roadway. The church yard and green, for instance, are raised above the surrounding street level by a 1m stone retaining wall and this feature occurs again along the edge of the village green off High Street and at the junction of Church Road and Queens Hill. The feature complements other boundary and road edge treatments, in particular brick garden walls and exposed bedrock cuttings.

Less successful in public realm terms is the treatment of the former open space opposite The Talbot public house at the junction of High Street and Hartle Lane. This has been divided between car parking and a village green, both rectangular open spaces ringed by tree and shrub planting. The village green has gates recently made by a local craftsman. The layout is not organically related to the form of the village; the car park is conspicuous and the perimeter planting too dense, overshadowing the garden and blocking views of the church (an important potential sightline between two of the village's focal spaces).

The Belne Brook is the least used of Belbroughton's public realm assets, it appears at the Holy Cross Lane entrance to the village then reappears on the other side of the village at the junction of Church Hill and Queens Hill where it can only be viewed from the highway. The extensive culverting under the Nash Works site and the infilling of the works millpond have contributed to its lack of impact on the modern village streetscape, although a network of ponds and streams still exists in the grounds of Yew Tree House.

The biodiversity value of public realm in the village is limited by the well-maintained nature of the spaces, which are mostly mown grass with a mix of ornamental and native species and few untended areas. The river corridor, which is less intensively managed and (in the grounds of Yew Tree House) dominated by native woodland and understorey, has more potential for flora and fauna.

Belbroughton History Society has fixed black Millennium heritage plaques to eight key buildings in the Conservation Area and these are considered to enhance the character of the buildings and the village streetscape. There are further informative plaques where the brook runs under a culvert near the Queen's public house, on the village green off the High Street - where there is also a Bradley forge hammer - at Ram Alley and nearby the church.

5 2012 Boundary Changes

We amended the boundary of the Conservation Area against the following criteria:

■ It should enclose a readily identifiable homogenous area of distinct architectural quality and/or historic interest which is desirable to preserve or enhance

■ It should include landscape features which are an integral part of the historic built environment

■ It should be tightly drawn but where necessary include the immediate setting which forms the heart of the area

■ It should relate to easily identifiable physical plot boundaries

■ It should include buildings and man-made features

There were 15 separate new included in the Conservation Area in 2012 each one of which satisfied at least one of the requirements listed above. They were as follows:

1) Church Farm Barn and Cow Shed and adjoining buildings and curtilages

Both of these mid-18th century farm outbuildings are listed structures, built of brick on sandstone bases with ornate stone dressings. They have been recently renovated and converted into dwellings and their contribution to the group setting of the nearby listed buildings (Church House and Holy Trinity) has been significantly enhanced. The boundary extends eastwards and southwards to Bradford Road including land now occupied by a late 20th century dwelling and a detached house from the 1930s. This extension consolidates the entry point into the village, linking in with the listed buildings of 7/9 Bradford Road and marking the boundary with arable farming to the south and west. Curtilage buildings sandwiched between the barns and Church House are also included as they contribute to the group value.

2) Land to the Rear of Church House

The previous boundary of the Conservation Area cut across the formal gardens to the rear of Church House. This was extended to a clearly defined physical boundary to the rear of the curtilage of Church House at a point where it meets the public footpath entry into the village. The land includes some significant groups of trees, which demarcate the footpath entry into the village.

3) Extension to Holy Trinity Church graveyard

The previous boundary cut directly across the graveyard. The extension includes the entire graveyard, up to the field boundary on the western edge, beyond which is open countryside.

4) Consolidating boundaries on the N.W. corner of the village

The amendment here rationalized the then existing boundaries, which cut across gardens and meadows adjacent to Belne Brook.

5) Land either side of Kidderminster Road

Little Brookfield and Brent Eleigh though both enlarged by modern extensions retain their positive historic merit. Their inclusion marked the north-west boundary of the Conservation Area along well-defined field boundaries.

6) Former chapel off Forge Lane

A straightening of the boundary here included the Primitive Methodist chapel, a building converted to commercial use which still maintains a strong historical presence. Primitive Methodism was a major movement in England from c. 1810 until the Methodist Union in 1932.

7) Nos. 3 - 7 Hartle Lane

These 3 buildings once constituted the eastern perimeter of the village centre before modern development began to shrink the distance between Belbroughton and Hartle. Coronation House (No. 3) is dated 1902 while the Parish Room at No. 7 was built in the 1930s. Both are largely unaltered contributing positively to the historic village streetscape and the setting of the Talbot public house.

8) 32 and 34 High Street

The proposal here was to include all the rear gardens attached to the dwellings that are within the Conservation Area rather than having the boundary cut across the gardens as is currently the case.

9) 44 High Street

Former police station now in residential use.

10) 71, 73 and 75 High Street

Minor amendments to the boundary of the Conservation Area were suggested to the rear of the gardens, to accord with garden boundaries, rather than cut across them.

11) 77 and 79 High Street

These late Victorian dwellings set in spacious gardens are significant street features contributing to the character of the street as it sweeps up the hill into the village. The wall to No. 77 is made up of split millstone wheels, a modern reminder of its Belbroughton's past industrial era.

12) Springfield (No. 62 High Street)

This imposing 3-storey painted brick Georgian dwelling, which is grade ll listed, seems to have retained much of its original character. Occupying an elevated position, it is a prominent landmark building overlooking the public green, Belne brook, the entrance to Dark Lane and the former site of Belbroughton Mill. The dwelling, together with its immediate historic surroundings, is an area of significant historic interest, which merited inclusion in the Conservation Area.

13) Belne Cottage and Nos. 3 - 7 Holy Cross Lane

Although Belne Cottage is a mid to late 20th century dwelling it is a good well-mannered example of its age complementing the symmetry of the 3-bay Edwardian cottages next door. Together they help define the entry into the village and merited inclusion in the Conservation Area.

14) Dark Lane

On the south side of Dark lane, opposite the curtilage to Yew Tree House, an outbuilding to Field House Farm presents a landmark frontage which is visible for some distance westwards along the lane towards the junction with Holy Cross Lane. The unusually detailed elevation is an essential part of the cherished scene, giving this western end of Dark Lane as it enters the village a sense of place. The building is of architectural interest with 6 matching slender chimneys, ornate gablets, diaper brickwork and a corbelled brick corner. It contributes significantly to the historic and architectural interest of this north eastern edge of the village environs and was therefore included in the Conservation Area.

15) Yew Tree House

This listed (grade II) early 19th century stuccoed villa is set in a landscaped parkland setting containing important evidence of the system of millponds, weirs and spillways built along the course of the Belne Brook. The gardens are entered in Richard Lockett's list of locally significant parks and gardens in "A Survey of Historic Parks and Gardens in Worcestershire" and the millponds are intact survivals from Belbroughton's industrial history - the recent loss of the Nash Works millpond enhances their historic significance. The site is a significant feature of historic interest which merited inclusion in the Conservation Area.

6 Summary of Issues

Belbroughton has many of the characteristics of North Worcestershire villages, and shares with its neighbours the problems common to rural communities in close proximity to a large urban area. The quality of life in the village makes it desirable as a commuting destination and this raises the twin challenges of accommodating new house building and increased traffic flows.

There are very few buildings in the Conservation Area which neither enhance nor detract from its general character or appearance (see Map 3). What negative areas there are remain limited, for example, garaging visible from High Street/Nash Lane. Post-war house building (mostly private) has helped expand the village's population and support services such as the village school and store. Development layouts and the design of individual houses, unfortunately, have tended to be suburban and self-contained in character, contributing little to the village setting. High housing values in the village should make it possible to insist on more location specific designs and layouts at the application stage.

The Appraisal has highlighted the following problems, needs and pressures in the Belbroughton Conservation Area:

6.1 Modern infill

The erosion of diversity and distinctiveness through modern infill emphasizes the very great need to harmonise any new development with the existing landscape and historic built environment. New building, as well as alterations, has not always been carried out in sympathy with existing styles and the tradition of adapting to change has not necessarily been followed. Land between the rear of High Street properties and the Nash Works is available for housing as the pressure for development of backland increases.

6.2 Former Nash Works

This substantial riverside plot which lies outside the Conservation Area is currently abandoned and neglected with most of its buildings demolished. A vacant, two-storey range on the north-west boundary remains and appears readily capable of repair. This may provide historic and de sign value to the site which was once the centre of a significant traditional manufacturing industry dominating the area over four centuries.

6.3 Loss of historic detailing

Incremental change within the existing Conservation Area boundary is eroding the historic character of the village. Many historic windows have been replaced with uPVC frames, which cannot reproduce the appearance and detail of the originals. Other fittings that are often replaced with standardised modern products include doors, rainwater goods (gutters, hoppers, downpipes), eaves and bargeboard fittings, roofing materials and chimney pots. The loss of these details may seem individually insignificant but collectively, over time, they can destroy the heritage value of the Conservation Area.

6.4 Locally listed buildings

The wider Belbroughton area has a wealth of historic buildings but only 57 of them are listed or designated heritage assets. Many of the other historic buildings are of local importance but not national importance. The establishment of a local list would identify these important local historic assets.

6.5 Gardens and their boundaries

These are an important part of Belbroughton's character and make a significant contribution as village features. The concentration of historic properties with limited car parking within the Conservation Area boundary has resulted in some owners removing walls, fences and hedges and paving over the planted part of their garden for vehicle hardstanding, often with unsympathetic modern paving materials. Although currently limited in extent, this pattern could have a serious impact on the visual quality of the village if allowed to continue unchecked.

The draft management plan in the next section considers how all of these issues might be addressed to ensure the continuing preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.6 Ponds and streams

These form a useful, local wildlife habitat despite their variable quality. The loss of this habitat would link to major declines in plants, terrestrial invertebrates and vertebrates elsewhere.

Part 2
Draft Management Proposals

1 Introduction

The purpose of this management plan is to provide a clear strategy for the management of Belbroughton Conservation Area in a way that will protect and enhance its character and appearance. It should be read in conjunction with the Belbroughton Conservation Area Appraisal (July 2012) in which the character and special interest of the Conservation Area is identified, along with the features and other issues that currently compromise or detract from its character and appearance.

Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas. The management plan is intended to provide guidance to those involved in dealing with development and change not only within the Conservation Area but also in respect of its setting. The plan sets out policies to maintain and reinforce the character of the Conservation Area, and also to guide and manage change and in particular to respond to the negative features and threats to the character which have been defined in the appraisal. It also outlines the resources required for implementation and provides for monitoring and review. The management plan has been prepared in accordance with national policy contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and follows the most recent guidance from English Heritage "Understanding Place: Conservation Area, Designation, Appraisal and Management" (2011). A Public Consultation took place between 16th July 2012 and 24th August 2012.

The management plan is for use as a technical document to provide guidance for owners and businesses in the Conservation Area. It informs and guides the development control process and policy formation. After a period of public consultation the plan was be formally adopted as a material planning consideration by Bromsgrove District Council.

1.1 Planning policy context

The management plan lies within a framework of local and national planning policy for the historic environment. General planning policies and proposals for the control of development and use of land within Belbroughton can be found in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan (adopted in January 2004) and the emerging Bromsgrove Core Strategy.

The key objectives in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan in respect of the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of the Conservation Area are:

- S35A, Development in Conservation Areas

- S36, Design of Development in Conservation Areas

- S37, Demolition in Conservation Areas

- S38, Protection of Buildings of Merit

- S41, Listed Buildings in Shopping Areas

- S42, Shopfronts in Conservation Areas

- S43, Traffic Calming Schemes

- S45, Improvements to Conservation Areas

- S47, Advertisement Control

Copies of the Local Plan are available on the Council's website at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk or from the Council House in Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, B60 1AA

In 2004 Bromsgrove District Council adopted SPG 2, Shopfronts and Advertisement Design Guide. In respect of the Conservation Area the aim of the guidance is to encourage shopfront design and advertisements which preserve and enhance the character and significance of the Conservation Area. This document is to be revised and updated shortly.

The Council is committed to plan-led development and the plan-making process and has produced a draft plan for the whole district in the form of the draft Core Strategy. This plan is progressing towards an advanced stage of production and it is hoped that now the NPPF has been published the plan can be progressed quickly to formal adoption.

This policy framework, along with the NPPF and the English Heritage Guidance Document PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (which remains valid), will be used to further the preservation and enhancement of the character of the Conservation Area.
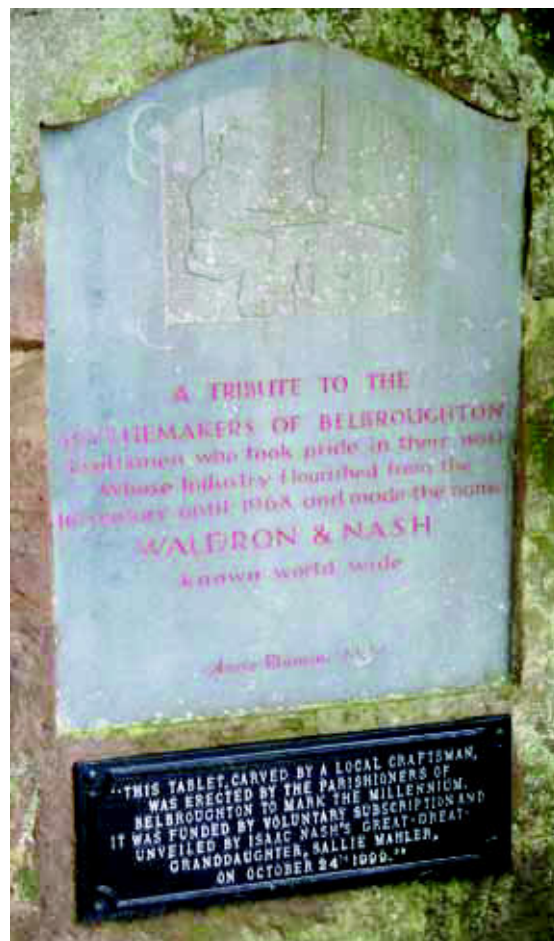
1.2 Summary of special interest

Belbroughton is a compact village nestling in a valley. A variety of well-mannered buildings from several periods can be identified with red brick architecture from the 18th and 19th centuries predominating along the High Street and in the area focusing on Holy Trinity Church.

Indications of village life past are the mill stones evident in the construction of many buildings, none more so than the flight of steps of 5 Church Road, which is formed of old scythe grinding stones, possibly used at the Nash Works which specialized in this manufacture. The village was a national centre for scythe making and the mill pools and forges can still be seen along the course of the Belne Brook.

Belbroughton has two manor houses of note as well as two village greens which are located at entrances to the village rather than the more usual central location. The street pattern, building styles and views within the village, the sense of enclosure and changes of level combine to give Belbroughton a unique character worthy of conservation.

1.3 Challenges and opportunities

The appraisal has highlighted the following problems and pressures in the Belbroughton Conservation Area:

- Modern infill
- Former Nash Works
- Loss of historic detailing
- Locally listed buildings
- Gardens and their boundaries
- Ponds and streams

2 Management Proposals

The following strategies have been identified as ways in which to help protect and enhance the character and significance of the Conservation Area by addressing the negative features identified above. The policies are in accordance with national policy guidance and local policies, and follow on from the Conservation Area Appraisal.

2.1 Modern infill

The erosion of diversity and distinctiveness through modern infill emphasizes the very great need to harmonise any new development with the existing landscape and historic built environment. New building, as well as alterations, has not always been carried out in sympathy with existing styles and the tradition of adapting to change has not necessarily been followed.

Land between the rear of High Street properties and the Nash Works is available for housing as the pressure for development of backland increases.

2.1.1 Proposed action

- New proposals should be assessed in accordance with local and national policies in respect of conservation areas to ensure that any new scheme achieves better integration into the historic environment and enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

- Ensure that new building, as well as alterations which can also have a significant impact on an area, are carried out in sympathy with existing styles, continuing the tradition of adapting to change

- Existing building lines should be maintained

- Allow no buildings to compete in height with their surroundings, for example, a single-storey building should not be permitted in a group of two-story buildings

- Materials should respect those generally used in the vicinity

- New buildings should maintain the line and scale of existing fenestration and need not necessarily copy historic styles

- Densities should be kept appropriate for the vicinity and houses provided with gardens in keeping with the existing patterns. Estates with large houses, close together, are not appropriate

- New development should be sited to minimize the need for new infrastructure

- Seek improvements to buildings where opportunities arise through development/redevelopment proposals

- New proposals should be assessed in accordance with local and national policies in respect of Conservation Areas to ensure that any new scheme achieves better integration into the historic environment and enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

- Encourage the preservation of important views within the village and preserve vistas towards historic buildings

2.2 Former Nash Works

This substantial riverside plot which lies outside the Conservation Area is currently abandoned and neglected with most of its buildings demolished. A vacant, two-storey range on the north-west boundary remains and appears readily capable of repair. This may provide historic and design value to the site which was once the centre of a significant traditional manufacturing industry dominating the area over four centuries.

2.2.1 Proposed action

- Any redevelopment of the Nash Works site should seek improvements to the existing access

- Retain and refurbish the Victorian building range on the north-west boundary

- Carry out archaeological fieldwork prior to and during redevelopment

- Include a small display of the history of the site and scythe manufacture

2.3 Loss of historic detailing

Incremental change within the existing Conservation Area boundary is eroding the historic character of the village. Many historic windows have been replaced with uPVC frames, which cannot reproduce the appearance and detail of the originals. Other fittings that are often replaced with standardised modern products include doors, rainwater goods (gutters, hoppers, downpipes), eaves and bargeboard fittings, roofing materials and chimney pots. The loss of these details may seem individually insignificant but collectively, over time, they can destroy the heritage value of the Conservation Area.

2.3.1 Proposed action

■ Discourage the removal or alteration of original fenestration

■ Address unauthorised alterations to buildings through enforcement action where appropriate, in accordance with our enforcement policy

■ Undertake a photographic survey of all the properties in the Conservation Area. This will provide a record of the condition and appearance of each property, which would be useful in any future enforcement situations

■ The reinstatement of historic detailing will be encouraged where opportunities arise through development proposals

■ We will consider the need for an Article 4 Direction to bring any permitted development works under planning control, to ensure that the special qualities of unlisted buildings of local significance are protected

2.4 Locally listed buildings

The wider Belbroughton area has a wealth of historic buildings but only 57 of them are listed or designated heritage assets. Many of the other historic buildings are of local importance but not national importance. The establishment of a local list would identify these important local historic assets.

2.4.1 Proposed action

■ When the local list criteria are adopted draw up a list of locally important buildings or heritage assets

2.5 Gardens and their boundaries

These are an important part of Belbroughton's character and make a significant contribution as village features. The concentration of historic properties with limited car parking within the Conservation Area boundary has resulted in some owners removing walls, fences and hedges and paving over the planted part of their garden for vehicle hardstanding, often with unsympathetic modern paving materials. Although currently limited in extent, this pattern could have a serious impact on the visual quality of the village if allowed to continue unchecked.

2.5.1 Proposed action

■ Consider the need for an Article 4 Direction

■ Encourage owners when designing new driveways to minimize the loss of greenery

■ When repairing or constructing new kerbs use original or matching recycled materials

■ New boundary detail, especially that visible from the road and footpaths, should reflect existing traditional styles

■ Encourage the use of reclaimed millstones as a wall building material

■ Brick walls should be:

◆ constructed with bricks to match original walls found throughout the village

◆ finished with the traditional blue half moon bricks or other traditional capping

◆ low where they front a property

■ Discourage styles such as:

◆ high security fences

◆ panel fencing, i.e. wood, concrete and uPVC

◆ planting of Leylandii, or conifers which are not native to the British Isles

2.6 Ponds and Streams

The course of the brook forms a useful, local wildlife habitat despite its variable quality. The loss of this habitat would link to major declines in plants, terrestrial invertebrates and vertebrates elsewhere.

2.6.1 Proposed action

■ support measures to re-landscape and improve the environmental quality of this area

■ encourage the restoration of the natural habitat as much as possible in order to enhance biodiversity

3 CONCLUSIONS

The successful management of the Conservation Area will depend not only on the commitment of the local planning authority, but also other stakeholders especially those who work and live in the area. General advice on all matters related to the historic environment, including Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings can be obtained from the Conservation Officer at Bromsgrove District Council.

Appendix 1

List of properties within the Conservation Area Boundary

Scout Hut Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

Church Office Church Road Belbroughton Bromsgrove Worcestershire DY9 9TE

Westcote Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

17A High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

Yew Tree Holy Cross Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SN

The Oaks Church Farm Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

The Queens Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

10 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

11 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

15 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

17 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

19 - 21 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

26 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SU

28 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SU

29 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

31A High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

35 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

36 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SU

37 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

39 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

40 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SU

42 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SU

43 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

51 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

55 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

59 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

63 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

67 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

69 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

73 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

Crown Domestic Appliances Ltd   3 Hartle Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TG

22 - 26 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

The Coach House High Street Belbroughton Worcestershire DY9 9SU

The Old Bakehouse High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

3 Holy Cross Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SR

Appendix 1 continued

5 Holy Cross Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SR

First Floor   22 - 26 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

Malt Cottage 8 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

Field House Farm Dark Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SS

Overbrook House Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

12 Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

Church House Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

The Old Rectory Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

The Rectory Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

4 Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

8 Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

18 Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

20 Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

26 Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

28 Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

32 Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

Church Farm Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

Little Brookfield Hackmans Gate Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DW

Bryher Hartle Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TG

Talbot Hotel Hartle Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TG

2 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

3 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

6 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

7A High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

8 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

1 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

5 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

9 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

11 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

15 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

3 Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

7 Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

Bramble Cottage 9 Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

11 Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

16 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

17 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

28 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

Appendix 1 continued

30 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

32 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

34 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

5 Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

6 Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

7 Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

8 Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

10 Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

11 Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

15 Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

16 Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

18 Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

3 Hartle Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TG

3 Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

5 Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

6 Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

7 Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

8 Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

11 Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

12 Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

Ye Olde Horseshoe 33 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

5 Hartle Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TG

1 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

4 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

7 Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

11 Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

Belne Cottage Holy Cross Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SR

Yew Tree House Holy Cross Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SN

75 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

Freshmans (P H) 22 - 26 Church Hill Belbroughton Worcestershire DY9 0DT

3 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

7 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

12 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

9 Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

14 Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

17 Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

7 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

Appendix 1 continued

9 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

32 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SU

37A High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

38 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SU

41 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

44 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SU

53 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

57 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

61 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

65 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

71 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

77 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

7 Holy Cross Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SR

22 Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

30 Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

10 Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

Church Cottage Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

The Flat The Old Rectory Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

10 Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

19 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

26 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

79 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

49 High Street Belbroughton Worcestershire DY9 9ST

Flat   38 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SU

Flat   42 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SU

Church Hall Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

Belbroughton C Of E First School Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

Belbroughton Post Office 24 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

Brent Eleigh Hackmans Gate Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DW

28A Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

Flat   51 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

Flat 1 Yew Tree Holy Cross Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SN

Flat 2 Yew Tree Holy Cross Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SN

2 Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

Queens Lodge 4 Church Hill Belbroughton Worcestershire DY9 0DT

Corner House 2 Church Hill Belbroughton Worcestershire DY9 0DT

The Malt House Church Hill Belbroughton Worcestershire DY9 0DT

Appendix 1 continued

21 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

24 Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

24 Queens Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DU

1 Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

31 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

30 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SU

Severn Trent Water Auth Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

34 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SU

5 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

1 Church Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TE

5 Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

The Parish Room Hartle Lane Belbroughton Worcestershire DY9 9TG

Church Lodge Bradford Lane Belbroughton Worcestershire DY9 9TF

25 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

23 - 25 High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9ST

Holy Trinity Church Church Hill Belbroughton Worcestershire DY9 9TF

Waifs House Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

Church Gables Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

Atcherley House Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

Coronation House Hartle Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TG

Church House Church Hill Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DT

Jordans Butchers High Street Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9SY

Island House Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

Springfields Dark Lane Belbroughton Worcestershire DY9 9SS

School House Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

The School House Bradford Lane Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9TF

2 Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

4 Drayton Road Belbroughton Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 0DX

A P P E N D I X 2

Listed buildings within the Conservation Area Boundary

There are 21 listed buildings and structures in the Conservation Area, all of which are listed grade 11 except for Holy Trinity Church, which is listed grade 11*.

Grade II*

Church of the Holy Trinity, Church Road (Grade II *)

12th century origins, altered 13th century, partly rebuilt 14th century, further alterations in 15th and 16th centuries, restored and extended 1894-5. This substantial parish church has retained a considerable proportion of its medieval fabric and its 17th century roofs and furnishings are of particular interest

Grade II

Springfield, High Street

Late 18th century house with mid 19th century alterations and additions

7 and 9 Bradford Lane

Pair of 17th century houses, altered and extended mid-18th century and mid-19th century

Church House, Bradford Lane

Mid-18th century house, now flats, refronted c. 1800 with further mid-19th century and mid-20th century alterations

Royden House and No. 17 Church Hill

House with smaller house adjoining to left. Late 18th century with mid-19th century and mid-20th century alterations and additions. Despite the 20th century alterations (when 19th century bay windows were removed) this house is included as it occupies a prominent site facing the southern approach to the village

Brecknell Memorial

Early 19th century chest tomb about 25 yards south-west of the Church of the Holy Trinity. Commemorates Joseph Brecknell (died 1805) and occupies a prominent site on the south-west side of the churchyard.

Church Hall, Church Road

Early 17th century barn, now church hall, with early to mid-20th century alterations

Church View, Church Hill

17th century house with mid-19th century and mid-20th century alterations and additions. The building is prominently situated facing the Church of the Holy Trinity and is included for group value

Corner House and adjoining outbuildings, Church Hill

Mid-18th century farmhouse, now house, with mid-19th century and mid-20th century alterations

The Old Rectory, Church Road

Mid-18th century rectory with mid-19th century alterations

Brook House and the Old Malt House, Drayton Road

18th century house divided into two dwellings with mid-19th century and mid-20th century alterations and additions. The building is prominently situated alongside the western approach into the village and faces Island House and the Corner House and adjoining out-buildings and is adjacent to No. 28 Drayton Road

Appendix 2 continued

Island House, Drayton Road

Mid-to late 18th century house with mid-19th century alterations and additions

Douglas Mills and Sulur, High Street

Mid 18th century butcher's shop and house with mid 20th century alterations

Churchyard Cross

About 25 yards south of the Church of the Holy Trinity. Probably 15th century, restored early 20th century

Garden wall and adjoining pavilions, Bradford Lane

Enclosing garden to north and east of Church House. Mid-18th century with c. 1800 and mid-19th century alterations. The wall partly separates the garden of Church House from the adjacent churchyard. The wall and pavilions form a prominent feature on the southern approach into the village. Included for group value

Yew Tree House and adjoining wall, Holy Cross Lane

Early 19th century, altered and extended c. 1930

Barn and cow house, Bradford Lane

About 15 yards north-west of Church Farmhouse (The Paddock). Mid-18th century with mid-19th century and mid-20th century alterations. Despite some later alterations this barn is included as it has retained some unusual good quality sandstone detailing

16 Church Hill

Mid-18th century house with mid-20th century alterations

Bellem Cottage, Church Road

17th century house, now divided into tenements, with mid-19th century and mid-20th century alterations and additions

28 Queens Hill

c. 1700 house with mid-19th century alterations and additions. Faces the main western approach into the village and is situated adjacent to the Brook House and Old Malt House, Island House, the Queens public house and Corner House and adjoining out-buildings. Included for group value

Belbroughton's Workmen's Club, High Street

House, used as bank, now club. 18th century remodeling of 17th century building. Mid 20th century alterations and additions

The Queens Public House, Queens Hill

House, now public house, c. 1800 with mid 19th century alterations. The Queens faces the main western approach to Belbroughton village and is situated opposite Corner House and adjoining out-building and Island House. Included for group value

A P P E N D I X 3

Bromsgrove District Local Plan - adopted January 2004

S20   Main Shopping Location

S23   Shopfront Enhancement

S24   Retention of Traditional Shopfronts

S24A   Original Features on Shopfronts

S25   New Shopfronts

S26   Shopfront Fascias

S27   Standards of Fascia Design

S27A   Projecting Signs

S27B   Design and Materials within Conservation Areas

S35A   Development in Conservation Areas

S36   Design of development within Conservation Areas

S37   Demolition in Conservation Areas

S39   Alterations to Listed Buildings

S39a   Demolition of Listed Buildings

S41   Listed Buildings in Shopping Areas

S42   Shopfronts in Conservation Areas

S43   Traffic Calming Schemes

S44   Reinstatement of Features in Conservation Areas

S45   Improvements to Conservation Areas

S46   Areas of Special Advertisement Control

S47   Advertisement Control

C17   Retention of existing trees

C19   Tree Preservation Orders

C36   Preservation of Archaeological Resources

C37   Excavation around Archaeological Remains

C38   Development Criteria for Archaeological Sites

C39   Site access for Archaeologists

E4   Extension to existing Commercial Uses

E9   Criteria for New Employment Development

E10   Retail or Recreational Uses on Employment Land

RAT4   Retention of Open Space

RAT33   Visitor Facilities

ES2   Restrictions on Development where Risk of Flooding

ES11   Energy Efficiency in Buildings

Appendix 3 continued

Worcestershire County Structure Plan

CTC.5   Trees and Woodlands

CTC.6   Green Open Spaces and Corridors

CTC.8   Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage

CTC.17   Archaeological Sites of Regional or Local Importance

CTC.18   Enhancement and Management of Archaeological Sites

CTC.19   Areas and Features of Historic and Architectural Significance

CTC.20   Conservation Areas

CTC.21   Reuse and Conversion of Buildings

D26   Office Development

D31   Retail Hierarchy

D43   Crime Prevention and Community Safety

# Appendix 4

Glossary

Listed Building	A building of special architectural or historic interest included on a national register. English Heritage is responsible for adding new entries to the statutory list.
Conservation Area	An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which, it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Local authorities are responsible for designating new Conservation Areas.
Bargeboards	An angled decorative timber board at eaves level (see Slug and Lettuce, 126-130 High Street)
Burgage plot	A medieval term describing a long strip of land, with the narrowest section facing the street
Camber headed	A slightly curved window head
Canalized	Contained with artificial man-made sides
Classical	An architectural style from ancient Rome and Greece, revived in the Georgian period. Detailing is simple and refined with columns, moulded doorcases and sash windows. (see Davenal House, 28 Birmingham Road)
Cornice	Projecting moulding often found at eaves level, or as part of a pediment
Culvert	A man-made channel beneath a road or building
Diaper pattern	Repetitive decorative arrangement of bricks, often in diamond shapes or squares.
Doorcase	A moulded case or frame lining a doorway
Doric columns	The plainest of the three types of columns found in classical architecture, with simple vertical flutes and an unornamented capital. (The three types are Doric, Ionic and Corinthian)
Dormer	A window projecting from the roof (see 33-37 Worcester Road)
Edwardian	Dates from 1901-1910
Fleur-de-lis	A stylised lily with three pointed leaves (see 1 High Street)
Georgian	Dates from 1714-1830
Gothic	An architectural style from 12th to 16th centuries but revived in the late Victorian period. Typical details include elaborate tracery, heavily mullioned windows and pointed arches.
Jettied gable	Projecting upper storey overhanging the lower floors, often a feature of timber framed buildings (see former Hop Pole Inn, New Road)
Keystones	A wedge shaped block found at the centre of an arch (see 120 High Street)

Glossary continued

Medieval	Dates from 950-1547
Mullioned windows	Vertical posts separating the sections of a window, usually in stone or timber
Naturalize	Make more natural
Pediment	Low pitched moulded triangle often found over doorways or windows and at roof level. (see Strand Centre, 14-18 The Strand)
Polychromatic brickwork	A feature of Victorian Gothic architecture, using a variety of alternating colours of brickwork
Portico	A feature of classical architecture, moulded projecting hood on supporting columns to form an open sided porch (see Lloyds TSB Bank, 112 High Street)
Quatrefoil	A tracery detail in the shape of a flower with four lobes separated by cusps. A trefoil has three lobes.
Quoins	Angular often slightly raised stones added to the corner of a building (see 18 High Street)
Regency	Dates from 1810-1820
Rusticated	Roughened texture added to stonework with sunken joints (see The Queens Head PH, The Strand)
Stucco	An external plaster finish, often finely textured
Tannery	A building where animal skin and hide is tanned
Venetian window	A window with three openings, the central one of which is arched and wider than the others
Victorian	Dates from 1837-1901
Wattle and daub	Sticks and twigs interwoven to form a panel packed with plaster and then limewashed. Commonly found in timber framed or thatched buildings.

**BELBROUGHTON
CONSERVATION
AREA
APPRAISAL**
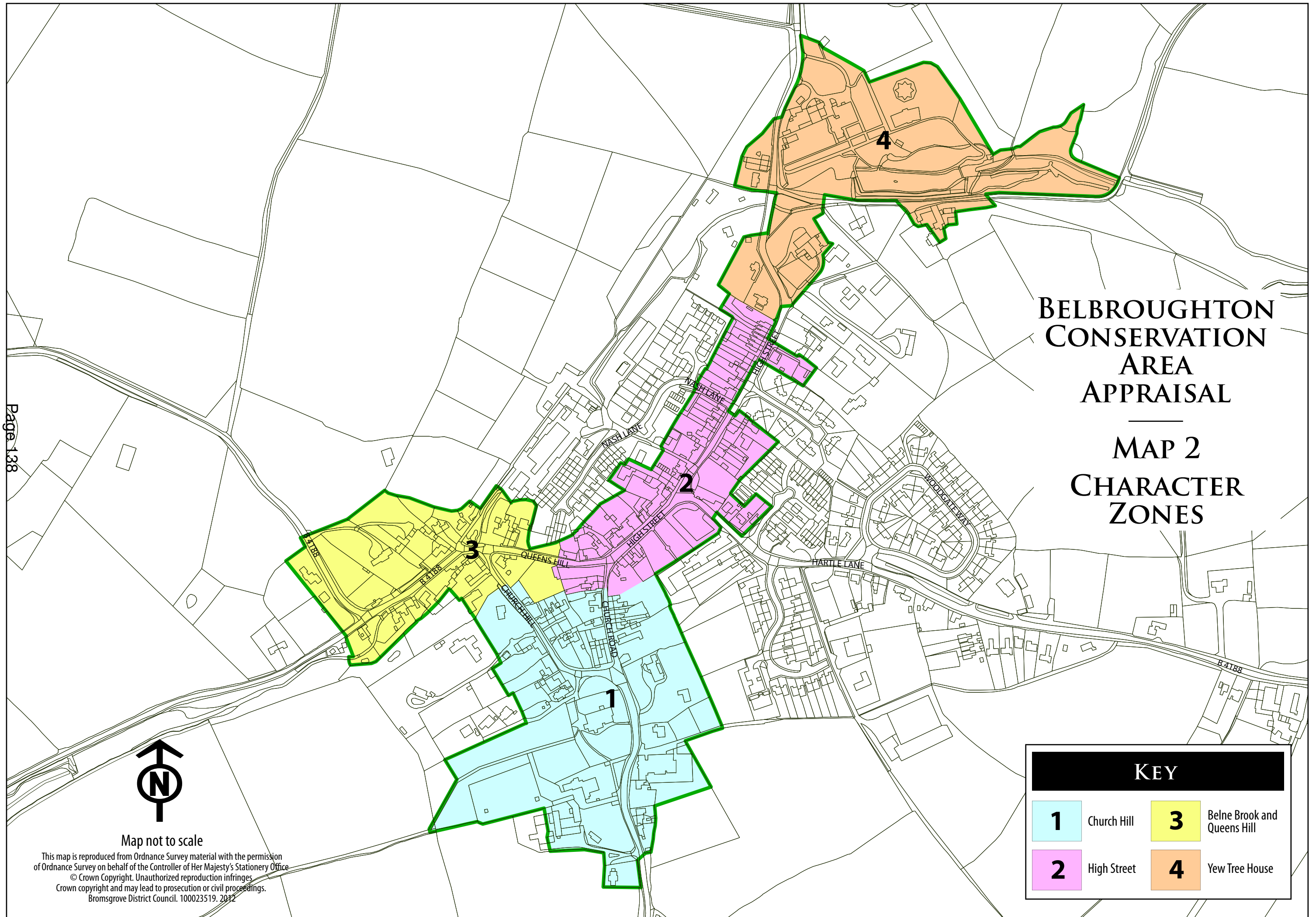
———

**MAP 1
BOUNDARY
SHOWING 2012
ADDITIONS**
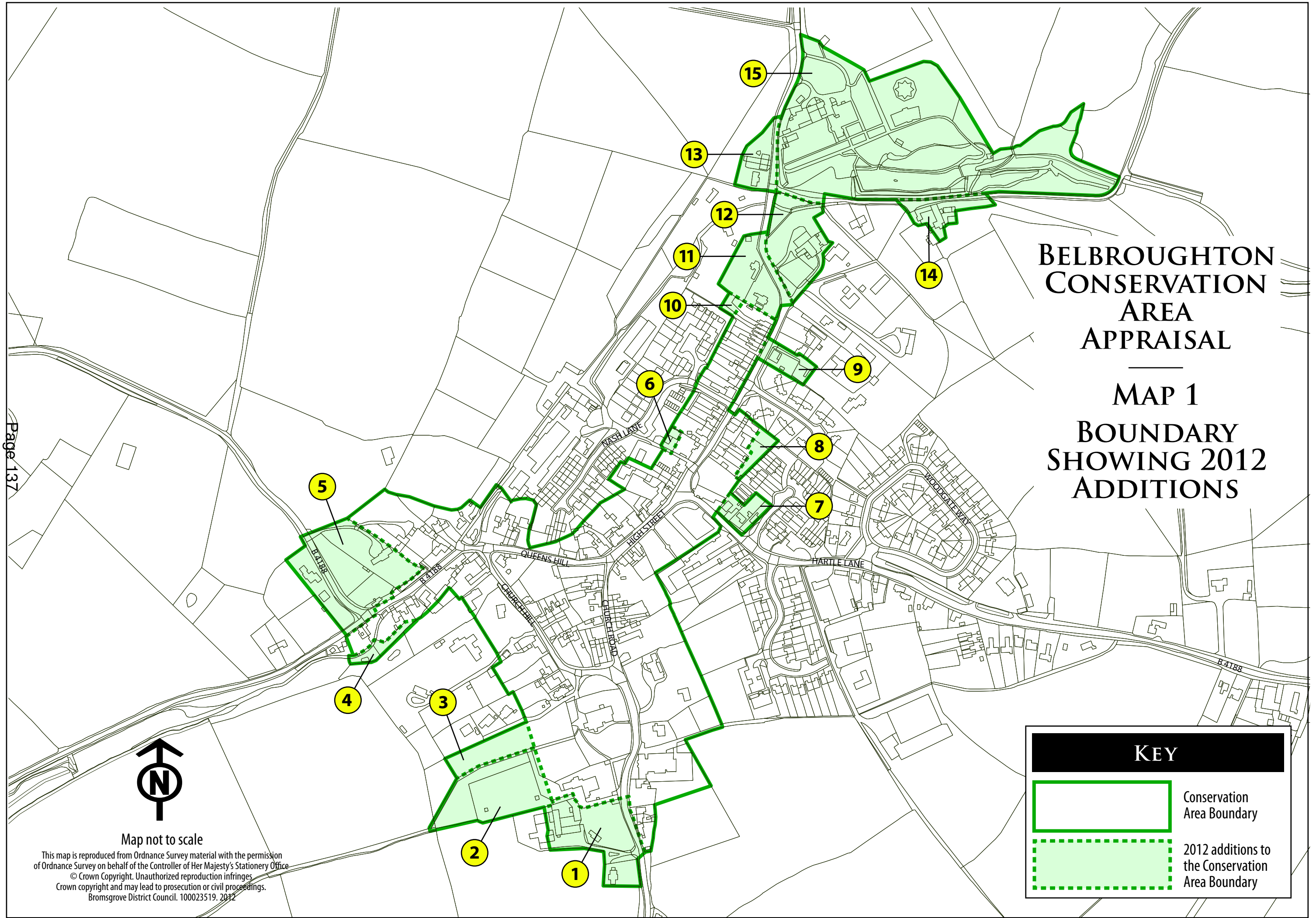
KEY

Conservation
Area Boundary

2012 additions to
the Conservation
Area Boundary

Map not to scale

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission
of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
© Crown Copyright. Unauthorized reproduction infringes
Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Bromsgrove District Council. 100023519. 2012

BELBROUGHTON
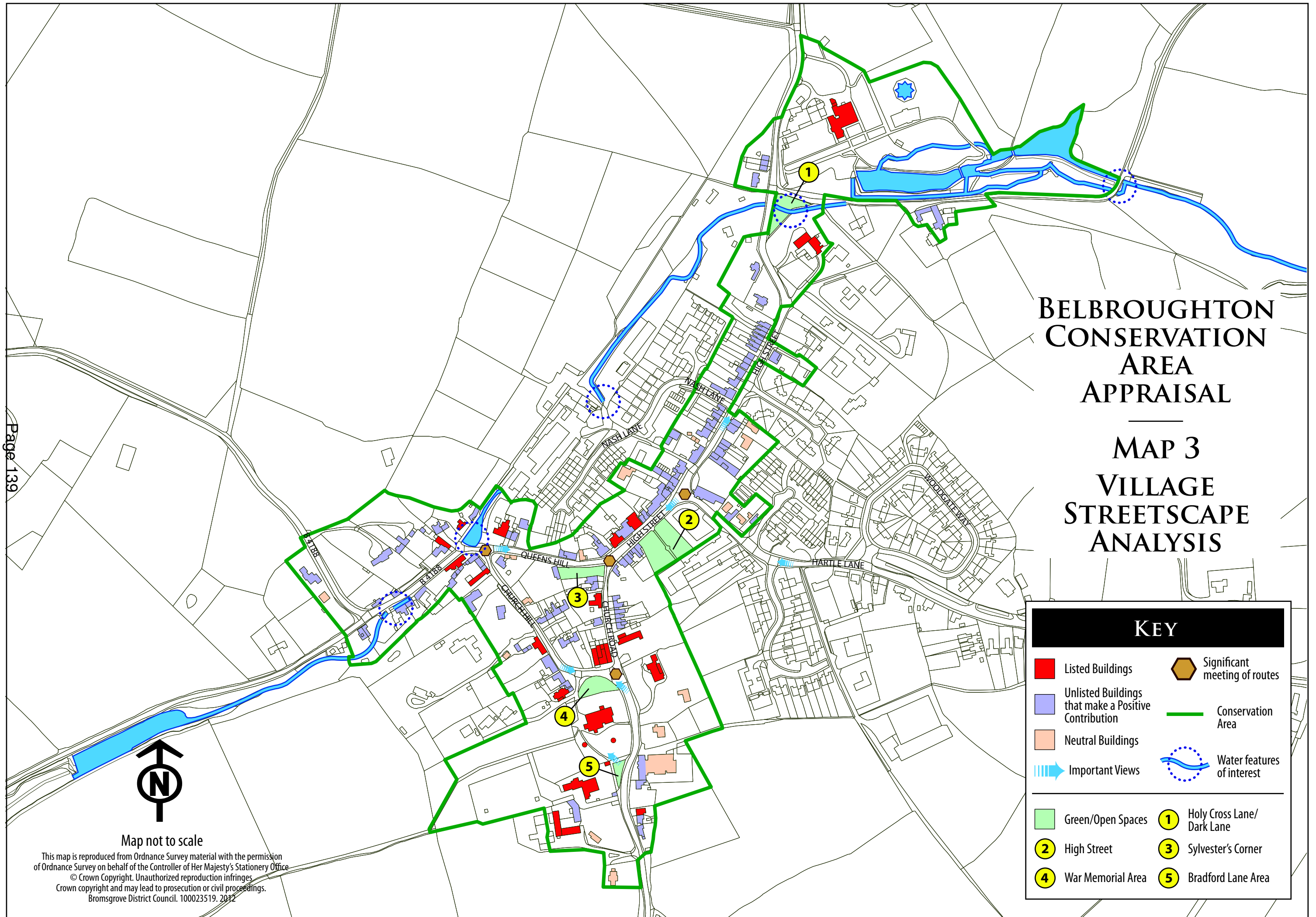CONSERVATION
AREA
APPRAISAL

———

MAP 2

CHARACTER
ZONES

KEY

1	Church Hill	**3**	Belne Brook and Queens Hill
2	High Street	**4**	Yew Tree House

Map not to scale

BELBROUGHTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

MAP 3

VILLAGE STREETSCAPE ANALYSIS

KEY

■ (red) Listed Buildings	⬡ (brown) Significant meeting of routes
■ (purple) Unlisted Buildings that make a Positive Contribution	━━ (green) Conservation Area
■ (pink) Neutral Buildings	⬭ (blue dotted) Water features of interest
▥➤ Important Views	

■ (green) Green/Open Spaces	①	Holy Cross Lane/ Dark Lane	
②	High Street	③	Sylvester's Corner
④	War Memorial Area	⑤	Bradford Lane Area

N

Map not to scale

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorized reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Bromsgrove District Council. 100023519. 2012

We will consider reasonable requests to provide this document in accessible formats such as large print, Braille, Moon, audio CD or tape or on computer CD

"Need help with English?" Contact Worcestershire HUB, Bromsgrove 01527 881288

'Potrzebujesz pomocy z angielskim?' Skontaktuj się z Worcestershire HUB, Bromsgrove, tel.: 01527 881288

"İngilizce için yardıma ihtiyacınız var mı?" 01527 881288 numarayı arayıp Worcestershire HUB, Bromsgrove ile irtibata geçin

"ইংরাজির জন্য সাহায্য চাই ?" 01527 881288 নম্বরে উস্টাশায়ার হাব [HUB] ব্রমস্গ্রুভ [Bromsgrove]-এ টেলিফোন করুন

''ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਮੱਦਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ?'' ਵ੍ਰਸੈਸਟਰਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਹੱਬ [HUB] ਨੂੰ ਬਰੋਮਸਗ੍ਰੂ [Bromsgrove] ਵਿਖੇ 01527 881288 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ

"انگریزی میں مدد چاہتے ہیں؟" ورسیسٹر شائر ہب [HUB]، برومزگرو [Bromsgrove] میں 01527 881288 پر رابطہ کریں

Belbroughton Draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Name	Support	Oppose	Comment	Para No.	Response	Officer Response
Natural England					Natural England is grateful to you for the opportunity to advise on your consultation but on this occasion has no comments to make.	Noted
English Heritage	Yes				While we cannot provide detailed comments on this occasion, it is good news that the programme of appraisals is continuing and English Heritage is highly supportive of the progress being made.	Noted
Belbroughton Parish Council	Yes		Yes		Thank you for inviting the Parish Council to comment on the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. The Council considers that the Conservation Area appraisal has been well done and that the report is a well researched and useful document. The Council notes that the management plan and proposed photographic record of properties in the Conservation Area will provide very useful monitoring tools to enable the Parish Council to identify and raise concerns about the potential loss of local features.	Noted and welcomed
					The Council generally supports the proposed extensions to the Conservation Area, which are well thought through, and it welcomes the inclusion of a number of additional listed buildings. However, in relation to the proposed extension along Hartle Lane (proposal no. 7), the Council considers that it would be sufficient to draw the boundary to include No 3 Hartle Lane (the Edwardian House) but that nos 5 and 7 Hartle Lane have no intrinsic architectural merit and could be excluded.	Noted. Please refer to comments below

			Points of detail on the report:	• Noted and amended • Noted. Property details arrived in this format from an electronic source. They will be re-sorted for the final draft.
			• No 7, Hartle Lane is wrongly described as 'The Recreation Community Centre, Hartle Lane'. This will be confused with Belbroughton Recreation Centre further up Hartle Lane. No 7 should be described as the parish room or parish council meeting room, Hartle Lane. • The list of properties within the revised Conservation Area boundary in Appendix 1 is not entirely logical or consistent. Could properties be listed together in their street order, eg properties 5-7 in Holy Cross Lane and 3-7 Hartle Lane- at present they are in different places in the list.	
Jaswant Kaur	Part	Part	Yes	Although generally supportive of a comprehensive, detailed document, there are notable omissions in Part 1 section 6 - Summary of Issues (Page 26) and Part 2 - Draft Management Proposals (Page 28 onwards) regarding traffic problems within the conservation area. The intention of protecting the character, heritage and environmental integrity of the conservation area is currently seriously undermined by the detracting and detrimental effects of through traffic on the High Street and Queens Hill parts of the Conservation area. As this part of the village has gradually been allowed to be used as a short cut to the motorway (Junction 4), the peace and character of the area is diminished, safety of pedestrians is affected and	Noted. A district-wide issue harming the amenity value of numerous villages.

		damage is caused to property frontages, street furniture and road edges/kerbs.

Particular problems are the speed of traffic, volume of traffic, use by HGV vehicles and peak-hour congestion. | |
| | | Additions should be made to the document to highlight the detrimental effect of traffic problems (Page 26) and management proposals should be added (Page 28 onwards) to help protect the area by including the following:

- Limit speed on Queens Hill and High Street to 20mph
- Introduce a width restriction (2m/6ft 6in) through the village
- Ensure current weight limits are adequately signed and enforced
- Provide marked resident parking spaces on Queens Hill/High Street
- Improve pedestrian safety as narrow parts of Queens Hill/High Street have limited pavements for pedestrian access. The road here is also barely wide enough for two vehicles to safely pass each other.

I note that the document also makes reference to S43 – Traffic Calming Measures but contains no specific proposals for there usage in the Conservation Area. | Noted and agreed. S43 Traffic Calming Schemes and the need to fully address traffic issues are areas for continuing discussion between Belbroughton Parish Council Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Coucil. |
| Rowena Jones | Yes | I agree that Belbroughton still has a wealth of historical features and every effort should be made to keep existing properties and public spaces in | Noted and welcomed. |

Page 143

Name	Yes/No	Section	Comment	Response
			original condition and to ensure any new development is appropriate and sympathetic. Belbroughton is a popular place for visitors and you can always see people rambling, cycling etc. It thus has significant positive impact on the local conurbations. It is important therefore for the sake of many others than just local residents to keep the village in authentic condition.	Noted and welcomed.
Sarah Bradley	Yes		Overall I think this an extremely thorough and impressive document, so most of my comments are minor.	
			Could reference be made to the Village Design Statement, which although not formally adopted, is referred to in planning matters, and is quoted extensively in this document.	Noted. A bibliography section will be included in final draft.
		1.1	Slightly puzzled by the reference to 9 Drayton Road, as in 1975 it was bought by the owners of 11 Drayton Road and converted to a single dwelling now referred to as 11 Drayton Road and now inside the conservation area.	Noted. Property number changed accordingly.
		1.3	Mention that part of the Nash Works site remains undeveloped. Also, be consistent over whether it is Nash Works or Forge Works.	Noted. "Nash Works" adopted throughout.
		1.3	Is the "small tree-lined village park" the Village Green? Consistency over naming. Could mention Sylvester's Corner by junction of Church Road and Queen's Hill.	Noted and appraisal amended. All green/open spaces to be marked on Map 3.
		3.1 & 4.1	Dates of church are inconsistent. It is mainly 14th century, significantly extended in the 19th ncentury.	Noted and updated.
		3.3	There was also agricultural employment in the past.	Noted and updated.
		3.4	Yew Tree Avenue is just a row of houses, not really an estate.	Noted and updated.
		3.5	Could mention the heavily restored Norman chapel	Noted and text amended

		at Bell Hall.	
4.7	Brook is a feature by Yew Tree House at Ram Alley. It emerges again at the Drayton Road exit.		Noted and text amended
4.8	Consistency over whether 22-26 Church Hill is former alms-houses or workhouse.		Noted. Workhouse adopted throughout text.
4.10	Reference to public garden should be to Village Green. Could also include reference to gates on the village green which were made by a local craftsmen and the village sign, the original one of which was erected in the 1930s, at Holy Cross exit to village.		Noted and amended accordingly.
4.10	History Soc thinks our plaques enhance the village! Also have plaques at stream by Queen's, on the village green where there is also a Bradley forge hammer, at Ram Alley and by the church.		Noted. Reference to black plaques as an enhancement added to text. Other plaques briefly referred to.
	On the proposed extensions, no comment except:		
5	Consider extending to include Little Bell Hall Cottages and the stream to 11 Drayton Road (but excluding substation and pumping station) to preserve the attractive entrance to the village.		Noted. This area and Pinchers Close were both considered as boundary extensions but neither seemed to attain satisfactorily the criteria set out in section 5 of the appraisal.
6	Consider including Nash Works because it is a site of historic importance, to ensure that development is sympathetic to its history		Noted. Any new development on this site will be sympathetic to its history, especially the remaining red brick buildings. Protection is afforded by inclusion within the setting of the conservation area.
7	Stop at Coronation House as the next door house and Parish Room are of little merit.		Noted. There is disagreement here. Although

Name			Reference	Comment	Response
					the next door house may be regarded as neutral the Parish Room is considered to make a positive contribution. To draw the boundary around the road margin seems a logical procedure.
			Management Plan 1.3	Is traffic also an issue particularly along the narrow High Street?	Noted and agreed. Please refer to comments above
			Management Plan 2.1	Include a reference to encouraging good modern design as per Design Statement.	Noted. It is felt that the proposed actions in their sum encourage good modern design.
			Management Plan 2.2	Proposed action at Nash Works should include a reference to ensuring any development reflects (or at least does not ignore) its historic importance.	Noted. It is felt that the proposed actions reflect this point.
			Management Plan 2.3	A plot survey is a good idea: who should fund it?	Noted. A photographic survey will be carried out in due course by council officers.
			Management Plan 2.5	Village Green is not formally designated as a village green. Could this be done to protect it from development?	Noted. Measures to formally designate the village green will be subject to a review.
			Management Plan 2.6	Encourage increased visibility of stream.	Noted. Measures to re-landscape the brook will increase visibility.
James Bradley	Yes	Yes		I think you have produced an excellent document, and I add my thanks to those of others. I agree with nearly all your proposals for extensions, which will add to the benefits I am sure the existence of the Conservation Area brings to the village.	Noted and welcomed.
				Sarah has suggested adding to Extension 4, by adding Little Bell Hall Cottages, in Drayton Rd nearly	Noted. Please refer to earlier comment on the suggestion

		Comment	Response
		opposite our house at 11 Drayton Rd. I can see the merits of including the "end of the village", to help protect the approach to the village and to encourage good quality in any future changes. On the other hand, that approach risks including buildings that are not up to the standard of others in the Conservation Area, and so diluting it. In the case of Little Bell Hall Cottages they are reasonably attractive and I can also see the benefit of adding a length of stream. It is quite balanced, but for myself I would exclude the Cottages. I feel more strongly about the similar arguments that apply to Extension 1, Church Farm, and to Extension 7, including the Parish Room in Hartle Lane. At Church Farm it is particularly the inclusion of the very ordinary house in their grounds, the last house in the village, that I do not believe is justified, and Church Farm itself is not distinguished even if the farm buildings are of interest. In Hartle Lane, I do not believe the Parish Room justifies any special status, having spent quite a lot of hours inside it. Its building standard is low, and although the gable end facing Hartle Lane is OK the rest of the building is in my view poor. The house between it and Coronation House is only average. Coronation House is, in my view, out of place. Edwardian buildings can be attractive, but it seems to me to jar with its surroundings rather than complementing them. For example its "building line" strikes me as aggressive by comparison with others set further back. As you point out, it is not representative of other Edwardian building in the village.	to widen the proposed boundary change No. 4. Comments to boundary change No. 1 noted. It should be understood that generally conservation area boundaries are not drawn to weave in and out around meritorious or negative buildings. The last house in the village is rich in subtle historic detail and largely unaltered, a worthy example of thirties architecture. Re: Hartle Lane, please refer to comments above.
		My second main point is to support including the	The Nash Works site was

Nash Works Site in the Area. This would have two purposes - to strengthen the protection afforded to the remaining buildings on the site, and to encourage good design for the prospective redevelopment - and is, I think, justified by the great importance of the site in the village's history. Barteak, the current developers, have been very co-operative in planning for the retention of the main building, but it cannot be guaranteed that they will complete the redevelopment. I think the site could be made to join up with the proposed/existing Conservation Area at both ends, leaving Nash Lane as an excluded "island'"	excluded from the proposed boundary extension in that it now contains few historic buildings of merit. Those that are extant are afforded protection by virtue of being included within the setting of a conservation area.
Finally, I support anything you think you can say to improve the value of the Belne Brook in and around Belbroughton. I have been in touch with the Wildlife Trust. I quote from an e-mail from their "Wetlands Officer", Peter Case. "We hope to deliver benefits to the Belne Brook to improve water quality using the Environment Agency's Catchment Restoration Fund (CRF) which we will be applying for in March 2013. Should we be successful in our bid for funding a three year program to address diffuse pollution on the river Stour and its tributaries, will be lead by the Trust. This would possibly involve works in the immediate area and if we can factor the mill pools into our proposal then I will! It would be great to see more made of the watercourses in and around the village both in terms of biodiversity and their amenity value."	Noted. We will seek to contribute to any dialogue between Belbroughton Parish Council and the Wildlife Trust.

CABINET

3 October 2012

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE 2012

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Ward(s) Affected	**All**
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Key Decision

1. **SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

1.1 The Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance (LCA SG) is a non-statutory document produced by Landscape Officers in Worcestershire County Council to aid interpretation and application of the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). The document was endorsed by Worcestershire County Council in November 2011 and was commended to Councils of Worcestershire for endorsement, so that it may form a material consideration in all respective Council's planning decisions.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That appendix A (The Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary guidance) is endorsed as a material consideration for planning purposes to aid interpretation of Landscape Character when considering planning issues.

3. **KEY ISSUES**

   Financial Implications

3.1 There are no financial implications of this report.

   Legal Implications

3.2 The European Landscape Convention became binding in the UK in March 2007. It emphasises not only the importance of all landscape – whether designated or not – but also the shared responsibility in guiding future landscape change. Endorsing the LCA SG will help promote landscapes protection, management and planning.

   Service / Operational Implications

3.6 In the past, when dealing with planning issues, the consideration given to landscape has largely been related to location, that is, focused on whether a proposal lies within an area of landscape designation or not. Proposals for development or change within a given area of landscape designation would be guided by policies indicating that the character or special quality of the area should be protected, but eventually leaving it up to the individual to define these

parameters. Areas outside such landscape designations invariably lacked such policy guidance and often form the greater part of a county where pressures for change are acute and the need for policies to protect the landscape are greatest.

3.7   LCA is a tool widely used to look at landscape systematically and objectively. It is a two-phase process which:
- Identifies landscape units and classifies these into areas of similar character known as Landscape Types, according to a number of landscape indicators, and
- performs subsequent analyses that ultimately determine the sensitivity of different landscapes to change. This allows LCA to be used as a robust and defensible strategic decision-making tool.

3.8   The LCA SG is a single, consistent and unifying guidance document on the application of landscape character planning for the whole Worcestershire. The LCA SG provides targeted guidance to support decision-making for county and district planning officers, planning applicants, land managers and communities.

3.9   The LCA SG will help to ensure the protection and enhancement of the District's landscape character and will contribute to the performance of the "Condition of the Landscape" indicator within the County Council's Balanced Scorecard.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.7   The LCA SG has no direct impact on the Councils Equalities and Diversity policies. Notwithstanding the publication of the LCA SG will allow residents and stakeholders of Bromsgrove District to understand what landscape character is and how it is assessed.

4.   RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1   There are no specific risks to endorsing the LCA at this stage, the information it provides will be used when preparing planning policies and considering planning applications. Any individual risks associated with the LCA information will be identified though the normal procedures in place for considering new planning policy and determining planning applications.

5.   APPENDICES

Appendix A -   Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance, October 2011

6.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

Worcestershire County Council Cabinet Report (24 November 2011)

CABINET

Sustainability Appraisal for the Landscape Character Assessment
Supplementary Guidance, May 2011

7. **KEY**

LCA   Landscape Character Assessment
SG   Supplementary Guidance

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Sumi Lai
email: s.lai@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: 01527 881314

This page is intentionally left blank

Landscape Character Assessment

This Supplementary Guidance (SG) seeks to explain the modern concepts of landscape and landscape character and to offer guidance in the application of Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).

October 2011

worcestershire
county council

Landscape Character Assessment

Supplementary Guidance

October 2011

CONTENTS

Landscape Character Assessment

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

1.1.1 This Supplementary Guidance (SG) seeks to explain the modern concepts of landscape and landscape character and to offer guidance in the application of Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) to professionals and lay persons alike. The advice offered is targeted at both planning and land management and will enable local communities to identify the landscape elements that contribute to local distinctiveness.

1.1.2 The LCA SG has been written as far as possible in non-technical language for ease of understanding and to make it accessible to any one who requires information about Worcestershire's policy and practice for the conservation, enhancement and regeneration of the rural landscape. Further factual information can be obtained from the Worcestershire County Council Landscape Website at *www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lca.*

1.1.3 A technical handbook has also been produced. This contains further descriptions as well as exhaustive raw data from the LCA database. A full range of definitions is included in the technical handbook but terms that are used throughout this SG are generally explained as they arise. The technical handbook provides useful analytical and background information but, of necessity is written in a less accessible style.
A copy can be obtained by applying to the County Council's Strategic and Environmental Planning Unit at County Hall, Worcester. Tel 01905 766038.

1.1.4 The SG has been divided into two parts. Part 1 provides background information, sets landscape character within the planning framework and describes the processes of assessment and evaluation. Part 2 describes the Landscape Types which underlie landscape based planning, along with a brief analysis of changing character trends and guidance for future management and development.

1.1.5 In order to gain a full understanding of the LCA process the reader is encouraged to read the whole of Part One in the order it is written. However, for a quick résumé, the summary box at the beginning of each chapter paraphrases the salient points. In addition, the various figures have been designed to set out the fundamental tenets of LCA in a graphical format. A quick step-by-step guide for potential developers is included in section 4.3.1. This section could also be viewed as an indicative process for evaluating the suitability of other non-built development that will result in change in the landscape.

Landscape Character Assessment

1

1.1.6 Part Two sets out the Landscape Types; each having a double page spread for ease of reference. The primary, secondary and tertiary characteristics have been derived from the detailed evaluation of "significance" which is explained in section 7.2. A thumbnail plan of Worcestershire indicates the distribution of the Landscape Type and the colours relate to those used in Fig. 11, p.49 - Map of the Distribution of Landscape Types. A second, hand-drawn, plan has been included to illustrate the typical patterns of settlement, enclosure and woodland or tree cover. For readers particularly interested in land management, the Landscape Guidelines demonstrate the broad-brush potential for conservation, restoration or enhancement of the natural landscape. Appropriate environmental gain linked to development control through the use of planning conditions should also be targeted through these guidelines.

1.2 WHO WILL USE THIS DOCUMENT

1.2.1 Increasingly it is acknowledged that landscape has the capacity to act as a unifying factor in planning for the future - providing as it does a spatial framework upon which we can map our ideas and aspirations. Landscape provides the backdrop against which we live and work, is a living record of our history and perhaps most significantly forms and is home to our natural resources and biodiversity. As a result, the range of potential uses of landscape character assessment data in planning is huge - extending through and beyond the statutory planning system to planning in other fields, as summarised in the table overleaf.

1.2.2 The widespread use of LCA is a requisite to ensure that the principles are embedded in decision-making and to protect and enhance the landscape. In order to achieve this it is important that landscape character data is fully accessible to as wide a range of people as possible. The Worcestershire County Council 'Landscapes of Worcestershire' webpages *(www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lca)* aim to do just that, making available documentation, maps and LCA data to all potential users. Please visit this site for the latest information on Worcestershire LCA with fully interactive mapping and planning advice relating to landscape character issues.

1.3 HOW THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED

1.3.1 This SG sets out the latest thinking behind the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment which was originally carried out between January 1997 and January 1999 and resulted in a first draft LCA Supplementary Planning Guidance published in May 1999. It is intended to review it on a five year basis in order to incorporate any policy or other changes and to update in the light of latest LCA development.

1.3.2 The original assessment was carried out with input from a number of other organisations, particularly the District Councils, Countryside Commission (now Natural England), Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, English Heritage and Council for the Protection of Rural England (C.P.R.E.). A targeted consultation on this document ran from the 10th June to the 22nd July 2011. Over 700 groups and individuals were consulted, reflecting those organisations with an interest in landscape issues in the county and included statutory consultees and Parish Councils.

1.4 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

1.4.1 This document has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to help ensure that it maximises social, economic and environmental benefits. An SA Scoping Report was produced in 2010 to determine the method by which this SG would be assessed. This enabled an SA framework to be developed, against which the sustainability of this draft SG could be assessed. This assessment was conducted in parallel with the SG development, and was consulted upon alongside the draft SG. The findings of the SA have been used to help shape the final adopted SG.

Table 1 Potential uses and users

Potential use	Potential user
• Development control planning including pre-application discussions	Development control planners, developers, agents
• Strategic planning	Strategic planners
• Forestry/woodland planting	FC, NE, Defra, landowners, Woodland Trust
• Habitat restoration, creation, enhancement	NE, Defra, FC, EnvAg, Wildlife Trusts, FWAG, landowners, consultants
• Geodiversity restoration, conservation and enhancement	Earth Heritage Trust, Local Authorities, NE, EnvAg Landowners
• Agri-environment scheme targeting	NE, Defra, FWAG, landowners
• Resource protection strategies	NE, EnvAg, Defra, landowners
• Climate change strategies and renewable energy	Local authorities, Defra, NE, EnvAg, developers, householders and landowners
• Green infrastructure and rural renaissance and blue infrastructure/flooding	NE, Defra, FC, EnvAg, local authorities, developers, service providers including transport, local businesses, landowners, local communities
• Tourism and countryside access	Local authorities, Defra, NE, local businesses and communities

2.0 WHY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER?

Summary
- An explanation of what the LCA will be used for
- A definition of landscape terms

2.1 STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT

2.1.1 The Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance (LCA SG) is a non-statutory document that will provide guidance on the application of landscape character principles to development. The LCA SG will ultimately be used to help guide and determine relevant planning applications in the county. It is intended that once adopted or endorsed, the guidance will be used at both county and district levels. Whilst it will not constitute a formal part of the Local Development Framework, it is intended that the final document will carry weight as a 'material consideration'.

2.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.2.1 There are a number of fundamental aims and objectives which the LCA has substantially already attained within Worcestershire. In addition, there are a growing number of applications for which the assessment is proving invaluable. These range from land use planning to land management, tourism and socio-economic initiatives and are set out in section 4.0.

The primary aims and objectives are:-

a) to support the landscape policies within Worcestershire's County and District Plans and thus help guide development

b) to enable an understanding and appreciation of the character and diversity of the Worcestershire landscape, both in its own right and as part of the national framework.

c) to identify and describe the various Landscape Character Areas within Worcestershire.

d) to identify the range of Landscape Types within the county through an understanding of their inherent characteristics.

e) to inform and explain the process of Landscape Character Assessment to interested professionals and members of the public.

f) to provide an analysis of inherent character and current landscape condition in order to enable future identification and development of landscape related strategies and priorities.

g) to enable the analysis and evaluation of landscape character and so arrive at an understanding of the resilience of different landscapes to change.

h) to enable detailed analysis of landscape character areas with a view to evaluating their sensitivity to change.

2.3 THE CONCEPTS OF LANDSCAPE

2.3.1 In order to begin to understand the concepts of landscape character assessment it is necessary to start by considering the meaning of landscape and landscape character.

The landscape can be defined as:-

'An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.' (European Landscape Convention)

Landscape character, on the other hand, can be described as: -

'An expression of pattern, resulting from particular combinations of natural and cultural factors that make one place different from another, rather than better or worse.'
(Countryside Agency LCA guidance)

2.3.2 The Worcestershire LCA fully recognises the concepts that lie behind these definitions. Namely that:

a) in order to produce a meaningful assessment of the landscape, an analysis of those components that make up the landscape must be made at a scale which is commensurate with understanding the landscape as a whole. Thus individual features within the landscape may be of interest on a site-specific scale, and help to define local distinctiveness, but they do not contribute to the overall character of the wider landscape, unless they constitute a repeated element. **Character assessment is thus, in the first instant, a strategic decision support tool and becomes less relevant as the scale of the area in question declines**. Nevertheless, the principles of landscape character assessment should inform the analysis of even small sites, considering the various attributes as seems appropriate. There are already a number of established approaches for assessing the other individual elements or features within a site, ranging from habitat/vegetation survey to the landscape and visual impact guidance advocated by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment.

b) landscape character is not a purely visual phenomenon, but rather an expression of the way in which combinations of physical and cultural factors have interacted over time to produce a distinctive sense of place. Character assessment thus focuses on the nature of the land, rather than the response of the viewer, in order to convey an informed picture of the landscape without reflecting personal preference, or making subjective value judgements.

3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

Summary
- Requirements of European Landscape Convention
- Government guidance promotes the use of landscape character assessment in the planning process
- Structure Plan landscape policy
- District Council landscape policies
- Landscape policies relating to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

3.1 GENERAL

3.1.1 This Supplementary Guidance is intended to take forward policy established at European and national, sub-regional and local levels. The guidance is intended to embody the principles of the **European Landscape Convention** and the government's planning objectives set out in **Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas**. At county level, the guidance expands upon the landscape character policy (CTC.1) contained in **Worcestershire's Structure Plan**. This policy is one of many which have been 'saved' until such time as they may be replaced through Local Development Plans. Generally, local level context for the guidance is provided through the District Councils' adopted Local Plan policies on landscape character, and through draft policies within emerging Development Plan Documents. However, Wyre Forest D.C. now have an Adopted Core Strategy (December 2010) which supersedes a number of policies within the Adopted Local Plan, including all of those policies relating to Landscape. Therefore, the Adopted Core Strategy sets out the strategic policy for Landscape Character within Wyre Forest District.

3.2 EUROPEAN GUIDANCE

3.2.1 The requirements of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) became binding in the UK in March 2007. It emphasises not only the importance of all landscapes, whether designated or not, but also our shared responsibility in guiding future landscape change. Perceiving landscape as an integrating framework for social and economic as well as environmental well being, it seeks to encourage groups, organisations and authorities to establish policies that protect, manage and plan landscapes.

3.2.2 The ELC is rooted in a democratic approach to landscapes and their management. It places a strong emphasis on the importance of all sectors of society not just central government, having the opportunity and responsibility to guide landscape change. But its overarching message is that **'all landscapes matter'**. The main purpose of the ELC is delivered in Articles 5 and 6 (general and specific measures). The four **general** measures are:

- to recognise landscape in law

- to establish and implement landscape policies aimed at protection, management and planning of landscapes

- to establish procedures for the participation of the general public, local and regional authorities and other stakeholders in the definition and implementation of landscape policies

- to integrate landscape into all relevant policies: regional and town planning, cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic.

The **specific** measures go into more detail about how the general measures may be achieved. They may be accessed from the ELC resources section of the Landscape Character Network website at *www.landscapecharacter.org.uk/elc/resources*

3.2.3 The Government considers that the UK is already compliant in delivering the ELC requirements but seeks to strengthen both policy and performance across all sectors. To this end, Defra has tasked Natural England with leading the implementation of the ELC in England, working closely with English Heritage and the Forestry Commission. To date, Natural England has:

- developed the first UK ELC Action Plan (which has since been joined by action plans of both English Heritage and the National Forest Company)

- established Regional Landscape Partnerships.

Worcestershire County Council sits on the West Midlands Regional Landscape Partnership alongside other local authorities from the West Midlands. The statutory agencies noted above and voluntary organisations, including the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), are also represented.

Organisations at all levels are being encouraged to produce ELC action plans and the official UK guidelines were published by Natural England in 2009.

Fig.1 'Making a reality of the ELC' diagram developed by the Landscape Character Network and Natural England after work by Michael Dower
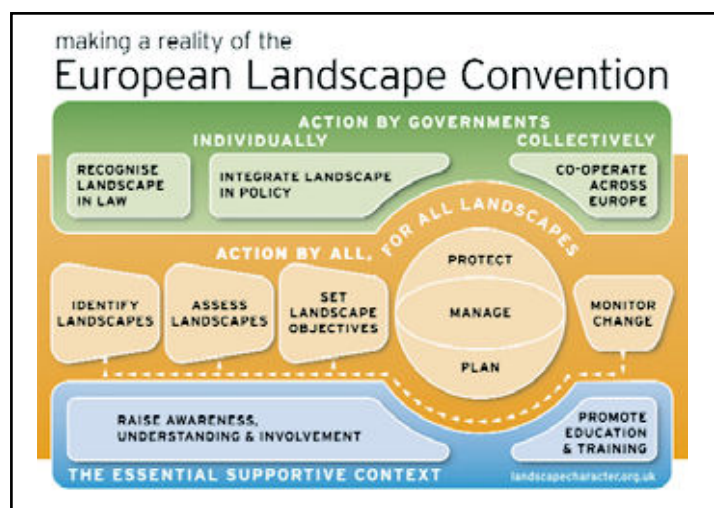
3.3   NATIONAL GUIDANCE

3.3.1 Government guidance within Planning Policy Statement 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (PPS 7), published in 2004, sets out how objectives for rural areas should be reflected in land use planning. The Government advocates the use of Landscape Character Assessment in land use planning at every level and promotes its use to understand, safeguard and enrich the quality of the whole landscape for its own sake, whilst still accommodating appropriate development. The following extracts from PPS7 indicate how government guidance is encouraging the application of LCA principles and practice in a way that has already been demonstrated by Worcestershire County Council:

- The first of the Government's objectives for rural areas, on page 6 of PPS 7 is:
  (i)   To raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas through the promotion of:
  - good quality, sustainable development that respects and, where possible, enhances local distinctiveness and the intrinsic qualities of the countryside.

- PPS7 includes a key principle of national planning policy which states that:
  (vi)   All development in rural areas should be well designed, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness.

- Under the heading of Local Landscape Designations, PPS 7 states at section 24 that:
  The Government recognises and accepts that there are areas of landscape outside nationally designated areas that are particularly highly valued locally. The Government

believes that carefully drafted, criteria-based policies in LDDs, utilising tools such as landscape character assessment, should provide sufficient protection for these areas, without the need for rigid local designations that may unduly restrict acceptable, sustainable development …..

- In addition, PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment includes 'historic landscapes' that extends to Registered Parks and Gardens as well as the wider landscape.

3.3.2 This advice has encouraged many Local Authorities to carry out county-based LCAs. In the West Midlands several Local Authorities have undertaken their assessments using the same methodology as Worcestershire. This is resulting in a progressively unified system of LCA applied across the whole of the West Midlands area.

3.4   LOCAL GUIDANCE

3.4.1 Worcestershire County Structure Plan (1996-2011) stresses the need to identify the factors that contribute to the landscape character of a particular place and that measures to conserve or enhance landscape character should be an integral element of decision making relating to land use. New development should have regard to the opportunities to contribute to these objectives, avoiding elements of visual intrusion, and seeking ways to integrate with the local landscape character of the area. A positive landscape identity benefits the economy of an area, attracts investment and tourism, and creates a sought after place in which to live and work. It can also promote pride of place and a sense of stewardship towards its well-being amongst those who live there.

3.4.2 The County Structure Plan Policy CTC.1 Landscape Character is a 'saved' policy. It states: *Proposals for development, and associated land use change or land management, must demonstrate that they are informed by, and sympathetic to, the landscape character of the area in which they are proposed to take place. In considering development proposals, the Local Planning Authority shall take every opportunity to safeguard, restore or enhance, as appropriate, the landscape character of the area in which they are proposed.*

The implications of development proposals relating to the landscape will be assessed having regard to the degree to which they would:

(i) be appropriate to, and integrate with, the landscape character of the area;

(ii) safeguard or strengthen the features and patterns that contribute to the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the area with particular attention being paid to both the scale, layout, design and detailing of existing buildings and other man made features; and to the semi-natural vegetation characteristic of that area; and

Table 2 Local Authority Policies

Local Authority	Local Plan Policy	Core Strategy Policy
Bromsgrove District Council	(Jan 2004), **Policy C1** Designation of Landscape Protection Areas, now refer to PPS7 section 24 **Policy C4** Criteria for Assessing Development Proposals **Policy C5** Submission of Landscaping Schemes. **Policy C6** Sites for Environmental Improvements	Draft Core Strategy 2, **CP17:** Natural Environment
Redditch Borough Council	Local Plan No. 3 (May 2006), **Policy B(NE)1** Overarching Policy of Intent, **Policy CS2** Care for the Environment, **Policy CS8** Landscape Character	Preferred Draft Core Strategy, **Policy BE.3,** Landscape Character, **Policy BE5** Trees, **Policy SC7** Infrastructure
Wyre Forest District Council	Local Plan (Jan 2004), **No relevant policies saved**	Core Strategy, (Adopted December 2010), **Core Policy 12** Landscape Character, **Core Policy 14** Providing Opportunities for Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Malvern Hills District Council	(July 2006), **Policy DS1** The Location of Development, **Policy DS3** General Development Requirements, **Policy QL1** The Design of New Buildings and Related Development, **Policy QL21** Landscaping, **Policy QL24** Landscape Character	South Worcestershire Development Plan, **SWDP1** Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy **SWDP3** Overarching Sustainable Development Requirements **SWDP5** Strategic Green Infrastructure **SWDP22** Rural Employment **SWDP26** Design **SWDP33** Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople **SWDP34** Replacement Dwellings in the Open Countryside and Re-use of Agricultural Buildings **SWDP35** Dwellings for Rural Workers **SWDP36** Tourist Development **SWDP37** Visitor Accommodation **SWDP38** Static and Touring Caravans, Chalets and Camping Sites **SWDP39** Waterfronts **SWDP40** Marinas and Moorings
Worcester City Council	(October 2004), **Policy NE5** Landscape Protection	
Wychavon District Council	(June 2006), **Policy ENV1** Landscape Character **Policy ENV2** Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty **Policy ENV4** Sites of Special Scientific Interest **Policy ENV7** Protection of Wider Biodiversity **Policy ENV11** Historic Parks and Gardens	

(iii) relate to the sensitivity of the particular landscape, and location, and to accommodate change. Development, or associated land use change or land management, which would adversely affect the landscape character of an area will not normally be allowed.

3.4.3 District Local Plans all contain policies that seek to protect, preserve and enhance landscape character. Wyre Forest District Council adopted its Core Strategy in December 2010 and as a result all of the adopted Local Plan policies relating to landscape character have now been superseded. At the time of writing the rest of the District Councils within Worcestershire are in the process of preparing their Core Strategies. The policies shown in Table 2 illustrate how landscape protection and enhancement has been addressed at District level.

3.4.4 The **Management Plans** for Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Cotswolds AONB address the need to conserve and enhance landscape character at a local scale. The AONB designation is a national landscape designation, based on the notion of natural beauty and designed to protect the natural landscape. The County Structure Plan and the Local Plans of districts whose areas fall wholly or partly within the AONBs include policies relating specifically to the AONBs, giving them added protection and restricting development. The AONB Management Plans provide an overriding vision for the future of the AONBs and provide more detailed guidance on achieving the aspirations of the respective Partnerships. The landscape element of the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan is based on the County LCA but provides greater detail at a local scale.

The Cotswolds AONB have produced their own LCA which is compatible with the relevant County LCAs. In all cases the management prescriptions seek to conserve and strengthen the key characteristics of the landscape.

3.4.5   The **Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2008-13** sets out: **Policy**

LP1: To conserve and enhance the character, diversity and distinctiveness of the Cotswolds landscape and ensure rigorous assessment of the impact of all major proposals based on appropriate landscape character assessments.

LP8: To ensure that inappropriate development does not take place which would individually or cumulatively diminish the special landscape character of the AONB…..

LP9: To monitor the effects of landscape change throughout the AONB and its surroundings.

3.4.6 The **Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan 2009-14** sets out:

Guiding principles

LP1 Change is inevitable in the landscape - it has been changing for thousands of years. However, change should be managed in a way that maintains and enhances the core elements of landscape character.

LP2 Landscape Character Assessments and Historic Landscape Characterisation should be used to improve understanding of the landscape and the processes of change within the landscape, and to inform decision-making and strategic planning.

Strategic objectives

LO1 Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape elements and features identified in Landscape Character Assessments and Historic Landscape Characterisations, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.

LO2 Restore distinctive landscapes and landscape features that have been significantly degraded.

LO3 Identify and promote opportunities for positive landscape change to landowners, managers, government and all those with an influence over land.

LO4 Undertake survey and research to better understand and monitor the condition, and rate of change, of landscape character within the framework of the Landscape Character Assessments and Historic Landscape Characterisation.

LO5 Seek resources to promote landscape management and improvements.

LO6 Promote greater awareness and appreciation of the landscape attributes and character of the AONB among residents and visitors, providing opportunities for them to be involved in identifying and conserving locally distinctive features, views and landscapes.

4.0 THE APPLICATION OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Summary
- Community involvement and opportunities to use the LCA
- Step by step guidance for those considering new development proposals
- The role in Green Infrastructure
- Climate change

4.1   APPLICATIONS

4.1.1 The Landscape Character Assessment is not an end in itself. Rather, it is a powerful tool which can direct land use change in ways that will prevent the destruction of the inherent landscape character or take advantage of opportunities to strengthen the character and thus enhance local distinctiveness.
It is complementary to Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) which English Heritage describes as being the legibility of the past in the present landscape. (see Appendix A)
The potential applications for the LCA tool are many and varied. A representative summary is set out below:

i)   Planning

- use to assess whether potential development or change is appropriate to a particular landscape, or to indicate which landscapes would be appropriate for a particular development or change to be directed to
- together with landscape sensitivity mapping, use during the strategic planning process to help inform development allocations

- provide an evidence base to inform Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal
- contribute to landscape capacity studies relating to land allocation at county level
- inform and underpin development policies
- contribute to the county or regional scale initiatives such as green infrastructure and climate change studies
- use to prepare design guidance for new built development
- inform development control decisions
- use to inform development at the pre-application stage, including the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessments
- contribute to the local evidence base informing and justifying changes to (or maintaining existing) designation boundaries such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- use to justify and enable landscape mitigation, environmental planning gain, landscape, biodiversity or geodiversity enhancement during the development control process

ii) Landscape Conservation, Management and Enhancement

- help to guide appropriate and sustainable land use change, e.g. opportunities for biomass planting

- contribute to the appraisals of other organisations, e.g. the Forestry Commission's English Woodland Grant Scheme

- use to prepare landscape management plans

- enable sustainable and targeted grant aid

- inform the targeting of agri-environmental initiatives

- inform and support geodiversity management and conservation

- inform the production of climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy

- contribute to allied studies and initiatives such as Historic Landscape Characterisations, Parish Plans, Village Design Statements

- inform the local Biodiversity Action Plan and subsequent initiatives

- provide a framework for landscape-scale nature conservation vision mapping and habitat management initiatives

- contribute to wider initiatives which address other aspects of sustainability such as tourism and green infrastructure

- inform monitoring through the annual State of the Environment report

4.2 LOCAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

4.2.1 The Landscape Character Assessment has a heavy emphasis at the level of the Landscape Type. This is the scale at which most strategic planning is undertaken and is directly relevant to the work of the County Council. However, the LCA is also a powerful tool when considering the landscape at a smaller, site-specific scale, where development control decisions are made by the District Councils.

4.2.2 For strategic planning, the LCA analysis enables an overview of the 'robustness' of the landscape to be gauged. Landscape sensitivity mapping is the vehicle resulting from this analysis that identifies those landscapes where proposals for change are most likely to coincide with the potential for the greatest detrimental impact upon the character of those landscapes. LCA therefore provides a sound basis for the preparation of strategic guidance for the future of the landscape of Worcestershire, defining a clear vision for each Landscape Type, together with clear priorities, objectives and actions. The assessment can have a positive role in guiding landscape change in situations as diverse as influencing the landscaping conditions for reinstatement of mineral workings, or informing decision making with regard to the routes of new highway schemes.

4.2.3 At the level of Landscape Description Units (LDUs) or Land Cover Parcels (LCPs) the supporting database contains useful detailed information. Landscape evaluation of individual sites or small tracts of land may however require more detailed survey information, particularly of unique features that may

not be picked up in the database. It is at this stage that additional information, taking into account the site's history, people's memories, cultural associations, special site features and so on can be included. Local community involvement is therefore vital, as much of the supporting 'evidence' for the area's distinctiveness will be locked into local people's memories and folk lore. This is too detailed to be covered by the county LCA and provides a level of information that can only be achieved on a site by site basis.

4.2.4 During the preparation of studies such as Neighbourhood Plans, Parish Plans or Village Design Statements, the Landscape Type descriptions can be used as the basis for understanding the landscape character, with additional information from the LCA database. However, this must be considered to be an over-view to which the local community will need to add the finer grain of detail in order to produce a meaningful and useful document. This additional detail would include all the local landscape features that are not picked up by the County assessment. These may include individual trees or woodlands, special views, local landmarks or areas valued for their wildlife, flora, historical context or design.

4.2.5 Depending on the weight accorded to specific documents, development control planning at the District level can make use of community-based plans and statements as well as using the full range of landscape character analysis techniques within the county LCA (as described in section 7).

A web-based analysis tool has been developed by the County Council to aid planning officers in the use of these techniques, as it is recognised that LCA is a specialist subject that may be daunting if not used regularly. Further information about this is available from the County Council's Strategic and Environmental Planning Unit at County Hall, Worcester. Tel 01905 763763.

4.3 FUTURE BUILT DEVELOPMENT

4.3.1 Aspects for Planning Officers to address

In order to reflect the findings of the LCA, potential development should be assessed against the steps set out below. This will enable both planning officers and developers to assess the landscape character potential for development and the most appropriate design treatment. Discussion at pre-application stage may usefully centre on these steps. Fig 2, p.22 shows this process in more detail.

● Identify the Landscape Type in which the site is located (see Fig.11, p.49 - *Map of the Distribution of Landscape Types*).

● Assess whether this is an **unsettled landscape** (see Fig.4, p.32 - Settlement Pattern). If the proposal is for built development within an unsettled landscape there would be, in landscape terms, a **high presumption against** new development.

- If the site is not located within an unsettled landscape, assess whether the proposals conform to the Landscape Type's settlement pattern. (see Fig.4, p.33 - Settlement Pattern). Ideally, built development, particularly housing, should respect the inherent settlement pattern and avoid imposing an inappropriate pattern on the landscape.

- Assess whether the site specific character of the landscape conforms to the generic Landscape Types used in LCA. The Landscape Description Unit descriptions and the Land Cover Parcel data (see Chapter 6), available on line can aid in this assessment. If it is clear that the site in question is untypical a different analysis should be made. (see paragraph 5.3.9 Untypical Sites)

- Other planning applications that do not constitute built development should consult the description of the relevant Landscape Type (see Part Two), in order to ensure that they are consistent with the relevant key characteristics.

- Ensure that detailed proposals fully take into account all site features and that mitigation and enhancement measures, such as green infrastructure, conform to and strengthen the key characteristics of the landscape.

4.3.2 Examples

a) A developer has purchased a plot of land on the edge of a village with the intention of developing it for residential use. The land is within the Landscape Type Principal Timbered Farmlands. This is a settled landscape and therefore potentially acceptable for development.

This Landscape Type has a wayside settlement pattern but the plot of land, being made up of three fields, is roughly triangular in shape and therefore not conducive to a linear pattern. The developer's architect researches the historic settlement pattern of the village and designs a layout that generally accords with this and is an acceptable compromise.

The key characteristics of this Landscape Type are the thick hedgerows, densely scattered hedgerow oaks and small areas of woodland. The site has excellent thick boundary hedges, another thick internal hedge and a second internal hedge which has not been properly maintained and is thin and gappy. There is also a small field pond in one corner and a strong row of hedgerow oaks along one boundary.

The architect's layout provides public open space and links this up with a network of footpaths through green infrastructure based on the existing hedgerow pattern, so preserving the organic enclosure pattern.

The field pond becomes the focus of a large area of green open space with an awkward corner of the site planted up as a small copse.

The landscape planting of the green infrastructure concentrates on gapping up and thickening the poor hedge and planting many more oak trees along the hedges.

The planting associated with the housing concentrates on hedges along roadsides, with oak trees wherever there is room and locally sourced native planting wherever there are opportunities for it. In this way, although the site has become an extension of the existing village, the underlying characteristics of the landscape have been preserved and strengthened and the development will relate more sympathetically to its surrounding rural setting.

b) A house-owner who lives in a small cottage with an orchard and two paddocks wishes to build another house on one of the paddocks. The Landscape Type involved is Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings whose character relies on its small scale and random layout of small cottages interspersed with domestic orchards and paddocks. The proposed dwelling is a substantial 5 bedroom house with integral double garage and paved forecourt, accessed directly from the lane.

Planners and the local community are concerned that the proposed house is out of scale and will detract from the distinctive character of the area. The applicant is persuaded to revise his proposal to a smaller house, built of brick to match the existing dwellings and of a similar exterior design. The new cottage is re-located at an angle to the lane and the fore-court is re-designed as a smaller gravel access that is less intrusive. The garage is re-designed as a separate, brick building, looking very much like one of the outhouses or small barns that are already present in the area. The new house is surrounded by a

densely planted hedge and fruit trees are planted in the garden. The applicant also agrees to restore his ancient orchard and to plant some more hedgerow trees around his untouched paddock.

By preserving and restoring the orchard and one of the paddocks and re-siting the proposed dwelling, the low density, random nature of the original settlement pattern has been retained. The character of the area is also preserved and strengthened by the additional planting and the use of vernacular building materials.

c) A farmer owns a badly drained field and has applied to the Forestry Commission for grant aid to plant it with a crop of poplar trees. The field lies within the Landscape Type, Wet Pasture Meadows and is readily visible from a number of public vantage points.

Wet Pasture Meadows are unwooded landscapes where the tree cover is represented by linear patterns of trees along watercourses and ditches. The poorly drained nature of the soil often leads to a botanically interesting wetland grass sward.

A plantation of poplar trees would therefore be totally contrary to the character of the landscape and, since the site is so visible, would be visibly intrusive. The Forestry Commission therefore decline the application to grant aid the work.

4.4   GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

4.4.1 Natural England defines green infrastructure as *'a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability. Its design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types.*

Green infrastructure includes established green spaces and new sites and should thread through and surround the built environment and connect the urban area to its wider rural hinterland. Consequently it needs to be delivered at all spatial scales from sub-regional to local neighbourhood levels, accommodating both accessible natural green spaces within local communities and often much larger sites in the urban fringe and wider countryside.'

4.4.2   Current concerns about the consequences of climate change and environmental sustainability underlie the emphasis on providing green infrastructure throughout new development schemes. The protection and enhancement of natural habitats and features has always been a primary consideration of landscape design, and Landscape Architects strive to incorporate linked up green amenity spaces through the masterplanning process. The consideration of green infrastructure is now a generally accepted intrinsic element of the design process, providing amenity open space, based as far as possible on natural site features such as streams, mature trees, hedges and woodland.

4.4.3   Within Worcestershire, green infrastructure strategy is being developed by the Sub-regional Green Infrastructure Partnership. This is a partnership between the County Council, District Councils, Natural England, Environment Agency and the voluntary sector, including Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. The Partnership is working towards producing a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the county, and is currently producing a series of Green Infrastructure Framework Reports. These compile a review of the existing evidence bases and information sources for green infrastructure, landscape character being one of the principal elements. The Strategy will be published in 2012. Landscape character, biodiversity and the historic environment also form the basis for the Green Infrastructure Environmental Character Areas. These identify and categorise green infrastructure within the county (as poor, medium or high) according to overarching Green Infrastructure indicators and, based on the quality, determine the appropriate type of interventions; create, restore or protect.
Full details of the development of Green Infrastructure within the county can be found at:

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/environment-and-planning/strategic-planning/planning-green-infrastructure.aspxSub-regional

4.4.4 At the strategic scale the analysis of condition, and the resulting sensitivity of those indicators that are directly relevant to green infrastructure can inform the planning process, directing new built development and its associated green infrastructure to those areas where there will be at least environmental harm and most potential environmental gain.

4.4.5 At the site scale, the siting and design of green infrastructure should be informed by the local landscape character as well as the natural site elements. For example: an area of Landscape Type Principal Timbered Farmlands might be identified for housing development. The site could be in poor condition with remnants of derelict woodland, a few remaining hedges, a small, litter-infested stream and the occasional over-mature hedgerow tree. Green infrastructure provision could:

- encompass the protection, re-planting and future management of the woods thereby also providing climate change mitigation through carbon storage.
- provide a buffering corridor of species-rich grassland and new woodland planting along the litter picked stream. This can also aid flood prevention by providing water storage areas that could encompass a sustainable urban drainage scheme (SUDS)
- re-instate the original enclosure pattern by planting new hedges and linking them to the surrounding landscape in order to achieve ecological connectivity
- gap up the existing hedges and plant a new generation of hedgerow trees to enhance and sustain ladscape character and ecological habitats
- do all this in a manner that will reflect the inherent character of Principal Timbered farmlands, while providing the linked up amenity spaces required by the local community.
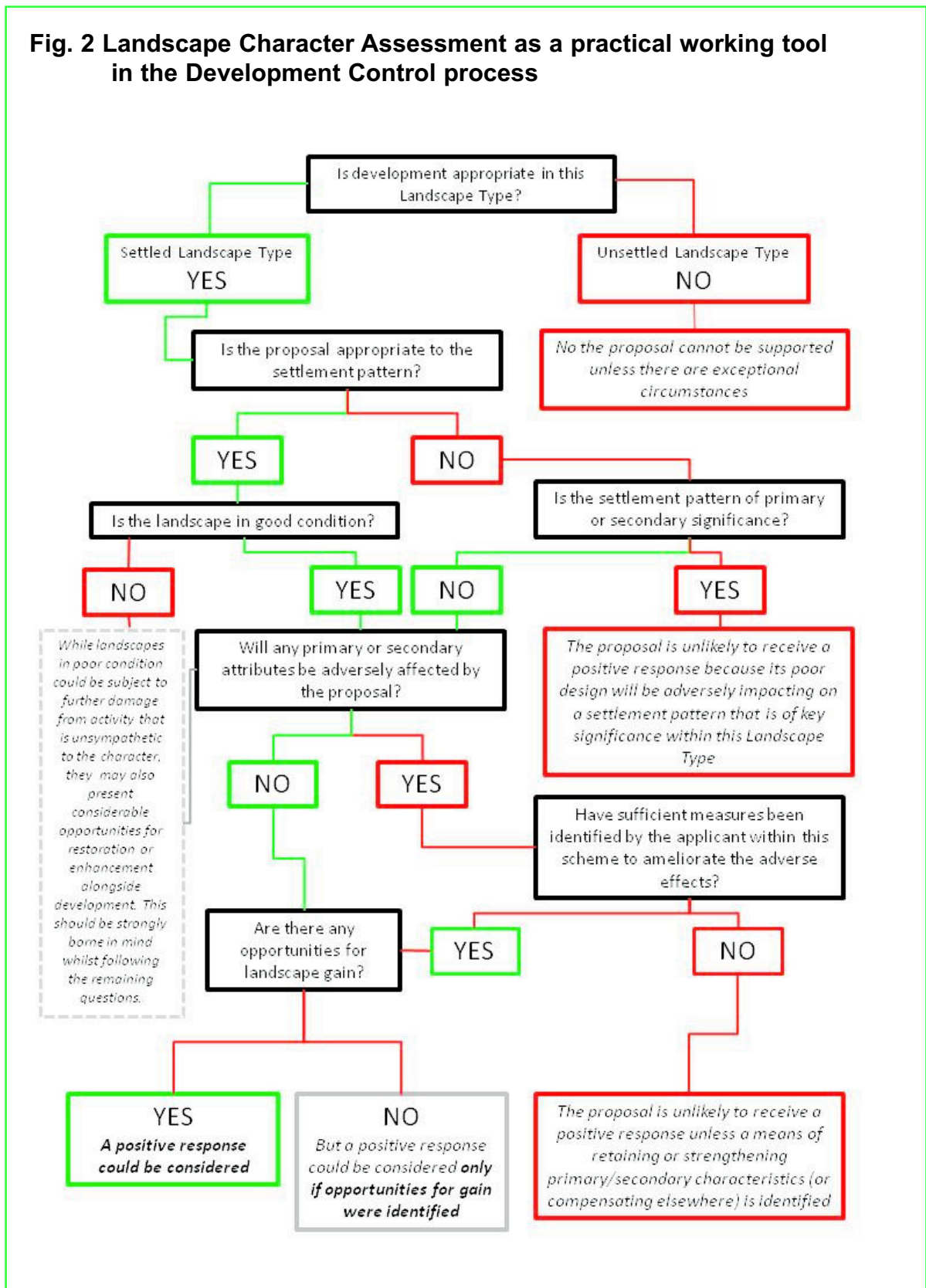
4.5 CLIMATE CHANGE

4.5.1 The UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) has been supporting organisations to adapt to climate change since 1997. UKCIP has been the main channel for providing modelling of potential change. Current concerns indicate that the UK is likely to experience more extreme weather conditions and that the distribution patterns of flora at the limit of their natural extent may be noticeably reduced.

4.5.2 The resulting impact on the landscape is likely to be one of loss of characteristic features, such as the beech hangers in Limestone Estatelands, become less prominent. Although this will result in a loss of species diversity, the impact on the overall landscape character is unlikely to be profound because it is dependent on a range of characteristics. Notwithstanding this, if one of the tree diseases currently affecting various species populations were to become as virulent as Dutch Elm Disease, the resulting adverse impact on the landscape would be significant.

Fig. 2 Landscape Character Assessment as a practical working tool in the Development Control process

Is development appropriate in this Landscape Type?

Settled Landscape Type
YES

Unsettled Landscape Type
NO

No the proposal cannot be supported unless there are exceptional circumstances

Is the proposal appropriate to the settlement pattern?

YES

NO

Is the settlement pattern of primary or secondary significance?

Is the landscape in good condition?

NO

YES

NO

YES

While landscapes in poor condition could be subject to further damage from activity that is unsympathetic to the character, they may also present considerable opportunities for restoration or enhancement alongside development. This should be strongly borne in mind whilst following the remaining questions.

Will any primary or secondary attributes be adversely affected by the proposal?

The proposal is unlikely to receive a positive response because its poor design will be adversely impacting on a settlement pattern that is of key significance within this Landscape Type

NO

YES

Have sufficient measures been identified by the applicant within this scheme to ameliorate the adverse effects?

Are there any opportunities for landscape gain?

YES

NO

YES
A positive response could be considered

NO
But a positive response could be considered only if opportunities for gain were identified

The proposal is unlikely to receive a positive response unless a means of retaining or strengthening primary/secondary characteristics (or compensating elsewhere) is identified

Page 177

5.0 THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT EXPLAINED

Summary
- The background to the LCA and its links to national work carried out by the Countryside Agency
- The nature of historical and ongoing land use change in relation to landscape character
- The twin concepts of appropriateness and resilience at both the strategic and detailed scales
- Examples of the impact of land use change on the elements of landscape character

5.1   BACKGROUND

5.1.1 The Landscape Character Assessment of Worcestershire was begun in 1997 by the then Hereford and Worcester County Council, and was informed by:
- "Countryside Character" undertaken by the Countryside Agency.
- "Natural Areas" carried out by English Nature.
- "Character of England" map prepared by English Heritage (1996)

5.1.2 Guidance published in April 2002 by The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage provides the latest updated advice on LCA. This is not a prescriptive document as it acknowledges that there are various approaches to the subject, all of equal merit. Later topic papers were produced by The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage to support their landscape character assessment guidance.

Topic Paper 6: "Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity" was published in final draft form in January 2004 with contributions from Worcestershire County Council. The Worcestershire LCA is quoted in the Topic Paper as one of a number of examples of practitioner best practice.

5.1.3 Although now complete, the Worcestershire LCA is capable of accommodating further data as this becomes available. The robustness of its methodology will allow continual updating of the supporting database without compromising the outcome of the assessment and hence this guidance.

5.2   RATIONALE

5.2.1 For many years, the concept of landscape conservation, particularly with regard to its association with development plans, has been largely based upon the notion of defining, and protecting, landscapes on the basis of their 'quality'. This led to the need to identify those areas or landscapes deemed to be the most attractive, and consequently affording them some form of protection. A hierarchy of landscape designations was developed, the most important being those of national importance, followed by those of regional, and then those of local, importance.

Of the areas of national importance, Worcestershire contains parts of two landscapes defined as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These are the Malvern Hills AONB which extends into Herefordshire and a small part of Gloucestershire and the western extremity of the extensive Cotswolds AONB across Bredon Hill and the Cotswold scarp beyond Broadway. Historically, beneath national designations came those landscapes of regional importance, defined by the Local Authority - in Worcestershire, these were termed Areas of Great Landscape Value - followed by those of local significance, defined in District Local Plans.

As a result, the consideration given to landscape, when dealing with planning issues, has largely been related to location - focused on whether a proposal lies within an area of landscape designation or not. Proposals for development or change within a given area of landscape designation would be guided by policies indicating that the character, or special quality, of the area should be protected. Until recently however, it was rare for the character of such areas to be described, leaving it up to the individual to define these parameters. Areas outside such landscape designations invariably lacked such policy guidance. These 'undesignated' areas, often forming the greater part of a county, were invariably the lowland, developed areas where, it could be argued, the pressures for change are most acute and the need for policies to protect the landscape are equally desirable.

5.2.2 Previous Structure Plans sought to recognise the importance of the wider landscape by identifying, and seeking to protect, a range of features throughout the county that were considered to be significant to the make up of its character. These features included skylines and hill features, mixed and broadleaved woodlands, dense hedgerow patterns and linear features. This approach, however, identified such features for their own sake and failed to relate to their spatial distribution, physical nature and association with one another and so make the link to the cultural evolution of the landscape.

5.2.3 LCA makes such a link, placing the features of a particular landscape in context, providing not just a description of the different landscapes within the county, but an understanding as to why those differences, and different landscapes, are there and what they represent. It puts local decision making in the context of a strategic, character based framework that is capable of linking national policy objectives with county/district wide planning and land management activities.

5.3   CHANGE IN THE LANDSCAPE

5.3.1   The landscape is the visual manifestation of the inter-relationship between man's activities and the natural environment. These are dynamic forces, forever changing the character of the landscape. The LCA seeks to understand the inherent character of the present day landscape. There is no intention to halt these processes of change or to fossilise the landscape as it is now or to try to return it to some previous supposed perfection.

5.3.2 The landscape has evolved over time as a result of two basic influences. The first is the physical structure of the landscape, represented by its geology, topography and soils. These are permanent physiographic elements and provide fundamentally stable basic patterns to the landscape. The second influence is the result of man's endeavours to live within the constraints of these different physical conditions, producing a range of cultural patterns that are superimposed upon the basic physiographic patterns. The cultural patterns result from differences in land use, and have been heavily influenced by:

- the nature of the soil and its fertility, the slope gradient and local climate, all of which affect farming patterns.
- the relative presence or absence of tree cover.
- population densities and social organisation.
- physical restraints such as the occurrence of seasonal flooding, or social restrictions such as the presence of forest laws or other aspects of land tenure and ownership.

These patterns, based upon physiographic parameters, and the cultural responses to them, define what is called the inherent character of the landscape.
The process of landscape character assessment is to identify and describe the areas of different inherent character within the landscape.

5.3.3 It is often stated that landscapes are constantly changing. The landscape is certainly not static, but the changes most often perceived are those that are site-specific rather than those affecting large areas of comparable landscape character. In retrospect it is obvious that the pace of change has been faster at certain times of recorded history than at others. Certainly in the last 60 years, the acceleration of change in rural areas has dramatically increased. Worcestershire's Historic Landscape Characterisation, produced by the Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, has recognised that while some of the Worcestershire landscape is extremely ancient in character, much of it has been significantly altered over previous centuries and the landscape that we see now may have been changed several times (see Appendix A).

Nevertheless, the patterns of rural landscape have usually respected the physiographic nature of the land and through this have perpetuated an underlying constancy to the landscape. Modern change, due to increased mechanisation, advanced agricultural technology and the demand for development, is no longer so restrained by the demands of physical landscape characteristics. Consequently, modern change has generally resulted in dilution of character and an acceleration of the process of uniformity across the county. The underlying, inherent character of the landscape that we see today relies on the established elements of constancy, while the condition of that landscape may be strengthened, or more usually weakened, by modern change.

5.3.4 Landscape Uniformity

The twin concepts of appropriateness and resilience underpin the approach to character-based planning both at the strategic scale and at the detailed scale. Concerns about the increasing uniformity of the landscape are well-founded and LCA can provide a tool to reduce this trend.

Landscape uniformity is the result of three key influences:

i. reduced dependency upon physical and cultural constraints, which formerly 'shaped' the character of the landscape

ii. the loss of features that are distinctive to a particular area

iii. the dilution and compromise of those features that remain by the addition of the commonplace or the inappropriate

This latter aspect can be compounded by the introduction of landscaping conditions, associated with planning permission, which are standardised solutions rather than tailored to reflect the character of the particular area. A similar impact results from advocating environmental principles that are 'generally beneficial' rather than 'locally specific' in such fields as forestry and countryside management. LCA provides a clear indication of those features that define the character of a particular area, together with the relative importance of those features. This provides a strong direction towards a vision or focus for the landscape of that area, which in turn can influence how the tools available in the planning and decision making processes can be best used to achieve such goals.

5.3.5 Shaping Landscape Change

A strategic awareness and understanding vision is needed in order to make rational decisions about how best to accommodate change in the countryside. **Historic patterns of settlement and woodland cover, for instance, are key determinants of landscape character and it is important that land use change should, where possible, respect these patterns (i.e. change should be appropriate to its setting and not be allowed to overwhelm and destroy the inherent character of the landscape). In landscapes that are least resilient to change the elements of landscape character are particularly sensitive and the impact of land use change, particularly new development, should be subjected to rigorous examination and resisted where that impact is seen to be unacceptable.**

5.3.6 Adoption of the concept of LCA does not equate with halting future landscape change. The underlying doctrine of LCA is to understand the process of landscape evolution, taking as read that landscapes will continue to evolve, reflecting changing economic, social and environmental forces in the process. LCA does not seek to embalm the landscape as a museum piece, set at a particular period of time. Instead it seeks to raise awareness of those aspects of landscape evolution that are pertinent to the identity of particular landscapes today, in other words, that contribute to its inherent character. The challenge lies in finding ways to guide and control change and to be able to best accommodate change, whilst recognising and respecting the inherent character of the landscape.

5.3.7 Landscape Character and Local Distinctiveness

The degree to which landscape character is influenced by change depends upon the magnitude of that change, in other words, the scale at which that change is occurring. To help understand this, it is helpful to bear in mind the difference between landscape character and local distinctiveness. Landscape character is defined by particular combinations of characteristics occurring in repeated patterns over a particular area, as opposed to the presence of individual, often unique, features, which contribute to what we regard as local distinctiveness. Landscape character defines the broad brush, generic, characteristics of areas that have shared a similar landscape evolution. For the character of a particular Landscape Type to be affected by change, that change should be evident or predictable across the Landscape Type as a whole.

5.3.8 Taking as an example a Landscape Type with the characteristics of a mixed farming land use and an absence of any woodland cover, should a landowner choose to plant an area of woodland, perhaps for shooting, or for nature conservation reasons, the eventual woodland would change the appearance of that specific locality: it would create a feature out of kilter with the general character of that (unwooded) Landscape Type. Such a change, in terms of landscape character, would not be encouraged, although it is recognised that there may be no control over such individual actions. If, on the other hand, the future of mixed farming generally ceased to be viable economically in that particular Landscape Type, and a change to a land use based on forestry appeared to be the most feasible, such a change, affecting the Landscape Type as a whole, would be recognised and accepted as part of the inevitable evolution of that landscape. The presence of woodland cover would then become part of the evolving inherent character of that Landscape Type.

5.3.9 Untypical Sites

Throughout the landscape there are examples of sites that are not typical of the Landscape Type in which they are found. Often this is due to a site specific feature such as a medieval deer park or ornamental parkland, an historic garden, a large body of water or an historic artefact such as a hill fort or ridge and furrow land form. Sometimes the area is too small to be singled out as a different Landscape Type. This is particularly true of the many commons throughout the county. In these situations a detailed analysis of the unique character of the area should serve to guide appropriate development. **There should be no attempt to return the area to the character of the Landscape Type in which it sits as to do so would be to destroy its own distinctiveness. Decisions on siting, scale, detailing and the use of construction materials relating to built development should be made with this detailed analysis of the unique local character in mind.** The settlement pattern, on the other hand, will be informed by the characteristic attribute of the relevant Landscape Type.

5.3.10 Sometimes the site may appear to be different because its poor condition has robbed it of many of the characteristics that would have originally identified it as belonging to the Landscape Type in which it is found. **In this situation the development should seek to strengthen the inherent landscape character through appropriate mitigation. Developers should be aware that if the site in question does not appear to conform to the inherent character of its Landscape Type through loss of features or addition of inappropriate features (i.e. it is in poor condition), proposals that would exacerbate this poor condition will not be considered favourably from a landscape perspective.**

5.3.11 New Future Landscapes
There are certain types of development which, because of their scale and nature, will fundamentally alter the inherent character of the rural landscape. In Worcestershire, developments of this kind are most noticeably represented by mineral extraction. Major housing and industrial sites, while they can also overwhelm inherent character, are more often than not sited in proximity to existing urban development and thus viewed as an extension of the town or city. Renewable energy technologies may also transform the landscape but are often of a more transitory nature, although, due to their size, wind farms can be highly intrusive. There is also the potential for impacts to arise from biomass plants and solar farms, as well as other land-use changes to support renewable energy, including the growing of energy crops and the installation of transmission lines, transformers and access roads. The impact of each of these on landscape

character would need to be considered on a case by case basis. While it is not possible for this document to provide detailed advice on renewable energy, these issues are being considered through other plans and policies at county and district levels. Mineral extraction however, can result in the profound transformation of landscape character and can only take place where economically viable deposits occur. Modern quarries are inevitably sited in rural areas where hard rock is usually to be found on elevated hilly land and sand and gravel deposits along the river valleys. Additionally, there is potential for small locally sustainable building stone quarries and delves throughout the county. In those situations the opportunity occurs to create new landscapes that may be radically different from the original. Decisions on the long term restoration of these sites should be taken with landscape character in mind as well as taking into account future opportunities to provide new facilities such as geodiversity features or lakes which could benefit tourism, public recreation and wildlife. The character of the surrounding landscape should be assessed and the long term restoration proposals should seek to integrate the site into the existing surrounding landscape. The decision may be to restore the site to agriculture, in which case the land should be enclosed with a pattern of hedgerows that link to the existing hedges and create fields of an appropriate scale and pattern. Where the long term proposals seek to create an entirely new landscape it should fit comfortably within the existing landscape, with hedges and streams linked up and no perceived conflict between introduced and existing features and habitats.

5.3.12 The emphasis on the appropriateness of a development in a landscape, and the landscape's resilience to change (or ability to accept that development without undue harm) can only be partially assessed through the LCA. Site visits and the need for detailed visual assessment are also a vital part of both strategic land use planning and development control. (Guidance on Visual Impact Assessment has been published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment in their *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment:* Second Edition.) Additional tools such as Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment may also play an important part in this process.

Nevertheless, both strategic planning and the development control process should be guided by the LCA which is able to inform them at every stage. Fig.2, p.22 shows how the LCA can guide the development control decision- making process from initial strategic feasibility through to detailed design of individual development. It must be emphasised, however, that the impact of development on the landscape is only one aspect among many that are considered at both strategic planning and development control stages. Decisions are informed by the relevant Development Plan and any other material consideration and are a balance between social, economic and environmental concerns. Where a decision goes against the landscape character advice, the findings of the LCA can then be utilised to develop appropriate mitigation measures.

6.0 CLASSIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION

Summary
- The first stage of landscape character assessment setting out the physical, tangible aspects of characterisation and its methodology
- Landscape character areas and landscape character types are explained
- Attributes and their indicators are set out

6.1 THE PROCESSES AND PRODUCTS OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

6.1.1 The process of Landscape Character Assessment involves the description and classification of areas where distinctive features occur in repeated patterns. It seeks to describe what makes one area different from another, avoiding personal preferences or judgemental values.

6.1.2 There are two stages in the process of LCA and it is important that these are recognised as quite distinct. The first phase of classification and description sets out the physical, tangible aspects of characterisation and is described in this section of the SG. The second phase is an analysis of this character and forms the basis of judgements and decisions taken with landscape character in mind. This is described in section 7.0.

6.1.3 The process of characterisation identifies two types of unit:

- Firstly, there are landscape character areas at a variety of scales, which in the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment are called Regional Character Areas, and Landscape Description Units (LDU). The larger areas are at a county scale while the smaller LDUs are at a local scale and are further divided into the smallest units known as Land Cover Parcels (LCP). These are all individual, unique areas with their own identity and character. These areas are identified by description and given appropriate local names such as the Vale of Evesham Regional Character Area, with Fladbury Principal Village Farmlands LDU being one of a number of LDUs found within it. Their individual descriptions are held in the Technical Handbook.

- Secondly, there are landscape character types. These have been identified through assessing the characteristics that make up landscape character. Thus, different combinations of these characteristics will result in different landscape character types (called Landscape Types in the Worcestershire LCA). Since this is a generic classification, the same combination of characteristics will always result in the same Landscape Type wherever it is found in the country.

**Fig. 3 Hierarchy of landscape
character units**

Regional Character Areas
Landscape Types
Landscape Description Units
Land Cover Parcels

6.2 METHOD

6.2.1 The LCA was carried out through a combination of desk study and field survey, backed up by consultation with specialists such as ecologists and historical geographers.

6.2.2 Identifying Landscape Description Units (LDUs)

Initially, a desk-based study systematically divided the countryside into discrete and relatively homogenous units of land within which the constituent physical and cultural elements occurred in repeated patterns and shared certain visual characteristics. These units of land are the Landscape Description Units (LDUs) and are the building blocks of landscape character. They form the basis on which all subsequent classification and evaluation takes place.

6.2.3   The LDUs were defined by a combination of three earth science and three cultural indicators, known as 'definitive indicators' because they defined the boundaries of the LDUs. The three earth science indicators of geology, topography and soils were identified through reference to specialist maps. These are known as 'permanent definitive indicators' since they are not generally subject to change through man's influence. They are jointly the most influential factors that contribute to the character of the landscape.

Three cultural definitive indicators were identified as providing base-line descriptive information. These are tree cover character, land use and settlement pattern. They are not permanent definitive indicators as they are subject to change, being a reflection of man's influence on the landscape, but they are always applicable to the landscape.

The desk study relied heavily on map analysis to arrive at a simple broad brush indication of the range of ways in which each indicator could be expressed in the Worcestershire landscape. The analysis of historical maps played a particularly important role in analysing the patterns of settlement, tree cover and land use.

Simplified map overlays were prepared for each indicator, which, when related to one another, enabled patterns to be distinguished. These, in turn, made it possible to begin to understand the relationship between the different indicators. This greatly assists in the understanding of how a particular landscape has developed and is the key to assessing landscape character.

6.2.4 Each indicator is broken down into its constituent attributes. Thus, for example, settlement pattern in Worcestershire can be described as:

- Nucleated - discrete, usually large villages with a low level of dispersal. There is little settlement beyond the village boundary and the farmsteads are contained within the fabric of the village. Buildings beyond the village boundary are usually restricted to 'new' farmsteads created at the time that the former open fields were enclosed.

- Clustered - discrete settlement nuclei (small villages and/or hamlets) associated with a moderate to high level of dispersal. Dwellings are centred around an inner core, often the church, but farmsteads are situated outside the village in open countryside.

- Wayside -small clusters or strings of roadside dwellings associated with a moderate to high level of dispersal.

- Dispersed - scattered farmsteads and rural dwellings associated with a low to moderate density of dispersal.

- Scattered - a very low dispersal of individual farmsteads and rural dwellings.

- Unsettled - landscapes lacking human habitation

6.2.5 Once the LDUs had been defined, additional descriptive information about the landscape, especially what it looks like on the ground, was gathered from a combination of further desk study and field survey. An additional six descriptive indicators were thus added to the original six definitive indicators. These address spatial character, indicative ground vegetation, field boundaries, enclosure pattern, tree cover pattern and other distinctive special characteristic features such as building style. Each of these indicators is also broken down into a number of attributes. Field boundaries for example, could be walls, fences, hedges, or hedge/ditches. In other parts of the country there will be other local characteristic boundary features. Unlike the definitive indicators, the descriptive indicators are not relevant in all areas and therefore not always applied. For example, tree cover pattern is not applicable on the higher slopes of the Malvern Hills as these have an unwooded character.

Fig. 4 Settlement pattern

There are five unsettled Landscape Types in Worcestershire, the remainder are settled.

UNSETTLED LANDSCAPE TYPES
High Hills and Slopes
Riverside Meadows
Unenclosed Commons
Wet Pasture Meadows
Wooded Forest

SETTLED LANDSCAPE TYPES
Scattered settlement pattern
Limestone Estatelands
Principal Wooded Hills
Settled Farmlands on River Terraces

Dispersed settlement pattern
Enclosed Commons
Principal Settled Farmlands
Principal Timbered Farmlands
Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use
Timbered Plateau Farmlands

Wayside settlement pattern
Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings
Timbered Pastures

Clustered settlement pattern
Estate Farmlands
Sandstone Estatelands
Wooded Estatelands
Wooded Hills and Farmlands

Nucleated settlement pattern
Principal Village Farmlands
Village Claylands
Village Farmlands with Orchards

6.2.6   Identifying Land Cover Parcels (LCPs)

During the process of field survey it was apparent that there was often a minor variation of attributes within a LDU. This was particularly true of land use and the historic patterns of field enclosure. The LDUs were therefore subdivided as necessary into smaller sub-landscape units called Land Cover Parcels (LCPs). The field survey provided additional detail that could not be derived from mapped sources. Such details included those of hedgerow species composition, woodland structure and the presence of trees along hedgerows or watercourses. It also enabled the degree of visual unity to be assessed. If two adjacent LCPs possessed no visual differences on the ground, they would be merged together to form one.

The field survey also provided an opportunity to gather information about the condition of the landscape, which is regularly updated, for example - whether hedgerows are well-maintained, overgrown or deteriorating and gappy, or whether hedgerow tree populations exhibit a healthy variation in age structure or primarily consist of over-mature specimens.

The data from both the desk study and the field survey is held in a database at the LCP scale. Thus each LCP is a totally homogeneous unit within which there are no variations of attribute and within which the landscape is a visual entirety.

6.2.7 Since the LDUs and LCPs are individual, site specific areas, it is possible to produce written descriptions of the landscape character for each. This enables the identification of special site features such as orchards, ponds or traditional hay meadows which are not picked up by the definitive or descriptive indicators. These are landscape features which contribute to the local landscape character and may be extremely important in defining local distinctiveness. However, they are not consistent throughout the landscape and therefore do not contribute to the definition of Landscape Types.

Fig. 5 Unwooded landscapes

There are two Landscape Types where trees and woodland are not characteristic
High Hills and Slopes
Unenclosed Commons

There are eight Landscape Types where woodland is not characteristic although there are individual trees.
Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings
Principal Settled Farmlands
Principal Village Farmlands
Riverside Meadows
Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use
Settled Farmlands on River Terraces
Village Claylands
Village Farmlands with Orchards

6.2.8 Identifying Landscape Types
Having completed both the field survey and desk study, it was then possible to group the LDUs into visually coherent Landscape Types, based on the visual prominence of the indicators that defined each LDU. Prominent indicators are those that have an immediate visual impact when viewed from the LDU and

can be described as the primary characteristics of the Landscape Type. Thus the primary characteristics of Landscape Type "Wooded Forest" are:

- Tree cover character is ancient broadleaved woodland.

- Tree cover pattern is of continuous tree cover.

- This is an unsettled landscape.

- There is an intimate spatial character with views restricted by the close proximity of trees.

6.2.9 Twenty two rural Landscape Types have been identified in Worcestershire:

- Enclosed Commons
- Estate Farmlands
- Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings
- High Hills and Slopes
- Limestone Estatelands
- Principal Settled Farmlands
- Principal Timbered Farmlands
- Principal Village Farmlands
- Principal Wooded Hills
- Riverside Meadows
- Sandstone Estatelands
- Settled Farmlands on River Terraces
- Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use
- Timbered Pastures
- Timbered Plateau Farmlands
- Unenclosed Commons
- Village Claylands
- Village Farmlands with Orchards
- Wet Pasture Meadows
- Wooded Estatelands
- Wooded Forest
- Wooded Hills and Farmlands

It should be noted than an assessment of urban landscape character has yet to be undertaken and for the moment all urban landscapes are grouped together. The Landscape Types are described in more detail in Part Two of this document but their distribution throughout the county is shown in Fig.11 p.49 - Map of the Distribution of Landscape Types.

6.2.10 Thus LDUs and LCPs are site specific units within which the elements that make up the character of the landscape have been identified by predetermined indicators and their accompanying attributes. They are referenced to their location e.g .LDU MH 07 Ankerdine Principal Wooded Hills. Landscape Types on the other hand, represent the various combinations of those visually prominent attributes. They

are therefore not site specific since the same combination of attributes can occur in a number of places. In fact many of the Landscape Types found in Worcestershire are also found throughout the rest of the country. Using a common nomenclature for Landscape Types, together with a common methodology for their definition, a compatible landscape character analysis at regional and national levels can, in theory, be achieved. In practise this has not yet happened.

Fig. 6 Landscape indicators

Definitive Indicators

Topography
Geology   } Earth Science
Soils

Land Use (farm type)
Settlement Pattern   } Culural
Tree Cover Character

Descriptive Indicators

Characteristic Features

Enclosure Pattern
Field Boundaries
Indicative Ground Vegetation
Spatial Character
Tree Cover pattern

Fig. 7 Landscape attributes

LAND USE (FARM TYPE)	FIELD BOUNDARIES
Rough	Hedges
Pastoral	Hedge/ditch
Mixed	Walls
Woodland	
Cropping	**ENCLOSURE PATTERN**
Arable	Unenclosed
	Organic
SETTLEMENT PATTERN	Variable
Unsettled	Sub-regular
Scattered	Planned
Dispersed	
Wayside	**TREE COVER CHARACTER**
Clustered	Unwooded
Nucleated	Ancient
	Planned
SPATIAL CHARACTER	Trees
Exposed	
Large	**TREE COVER PATTERN**
Medium-open	Continuous
Medium-framed	Linked
Small	Discrete
Intimate	Linear
Variable	Tree groups
	Scattered trees
INDICATIVE GROUND VEGETATION	**CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES**
Heathy/acid grassland	Building style
Wetland	River
	Parks

Landscape Character Assessment

35

6.2.11 Identifying Regional Character Areas

At a larger scale, LDUs may also be grouped together in areas that reflect a perceived common cultural unity. These are primarily identified by the earth science indicators of geology, topography and soils, although the other three definitive indicators of tree cover character, land use and settlement pattern also play a role. These broad brush areas are defined only by description. They have been called Regional Character Areas (aka National Character Areas) and generally equate with those identified in the national programme of Countryside Character undertaken by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England). The greater degree of detail that can be gained from a county as opposed to a national character assessment enables the boundaries of these Areas to be defined more accurately, and, where appropriate, to further subdivide them. Regional Character Areas define areas of physiographic and cultural identity at a very broad brush level of detail, invariably transcending the administrative boundaries of local authorities and so creating a regional and national framework within which the finer scale of evaluation at county level can take place. Regional Character Areas in this study are used primarily to provide a simple geographical framework within which to present the range and distribution of Landscape Types in a comprehensive manner.

6.2.12 The Vale of Evesham is an example of a Regional Character Area. The public relate to this generic area and have certain perceptions about its landscape, particularly pertaining to its cultural attributes, notably its land use, and, to a lesser extent, to its topography. The Vale of Evesham actually comprises a range of Landscape Types:

- *Principal Village Farmlands,* representing the core areas of horticulture and cropping.

- *Village Farmlands with Orchards,* representing those areas where orchards and soft fruit growing are dominant.

- *Riverside Meadows,* flanking the River Avon.

- *Village Claylands,* representing the areas of heavier clay soils where arable land uses are less dominant.

6.2.13 The location and list of Regional Character Areas is shown in Fig. 12, p.51 - Map of the Distribution of Regional Character Areas. The descriptions of both these and the LDUs are available in the Technical Handbook which accompanies this SG. Since they are site specific descriptive areas they are not considered directly pertinent to this planning guidance but they do provide valuable additional information which will be vital in the future preparation of documents such as management plans and design guides.

7.0 ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

Summary
- The second stage of landscape character assessment setting out the evaluation methodology to enable the development of landscape strategies and priorities for action
- Indicators are explained in terms of their significance to landscape character and their vulnerability, tolerance and resilience to change
- The concepts of condition and sensitivity are explained

7.1 METHODOLOGY

7.1.1 Having completed the classification and description of the landscape, it is essential to direct this understanding in ways that will achieve the principles of sustainability and sense of place promoted in PPS 7. The classification and descriptions alone still place a great onus on individual interpretation. Therefore, an evaluation methodology has been formulated to enable the development of landscape strategies and priorities for action. This methodology is also essential when making development control decisions based on Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). The fundamental maxim of all decisions based on LCA is:

- to identify those attributes of landscape character about which we should be most concerned. In other words, in each Landscape Type, would the loss of certain attributes be more damaging to landscape character than others?

- to assess whether some landscapes have a greater capacity to accept change than others. In other words, should we be more concerned about proposals for change in some landscapes than in others?

- to anticipate likely changes in landscape character and take a proactive approach to the strategic development of such areas, in order to guide change for multi-purpose benefit.

The principles of analysis and evaluation are set out briefly within the main text of this SG. The Technical Handbook contains further explanation.

7.1.2 Of the six definitive indicators of landscape character, the three relating to physiography (soils, topography and geology) are considered to be stable, permanent components. They are less likely to be significantly affected as a result of proposals for development or other forms of change. By way of contrast, the nature of the three cultural indicators could alter due to damage or loss, or by dilution as a result of the introduction of inappropriate replacement or additional characteristics. Changes to some of the descriptive indicators are similarly possible. The process of analysis therefore concentrates on the following cultural and descriptive indicators that are readily subject to alteration:

- Land Use
- Tree Cover Character
- Tree Cover Pattern
- Enclosure Pattern
- Boundary Type
- Settlement Pattern

7.1.3 The descriptive indicator of 'Spatial Character' was excluded from the analysis as the various components that together contribute to spatial character - tree cover, enclosure etc. were already being assessed individually. The descriptive indicators of 'Indicative Vegetation' and 'Additional Characteristic Features' were also excluded from the analysis as the presence or absence of these tended to be of a more inconsistent nature and therefore not necessarily a pertinent contribution to the assessment of resilience or condition.

7.1.4 It was recognised that by analysing and evaluating the six chosen indicators, an understanding can be achieved of their significance, vulnerability, tolerance and resilience to change. This ability to systematically define the key characteristics that distinguish the various Landscape Types makes it possible to carry out comparative analyses of these landscapes. The analysis and evaluation described below was all carried out at the scale of the Landscape Types. At a more local scale, the information on condition held in the landscape database enables an analysis of sensitivity to change at the Land Cover Parcel (LCP) scale.

7.2 SIGNIFICANCE

7.2.1 Within each Landscape Type certain attributes may play a more **significant** role than others in defining the character of that landscape. The contribution that a particular indicator makes to the character of the landscape is dependent on the extent or consistency of its relevant attribute and its visual prominence. This analysis was carried out in the field and enabled the grouping of Landscape Description Units (LDUs) into Landscape Types.

7.2.2 The various combinations of the consistency and visual prominence defined each indicator of each Landscape Type as a primary, secondary or tertiary characteristic.

The primary and secondary characteristics of each Landscape Type are clearly set out in the descriptions contained in Part Two of this SG.

7.3 VULNERABILITY

7.3.1 Within each Landscape Type, certain attributes may be more vulnerable to change than others. On the basis of the field survey information, together with subsequent analysis, an assessment was made of the relevance or function of each attribute and the likelihood of change, expressed as the trend. Vulnerability is assessed by analysing the combination of function, trend and significance of each attribute. It can be defined as the likelihood of change to an attribute, or the landscape as a whole, as expressed by the significance of predicted trends in relation to function.

7.3.2 When assessing function, each attribute within the relevant indicators for each Landscape Type was considered in relation to the combination of circumstances that originally gave rise to that attribute. The resulting analysis graded attributes into three categories.

- still functional in today's landscape in its traditional form

- only functional in today's landscape in a modified form or only likely to be maintained in its traditional form with support

- cosmetic, since the original or historic function is now redundant. In other words these attributes are a relic of the past preserved only for their non-practical aesthetic, sentimental or historic value

7.3.3 The attributes were then considered with regard to their trends - certain attributes may be declining, others may be considered to be stable or improving. An informed judgement was made regarding the likelihood of future change, based on knowledge of current and past change.

7.4 TOLERANCE

7.4.1 Tolerance can be defined as the degree to which change is likely to cause irreparable damage to the essential components that contribute to landscape character.

7.4.2 Tolerance can be assessed by considering the replaceability of individual attributes in relation to their significance in the landscape as a whole. Within each Landscape Type, the degree to which different attributes are **replaceable** may vary - both in terms of timescales for the replacement to be considered achieved and in terms of the replacements being sufficiently comparable to the original. Replaceability addresses the potential for re-creating an attribute should it be damaged or destroyed as a result of land use change

7.5 RESILIENCE

7.5.1 Resilience is a measure of the endurance of landscape character, defined by the likelihood of change in relation to the degree to which the landscape is able to tolerate that change.

It is assessed by considering vulnerability (which includes significance) and tolerance together. The resilience assessment is generic for a given Landscape Type.

7.5.2 A comparative scale of resilience can be created to illustrate the ability of the different Landscape Types to tolerate change. This final analysis of the Landscape Types proves valuable when assessing the potential for, and the landscape impacts of, new built development, forestry, mineral extraction, transport routes etc. within the strategic planning process.

7.5.3 This map-based analysis can also be carried out for individual indicators so that, for example, the potential for large-scale forestry creation can be assessed on a landscape character basis. In this case the resilience of the attributes for tree cover character and tree cover pattern would be assessed and then the condition of the LCP would be taken into account. This would enable the capacity of the landscape to accept new woodland without compromising its character to be assessed. So, for example, the ancient wooded character and the discrete woodland pattern of an LCP of the Landscape Type Wooded Hills and Farmlands would be seen as resilient and therefore, in theory, new woodland planting would be acceptable. However, if the LCP were in good woodland condition, already containing large discrete blocks of woodland, it may not have the capacity to accept more woodland without detriment to its character. Similarly, if the LCP were in poor condition through lack of woodland then woodland may be welcome, although with large-scale elements the whole LDU would need to be assessed in order to maintain the optimum proportion of woodland to mixed farming.

7.5.4 It is therefore apparent that landscape character analysis enables the individual attributes that determine the low resilience of a particular landscape to be identified. It may well be possible therefore, even in landscapes of least resilience, to enable some change or development to take place providing the low overall resilience of that landscape is recognised and respected, and that the attributes that determine its low resilience are safeguarded.

Similarly, even landscapes that are highly resilient still have their weaknesses, in the sense that individual attributes may be of low resilience (i.e. of high significance, high vulnerability, low tolerance, or in decline). **High overall resilience does not give 'carte blanche' to ignore the impact of land use change on the landscape. Development or other change in these landscapes should still take note of the attributes that define them in order to respect and reflect them, and particularly to safeguard those attributes that are of low resilience within them.**

7.5.5 For the first time, this approach presents a breakdown of the character of all landscapes. It does not dictate a given conclusion, but simply provides a structure enabling a planning officer, or other user, to make an informed decision. The process is flexible in that it can accommodate changing perceptions of the landscape. For example, should it be felt that a previously functional attribute has ceased to be so, and may even now veer towards the cosmetic, the vulnerability analysis can be readily revised to accommodate such a changing status.

As stated above, resilience analysis (which takes account of significance, trend, vulnerability and tolerance) has been applied at the Landscape Type level. Landscape Type is therefore assessed by analysis of its constituent elements. Such a process also enables comparisons between different Landscape Types to be made. Fig. 9, p.42 - Overall resilience of each Landscape Type, illustrates the range of resilience between different Landscape Types, but also indicates the differing resilience of attributes within a given Landscape Type, and also comparison of the resilience of a particular attribute across the range of Landscape Types.

7.6 SENSITIVITY

7.6.1 In order to assist the considerations of development control and to allow informed choice, a more detailed level of information, often at a site specific level is usually required. This can be achieved by analysis of the smaller and more detailed LCPs, at which scale information on the condition of the landscape is held. The condition of the landscape - the degree to which the described character of a particular Landscape Type is actually evident today -will vary from LCP to LCP, or even within the LCP. Based on the assumption that within a landscape of high resilience (taken from the Landscape Type analysis), those parts of that landscape which are deemed to be in good condition (i.e. the inherent character is strongly represented) are more susceptible to change than those where the inherent character is already diluted or poorly represented, a more prescriptive approach to guiding land use change or development can be achieved.

7.6.2   The assessment of condition involves two fundamental components:

i. **Representation** - which considers how well the landscape attributes are represented today and if there has been any loss or deterioration

ii. **Modification** - which considers how the landscape may have been modified e.g. with incongruous, uncharacteristic additions

7.6.3   Once the condition of the landscape can be measured, the final piece of the jigsaw fits into place, the **sensitivity** of the landscape can be identified. **Sensitivity is the measure, or reflection, of the inherent resilience of a Landscape Type that is represented in the landscape today.**

Obviously, an area of landscape within a Landscape Type of high resilience, in which the attributes are well represented, is going to be more sensitive than an area within the same Landscape Type where the same attributes are in decline, damaged or lost. Such an indication of actual sensitivity, as opposed to the theoretical sensitivity of a landscape, is the tool that is most relevant to the more area-specific (as opposed to strategic) aspects of the planning process.

7.6.4   Whilst the measures of vulnerability and tolerance, and therefore resilience, are likely to be subject to only a slow change over time, and therefore can be regarded as 'constant', the condition of an LCP can be subject to rapid change. Condition can be measured and integrated with resilience at any time. Such flexibility is particularly beneficial as it enables an accurate analysis of the current situation i.e. the condition of the

landscape can be taken into account at the time that a decision about it needs to be made. It is desirable, however, to have, at an early stage, an overall analysis of the condition of the landscape of the whole county. Such a baseline level of information is necessary in order to:

• place the sensitivity of a particular LCP in context

• enable monitoring of landscape change.

A condition assessment of all the county LCPs has now been completed and the variation in condition of each of them is reflected in a range of sensitivity 'scores'. The sensitivity of a particular LCP will be most meaningful if it can be related to this range, therefore enabling its relevance in a county, district or more local context to be established. It must, however, be stressed that the condition of an LCP should always be checked on site before any decision is made as changes can rapidly take place.

Fig. 8 Flow chart illustrating the relationships between calculations in the analysis and evaluation phase of LCA.
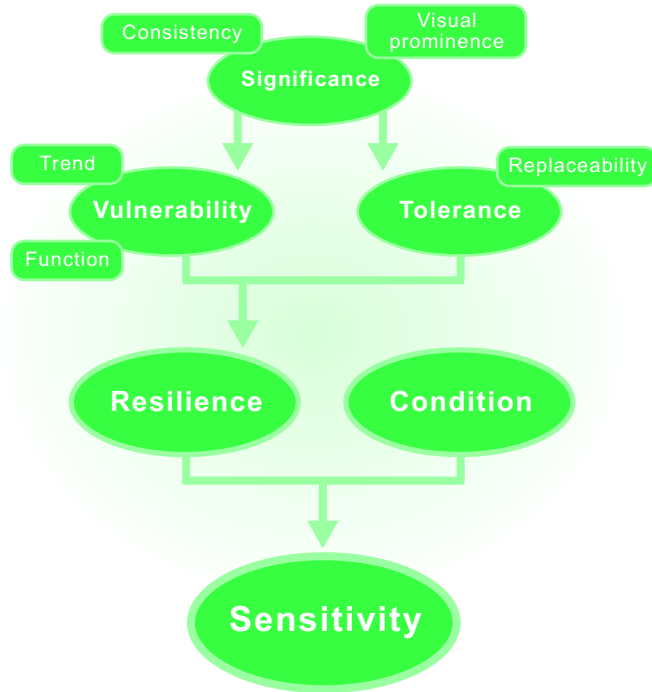
Fig. 9 Overall resilience of each Landscape Type in ranked order from most resilient (lower scoring) to least resilient (higher scoring). The chart also illustrates how the resilience scores of each individual indicator contributes to the overall score.
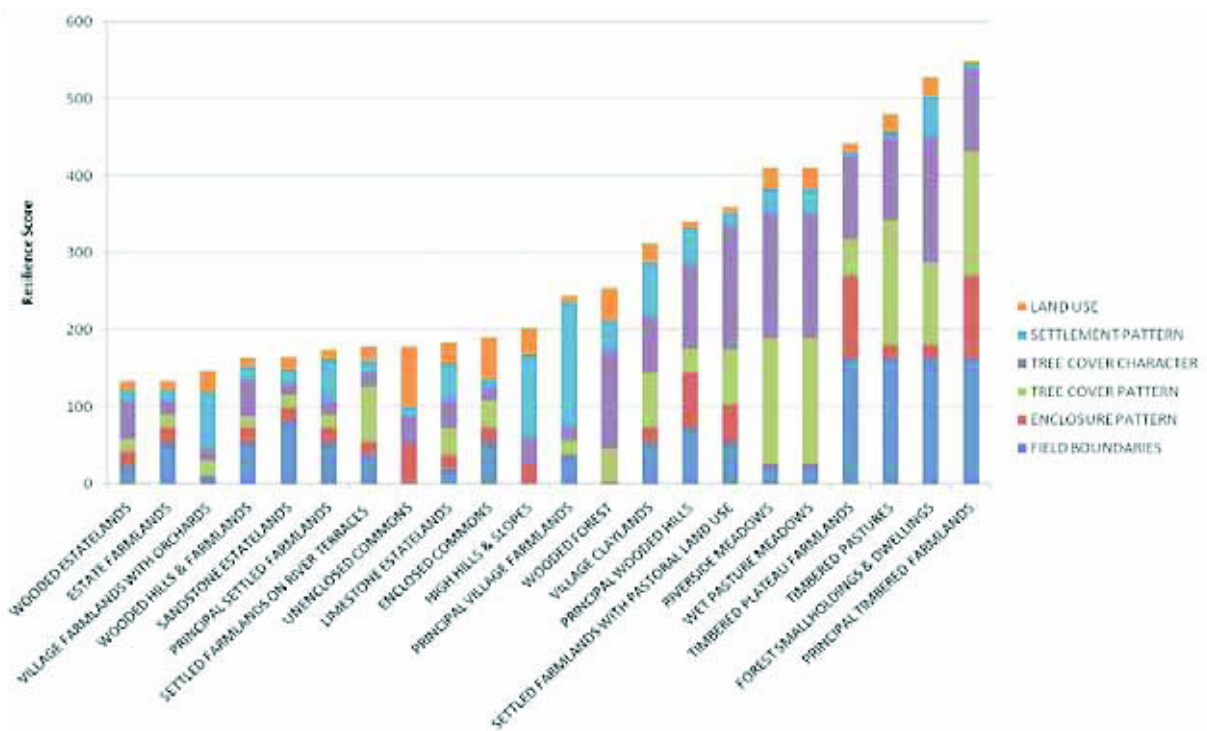
8.0 LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT

Summary
- The role of the LCA in influencing land management is explored and the concepts of conservation, restoration and enhancement are explained

8.1 Farmers and other land managers play a vital role in maintaining the health and character of the landscape. Future land management can help to direct change so that the character of the landscape is not compromised. The descriptions of the Landscape Types in Part Two of this SG include a brief analysis of the way in which the landscape is changing in the 21st century. Unfortunately, this often leads to a weakening of landscape character and loss of local distinctiveness but it is possible to strengthen the character of the landscape by appropriate management. Again, it is the twin principles of appropriateness and resilience which underpin both acceptable land management and development.

8.2 Opportunities for future beneficial land management can be considered under the three banners of conservation, restoration and enhancement. Where an attribute provides a significant contribution to landscape character (i.e. is a primary or secondary key characteristic) and is well represented the priority should be to **conserve**. An example of this might be the ancient wooded character in Landscape Type Principal Wooded Hills or well-represented hedgerow tree cover where this is a primary indicator of character. Where the significant attribute is in poor condition, such as few remaining hedgerow trees, or if the tree population comprises virtually all over-mature specimens, an incentive to generate an interest in reviving and **restoring** the hedgerow tree population is needed. Any means to secure such benefits through planning controls or conditions should be sought. In some cases the conservation of existing features and their restoration is inappropriate or insufficient to noticeably strengthen the landscape character. In these cases the opportunity to **enhance** the landscape character should be pursued. This may be achieved by removing inappropriate features or introducing or strengthening lost or weak key characteristics in order to optimise the inherent landscape character, or a combination of both. An example might be in Landscape Type Unenclosed Commons where ornamental tree planting is removed, previously ploughed arable land is returned to rough grazing and a small pond is created for the benefit of grazing animals and wildlife.

8.3 These concepts of conservation, restoration and enhancement have been set out as a broad-brush approach relating to the Landscape Types. However, they are even more relevant when considering the management of individual sites where the local landscape character may be dependant on unique features or may be untypical of the Landscape Type. The detailed description of the LDU could be a useful tool in this situation, as are the standard processes of landscape survey, analysis and evaluation. New built development should also address this threefold

approach. **There are often opportunities on development sites for mitigation measures to conserve landscape features such as trees, to restore features such as boundary hedges and to enhance the landscape character by other means such as off-site planting and the use of local native plant species. The preparation of management plans, whether allied to development sites or not, should address these three aspects in relation to the local landscape character and the relevant Landscape Type.**

8.4 The further analysis of vulnerability, tolerance and resilience *together* enables a greater refinement of this broad guidance. Priorities can be fine-tuned specifically to target those attributes which are either unlikely to be replaced without particular encouragement (those that have lost, or are losing, their function), together with those that can be replaced only with difficulty over a long period of time. Such analysis can be influential in the assessment and review of available initiatives in order to see if they actually provide sufficient incentive to achieve the required results on the ground. If they fail to do this, some new form of incentive will be urgently required.

8.5 The concept of vulnerability, in particular, enables future trends to be discerned, and this opportunity to be predictive enables planning control, and landscape management in general, to become more pro-active rather than re-active. Instead of waiting for landscapes to deteriorate and then responding to that situation, the key declining influences can be determined and measures put into place to try to remedy such decline before it actually manifests itself in the landscape.

Taking the vulnerability (v), tolerance (t) and resilience (r) summary for a particular Landscape Type, for example Principal Timbered Farmlands:
The significance analysis indicates that the primary cultural attributes that define the character of the Timbered Farmlands are:

- Hedgerow boundaries to the fields

- Ancient character of the woodlands/tree cover

- Dominant representation of tree cover in the pattern of scattered trees (the detailed descriptions indicate that hedgerow trees define the primary patterns and those along water courses also having relevance)

- Organic enclosure pattern

The v.t.r. analysis shows that of these, the scattered (hedgerow) tree populations are of greatest concern as these display high vulnerability, low tolerance and low overall resilience. The key priority in these landscapes should therefore be to safeguard this attribute and encourage its **restoration**.

The v.t.r. analysis also indicates many other attributes that give cause for concern. The Principal Timbered Farmlands Landscape Type, it must be remembered, is one of the ancient landscapes and, broadly speaking, the ancient landscapes are far less resilient to change than the more recent planned landscapes. In the Principal Timbered Farmlands, it is evident that the future of the organic pattern of enclosure is also of prime concern. Bearing in mind the fact that the conditions relating to the evolution of the organic pattern no longer apply, efforts to safeguard the existing attribute will be particularly important.

The ancient character of the woodlands/tree cover is also highlighted - whilst there may be initiatives (through the Forestry Commission) that may enable these woodlands to remain economically viable (and therefore moderately functional), should the ancient character be lost, the impact on landscape character can take a long time to repair - hence the low replaceability rating of this characteristic. The need to retain hedgerows as the characteristic field boundaries, together with respect for aspects of the characteristic brick and timber building style often associated with the settlements in these landscapes, is also relevant.

8.6 Guidance for restoration and conservation priorities can therefore be gauged relatively easily from the processes of landscape character analysis. The notion of enhancement of landscape character is a little more difficult to embrace. 'Enhancement' has been interpreted in different ways in other landscape studies, and in the process is often confused with restoration. If elements of landscape character are in poor condition and are being reinstated or repaired to improve the inherent character, the process is considered to be that of restoration. To enhance something implies that it is being made better or different in some way. To 'improve' the landscape may be charting difficult waters as there would need to be sound reasons to explain:

- why the landscape was deemed to be in need of improvement as opposed to restoration

- the nature of the guiding principles that define the manner in which a landscape is 'enhanced'.

Fig. 10 Principal Timbered Farmlands attribute analysis

Principal Timbered Farmlands		Significance	v	t	r
Land Use	Mixed	Tertiary	M	H	H
Field Boundaries	Hedges	Primary	M	M	M
Tree Cover Character	Ancient	Primary	M	L	L
Tree Cover Pattern	Scattered	Primary	H	L	L
Enclosure	Organic	Secondary	H	L	L
Settlement	Dispersed	Tertiary	H	M	H

8.7 To expand the latter point, the process of landscape character assessment is to identify similarities in landscapes, to recognise repeating patterns of attributes that reflect commonalities of evolution and justify their grouping into Landscape Types. To allow a free hand to develop a new palette of characteristics for a particular area could well go against such principles and point towards change on a random, or chance, basis. Furthermore, it is likely that it would be those landscapes which had deteriorated beyond the 'point of no return', those which had been devastated, with their primary attributes destroyed, which would be the prime candidates for enhancement. This raises concern about the message this conveys about commitment to perpetuating landscape character. It might well appear that the benefits to be gained from doing little to look after the character of the landscape outweigh those for seeking to perpetuate it. Certainly, working within the confines of landscape character, particularly in landscapes of ancient character, is likely to impose far greater constraints, than working in a 'new', custom-designed, functional landscape.

The promotion of landscape enhancement is therefore treated with caution, although the relevance of the concept is recognised and appreciated in *certain situations.*
There will be cases where change occurs within Landscape Types that coincide with opportunities to influence change to the character of those landscapes. It must be stressed that change in this context is something that manifests itself, or has the potential to manifest itself, throughout the area covered by a particular Landscape Type (as opposed to a change that occurs at one particular site). An example

of such a change might be that related to sand and gravel extraction in the Landscape Type 'Settled Farmlands on River Terraces'. In Worcestershire, such extraction is occurring at several locations within this Landscape Type and in such instances large bodies of open water are invariably introduced into the landscape as a result of the extraction and restoration processes. Large bodies of open water are not a characteristic of any Landscape Type within Worcestershire, with the exception of the lakes created for aesthetic reasons in the parklands associated with country houses and their estates, which can sometime reach considerable proportions e.g. Westwood Pool.

In recognising and accepting the water bodies as part of the 20th/21st century evolution of these landscapes, opportunities to introduce or modify other attributes, perhaps tree cover, or to encourage an expression of natural vegetation associated with these features, arise primarily as a means to help integrate the water bodies within the wider landscape. Whilst such opportunities for enhancement are accepted, it is desirable that such enhancement accords with landscape guidance for that particular situation, in that particular character area. This will help ensure that such enhancement translates into patterns that are repeated, and can be recognised within the landscape, so conforming to landscape character principles. Landowners, and others with appropriate interest in the land, may, however, still be able to introduce expressions of individuality and, in so doing, contribute to the local distinctiveness of an area.

9.0 MONITORING

Summary
- Aspects of monitoring the landscape are explored
- The relationship with the State of the Environment report

9.1 MONITORING LANDSCAPE CHANGE

9.1.1 The evaluation of landscape character provides a very effective mechanism for monitoring landscape change. The definition and analysis of key attributes of landscape character provides a ready data base for which further data collection on a regular basis can be undertaken. The attributes are clearly defined and the approaches to measuring the relevant aspects associated with them, such as resilience and condition, have been identified. These attributes should be regarded as the critical indicators associated with the landscape and, as such, act as a barometer to reflect the wider state of the environment and can be used to indicate, and to predict, changes to that state.

9.1.2 Monitoring landscape change is a particularly pertinent issue as it provides a means to gauge the effectiveness of landscape policies and the means by which they are interpreted and implemented, so contributing to policy review. Monitoring will also enable wider landscape change to be detected and predicted and will help gain an understanding of the factors that are influencing landscape change, the spatial differences relating to such changes and the rate at which change is taking place. Such information will, in turn, contribute to guiding the effective targeting and prioritisation of resources in such fields as countryside management and forestry.

9.1.3 Climate change, while currently resulting predominantly in localised damage e.g. storm damage to trees, will inevitably impact more widely on the character of the landscape. Already, the traditional length of the winter planting season has been dramatically shortened as autumns stay warmer and springs arrive early. The works carried out to contain unpredictable flash flooding and, conversely, to provide irrigation during summer droughts, will impact on the landscape; at a local level initially, but at a more general level as these features become more widespread. When considering woodland it is likely that large woodland blocks, which can create their own micro-climate, will be more resilient to extreme weather than smaller, more fragmented woodlands. Similarly, the species composition of both woodland and grassland may alter as species at the limit of their range find the more frequent extreme weather events too challenging. Landscape monitoring can provide a county-wide overview of the impact of climate change and inform the debate regarding mitigation and damage limitation.

9.1.4   Monitoring methodology

The methodology is applied to an established sample of Land Cover Parcels within each Landscape Type to produce an indication of how far landscape condition has improved or declined. Landscape change is measured by re-assessing the landscape character condition scores for a sample of 6 Land Cover Parcels within each Landscape Type and comparing them with their baseline condition scores. This amounts to 132 LCPs in all; selected from urban fringe and rural locations across the county. The baseline assessment was undertaken for the whole county (912 LCPs) using the 2005 aerial photographs and updated in 2010/11.

9.1.5   Landscape condition is assessed by a combination of site visits and viewing the most up to date aerial photographs to assign scores to each LCP for each of the 6 landscape indicators of:

field boundaries

enclosure pattern

tree cover pattern

tree cover character

land use

settlement pattern

Based on these total scores, parcels are then assigned to high, medium or low condition categories. During the reporting process, the selected parcels are reassessed and it is noted if their score changes sufficiently to move them up or down a condition category (e.g. high to medium, low to medium, medium to high, medium to low etc.).

9.2 STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

9.2.1   The results of the Landscape Character Assessment's monitoring of landscape change is used to inform the Worcestershire Partnership's State of the Environment (SoE) report. The research forms part of a suite of indicators within the SoE report, the relevant indicator for landscape being ' The number of landscape units (Land Cover Parcels) in which the condition has changed.' Re-assessment is undertaken as and when updated aerial photography becomes available and will normally be within a 5 year period. Further information on the SoE report is available at:

http://www.worcestershirepartnership.org. uk/cms/theme-groups/environment- group/state-of-the-env-report.aspx

Legend

- Enclosed Commons
- Estate Farmlands
- Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings
- High Hills and Slopes
- Limestone Estatelands
- Principal Settled Farmlands
- Principal Timbered Farmlands
- Principal Village Farmlands
- Principal Wooded Hills
- Riverside Meadows
- Sandstone Estatelands
- Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use
- Settled Farmlands on River Terraces
- Timbered Pastures
- Timbered Plateau Farmlands
- Unenclosed Commons
- Village Claylands
- Village Farmlands with Orchards
- Wet Pasture Meadows
- Wooded Hills and Farmlands
- Wooded Forest
- Wooded Estateland
- Urban

N

2.5 1.250   2.5 Kilometers

worcestershire
county council

Fig. 11 Map of the distribution of Landscape Types

Legend

- Arden
- Birmingham Conurbation
- Bromyard Plateau
- Cotswolds & Bredon Hill
- Kinver Sandlands
- Malvern & Abberley Hills
- Mid Worcestershire Forests
- North West Gloucestershire Sandlands
- Vale of Gloucester
- Teme Valley
- Vale of Evesham
- Wyre Forest Plateau

2.5 1.250 2.5 Kilometers

worcestershire
county council
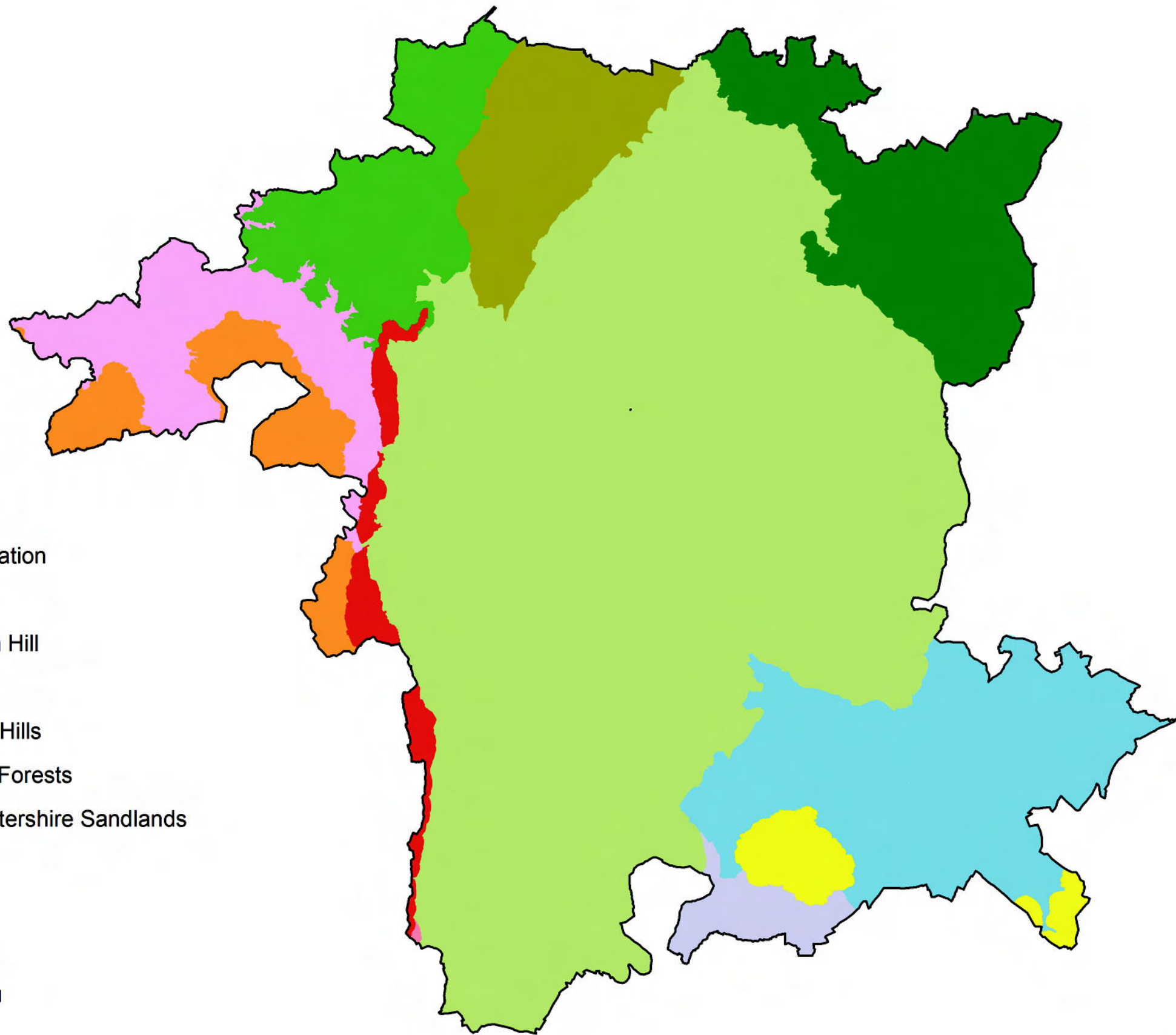
Fig. 12 Map of the distribution of Regional Character Areas

PART TWO
DESCRIPTION OF LANDSCAPE TYPES

10.1 ENCLOSED COMMONS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

This is a landscape of very similar character to the Sandstone Estatelands, with the same ordered pattern of large fields of regular outline, straight roads and estate plantations. It is an open, formal landscape with a visual clarity primarily defined by the straightness of the field boundaries. These are patterns that the Historic Landscape Characterisation shows have arisen as a result of late enclosure from former commons and wasteland.
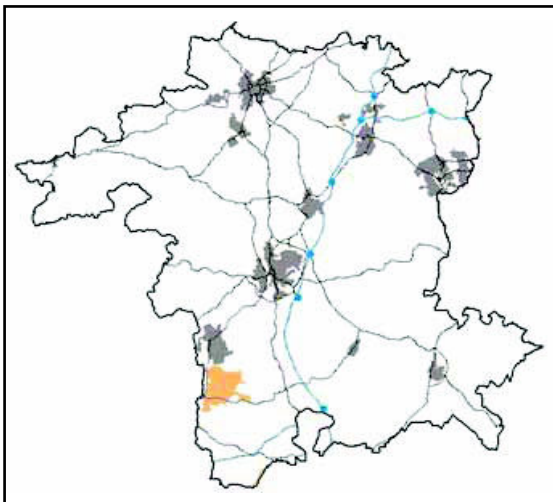
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Hedgerow boundaries to fields
- Planned enclosure pattern of straight boundaries and roads

Secondary:
- Pastoral land use
- Planned woodland character
- Woodland pattern of discrete blocks (estate plantations)

Tertiary:
- Gently rolling topography
- Open farmland landscape
- Impoverished soils
- Dispersed pattern of isolated farmsteads and scattered wayside dwellings

open farmland landscape with pastoral land use

straight roads

planned enclosure pattern

wide grass verges

thick straight hedges
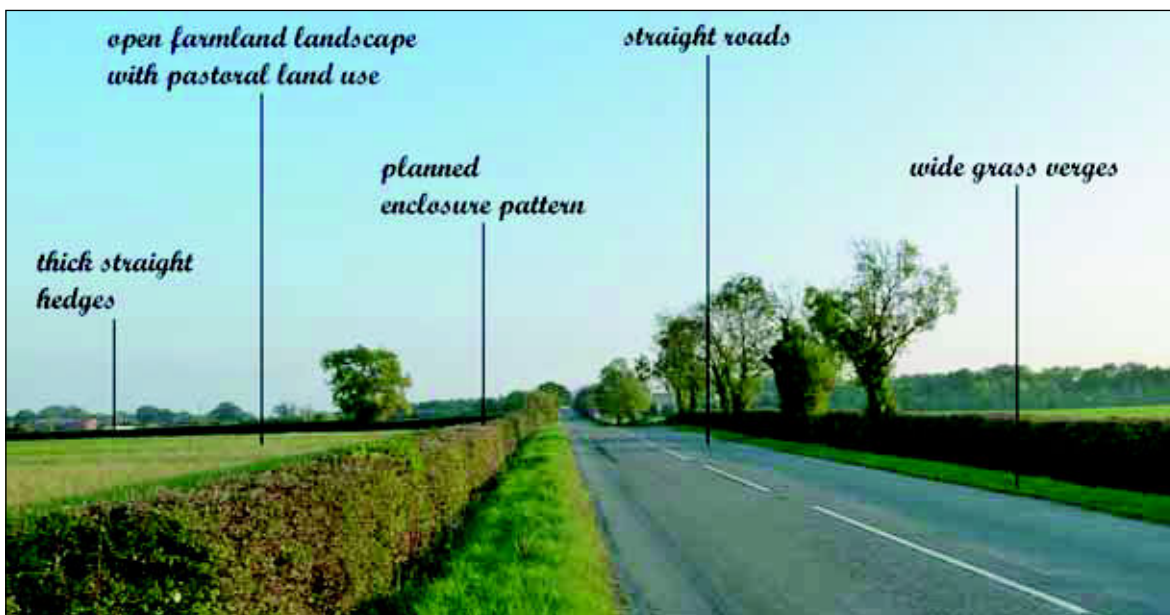
DETAIL

This is a planned landscape with a notably regular pattern, defined by the straightness of its hedge lines, roads and the outlines of its woodlands. This regularity is strongly expressed visually, the general openness of the landscape enabling the pattern to be clearly evident.

Tree cover along watercourses can contribute significantly to the landscape structure but hedgerow tree cover is generally far less significant.

The presence of wayside dwellings corresponds to the historic evolution of these landscapes from areas of former waste and common land. Scattered farmsteads can also be a characteristic feature today. These landscapes are often located adjacent, or close, to areas which remain today as unenclosed common land.

Parkland and ornamental grounds, together with associated estate villages can contribute to the landscape diversity of the enclosed commons.

These are farmed landscapes with an inherent land use of mixed agriculture, although recent increases in arable dominance may be evident. If such a trend continues, the functional value of hedgerows could be significantly reduced. Any loss or deterioration in the hedgerow structure could dilute the visual clarity of these landscapes.
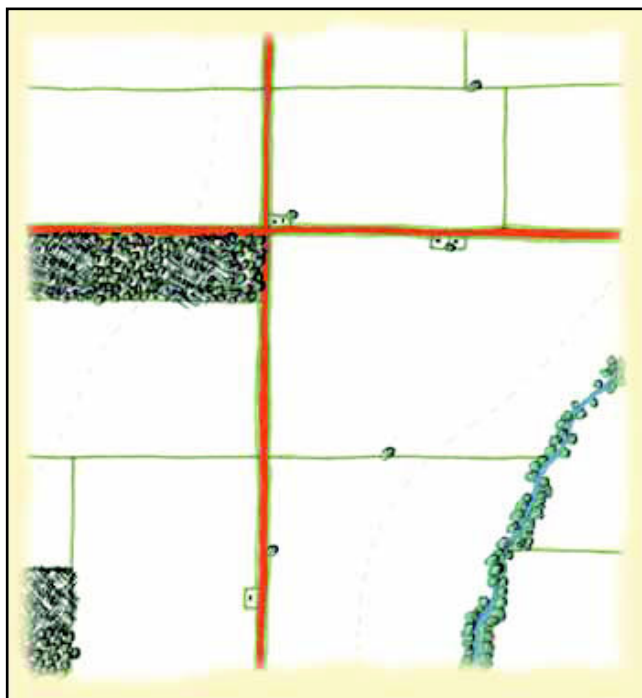
MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
The low density wayside settlement pattern of small cottages and occasional farmsteads is gradually being altered as cottages are enlarged and new dwellings built. In principal, these landscapes can accept additional wayside dwellings if the proposals are in accordance with policy, but the density should remain low and any new building must respect the style, materials and the small scale of the traditional cottages.

Enclosure Pattern:
The former common land was enclosed in a planned manner to create a geometric pattern. The removal of hedgerows has led, in some places, to a change in landscape scale and disruption of pattern.

Tree Cover Pattern:
This is a sparsely wooded landscape where trees are restricted to occasional hedgerow trees, discrete plantations and tree cover along watercourses. Efforts to introduce more hedgerow trees would be misguided here.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve and restore the distinctive hedgerow pattern with priority given to primary hedgerows.
- Conserve and enhance the tree cover along water courses.
- Conserve the scale, spatial patterns and specific character of wayside dwellings.
- Promote the creation and appropriate management of natural vegetation communities on non-farmed areas and along highways.
- Conserve and enhance the spatial pattern and scale of the landscape.
- Promote the development of wide field margins for wildlife benefit.

10.2 ESTATE FARMLANDS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

This is an ordered agricultural landscape characterised by a sub-regular pattern of medium to large sized fields, small geometric plantations and groups of ornamental trees associated with large country houses. Settlement is largely restricted to discrete clusters of dwellings and occasional small estate villages.

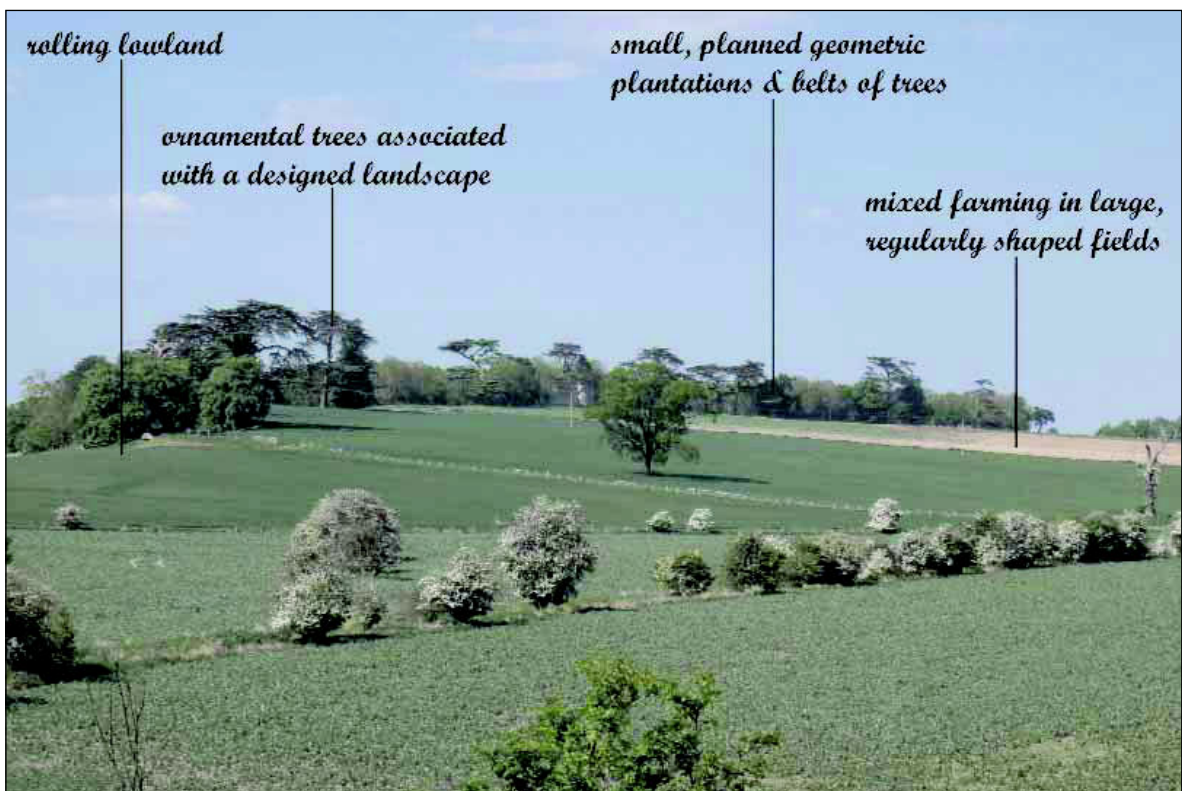<div style="border:1px solid green">
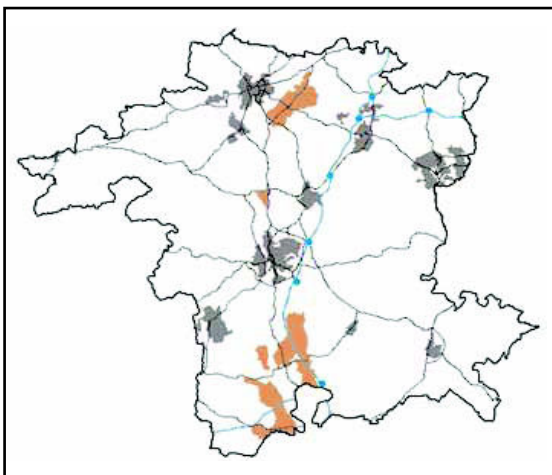
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Hedgerow boundaries to fields
- Planned woodland character

Secondary:
- Mixed farming land use
- Discrete settlement clusters and small estate villages
- Medium-framed views

Tertiary:
- Semi-regular pattern of medium to large fields
- Small geometric plantations and belts of trees
- Large country houses set in mature grounds
- Rolling lowland with occasional steep-sided hills and escarpments

</div>

rolling lowland

small, planned geometric plantations & belts of trees

ornamental trees associated with a designed landscape

mixed farming in large, regularly shaped fields

DETAIL

This is a landscape depending upon tree cover and field pattern to provide its structure and scale. The character is based upon the small plantation woodlands and tree features associated with large country house estates and ornamental parklands, and relates to a field pattern that lacks the strong geometric framework of some other Landscape Types. The eighteenth and nineteenth century enthusiasm for landscape design is often evident in this Landscape Type where tree planting has been designed specifically to enhance, frame or screen designed views. Croome Park is a particularly striking example.

This is a landscape of increasingly dominant arable land use where hedgerow loss and deterioration is apparent and accelerating. In some localities, such as Croome and Pirton, the relics of extensive parkland plantings still remain, now often located amidst arable land. Estate villages with distinctive architectural styles and detailing are often associated with such areas but face dilution of their distinctive character by modification and new development. These are landscapes that have restricted opportunities for wildlife but have the potential to accommodate considerable new woodland planting which would be of benefit in strengthening the overall landscape structure as well as increasing their ecological interest. The restoration of tree cover associated with parkland and ornamental grounds together with improving the tree cover along watercourses should also be encouraged.

.
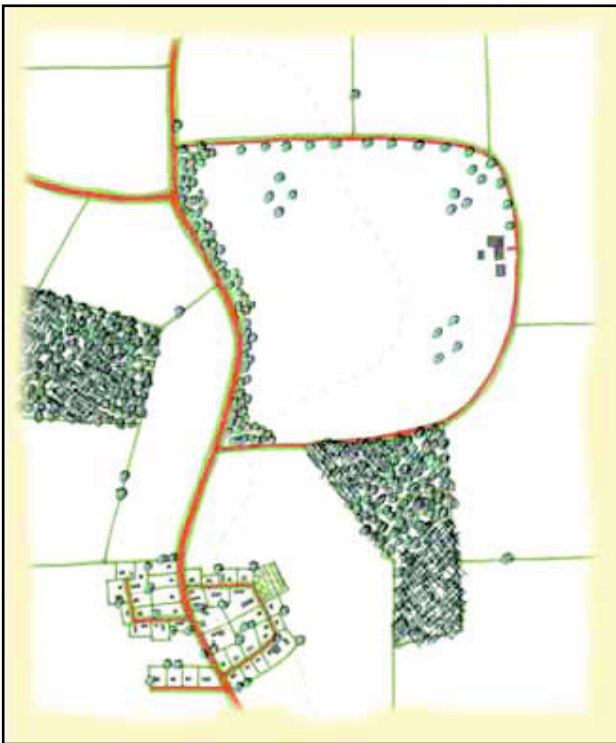
MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
The settlement pattern of clustered groups of dwellings, often estate villages, could theoretically accept new development if in accordance with policy. However, the siting of new development should be undertaken with extreme care in order to avoid compromising the visual integrity of distinctive estate villages.

Enclosure Pattern:
The tendency towards arable conversion is gradually changing the character of this Landscape Type. Hedgerow loss and deterioration are very often associated with an arable land use change, as hedgerows are no longer required for their primary function of stock containment.

Tree Cover Pattern:
The specimen tree planting and small plantations associated with large country houses and ornamental parkland is generally over a century old now and inevitably in decline, although it should be borne in mind that old or veteran trees can be of considerable wildlife and historical interest.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Enhance tree cover through further planting of small scale plantations and tree belts.
- Conserve the pattern of hedged fields, with priority given to primary hedgelines.
- Conserve and restore parkland and the tree cover associated with large ornamental grounds.
- Conserve and enhance the tree cover along water courses.
- Promote the development of wide field margins for wildlife benefit.
- Conserve the integrity of estate villages.

10.3 FOREST SMALLHOLDINGS AND DWELLINGS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Occurring in Worcestershire solely around the fringes of the Wyre Forest, this is an intimate, densely settled landscape characterised by strings of wayside cottages and associated smallholdings. These nestle within a complex, matrix of pastoral fields and narrow interlocking lanes, usually defined by prominent dense hedges with hedgerow trees. The consistency of human activity in these distinctive, small scale landscapes has resulted in a unified, palpably domestic character.
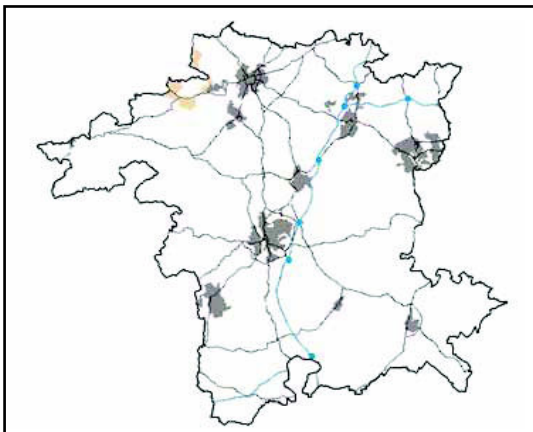
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Hedgerow boundaries to fields
- Scattered hedgerow and garden trees
- Intimate spatial character
- Intricate network of narrow, interlocking lanes
- Densely settled pattern of wayside dwellings
- Distinctive building style - small cottages of brick or stone

Secondary:
- Variable enclosure pattern of small fields
- Heathy/acid grassland ground vegetation - widespread bracken and gorse
- Pastoral land use

densely settled wayside dwellings and smallholdings set in an intricate pattern of narrow winding lanes

small scale pattern of hedged pastures and orchards assarted from woodland

distinctive small brick or stone cottages

DETAIL

These distinctive landscapes owe their character to the incremental assarting and subsequent settlement of areas of former woodland and waste. The settlement pattern has developed in a random, opportunistic manner, the corresponding density, scale and ad hoc pattern of both dwellings and lanes being distinctive characteristics today. The associated, usually small, parcels of pasture, orchard and pockets of rough ground with heathy/acid grassland are also important, reinforcing the scale and providing reminders of the origin of these landscapes. The hedgerows usually have significant associated tree cover and provide an important structural element to the landscape.

The pastures are often of considerable nature conservation interest yet this can be easily lost through inappropriate management. This is especially true where they are used as paddocks for ponies and horses, a change of use that can be accompanied by degradation and loss of hedgerows. These landscapes possess a unique element of rustic charm which is destroyed by excessive "tidiness".

The overall management strategy should be based on the conservation of the distinctive, small scale, settled, rural character of the landscape.
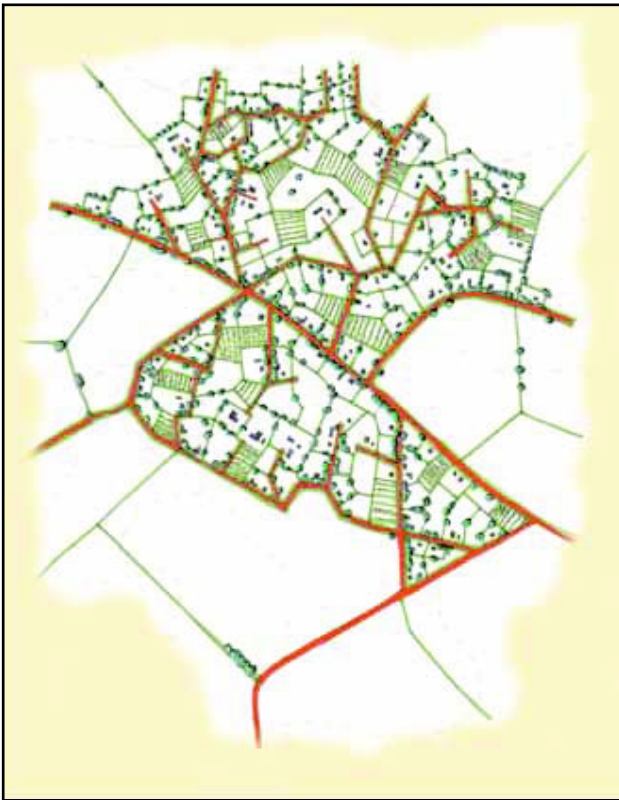
MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
The settlement pattern and the character of individual dwellings are vulnerable to expansion and modification to an urban character. The small scale plots and pastures provide considerable scope for infilling which in turn changes the character of these landscapes.

Enclosure Pattern:
The varied, small scale enclosure pattern is under threat from amalgamation of pastures and orchards as hedges are allowed to fall into disrepair.

Tree Cover Pattern:
The verdant quality of this landscape depends on the mature hedges, hedgerow trees, traditional small orchards and garden plantings. As orchards and hedgerow trees age they are not being adequately replaced so that a tidy sub-urban character is gradually encroaching.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve the pattern, scale and detailing of settlements, including the open spaces within them.
- Conserve the small scale enclosure pattern of hedged fields through appropriate management.
- Encourage the retention and appropriate management of permanent pasture.
- Conserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes.
- Conserve and enhance the tree cover within the landscape, giving particular attention to hedgerow trees.

10.4 HIGH HILLS AND SLOPES

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

This is an unenclosed "highland" landscape characterised by its steeply sloping topography, shallow mineral soils and extensive tracts of rough grassland and heath. The large scale and open, exposed character is heightened by the dramatic form of the topography creating a wild and invigorating quality of place. This is a simple, yet visually distinctive landscape, not least for the contrast which it provides with the surrounding, less dramatic, enclosed agricultural landscapes.
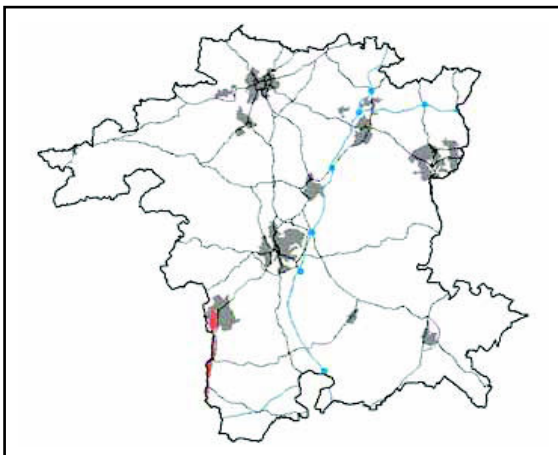
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Prominent, steeply sloping highland topography
- Hard rock geology with localised prominent rocky outcrops
- Unsettled landscape with few signs of human habitation
- Wide views over surrounding, lower lying farmland
- Shallow mineral soils supporting extensive areas of acid grassland and heath
- Unenclosed landscape

Secondary:
- Rough grazing land use
- Absence of woodland, though there may be localised patches of secondary woodland and scrub

secondary woodland & scrub encroachment

prominent, steeply sloping high ground with rocky outcrops

wide views over lower lying land

unsettled, unenclosed landscape with rough grazing

shallow soils with heathy acid grassland
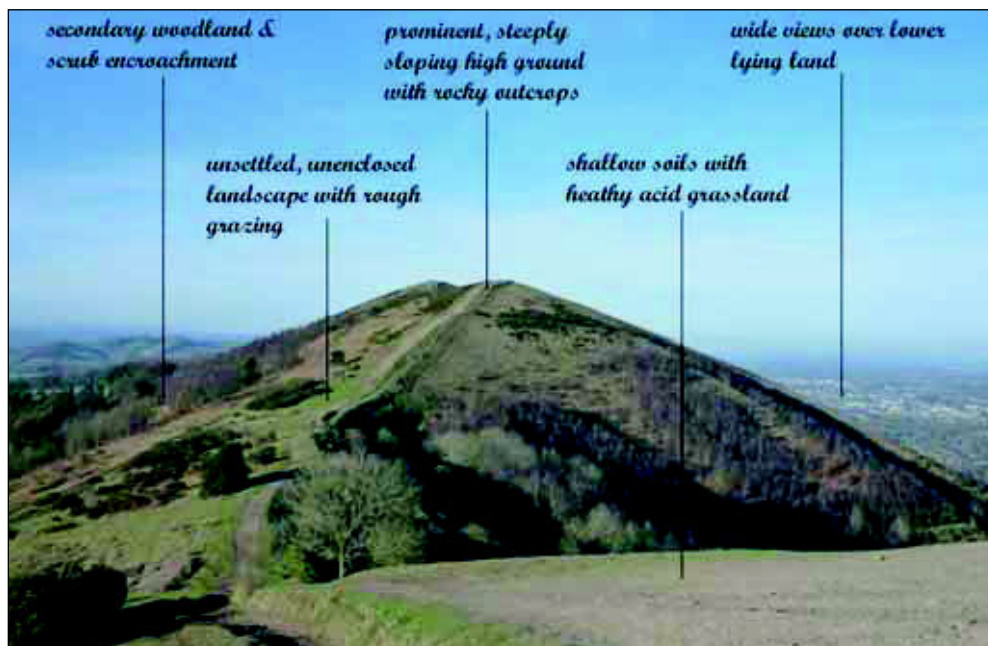
DETAIL

This is a landscape that owes its character to a combination of past management and physical structure. In Worcestershire, this Landscape Type is restricted to the summits and upper slopes of the Malvern Hills. Here the ridge of hard Precambrian schists and gneisses is one of the country's most striking landforms, while the Iron age hillforts built along the ridge provide an even more distinctive silhouette. This is an area that, in the past, has been an unenclosed expanse of commons and rough grazing. The stocking levels would have been sufficient to keep scrub encroachment at bay and so maintain its distinctive open character, producing a close, botanically valuable sward in the process. It is an area that has a much greater diversity of vegetation today, with significant areas of bracken together with scrub and secondary woodland, particularly on the lower slopes. It is an area that tends to be bordered by roads, rather than crossed by them, the sparse settlement that exists being associated with the few roads.

In order to facilitate the maintenance and possible expansion of the open grassland area, the long term sustainable management of the central ridge should be a priority. The notable ecological status of the area, particularly the habitat requirements of certain rare species must strongly influence the eventual management strategy of the area, but a degree of consultation to appreciate public perceptions of this particular landscape should also be included.

The future management of areas of scrub and woodland should be led by biodiversity priorities where a compromise approach, accepting a degree of woodland and scrub cover and endeavouring to maximise habitat diversity within the matrix of habitats present will be most appropriate.
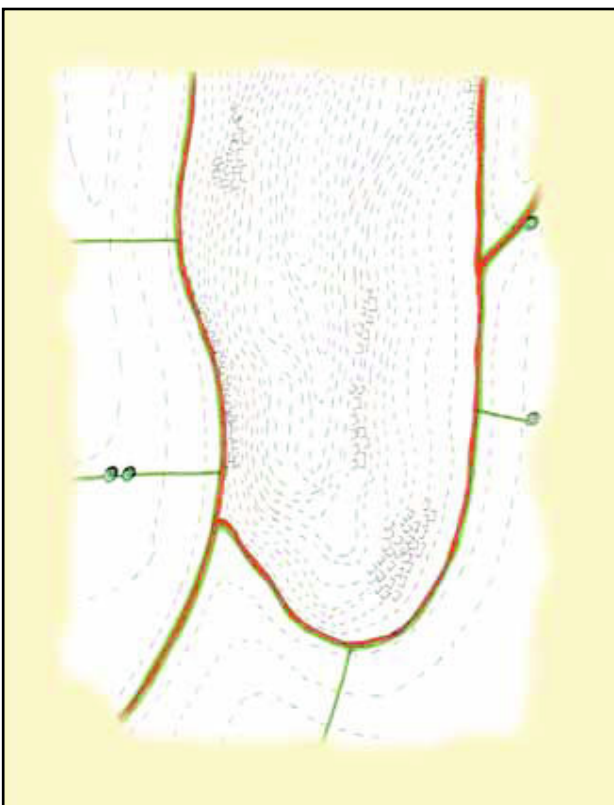
MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
Modern planning controls should safeguard the unsettled character but where dwellings already exist there is a tendency towards suburbanisation.

Enclosure Pattern:
The enlightened management guidelines provided by the Malvern Hills AONB discourage any further enclosure.

Tree Cover Pattern:
It is important for ecological, historical and visual reasons that the existing areas of open grassland are retained. A severe reduction in stocking levels over the years has led to the advance of bracken and scrub, and the character of the landscape is likely to change enormously if this encroachment is allowed to continue. Allowing the establishment of woodland cover would have the effect of wiping out the historical record of the landscape, destroying the essential scale and openness in the process.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve all remaining areas of semi-natural grassland.
- Restore areas of former grassland whilst acknowledging the need to retain other habitats of importance for endangered species.
- Enhance the nature conservation interest of the whole area through appropriate sustainable management, with particular emphasis placed on restoring grazing at the necessary stocking densities.
- Conserve the simple unity of the area, avoiding enclosure, built development and urban influences.

10.5 LIMESTONE ESTATELANDS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

This is a sparsely populated "upland" landscape characterised by thin limestone soils, estate plantations and large rectilinear fields defined by drystone walls. Although still retaining a remote character, the stone walls convey a sense of human presence and the reddish soils a sense of warmth to this landscape. Closely associated with the higher parts of the Cotswold escarpment, this is a well ordered landscape of large open spaces framed for the most part by woodland edges and belts of trees.
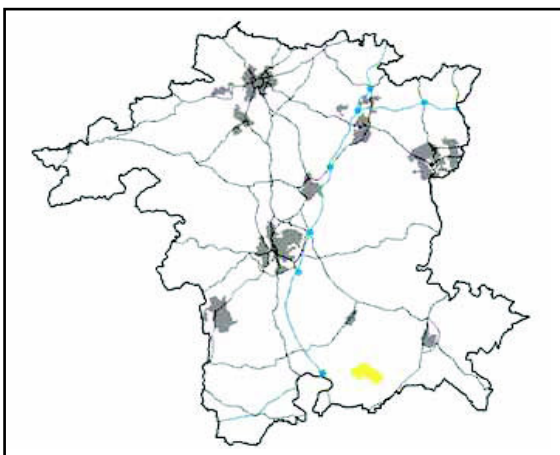
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Upstanding rolling plateau, capped by oolitic limestone
- Thin, stony soils with characteristic orange colouring
- Large rectilinear fields defined by drystone walling
- Dominant use of local stone for building
- Woodland of planned character - estate plantations and belts of trees

Secondary:
- Scattered settlement, largely restricted to isolated stone farmsteads
- Discrete woodlands with dominance of beech in woodland composition

high, rolling limestone plateau

thin, red stony soil

isolated stone farmsteads

planned estate plantations and belts of trees with dominant beech hangars

large geometric fields divided by drystone walls
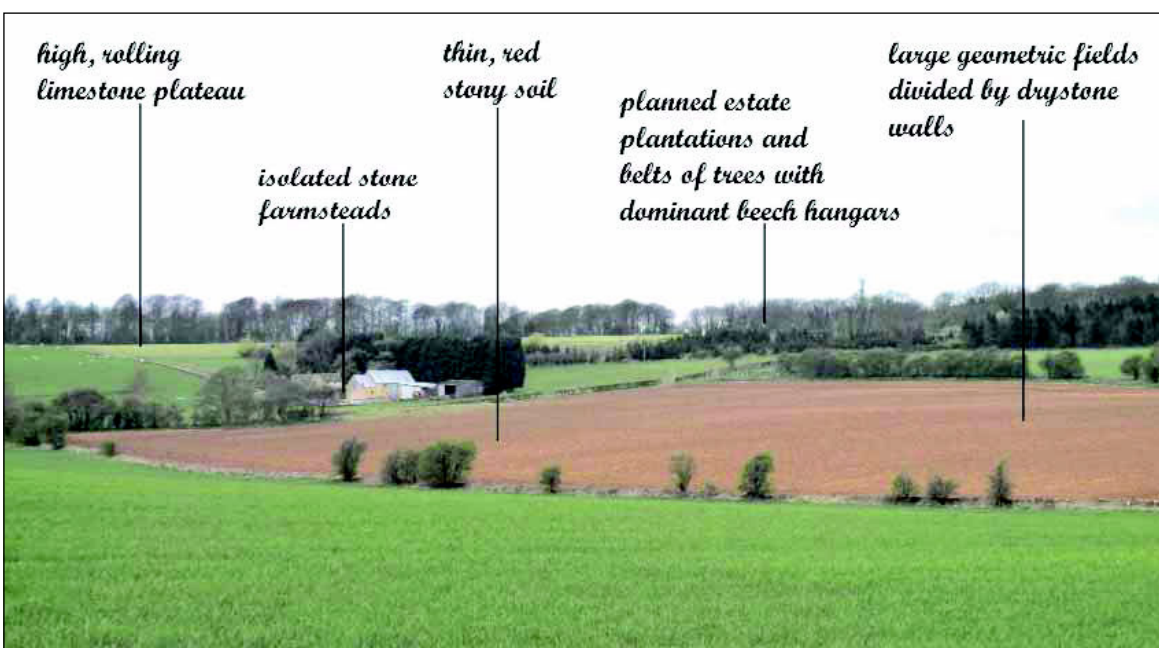
DETAIL

The key factors that define this landscape are its topography, its large scale and open character and the estate like influence of large regular fields, plantations and belts of trees. The undulating form of the plateau is emphasised by the openness and long distance views. This is a landscape formerly associated with extensive sheep walks, although much of the permanent pasture has now been lost to arable uses. It is a landscape that was probably cleared of its tree cover by Roman times, and with its favoured light and easily cultivated soils, has been farmed ever since, with little opportunity for the natural re-establishment of woodland except along the steeper valleys. The tree cover today comprises plantation woodlands and tree belts, the shape of which emphasise the regular pattern of fields. It is an area of intensive agriculture with settlement tending to be confined to the valleys and lower ground, with the exception of occasional farmsteads. The dominance of local stone as a building material for buildings and field boundary walls provides further unity and distinction to the landscape.

This is a landscape where priority should be given to ensuring that the large scale, open pattern of regular fields is retained. The essence of these landscapes is their large scale and spaciousness which could become fragmented and diluted by land use changes. Reinforcement and expansion of the characteristic belts of trees could usefully strengthen the structure and scale of the landscape. The planting of further large plantations should be considered, in order to enhance the estate character of the landscape, providing care is taken to recognise and conserve the dominance of large open spaces. Initiatives to secure the ongoing repair and maintenance of the network of stone walls with appropriate local stone should be encouraged.
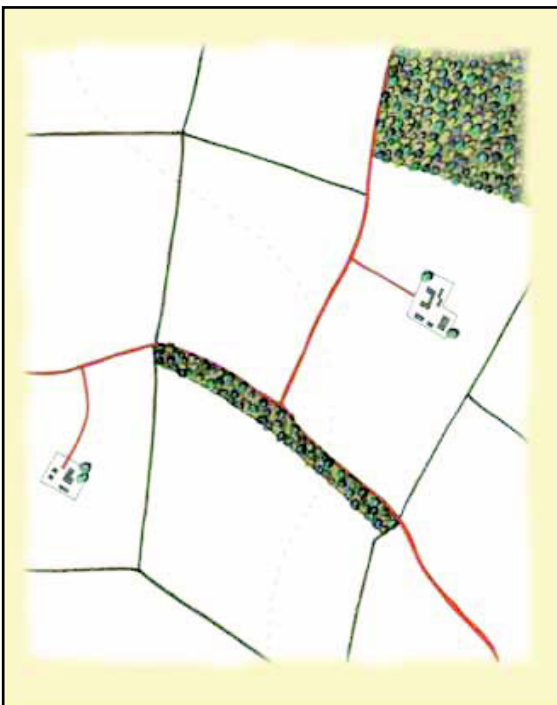
MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Enclosure Pattern:
Ongoing deterioration of the field boundary walls gives cause for concern for the long term perpetuation of this distinctive characteristic.

Tree Cover Pattern:
Whilst these areas can accommodate considerable amounts of new woodland planting, the siting and scale of such woodland will be a critical factor in order to ensure that the dominance of the landform and the open visual expanse of the landscape is not compromised. This is a landscape where plantation woodlands are a feature, rather than being a landscape that is classed as wooded. The introduction of too much new woodland planting on the plateau area could easily result in closing down the views and creating a sense of enclosure which is uncharacteristic of this landscape.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Maintain the large scale estateland character of the farmed land by conserving the strong rectilinear field pattern.
- Enhance the structure of the landscape by encouraging new woodland planting whilst retaining the long distance views and open character of the plateau.
- Conserve and restore field boundary walls especially along roadsides, using locally sourced stone.
- New, or replacement, tree planting should be predominantly broadleaved, favouring beech, together with oak and ash, as the major species.
- Strengthen and expand the linear pattern of tree belts.

10.6 PRINCIPAL SETTLED FARMLANDS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

These are small to medium scale, settled agricultural landscapes of scattered farms, relic commons and clusters of wayside dwellings. These buildings are linked by a network of narrow, winding lanes which nestle within a matrix of hedged fields. Tree cover is largely restricted to thinly scattered hedgerow trees and groups of trees around dwellings. The land use is primarily one of mixed farming.
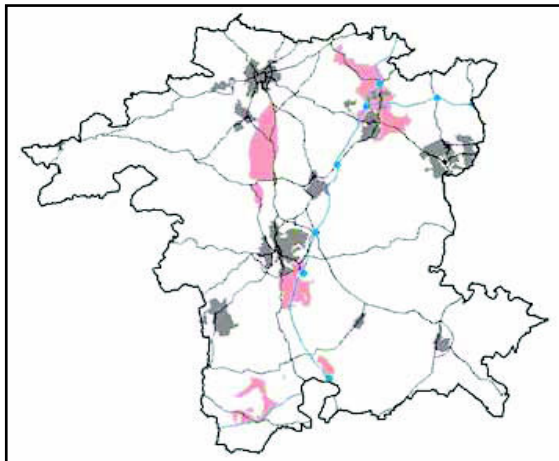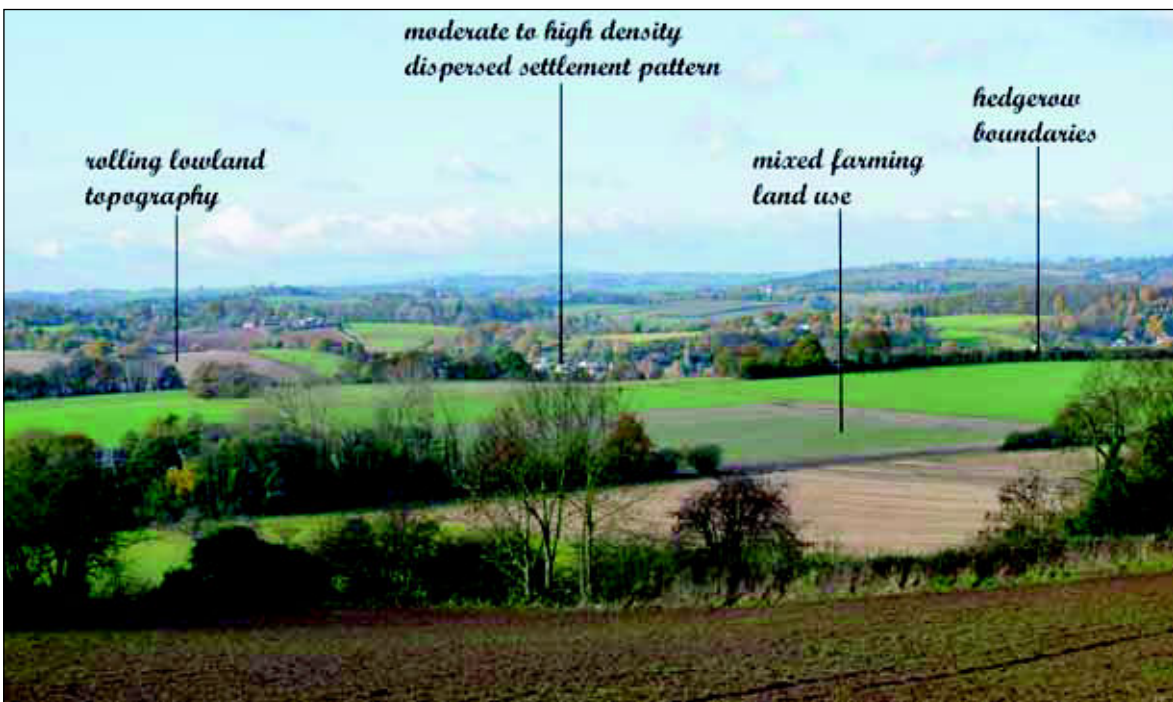

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Hedgerow boundaries to fields
- Moderate-to-high density settlement pattern of farmsteads and rural dwellings dispersed throughout the area

Secondary:
- Mixed farming land use

Tertiary:
- Irregular enclosure pattern of small and medium-sized fields
- Scattered hedgerow trees

moderate to high density dispersed settlement pattern

hedgerow boundaries

rolling lowland topography

mixed farming land use

DETAIL

In Worcestershire, these landscapes are located in areas of former Royal Forest and their 'hybrid' characteristics, between Timbered Farmlands and Village Farmlands, may be the result of the late clearance of these forest areas following contraction of the Royal Forest boundaries. The subsequent withdrawal of the associated Forest Laws, which had previously influenced and restricted their land use would have enabled a wider farming remit leading to mixed farming which now characterises the land use. These are landscapes with a notably domestic character, defined chiefly by the scale of the field pattern, and the moderate to high density dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets. Principal Settled Farmlands are thought to have developed from areas of extensive open field that were established from cleared forest later than the open fields associated with Village Farmlands. The field pattern tends to be of a sub-regular nature, supporting the suggestion of early enclosure of areas of open field.

Woodlands are not characteristic of these landscapes and the introduction of such features tends to dilute their identity. Opportunities for new tree planting are best concentrated along watercourses, strengthening the linear pattern of these features. It is desirable to encourage additional tree cover in the vicinity of farmsteads and other settlements, in so doing, emphasising the domestic scale of the landscape. The small scale fields of permanent pasture found within these landscapes can often be of significant nature conservation interest, the increasing change in land use in favour of arable farming can threaten such sites and initiatives to safeguard remaining areas of permanent pasture should be strongly promoted in these areas.

MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
There are pressures for development in many of these areas and a danger that concentrations of new development could arise, resulting in the creation of a pattern approaching the nucleations of other Landscape Types. However, the dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets is capable of accommodating limited low densities of new development if it is in accordance with policy.

Enclosure Pattern:
The pattern of small to medium sized hedged fields is vulnerable to change as the tendency towards arable dominance reduces the functional worth of hedgerow boundaries. Hedgerow loss and deterioration is already in evidence locally, with corresponding dilution of the essential scale of these landscapes.

Tree Cover Pattern:
Tree cover is most notable along stream sides, with only scattered tree cover along hedgerows. Groups of trees and orchards are often associated with settlements. Woodland is not a characteristic feature of this Landscape Type and its introduction in many places has weakened the landscape character.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve and enhance the pattern of hedgerows.
- Retain the integrity of the dispersed pattern of settlement.
- Conserve and enhance tree cover along watercourses.
- Enhance patterns of tree cover associated with settlement.
- Seek opportunities to conserve all remaining areas of permanent pasture.

10.7 PRINCIPAL TIMBERED FARMLANDS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Principal Timbered Farmlands are rolling lowland landscapes with occasional steep sided hills and low escarpments. They have a small scale, wooded, agricultural appearance characterised by filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees. These are complex, in places intimate, landscapes of irregularly shaped woodlands, winding lanes and frequent wayside dwellings and farmsteads.

The Principal Timbered Farmlands are characterised by a mosaic of agricultural land cleared directly from woodland, on a piecemeal basis, together with land enclosed from former localised areas of open fields, resulting in their dispersed pattern of farmsteads and wayside cottages and lack of strong settlement nuclei.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Notable pattern of hedgerow trees, predominantly oak
- Hedgerow boundaries to fields
- Ancient wooded character

Secondary:
- Organic enclosure pattern
- Small-scale landscape with hedgerow trees creating filtered views
- Brick and timber building style of older properties
- Rolling lowland with occasional steep-sided hills and low escarpments

Tertiary:
- Mixed farming land use
- Dispersed settlement pattern

ancient wooded character

dispersed pattern of brick & timber cottages

small scale organic enclosure pattern

lines of hedgerow oaks with filtered views between
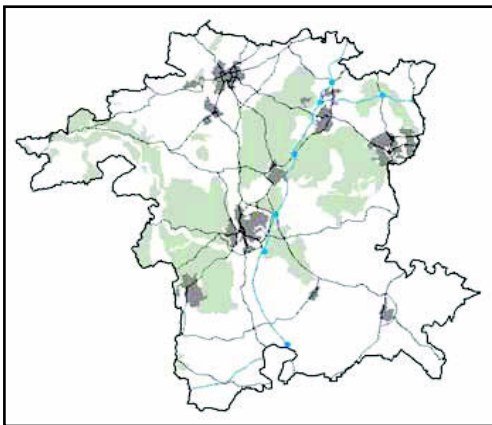
DETAIL

The key element of these landscapes is the strongly unifying presence of tree cover in the guise of woodlands, hedgerow trees, and linear, stream side tree cover. The combined presence of these tree cover components creates the underlying sense of scale and enclosure, together with the filtered views that are distinctive in this landscape. The resulting woodland character is essentially that of mixed native broadleaves, with oak the dominant species, lines of mature oak being a particular feature of the hedgerows as befits a landscape with strong links to its woodland origins. The scale and shape of the woodlands is also important, the woodlands ranging in size from small field corner copses to those of a size exceeding that of the surrounding fields. The pattern of hedgerows is also important, not only in providing the basic fabric for the hedgerow tree populations, but also in emphasising scale and enclosure, the hedgerow composition being complex and rich in places where the links to woodland origins are strongest. The irregular outline of many of the woodlands, together with the pattern of hedgerows and winding lanes, contributes to the overall organic character of this landscape.
A densely dispersed pattern of farmsteads and wayside cottages is typical with a notable number of buildings constructed out of brick and timber.
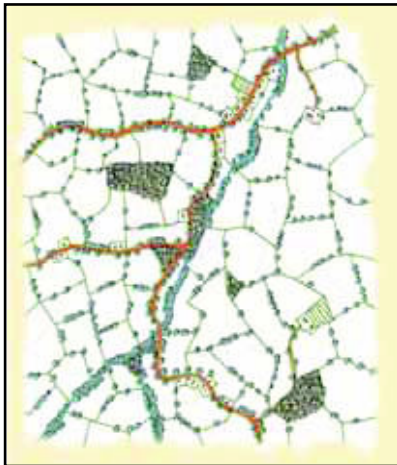
LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Maintain the tree cover character of hedgerow oaks, and enhance the age structure of the hedgerow oak population.
- Conserve all ancient woodland sites and restock with locally occurring native species.
- Seek to bring about coalescence of fragmented relic ancient woodlands.
- Encourage the planting of new woodlands, reflecting the scale, shape and composition of the existing ancient woodland character, favouring oak as the major species.
- Conserve and restore tree cover along water courses and streamlines.
- Seek opportunities to enhance tree cover along highways and other non-farmed locations.
- Conserve and restore the pattern and composition of the hedgerow structure through appropriate management, and replanting.
- Conserve the organic pattern and character of the lane networks.
- Maintain the historic dispersed settlement pattern.

MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
Additional individual dwellings could be accommodated within the dispersed settlement pattern as long as they do not occur in sufficient density to convert the pattern to wayside or clustered status. Modern development favouring groups or clusters of new houses would not be appropriate in this landscape.

Enclosure Pattern:
Though traditionally a landscape of mixed farming, a gradual increase in arable land use is leading to the demise of the hedgerow structure. It is vital for the retention of landscape character that the organic pattern of enclosure is preserved and that a geometric pattern is not superimposed by subdividing fields or enlarging others and employing straight fence or hedgelines.

Tree Cover Pattern:
The accelerating loss of scale and structure in the landscape is due mainly to the decline and fragmentation of the elements of tree cover, particularly the hedgerow trees. The age distribution of hedgerow oak is unbalanced, with the majority classed as mature or veteran. The distribution of woodlands is also uneven and the streamside cover fragmented in places. There is scope for additional small-scale woodland planting but large scale planting or linking up existing fragmented woodlands to form large blocks would not be appropriate.

10.8 PRINCIPAL VILLAGE FARMLANDS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Principal Village Farmlands are open, rolling landscapes characterised by a nucleated pattern of expanded rural villages, surrounded by large arable fields, often sub-divided into a series of smaller plots. This is an intensively farmed landscape associated with fertile, free draining soils which give rise to high quality farmland used for growing a wide variety of cash crops. This is a landscape of contrasts, the intensely functional, yet often very open and empty character of the farmland and the focused, communal density of the villages.
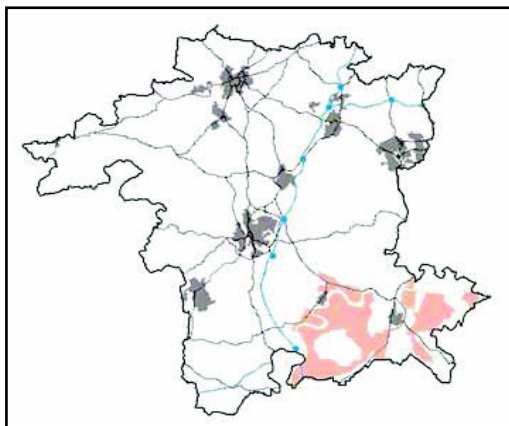
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Nucleated pattern of expanded rural villages
- Arable/cropping land use - cereals and field vegetables on fertile, free-draining soils

Secondary:
- Hedgerows define field boundaries
- Rolling lowland topography

Tertiary:
- Planned enclosure pattern of medium-to-large scale fields
- Groups of trees associated with dwellings

groups of trees associated with dwellings

planned enclosure pattern of large fields

strong hedgerow pattern

arable & horticultural land use
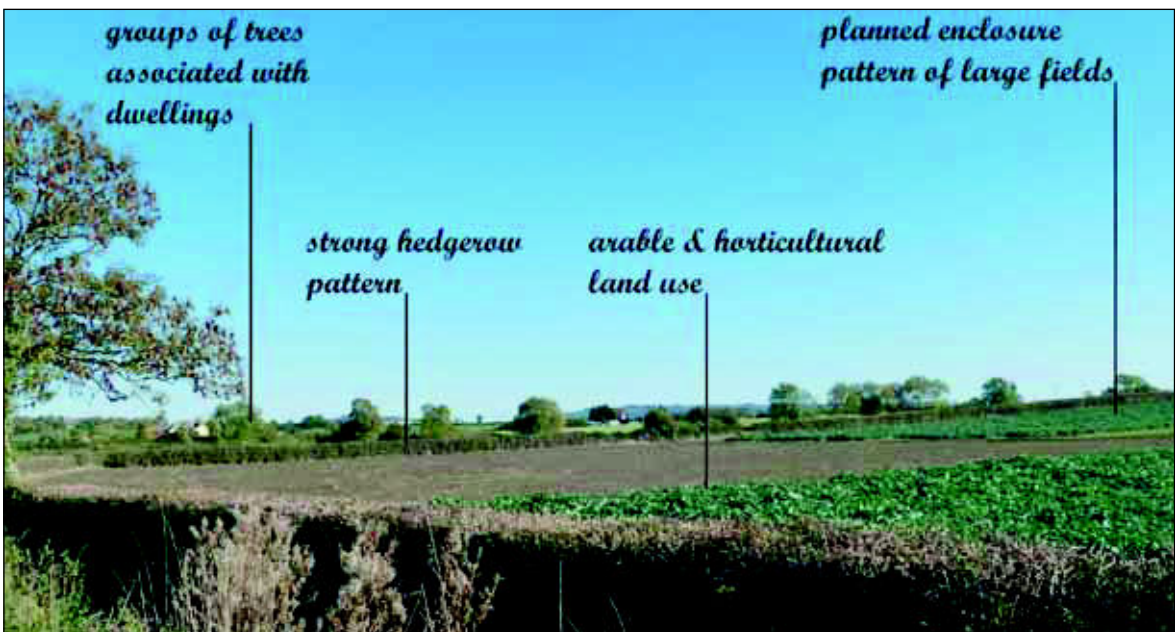
DETAIL

These are landscapes which the Historic Landscape Characterisation (see Appendix A) shows are derived from vast expanses of former open field, which have remained under intensive cultivation following their enclosure and within which the regeneration of woodland and tree cover has never re-established to any significant degree. The exception being elm, which was formerly a dominant hedgerow tree, now almost completely lost to Dutch Elm Disease. These are relatively open, large scale landscapes, where the key elements are the settlement pattern and land use. It is important to try to retain the notable contrast between the concentrations of dwellings and farmsteads in the villages and the relatively unsettled land between them. The land use in these areas is very strongly based on cropping and horticulture, with characteristic concentrations of tunnels and greenhouses associated with such uses. Orchards are a distinctive feature, occurring throughout the area on a domestic scale, with lines of fruit trees, usually damson, growing in the hedges.

The characteristic traditional orchards of standard trees are gradually disappearing in certain areas, being replaced by bush stock. Associated with this is the loss of many of the old fruit tree varieties, many with close links to the County.

MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
The nucleated settlement pattern lends itself to modern housing development where dwellings are constructed in clusters within the existing village envelope.

Enclosure Pattern:
The hedgerow network provides structure in places but has often largely lost its function, and the resulting scale is derived from the patterns of cropping rather than the boundaries between them. Although it is desirable to try to retain the full hedgerow structure for visual and wildlife reasons, it is most viable to focus on the primary hedges in these landscapes where the hedgerow function is generally in decline.

Tree Cover Pattern:
Woodland cover is not a characteristic of the Village Farmlands and the prospect of new woodland planting in these areas would dilute their distinctive character. The regeneration of elm continues in the hedgerows but still eventually succumbs to disease at a certain size. After much consideration, it has been decided to promote the planting of oak and ash substitutes for the original densely planted hedgerow elms.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Retain the pattern of strongly nucleated villages with associated low dispersal of settlement between.
- Conserve and enhance the hedgerow structure, with emphasis on the primary hedgelines.
- Conserve and enhance tree cover along watercourses.
- Encourage opportunities for tree planting in and around villages.
- Conserve and restore old orchards around villages, with an emphasis placed upon the fruit type and varieties associated with different localities.
- Conserve and restore lines of hedgerow fruit trees.
- Promote the development of wide field margins for wildlife benefit.
- Promote the management of roadside verges for wildlife benefit.

10.9 PRINCIPAL WOODED HILLS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

These are upstanding, wooded landscapes with a sloping, in places steeply undulating topography, often on the edge of higher ground. These are landscapes of large, irregularly shaped ancient woodlands and wooded streamlines, typically forming an interlocking pattern with surrounding hedged fields. The flowing woodland cover is a key visual element within the landscape, resulting in a strong sense of unity and visual integration.
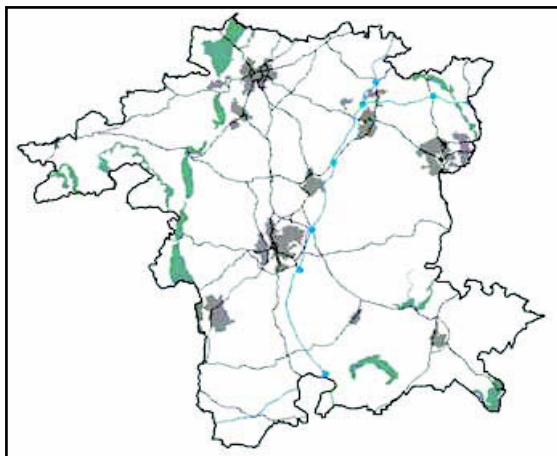

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Varied, often steeply sloping, topography
- Large, often interconnecting, blocks of ancient woodland

Secondary:
- Organic pattern of hedged fields, derived from assarting the adjacent woodland
- Frequent, narrow, wooded valleys or dingles
- Medium-framed views
- Patches of rough grassland and scrub
- Sparsely settled pattern of farmsteads and wayside dwellings

steeply sloping hills

large interconnecting blocks of ancient woodland

sparse settlement

organic pattern of small hedged fields assarted from the woods
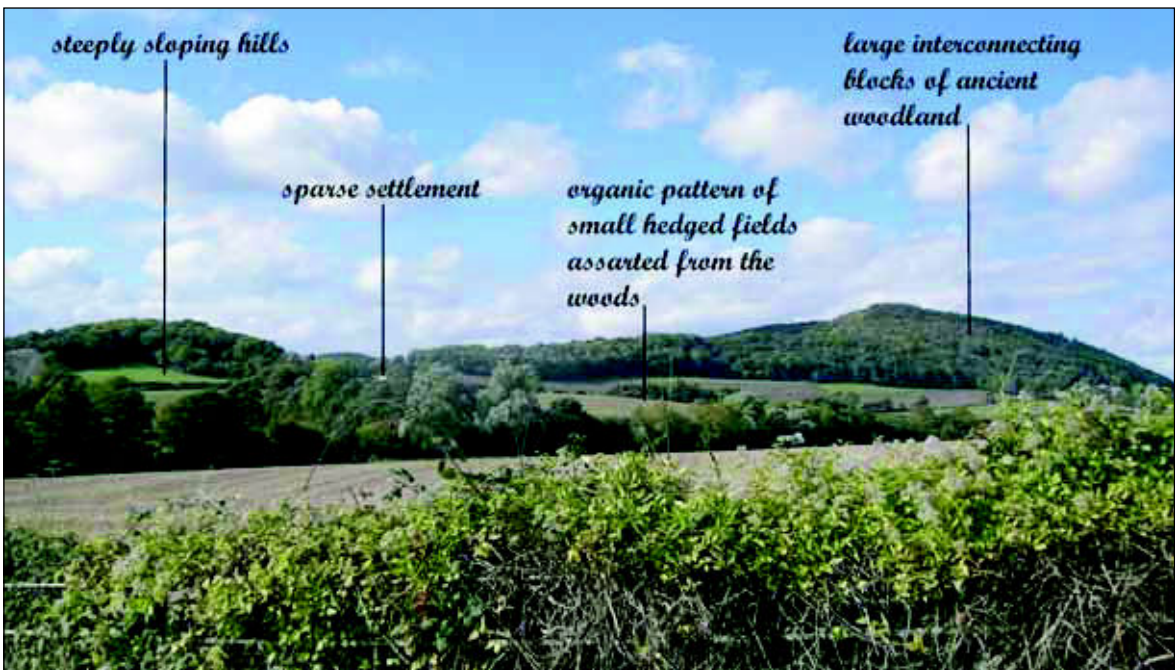
DETAIL

In these landscapes the nature and steepness of slope has inhibited clearance for agricultural use in the past. Consequently, they have retained a significant proportion of ancient semi-natural woodland into which only slight clearances, usually of an assarted nature, have taken place. Woodland cover usually occurs in extensive interlocking belts and is the dominant land use, typically extending to 60 - 70%, although a lower proportion might be more appropriate in the Cotswold Wooded Hills where a greater amount of historical piecemeal clearance took place and where many of the grasslands are of significant nature conservation interest. Where clearance has taken place in the past, the presence of strong hedge lines with good a representation of hedgerow tree cover contributes to the visual integration of the landscape. The ancient semi-natural status of these woodlands confirms their nature conservation value.

The visual cohesion of these landscapes is critical. They are very visible landscapes, tending to frame long distance views, and as such their composition and unity is particularly important. Hedgerow trees and wooded streamsides are a vital component in achieving visual integration between the areas of historic clearance and the denser woodland. In these areas, the hedgerow tree stock tends to be dominated by mature and veteran trees, and the visual integration will become diluted if tree populations are not perpetuated.
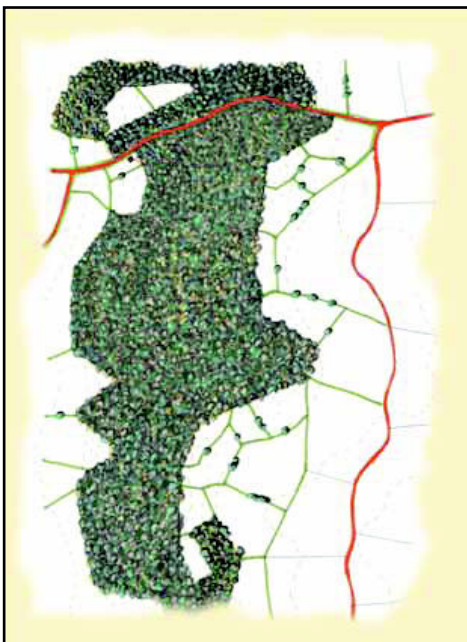
LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve and restore the ancient broadleaved character of all woodlands.
- Seek to restore the wooded character of the area through large scale woodland planting in areas where the interlocking pattern has become diluted.
- Conserve and restore the irregular pattern of assarted fields.
- Strengthen the wooded character of hedgelines and streamlines through replanting or natural regeneration.
- New woodland planting and felling coupes should be carefully designed to take particular account of their visual impact.

MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
The sparsely scattered settlement pattern consists of occasional dwellings which were traditionally small forestry workers cottages. An occasional additional dwelling could be assimilated if it is in accordance with policy, but the density should remain extremely low.

Enclosure Pattern:
The organic enclosure pattern is made up of irregularly shaped pastoral fields bounded by hedges, often cleared from the adjoining woodland. Any changes to woodland cover, either through felling or new planting, should respect the historical significance of the old patterns of woodland clearance and ensure the conservation of these patterns along with boundary hedges of assarted origin.

Tree Cover Pattern:
The woodland component has become fragmented in places by recent clearances which damage the unity of the landscape.
The development of woodland shapes that are unsympathetic to the topography, together with the modification of the mixed broad leaf composition of the woodlands, most notably through the introduction of conifer blocks, can severely interrupt the unity of the landscape. The presence of conifer dominated skylines is particularly damaging. The nature conservation value of the woodlands is also significantly reduced by deviations from their inherent species composition.

10.10 RIVERSIDE MEADOWS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Riverside Meadows are linear riverine landscapes associated with a flat, generally well-defined alluvial floodplain, in places framed by steeply rising ground. These are secluded pastoral landscapes, characterised by meandering, tree-lined rivers, flanked by alluvial meadows which are defined by hedge and ditch boundaries. Settlement is typically absent.
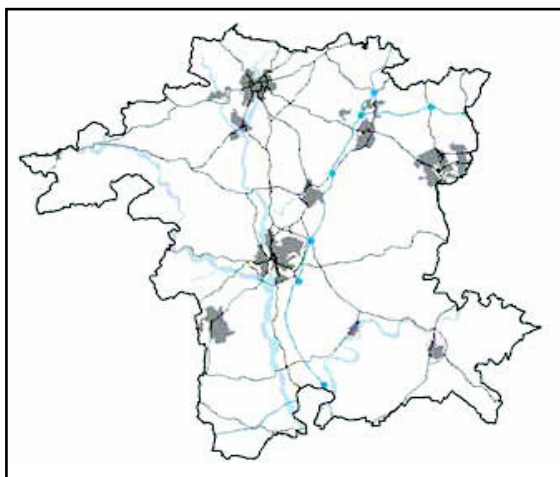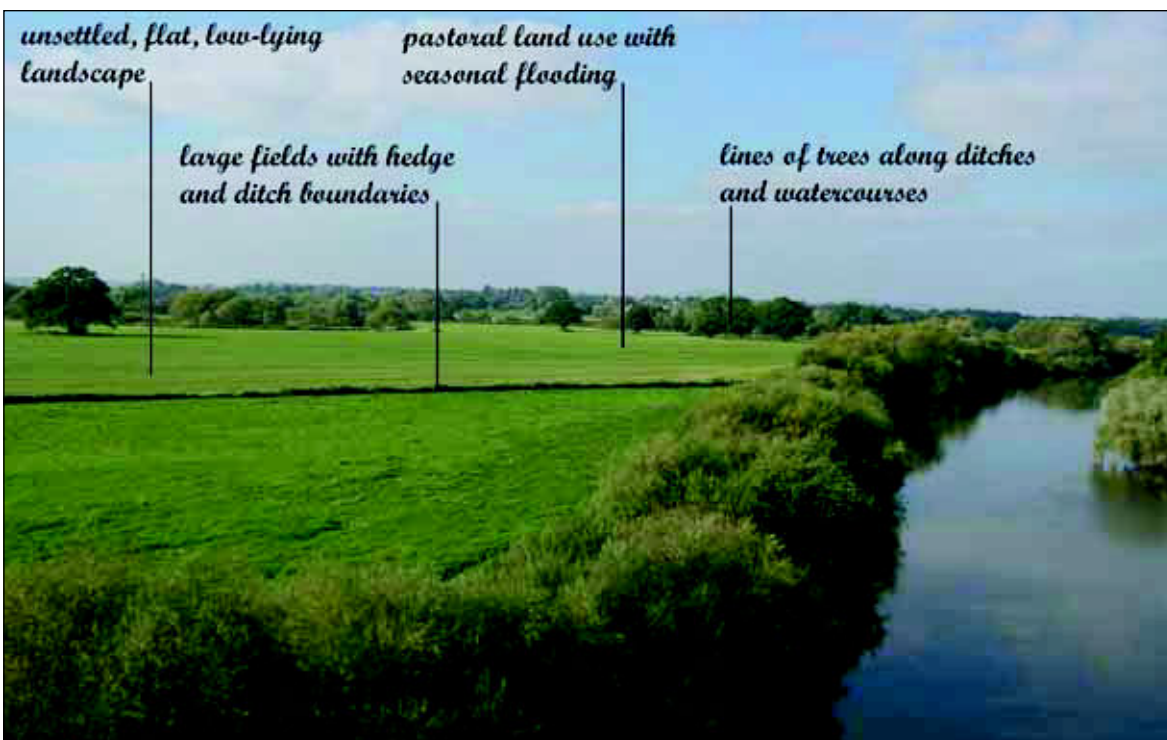

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Flat, low-lying topography
- Pastoral land use, including seasonal grazing meadows
- Tree cover character of individual trees rather than woodland
- Tree cover pattern of linear tree belts along ditches, watercourses and in hedgerows

Secondary:
- Unsettled with few roads
- Seasonally flooded alluvial floodplain
- Meandering river channel
- Medium-to-large fields with hedge and ditch boundaries
- Rushes, reeds and other wetland vegetation

unsettled, flat, low-lying landscape

pastoral land use with seasonal flooding

large fields with hedge and ditch boundaries

lines of trees along ditches and watercourses

DETAIL

Throughout these landscapes, the presence of extensive areas of waterside meadows, used for seasonal grazing, has in the past provided a strong sense of visual and ecological unity. These are landscapes that accommodated a degree of annual flooding, a factor which was reflected in the patterns of land use, the lack of settlement and development (except for the occasional water mill), and the representation of species and habitats tolerant of such waterlogged conditions. Tree cover is a notable element of Riverside Meadows, usually in a linear pattern along the hedge and ditch lines and along the banks of watercourses. Typical species are alder and willow, the latter often pollarded.
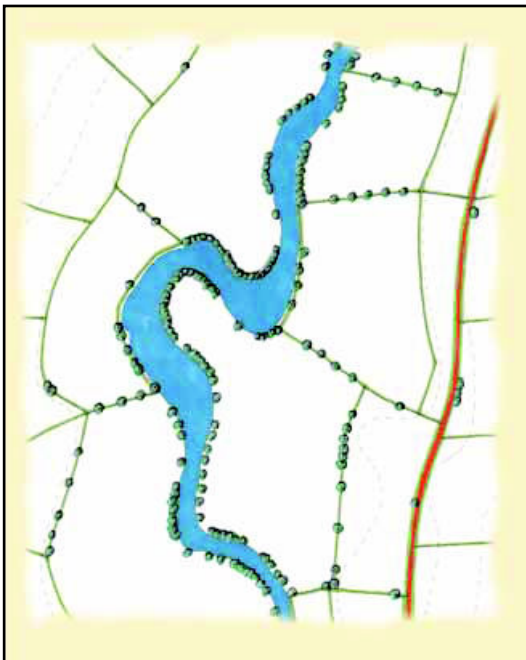
LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Seek to retain the unity of the linear form of these landscapes.
- Conserve all existing areas of permanent pasture.
- Seek opportunities to encourage the conversion of arable land back to pasture.
- Conserve and enhance continuous tree cover along hedgelines, ditches and watercourses.
- Conserve existing wetland habitats and seek opportunities for further wetland habitat creation.
- Avoid building or road construction works.
- Avoid further drainage of waterside meadows.
- Explore opportunities to return to patterns and processes of natural flooding cycles.

MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Land Use:
The strong unity derived from the presence of watermeadows and pasture is becoming fragmented by the encroachment of arable land uses. The decline in the traditional practices of seasonal grazing and haymaking have diminished the nature conservation interest of the remaining areas of pasture. Similarly, modification of the natural shape and profile of water courses and drainage channels has reduced their wildlife value and produced a functional, somewhat urban appearance. These are essentially linear landscapes, relying on extensive views along the length of river corridors. New roads have been constructed on embankments directly across the flood plain, notably in the vicinity of Worcester, fragmenting the visual unity of the riverside meadow corridors as a result.

These are landscapes where the remaining areas of pasture should be conserved and opportunities sought to convert areas of arable land back to pasture. Wetland habitats are nationally scarce today and opportunities to restore or re-create them should be encouraged and in areas where property would not be at risk, a return to annual flooding cycles could be considered in order to achieve this.

Tree Cover Pattern:
There is little to indicate that woodlands have been a characteristic feature of these landscapes since their use as grazing meadows evolved. Therefore, opportunities to introduce new tree planting should respect the inherent linear patterns of tree cover, although there may be some limited opportunity for wet woodland creation.

10.11 SANDSTONE ESTATELANDS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

These are open, rolling landscapes characterised by an ordered pattern of large, arable fields, straight roads and estate plantations. Fields are typically defined by straight thorn hedges, reflecting the late enclosure of much of this landscape from woodland and waste. This historic land use pattern is also reflected in the occurrence of isolated brick farmsteads and clusters of wayside dwellings, interspersed with occasional small villages. Despite the fact that this is a functional landscape, the consistent geometric pattern can convey a strong sense of visual unity.
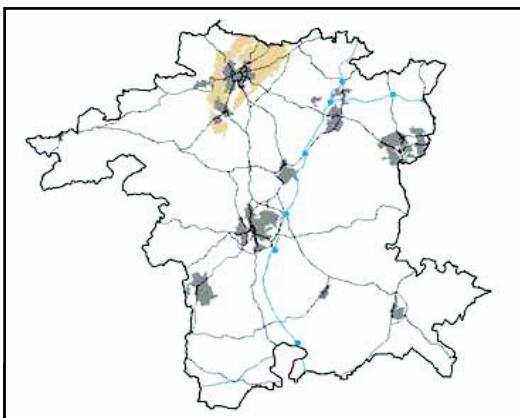
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Arable land use
- Hedgerow boundaries to fields
- Planned enclosure pattern - straight roads and field boundaries

Secondary:
- Woodland pattern of discrete blocks
- Planned woodland character - estate plantations and groups of trees
- Large-scale landscape with wide views over open farmland
- Impoverished soils with relic heathy vegetation
- Dispersed pattern of isolated farmsteads and scattered wayside dwellings
- Discrete settlement clusters often in the form of small estate villages

Tertiary:
- Rolling topography with occasional low escarpments

planned enclosure pattern with straight hedges

large scale landscape with wide views over open farmland

arable land use
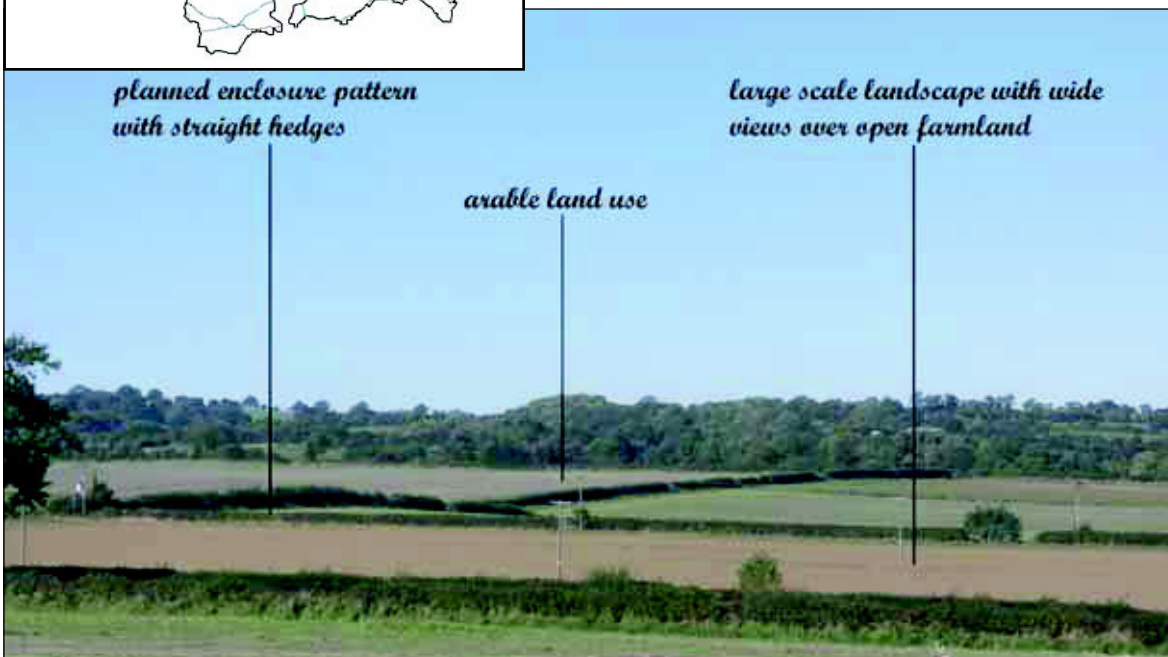
DETAIL

This is an ordered landscape in which strong, regular patterns - in terms of field layout, road networks and woodland shape - play a dominant structural role. Large plantation woodlands provide a notable structural component to the landscape, although it is the field pattern that provides the overall unity. Further structure is provided by tree belts and linear tree cover along watercourses, although this is essentially a fairly open landscape, the tree cover providing a framework to views rather than producing a sense of enclosure and blocking them. Parkland features and associated ornamental planting, together with estate villages, can all contribute to the diversity of these landscapes.

These are landscapes of arable dominance in which the hedgerows have largely lost their function. Hedgerow loss and deterioration is already apparent in places to the detriment of landscape scale and character. The deterioration and reduced size of parklands is often evident, with parkland trees now located in areas of arable cultivation. These are landscapes that have a particularly distinctive natural vegetation of heathy/gorse communities that are seldom expressed, being too often suppressed by management, particularly in such non-farmed locations as roadside verges.
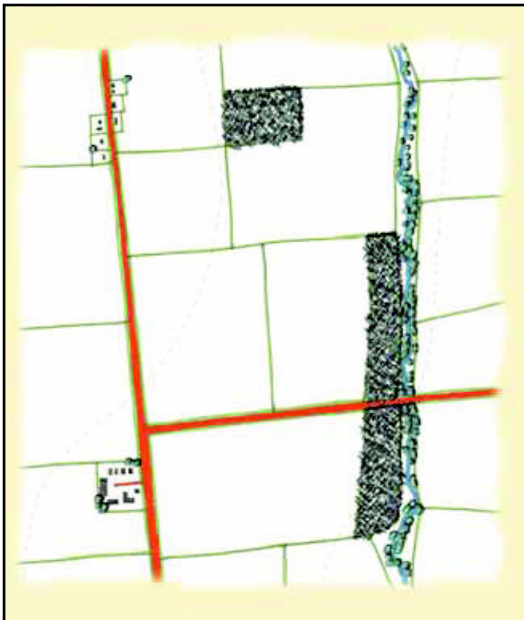
LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve and restore the distinctive hedgerow pattern with priority given to primary hedgerows.
- Identify opportunities for further large scale planting of woodlands and tree belts to strengthen the regular patterns of the landscape.
- Conserve and restore parklands.
- Conserve and enhance tree cover along watercourses.
- Conserve the integrity of estate villages.
- Promote the creation and appropriate management of natural vegetation communities along highways and other non-farmed areas.
- Promote the development of wide field margins for wildlife benefit.

MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
The settlement pattern varies between isolated brick farmsteads, clusters of wayside dwellings and occasional estate villages. There may be limited opportunities for new development that conforms to policy and local character.

Enclosure Pattern:
The conservation of hedgerows remains a priority but, bearing in mind the overall loss of hedgerow function, focus should be placed on primary hedgerow patterns. The opportunities for wildlife can be restricted in large scale arable landscapes such as these, and scope for improving wildlife habitats and corridors, particularly the development of wide field margins and the continuous tree cover along watercourses should be encouraged.

Tree Cover Pattern:
Tree cover is predominantly provided by large, discrete plantation woodlands and tree belts. These are often planted with conifers, poplars or other quick cropping species. The Sandstone Estatelands have the capacity to accommodate considerable areas of new woodland planting. With the decline and fragmentation of the hedgerow pattern, the development of a cohesive woodland structure, with woodland shape reflecting the pronounced regular landscape pattern, would considerably help to retain a sense of unity and scale to the landscape.

10.12 SETTLED FARMLANDS ON RIVER TERRACES

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

This is a medium scale, settled agricultural landscape where horticulture and cropping is the dominant land use, reflecting the fertile free draining soils. The settlement pattern is represented by scattered farms and clusters of wayside dwellings, linked by a matrix of winding lanes. Fields are bounded by hedgerows, with tree cover largely concentrated in groups associated with dwellings.
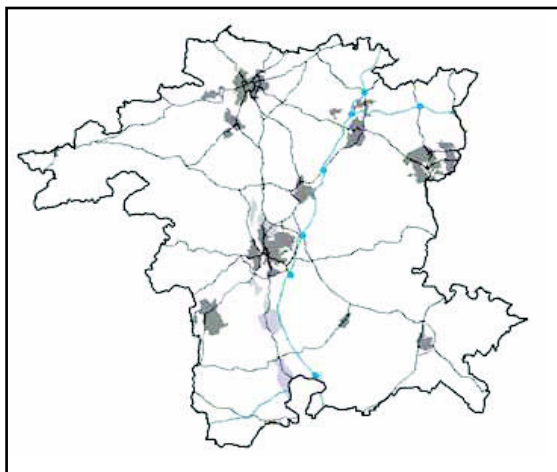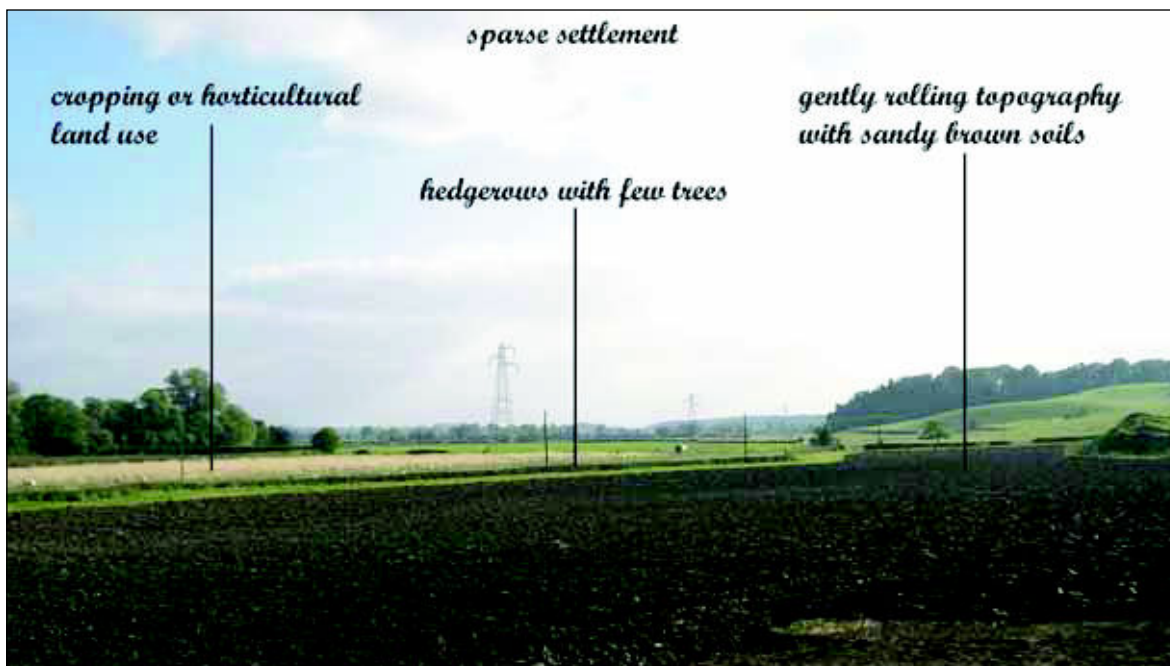

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Cropping/horticultural land use
- Landscape of medium scale
- Gently rolling lowland topography
- Sandy brown soils

Secondary:
- Hedgerow boundaries to fields
- Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and clusters of wayside dwellings
- Tree groups associated with settlement

Tertiary:
- Sub-regular enclosure pattern

sparse settlement

cropping or horticultural land use

gently rolling topography with sandy brown soils

hedgerows with few trees

DETAIL

This landscape is similar to Principal Settled Farmlands and shares many of the characteristics of the latter, in terms of the absence of woodland, the pattern of dispersed settlement, and hedged fields. The topography too is similar, but typically of a more gently rolling nature. The field pattern tends to be sub-regular, suggesting early enclosure from areas of open field.

The defining characteristic lies in its land use - this landscape is primarily found on the river terraces, where free-draining, highly fertile sandy brown soils support an arable land use dominated by cash crops and market gardening. In Worcestershire, this Landscape Type is located on the river terraces of the Severn.

These landscapes are of medium scale with an open nature, tree cover being most strongly represented along watercourses and in association with settlement. Woodland is not characteristic of the Settled Farmlands on River Terraces. These areas have always been amongst the most fertile and productive agricultural land and were consequently probably cleared early and maintained under cultivation, and as a result have been devoid of woodland for a substantial period of time.
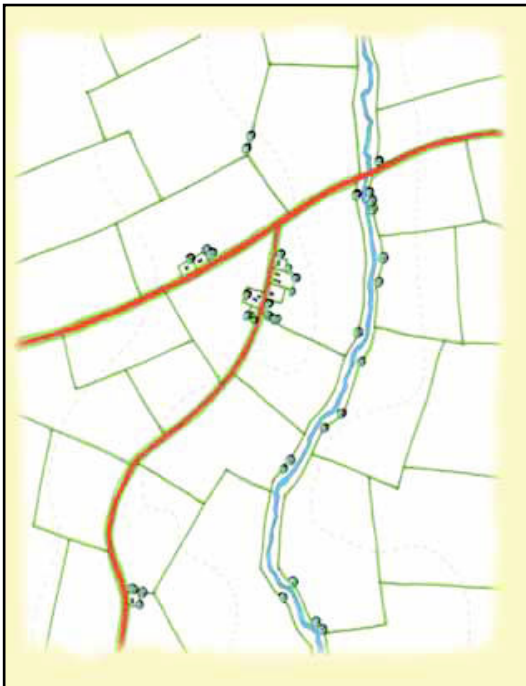
MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
Settlement tends to be sparsely distributed, comprising wayside dwellings and small clusters. The same dense network of interlinking lanes, as found in the Principal Settled Farmlands, is usually present.

Enclosure Pattern:
The pattern of hedged fields is very vulnerable to change as the functional worth of these boundaries becomes reduced, coupled with the increasing demands of modern horticulture. There is a consequent increase in openness and scale of the landscape as these features become fragmented. Several areas already have a notably depleted hedgerow pattern.

Tree Cover Pattern:
Hedgerow trees have become reduced in number, due to their incompatibility with modern arable farming, and tree cover is now largely concentrated in the vicinity of settlement and in association with watercourses. This is not a landscape where woodland is characteristic and opportunities for new tree planting are best focused on strengthening the linear pattern of cover along watercourses, together with augmenting the tree cover associated with farmsteads and other settlements.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Retain the integrity of the dispersed settlement pattern.
- Conserve and enhance tree cover along watercourses.
- Seek to maintain cropping/horticultural land uses.
- Enhance patterns of tree cover associated with settlement.
- Conserve and enhance patterns of hedgerows.

10.13 SETTLED FARMLANDS WITH PASTORAL LAND USE

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

These are small-scale rolling lowland, settled agricultural landscapes with a dominant pastoral land use, defined by their hedged fields. Hedgerow and streamside trees, together with those associated with settlement provide tree cover in a landscape with a notable network of winding lanes, scattered farms and clusters of wayside settlements.
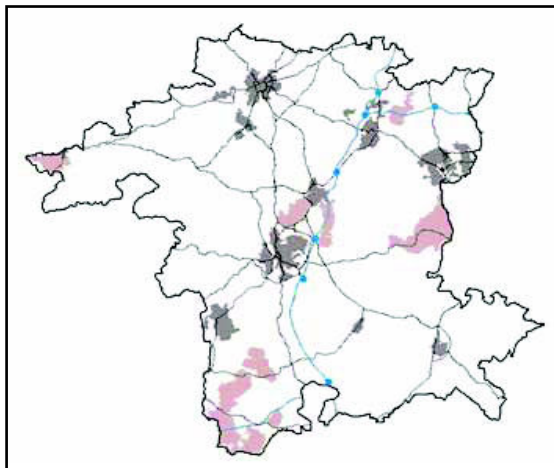
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Pastoral land use
- Small-scale landscape defined by prominent pattern of hedged fields
- Tree cover character of individual trees rather than woodland

Secondary:
- Tree cover pattern of scattered trees along hedgerows and watercourses
- Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and groups of wayside dwellings
- Sub-regular enclosure pattern, with small and medium sized fields
- Rolling lowland with occasional steep sided hills and escarpments

Tertiary:
- Gleyed soils

scattered hedgerow trees

small scale rolling pastoral landscape with a prominent pattern of small to medium sized hedged fields

DETAIL

The Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use share many characteristics of the Principal Settled Farmlands. They are both lowland agricultural landscapes, with hedged fields, and a dispersed settlement pattern but the primary defining characteristic relates to soils and to the subsequent land use. These are landscapes of heavy or poorly drained soils associated with a predominantly pastoral land use. The field pattern follows that of the other Settled Farmlands, tending to be sub-regular, suggesting early enclosure from areas of open field, but the size of the fields tends to be smaller, and the pattern more prominent.

Tree cover is primarily represented by hedgerow trees and by trees along watercourses. In both instances these can be notable in their numbers and, combined with the field size, results in a landscape of much smaller, more intimate, scale than the other Settled Farmlands categories.

The same pattern of dispersed farmsteads and wayside dwellings occurs in association with a dense network of lanes.
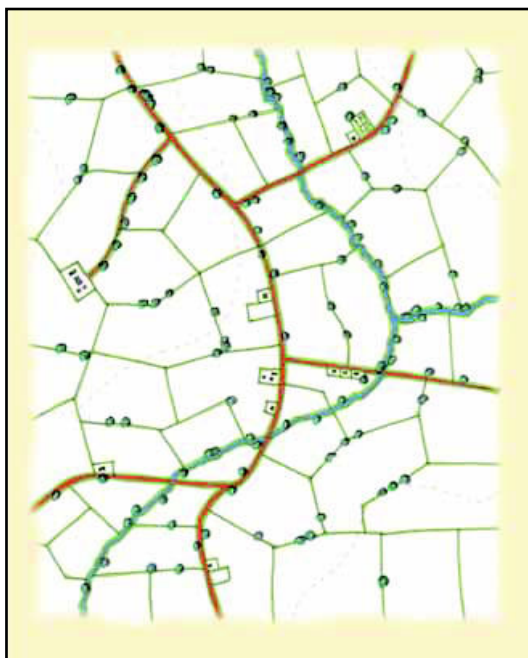
LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

● Conserve and enhance the pattern of hedgerows.
● Maintain overall pastoral land use.
● Seek opportunities to conserve all remaining areas of permanent pasture.
● Conserve and enhance tree cover along watercourses.
● Conserve hedgerow tree populations and promote new hedgerow tree planting.
● Retain the integrity of the dispersed pattern of settlement.

MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Land Use:
The defining pastoral land use is becoming diluted due to increased arable cultivation, which in turn has an impact upon the scale and enclosure pattern of these landscapes. The remaining areas of permanent pasture can often be of significant biodiversity interest, and this can be threatened by the increasing change in land use in favour of arable farming. Initiatives to safeguard remaining areas of permanent pasture should be strongly promoted.

Enclosure Pattern:
Over the past years hedgerows have been removed, resulting in larger fields and a change in the scale of the landscape and, although the Hedgerow Regulations should now reduce such direct damage, deteriorating management is likely to continue.
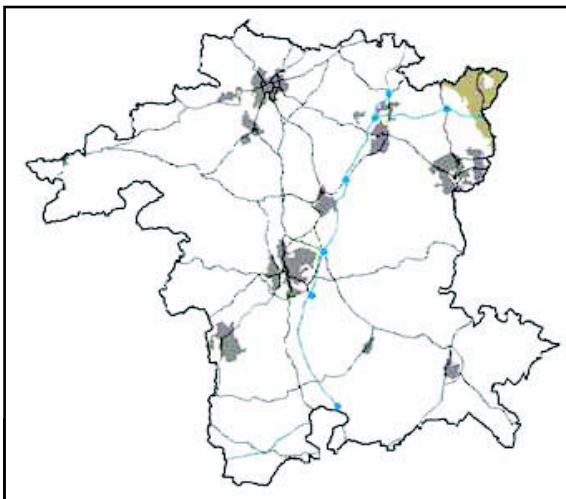
Tree Cover Pattern:
Woodlands are not characteristic of these landscapes and hedgerow trees, together with linear tree cover associated with watercourses, are particularly important, providing the defining tree cover element. The existing patterns of tree cover should be conserved, and opportunities for new tree planting should be focused on strengthening and restoring hedgerow tree populations and the tree cover associated with watercourses.

10.14 TIMBERED PASTURES

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Timbered Pastures are small-scale, settled, pastoral landscapes characterised by filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees. The oak trees convey a sense of scale and stature combined with a feeling of maturity and history. This is a complex landscape of relic commons and former wood pasture, reflected today by an intermixed pattern of irregular fields and scattered farms occurring next to areas of geometric enclosure, straight roads and strings of wayside dwellings.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Notable tree cover pattern of mature hedgerow oaks
- Ancient wooded character
- Small-scale landscape with well-defined pattern of small, hedged fields

Secondary:
- Pastoral land use
- Dense network of minor lanes

Tertiary:
- Impoverished, poorly draining soils with wet heathy vegetation
- Variable enclosure pattern
- Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and strings of wayside cottages

pastoral land use within small hedged fields

dense hedgerow trees, predominantly oak, give an ancient wooded character

Page 233

DETAIL

This is a landscape of considerable ecological and historical interest, comprising a matrix of former areas of commonland and areas of woodland assarted origins. The key feature, providing its character and structure, is the dominant presence of dense lines of mature hedgerow oaks, which in turn rely upon the presence of hedgelines for their continued existence. The tree cover emphasises the small scale pattern of enclosure, overriding local differences in hedgerow pattern, regular where the fields are derived from the late enclosure of commonland, irregular where associated with fields of assarted origin. The dominant pastoral land use is also a notable feature. This is a landscape that can contain considerable nature conservation interest, the presence of areas of unimproved permanent pasture together with the high densities of small field ponds associated with former marl pits, being particularly relevant.
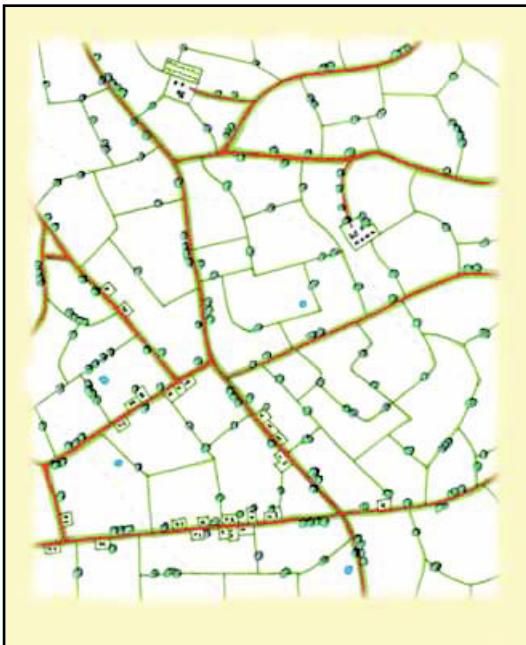
LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve the dominant presence and density of hedgerow oak trees.
- Conserve and restore the small-scale pattern of hedged fields, through appropriate management.
- Conserve the pastoral land use character.
- Conserve the distinctive pattern and character of wayside dwellings.
- Maintain the distinctive density of ponds.
- Seek opportunities to reintroduce the character of unenclosed commons through creative design.
- Conserve the distinctive pattern and character of narrow, winding lanes.
- Seek opportunities to enhance tree cover along highways and other non-farmed locations.

MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Land Use:
Change over to arable farming and an increase in the grazing of horses are becoming evident, both of which can have a detrimental effect upon the hedgerow structure, and in turn on the perpetuation of hedgerow trees.

The decline in the dominance of permanent pasture dilutes the unity of this landscape and opportunities to both conserve and restore this land use should be sought. This is a landscape which formerly included a distinctive concentration of unenclosed commons, the essential character of which could be integrated into any new development proposals for the area, in order to facilitate opportunities for recreation

Significant numbers of field ponds are being lost due to infilling. This landscape is subject to many pressures due to the proximity of the conurbation, not least through the modification of the characteristic wayside dwellings as a result of modernisation and enlargement. Pressures to modify the narrow winding complex of lanes could become a priority as traffic volumes increase.

Tree Cover Pattern:
Emphasis needs to be placed upon promoting the importance of hedgerow oaks to this landscape, developing appropriate new incentives to encourage the initiation of new populations. Alternative opportunities to introduce tree cover within farmland, such as field corner plantings, are unlikely to achieve the distinctive density and consequent sense of enclosure created by the existing oaks.

10.15 TIMBERED PLATEAU FARMLANDS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

The Timbered Plateau Farmlands are varied, mixed farming landscapes of hedged fields, scattered farms, woods and wooded valleys associated with upstanding areas of undulating relief. The landform conveys a sense of strength and dominance which tends to override the pattern of tree cover and fields. Variations in landform within this landscape create a changing sequence of visual perspectives, ranging from open vistas on plateau summits to more secluded scenes along valley bottoms.
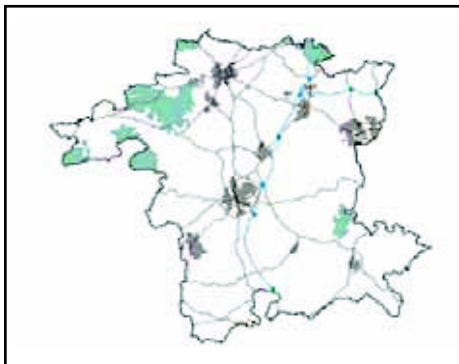
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Upstanding plateau of rolling topography dissected by broad valleys
- Filtered medium/long distance views
- Woodland of ancient character
- Mixed hedges with scattered hedgerow oaks

Secondary:
- Organic enclosure pattern of medium-to-large fields
- Linear tree cover pattern of wooded valleys often associated with streamside habitats
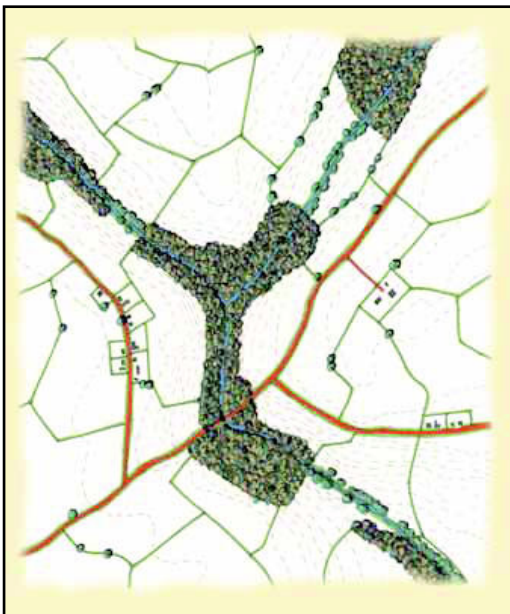- Mixed farming land use

Tertiary:
- Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets

long distance views over an upstanding plateau of rolling topography and pronounced valleys

scattered hedgerow oaks

mixed farming in an organic pattern of medium to large fields

linear, broadleaved woodland in dingles

DETAIL

The key elements of the Timbered Plateau Farmlands are topography and woodland. These are landscapes that have developed from a mosaic of piecemeal clearance of woodland and localised areas of open field, and retain a strong association with their woodland origins. The tree cover, consequently, is essentially of ancient semi-natural character, with oak as the dominant species. Unlike the Principal Timbered Farmlands, the lowland equivalent of this Landscape Type, the role of hedgerow trees and their influence in creating filtered views is less significant in the Timbered Plateau Farmlands. The more pronounced topography tends to throw the pattern of woodland and hedgerows into greater visual prominence. The woodland cover provides the major structure to the landscape, the hedgerow pattern defining the scale. These are landscapes containing woodlands of varying size, the dingles associated with the valley streams being a particular characteristic. The settlement pattern is a variable one of dispersed farms and hamlets with occasional villages or wayside cottages. The land use tends to be a patchwork of mixed farming with pasture often dominating the areas where topography limits intensive cultivation.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve and manage all ancient woodland sites, restocking with locally occurring native stock.
- Promote the coalescence of fragmented remnants of ancient woodland.
- Promote new woodland planting, favouring native broadleaves with oak as the major species.
- Promote infilling of gaps in tree cover along watercourses and dingles.
- Conserve hedgerow oaks and promote the importance of veteran trees.
- Conserve and restore the pattern of hedgerows throughout the area, giving priority to primary boundaries and boundaries of assarted origin.
- Conserve and restore existing parkland areas.
- Encourage new populations of hedgerow oaks, particularly through natural regeneration.
- Maintain the characteristic dispersed settlement pattern, avoiding the formation of pronounced settlement nuclei.

MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Tree Cover Pattern:
The deterioration of the overall structure of tree cover tends to be the major issue in these landscapes with corresponding loss of landscape unity. Woodland cover is not always a prominent component of the landscape today, the streamside tree cover can often be fragmented and the hedgerow tree cover composed of primarily mature or veteran trees. The fragmentation of hedgerows can result in the remaining woodlands becoming isolated from other areas of tree cover. The gradual change from a landscape of mixed agriculture to one dominated by arable farming, suggests that the function of hedgerows will become increasingly reduced, rendering the whole linking structure of hedgerows and tree cover, upon which the landscape character depends, increasingly vulnerable. The Timbered Plateau Farmlands are landscapes that could accommodate a considerable amount of new woodland planting. In some places a doubling of the woodland cover could be considered in order to retain and emphasise the woodland associations and origins of these areas, and to give greater structure to the landscape. New planting should aim to perpetuate the characteristic wide range of woodland size.

10.16 UNENCLOSED COMMONS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

This is a category of landscape that offers tremendous variety of scale and size, the overriding characteristics being the lack of enclosure and, usually, a land use of rough grazing. The smaller unenclosed commons are ranked as features within other Landscape Types but a few are considered to be of sufficient extent to warrant separate classification. Settlement, where present, is usually restricted to wayside dwellings situated around the perimeter of the common.
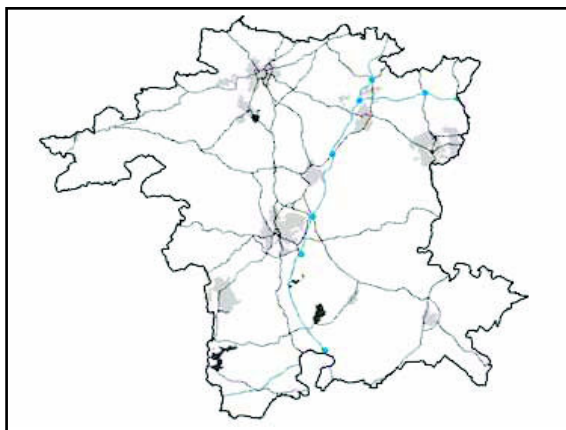
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Unenclosed land
- Rough grazing land use

Secondary:
- Unsettled, but with wayside dwellings of distinctive scale and style, located on the perimeter of commons
- Unwooded, but small plots associated with dwellings often afford scattered tree cover
- Acid grassland/heath very often associated with these landscapes

scattered tree cover in cottage gardens

unenclosed rough grazing land

distinctive small dwellings sited on the edge of the common

acid heathy grassland

DETAIL

The character of these landscapes has, in the past, developed as a result of the activities of local people with commoners' rights. Different activities have resulted in rather differing identities.

They are, as a group, notable for their lack of enclosure and their overall sense of wilderness. There is frequently an element of settlement associated with these commons, the style, scale and pattern of which is particularly distinctive, typically being small, wayside cottages, often white-washed, set in small plots of irregular shape. In many cases, tree cover is largely restricted to the plots and gardens associated with these cottages. The traditionally grazed commons are invariably associated with a high nature conservation value due to their unimproved status.

There would appear to continue to be a general lack of motivation to restore active pursuance of rights of common today, factors of economic benefit, disturbance and danger to grazing stock from busy roads, dogs and people together with increased regulations associated with animal husbandry perhaps contributing to such reluctance. The demise in the exercising of commoners' rights has resulted in reversion to scrub in many places. Elsewhere commons are valued for their recreation potential and managed in a municipal fashion, with regular cutting of the sward and sometimes associated planting of ornamental trees. There have, however, been successful instances of community approaches to restoring grazing stock on commonland, Monkwood Green being an example. Long term sustainable management initiatives are clearly needed for these landscapes and the success of such existing schemes should be widely promoted and encouraged elsewhere.
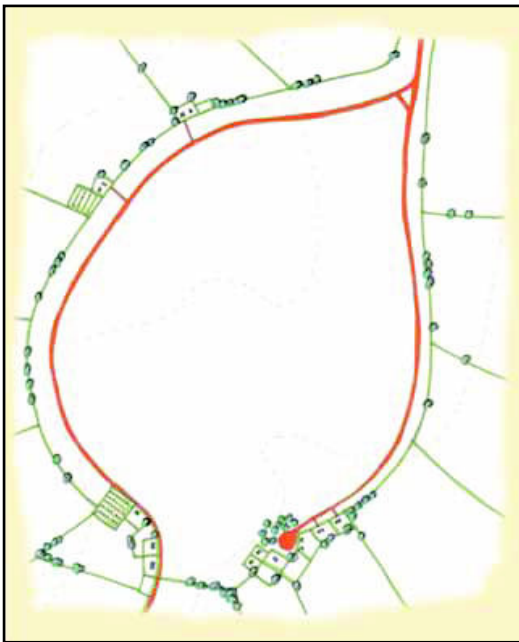
LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve and enhance the visual distinctiveness of open common areas.
- Conserve and enhance the spatial pattern, scale and specific character of wayside dwellings associated with commons.
- Recognising that each common will have a different historical profile, seek to define management objectives to integrate wildlife benefit, current recreational interests and other uses, together with the historical interest.
- Seek to avoid municipal/tidy approaches to management.

MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
These are fundamentally unsettled landscapes, but over the years an element of settlement has built up. The degree of settlement varies but is usually of small wayside cottages dotted around the periphery of the common. The cottages are often whitewashed and set in small, irregularly shaped gardens with occasional paddocks. Modern enlargement and remodelling has often resulted in an uncharacteristic sub-urban character.

Enclosure Pattern:
All methods of enclosure are inappropriate although peripheral temporary stock fencing may sometimes be necessary

Tree Cover Pattern:
Tree cover is typically restricted to the gardens and small orchards associated with the surrounding cottages. However, the character of these commons varies widely and some have a significant number of trees, either as individual specimens, groups, or areas of grazed woodland. In addition, those commons that are no longer adequately grazed have a problem of encroaching scrub and secondary woodland. Generally, additional tree planting is not appropriate on Unenclosed Commons.

10.17 VILLAGE CLAYLANDS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

These are open, gently rolling agricultural landscapes characterised by an ordered pattern of hedged fields and discrete rural villages connected by a network of minor roads. These are landscapes of heavy, poorly drained soils, typically associated with broad clay vales backed by steeply sloping escarpments. Ridge and furrow, a relic of medieval farming practice is often distinctive. The field pattern tends to define the scale of the landscape.

<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 10px;">
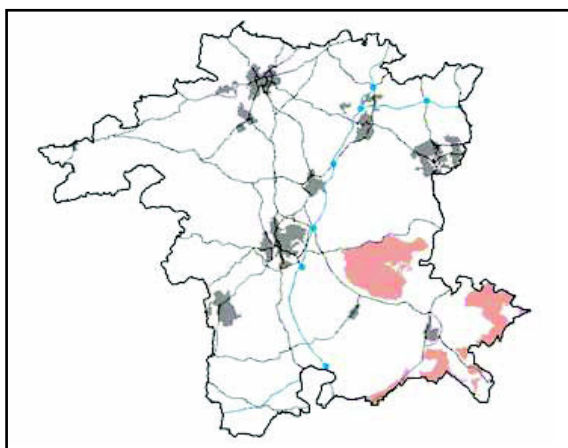
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Hedgerow boundaries to fields

Secondary:
- Pastoral land use with relic ridge and furrow
- Gently rolling lowland topography
- Heavy, poorly drained soils
- Medium-to-large scale field pattern
- Rural lanes with uniform grass verges
- Scattered hedgerow and streamline trees
- Nucleated settlement pattern, usually of small, rural villages

</div>

medium to large hedged fields with scattered hedgerow trees

pastoral land use with relic ridge & furrow

nucleated settlement pattern of small villages

DETAIL

The pastoral land use is one of the key elements of this landscape, together with the pattern of settlement and hedged fields. These are landscapes derived from former extensive areas of open fields, but, because of their heavy soil, were less favoured for continued arable cultivation becoming predominantly converted to pasture at the time of enclosure. There are still significant areas of permanent pasture in some localities, often with notable representation of ridge and furrow. The pattern of hedged fields defines the scale of the landscape which until recently would have conveyed a more pronounced sense of structure and enclosure. These landscapes were often bastions of hedgerow elm tree cover in the past, and the composition of many hedges is still dominated by this species. The impact of Dutch Elm Disease has left them significantly lacking in tree cover. Originally, it was thought that rather than use an alternative species to restore the distinctively dense tree cover associated with the elm it would be left for a degree of natural resistance to emerge that would enable regeneration of this species to arise from the remaining hedgerow stock. However, after 40 years there is no evidence of any emergence of natural resistance. The decision has therefore been taken to attempt to replicate the originally heavily treed landscape by promoting the planting of oak and ash hedgerow trees.
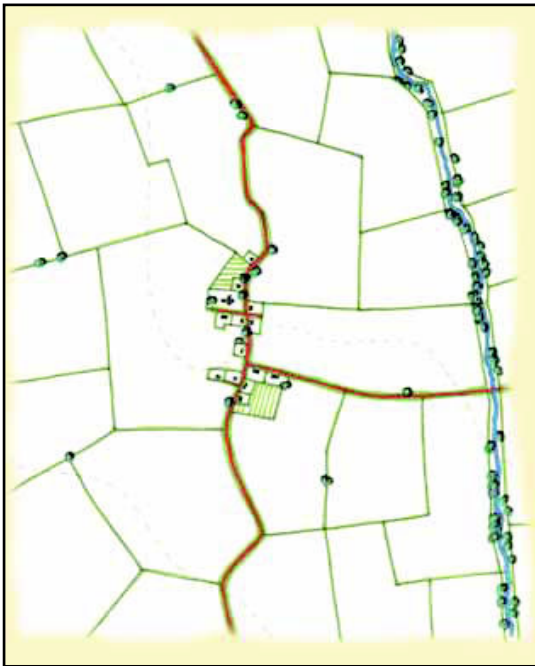
LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve the pattern of hedgerow boundaries.
- Conserve all remaining areas of permanent pasture.
- Conserve and enhance tree cover along water courses.
- Conserve and enhance the scattered populations of hedgerow trees.
- Seek to retain the integrity of the distinctive settlement pattern of small villages.
- Encourage the planting of tree groups in association with settlements.
- Opportunities for conversion of arable land back to pasture should be given consideration.

MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
The nucleated settlement pattern reflects the organised community structure associated with open field culture of long standing where farmsteads were located within the village, not in the open countryside. However, the villages have often declined in size or even become abandoned, reflecting the decline in status of the areas for farming.

Enclosure Pattern:
An increase in the proportion of arable land is evident which dilutes the distinctive land use and results in damage to the nature conservation and archaeological interest if areas of unimproved meadow are destroyed in the process. The increase in arable land uses also reduces the functionality of hedgerows, with consequent dilution of landscape scale and structure as hedges become lost or fragmented.

Tree Cover Pattern:
Woodland is not a characteristic of these 'planned' landscapes. Trees are now primarily represented by watercourse lines of willow and alder with limited hedgerow ash. The restoration of tree cover along the watercourses is to be encouraged along with the planting of tree groups in and around settlement to enhance the character and to help emphasise the distinctive settlement pattern

10.18 VILLAGE FARMLANDS WITH ORCHARDS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

This is a distinctive planned lowland agricultural landscape with a notably dominant orchard land use. It is an intensively cultivated landscape characterised by a nucleated pattern of expanded villages surrounded by large cultivated fields.
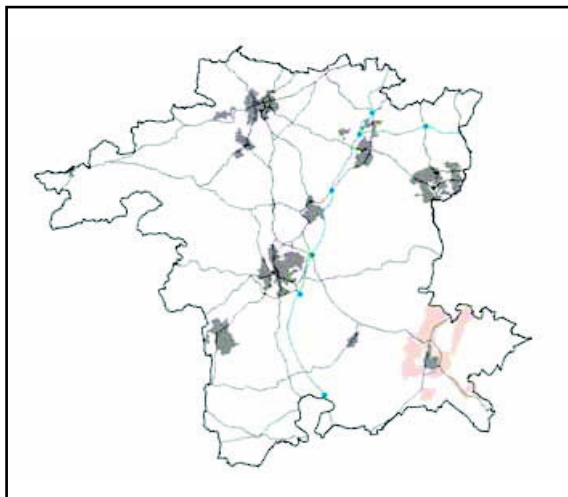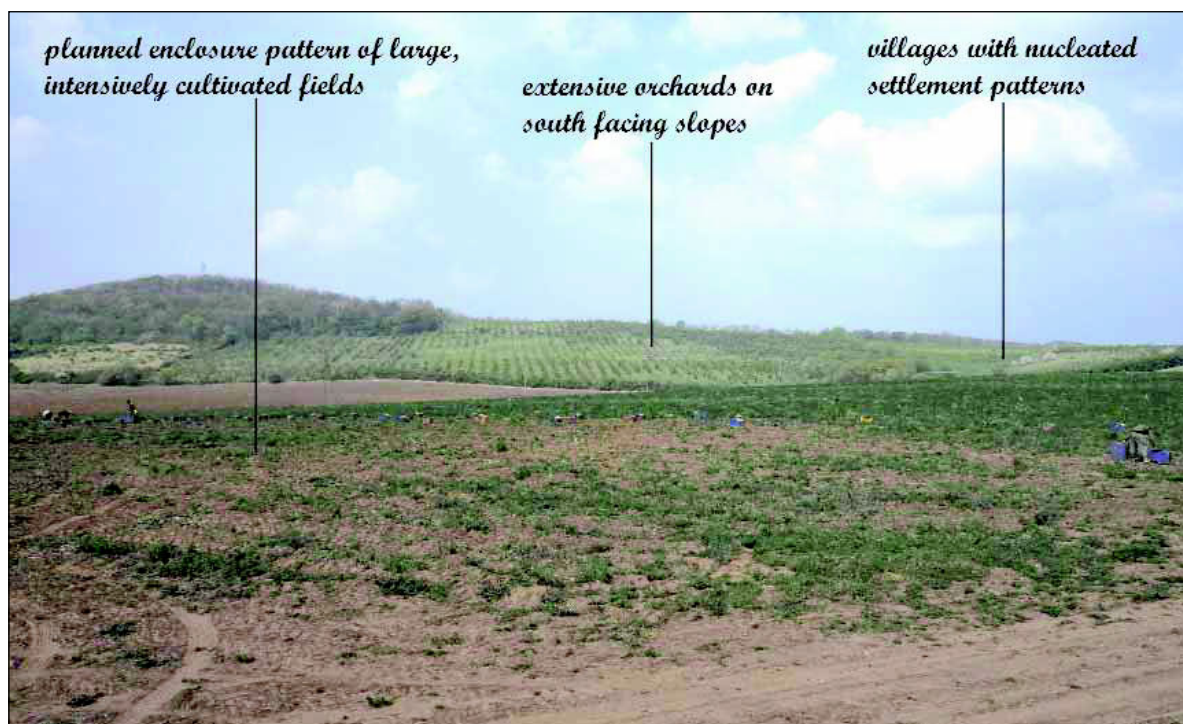

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Extensive apple and plum orchards on south facing slopes

Secondary:
- Nucleated settlement pattern

Tertiary:
- Gently undulating topography
- Planned enclosure pattern of medium- to large-scale fields
- Crops of cereals and field vegetables

planned enclosure pattern of large, intensively cultivated fields

extensive orchards on south facing slopes

villages with nucleated settlement patterns

DETAIL

The Village Farmlands with Orchards are planned, lowland agricultural landscapes with a strongly nucleated settlement pattern, sharing many of the characteristics of the Principal Village Farmlands with which they have a similar evolution. The primary defining characteristic lies in the land use. These landscapes tend to be located in areas of slightly more pronounced topography, where the south facing slopes are ideal for fruit growing. Orchards are a primary land use, apple, plum and gage being particularly notable. Unfortunately, the characteristic traditional orchards of standard trees are disappearing in some areas, with many old traditional fruit tree varieties being lost as a result. The economic worth of certain types of orchard - such as damson and plum - appears to be in decline and could hamper prospects of replacement once the old trees have declined. New orchard planting/restoration, notably of apple, often uses bush stock, the smaller stature of which has an impact upon the scale of the landscape.

Fields are bounded by hedgerows, typically of a regular, planned pattern, although the pattern becomes subsidiary to the structure of orchard cover, and is less evident visually than in the Principal Village Farmlands.

Lines of hedgerow fruit trees, particularly damson, are a distinctive local feature. Scattered tree cover along water courses, together with tree presence within the villages, provides the remaining tree cover character of these landscapes.
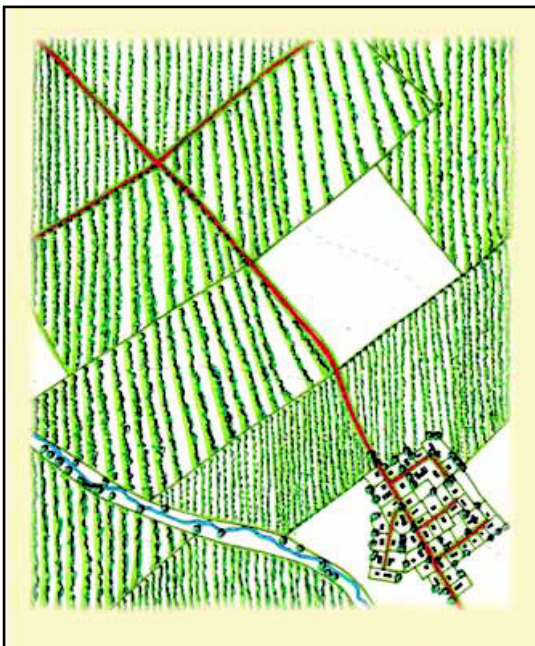
MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Enclosure Pattern:
The functionality of many hedgerows has now declined and, whilst appreciating both the landscape and wildlife value of retaining the full hedgerow structure, it would appear most viable to give priority to the conservation and restoration of primary hedgerows.

Tree Cover Pattern:
Woodland is not characteristic of any of the Village Farmlands and new woodland planting in these areas would dilute their distinctive character. Elm was formerly a dominant tree species, providing a distinctive landscape feature. The regeneration of elm continues in the hedgerows but still eventually succumbs to disease at a certain size. After much consideration, it has been decided to promote the planting of oak and ash substitutes for the original densely planted hedgerow elms.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve and restore traditional orchards, with emphasis placed upon the fruit type and varieties associated with different localities.
- Conserve and restore lines of hedgerow fruit trees.
- Retain pattern of strongly nucleated villages with associated low dispersal of settlement between.
- Conserve and restore hedgerow structure with emphasis upon the primary hedge lines.
- Conserve and enhance tree cover along watercourses.
- Encourage opportunities for tree planting in and around villages.
- Promote development of wide field margins for wildlife benefit.
- Promote management of roadside verges for wildlife benefit.

10.19 WET PASTURE MEADOWS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

A flat, low-lying, largely uninhabited landscape associated with irregularly shaped, poorly draining basins fringed by low hills or scarps. This is a secluded pastoral landscape characterised by a regular pattern of hedged fields and ditches fringed by lines of willow and alder. Pollarded willows are often a distinctive feature.
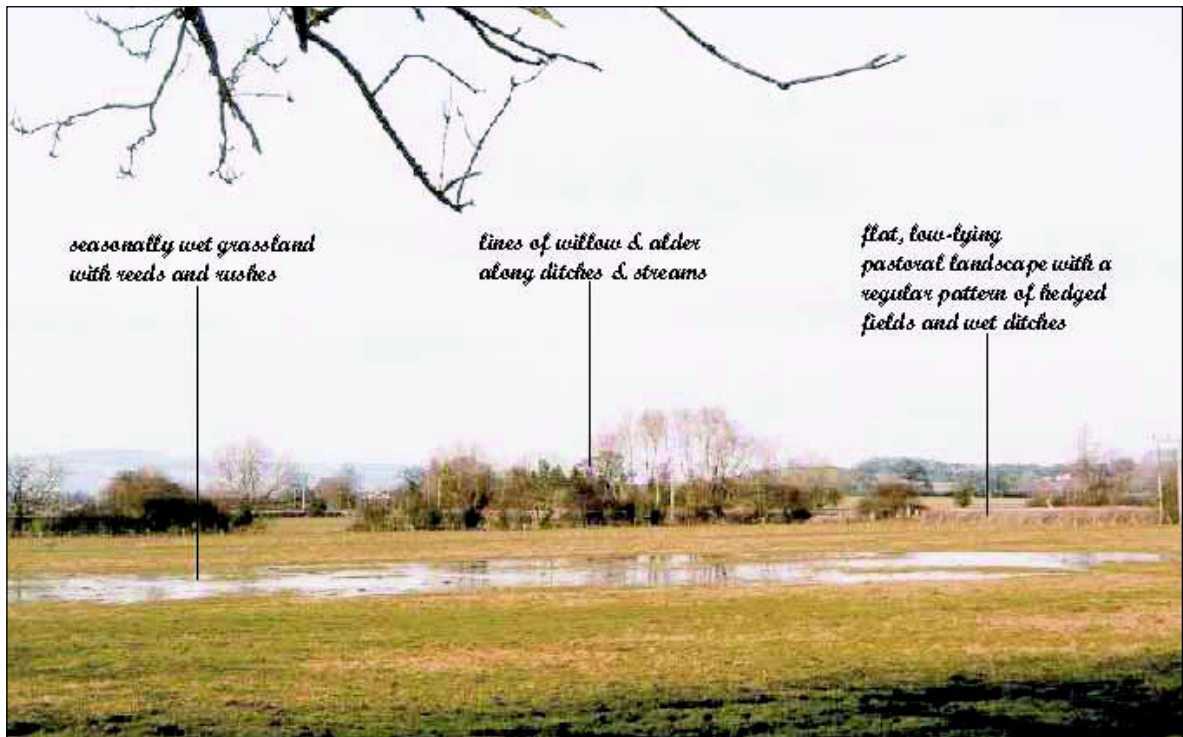
<div style="border:1px solid green">
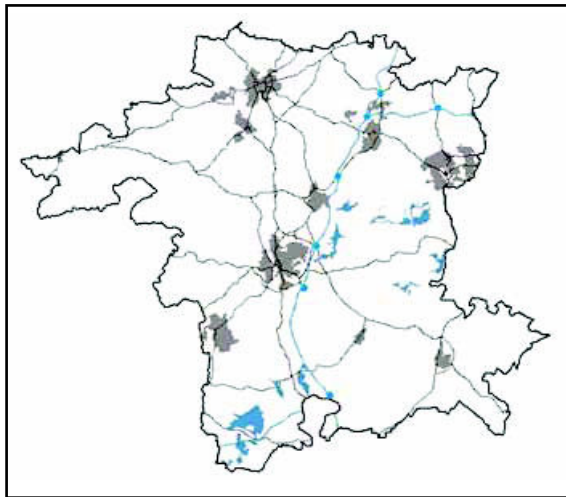
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Flat low-lying topography
- Pastoral land use with patches of wet grassland
- Tree cover character of individual trees as opposed to woodland
- Tree cover pattern of linear tree belts along ditches and watercourses - particularly lines of alder and willow

Secondary:
- Regular pattern of hedged fields with ditches
- Rushes, reeds and other marginal/aquatic vegetation
- Unsettled with few roads

</div>

seasonally wet grassland with reeds and rushes

lines of willow & alder along ditches & streams

flat, low-lying pastoral landscape with a regular pattern of hedged fields and wet ditches

DETAIL

These are flat, low lying and largely uninhabited landscapes. They are found where the land form has naturally created poorly drained, low lying basins collecting water from the surrounding low hills or scarps. These are landscapes which, in the past, have been protected from change by the difficulty of cultivating soils with such poor drainage. They have consequently been avoided as sites for settlement and roads, and have often not been considered economically viable for agricultural improvement. This, together with the widespread pastoral land use, and associated traditional methods of management, has favoured the retention of wetland habitats of considerable wildlife interest and a certain wilderness quality. The patterns of hedged fields provide structure to the landscape, the hedge lines invariably associated with ditches. Further structure is provided by linear tree cover along the ditches. These are usually alder and willow, with pollarded willows being a distinctive feature in places.

The sustainable land use for these areas would appear to be pastoral, which in turn is compatible with the great ecological potential these landscapes possess and the exciting opportunities they offer for wetland creation or restoration.
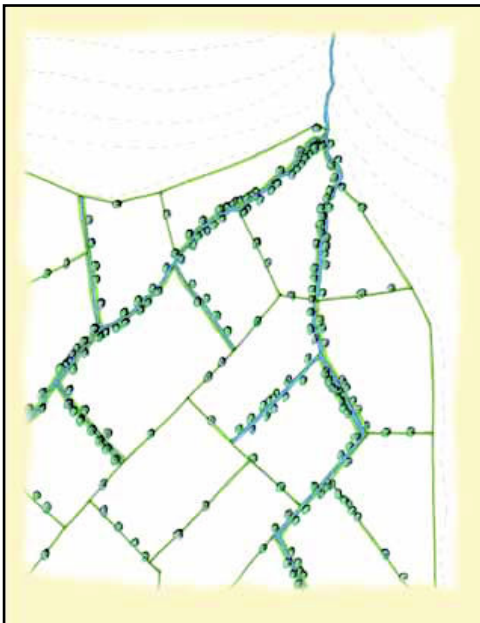
LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve all permanent pasture.
- Conserve and restore linear tree cover along watercourses, ditches and hedgelines.
- Seek opportunities to encourage the conversion of arable land back to pasture.
- Encourage the retention and appropriate management of existing wetland habitats.
- Encourage the creation of new wetland habitats.
- Discourage activities likely to increase the drainage, or lower the water table of these areas.
- Discourage any building or construction works in these landscapes.

MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
These are unsettled landscapes where development is not appropriate in landscape terms. They should be regarded primarily as areas of conservation and the unsettled, undeveloped character perpetuated.

Land Use:
These landscapes are particularly vulnerable to changing agricultural practices. Many Wet Pasture Meadows have been drained in order to increase their productivity. This has led to agricultural improvement of the sward, changes from hay making to silage production, or arable conversion. All such changes result in a significant impoverishment of landscape character and ecological value. Similarly, the transformation of some of these areas to deeper water by excavating features such as lakes and irrigation reservoirs will have inevitably destroyed wetland habitats of greater ecological interest.

Tree Cover Pattern:
Unfortunately, the traditional management of pollarding willows is often neglected, leading to deterioration and loss of the linear tree cover. Woodland is not appropriate in Wet Pasture Meadows.

10.20 WOODED ESTATELANDS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

This is a large scale, wooded agricultural landscape of isolated brick farmsteads, clusters of wayside dwellings and occasional small estate villages. The key visual element in this landscape is the frequent large, irregularly shaped ancient woodlands, often prominently situated on low crests. It is a landscape that, due to its scale, lacks intimacy and can appear rather functional.
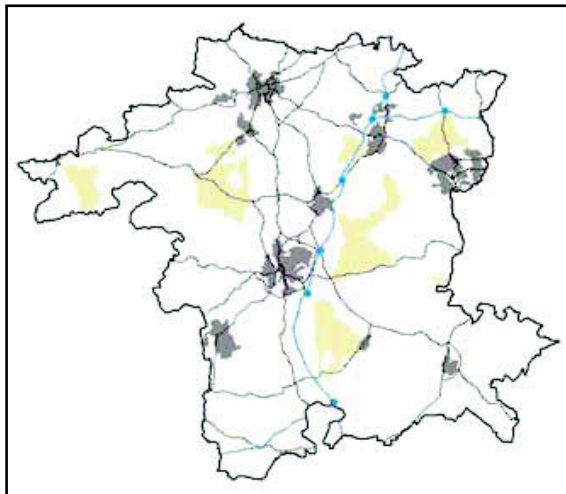

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Large discrete blocks of irregularly-shaped woodland
- Mixed farming land use

Secondary:
- Rolling topography with occasional steep-sided hills and low escarpments
- Semi-regular pattern of large, hedged fields
- Woodland of ancient character
- Discrete settlement clusters often in the form of small estate villages
- Medium distance framed views
- Large country houses set in parkland and ornamental grounds

large, discrete blocks of ancient woodland

rolling topography

small clusters of settlement

mixed farming in large hedged fields
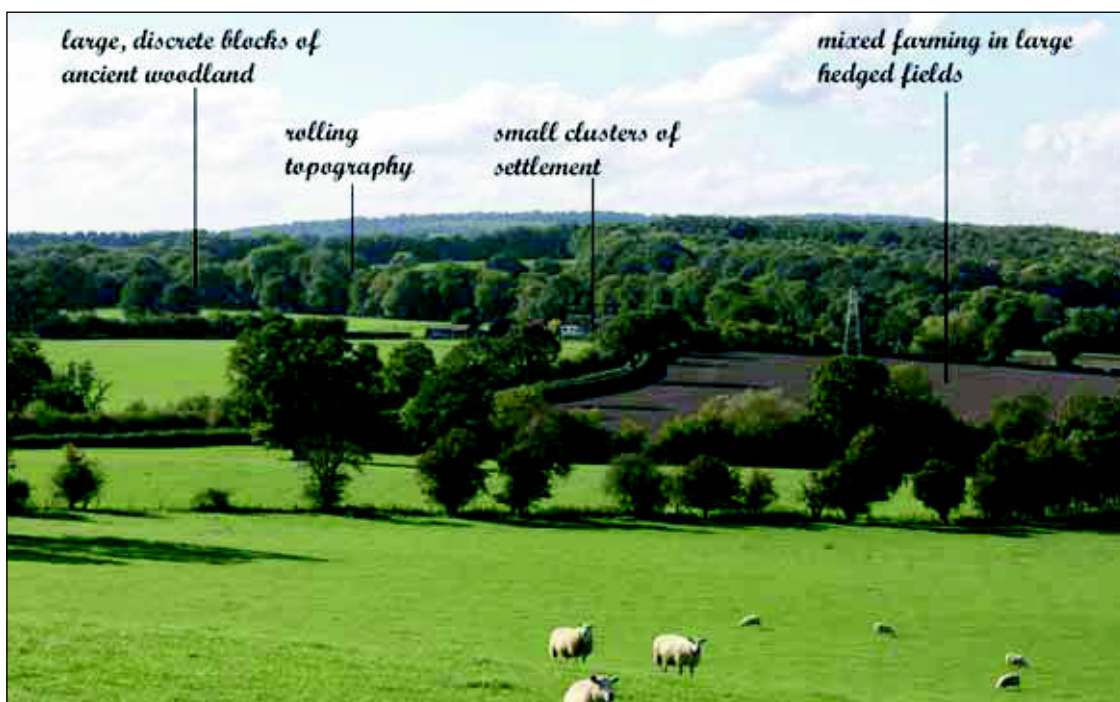
DETAIL

These are wooded agricultural landscapes of isolated farmsteads, clusters of wayside dwellings and occasional small estate villages. Mixed farming is the dominant land use, with woodland comprising about 30-40% of the land cover. This Landscape Type relies heavily upon its woodland component as the critical element in defining its character. The size, shape and composition of the woodlands are all important, being generally large, discrete woods of ancient semi-natural character and irregular or semi-regular outline. They frame the views and are often prominently situated on low crests. The prominent hedgerows are also important in defining the scale and providing the structure to the landscape. Ornamental grounds and parkland associated with large estates can be a noticeable feature in these landscapes. Groups of mature ornamental trees planted in parks or gardens are often significant visual landmarks. Similarly, medieval parkland and its associated ancient woodland is often a feature. Estate villages may also be associated with these areas, and invariably possess a strong character as a result of their style, layout and detailing. It is not an intimate landscape and, due to its fairly large scale, can sometimes appear rather functional.

The landscape character is dependant on a small number of strongly defined characteristics. It could easily lose its integrity and become muddled and confusing if the range of features associated with it were to be increased. The introduction of small scale elements would do as much harm to the character as the loss of the inherent features.
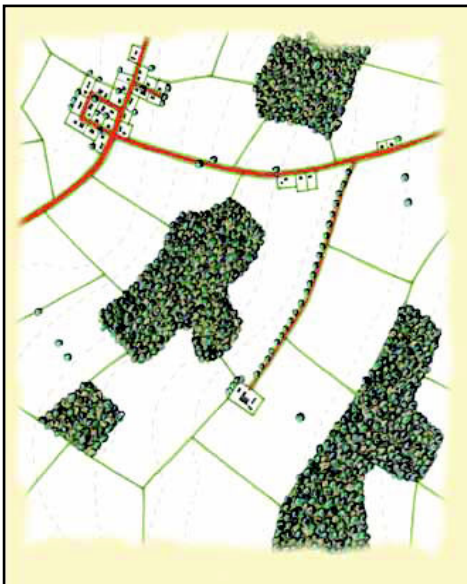
MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
These landscapes generally have a clustered settlement pattern of wayside dwellings or estate villages. Isolated farmsteads are also a feature. New development would be appropriate if it is in accordance with policy but it must be carefully sited in order to protect the visual integrity of the estate villages.

Land Use:
Hedgerows provide a unifying presence in this landscape by linking the large blocks of woodland. The intensification of arable farming has resulted in the loss and deterioration of many of the hedgerows and thus the fragmentation of landscape character.

Tree Cover Pattern:
The introduction of conifers to the woodlands has weakened the inherent character of the landscape. The many parklands often originating from medieval deer parks have been significantly reduced in size, frequently leaving the former parkland trees marooned amongst arable cropping.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve all ancient woodland sites and restock with locally occurring native species.
- Promote new large scale woodland planting.
- New woodland planting should be of native broadleaved species, favouring oak as the dominant species and relate to the scale and spatial pattern of the Landscape Type.
- Conserve and restore the hedgerow pattern, particularly primary hedgerows and hedgerow tree cover.
- Seek to ensure hedgerow linkage to all woodland blocks, for visual cohesion and wildlife benefit.
- Conserve and restore parkland including historically correct ornamental planting and with an emphasis on arable reversion.
- Conserve the integrity of estate villages and their associated tree cover.

10.21 WOODED FOREST

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

In Worcestershire this Landscape Type is only represented in Wyre Forest.
This is a landscape dominated by dense tree cover, predominately woodland of ancient character, effectively blocking all but immediate short distance views. It is essentially unsettled although occasional wayside cottages occur, often with adjacent small fields of assarted origin. This is an uncomplicated landscape where the unrelenting mass of woodland and restricted views creates a strong character which can feel overwhelmingly remote and confined.
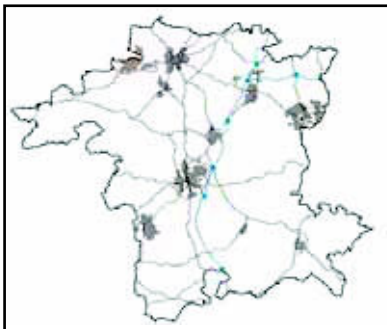

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Continuous woodland cover of ancient character, woodland being the dominant land use
- Intimate spatial character

Secondary:
- Generally an unsettled landscape, except for occasional wayside cottages
- Infrequent roads, access generally poor
- Occasional clearings of small fields associated with cottages

continouos tree cover of native broadleaved woodland

unsettled, intimate spatial character

restricted views

DETAIL

The overriding characteristic of this landscape is the dominance of woodland cover. These are areas that may have been briefly cleared for agricultural purposes at the height of agricultural expansion in the late13th/early 14th centuries. Any clearance would have been likely to be of a piecemeal nature with woodland re-colonisation following the contraction of the area of cultivated land after the Black Death. The relative lack of settlement relates to the absence of a prolonged period of agricultural activity, the scattered cottages probably relating to occupations linked to the woodland. The interdependence of woodland and the charcoal and smelting industries has been a major factor in the survival of such a large concentration of forest. The woodlands are of ancient character and the whole woodland landscape is one of notable nature conservation value. The underlying impoverished sandy soils give rise to a heathy/acid grassland ground vegetation, which is of considerable botanical interest in its own right.
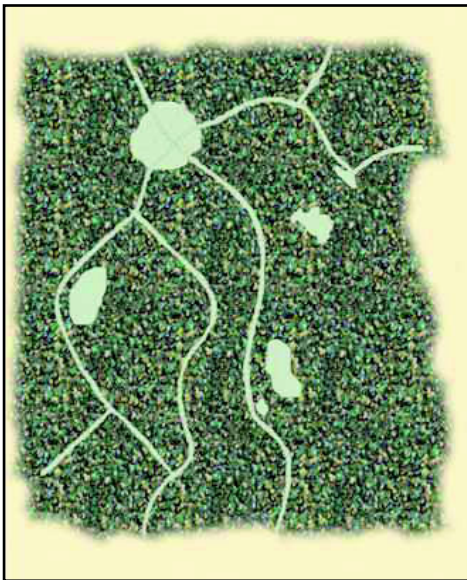
MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
This is fundamentally an unsettled landscape but one that accommodates the occasional small scale wayside dwelling. The character and integrity of these cottages and their associated land parcels is important to the integrity of the landscape and should be conserved; any increase to the size, appearance or scale of such properties should be avoided. Additional settlement is not appropriate in this landscape.

Enclosure Pattern:
This is an unenclosed landscape of continuous woodland. Additional clearance or enclosure should be resisted.

Tree Cover Pattern:
Previous conifer plantings have resulted in some dilution of woodland character. However, the acknowledged importance of the nature conservation interest and the increasingly sympathetic approach towards landscape and wildlife interests promoted in current national woodland management guidance suggests that the restoration of the ancient wooded character is already a priority, and that further deterioration of the woodland character is unlikely. The existing guidance for the management of ancient woodland sites should be strongly promoted and supported in this area, coupled with priorities identified for nature conservation.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve all ancient woodland sites and restock with appropriate locally occurring broadleaved trees, favouring oak as the major species.
- Conserve the unsettled woodland character, avoiding any urban influences.

10.22 WOODED HILLS AND FARMLANDS

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

These are medium to large scale upstanding, wooded landscapes with a sloping topography and well defined character. They are similar to the Principal Wooded Hills, but with more of an emphasis on farmland. The woods tend to occur as discrete blocks framing larger areas of enclosed fields. The latter are often associated with a small village or hamlet. There is a sense of balance, with a character that is less extreme than the Principal Wooded Hills.
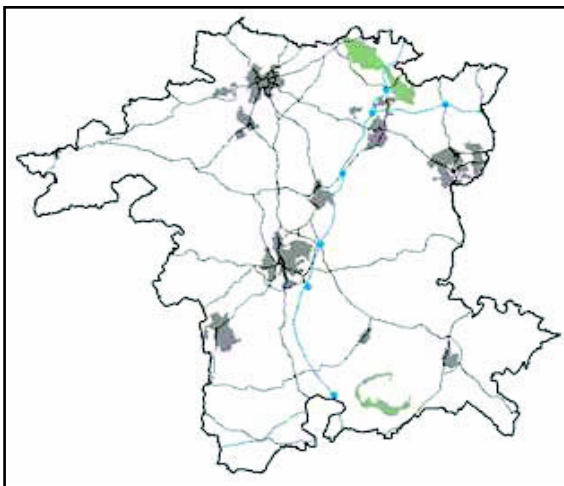

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Primary:
- Prominent sloping topography
- Hedgerow field boundaries are an important element in defining landscape scale
- Tree cover pattern of large, discrete woodland blocks

Secondary:
- Woodland of ancient character
- Mixed farming land use
- Medium-framed views
- Sparsely clustered settlement pattern associated with areas of former open fields

large, discrete, mixed broadleaved woods

hedges made prominent by the landform

prominent sloping topography
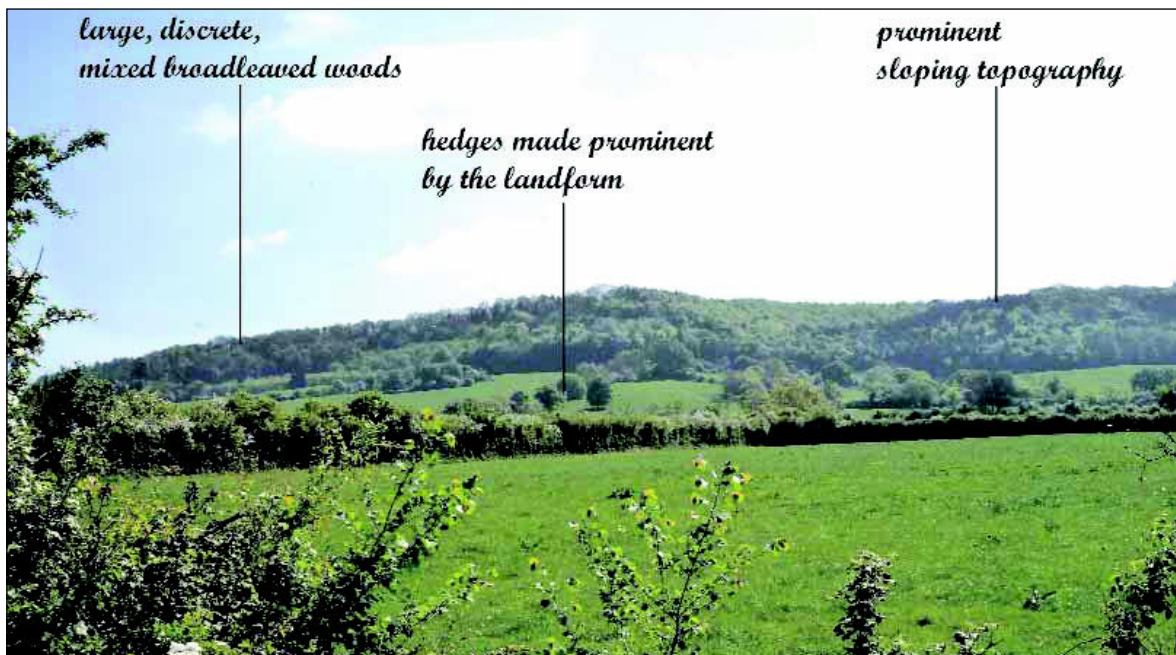
DETAIL

These are landscapes with an inherently large scale and strength due to their patterns of substantial woodland blocks and large hedged fields. The steepness of slope is generally less severe than the Principal Wooded Hills and therefore has been less of a constraint for agriculture. They contain a significant proportion of farmland, considered to be derived from former areas of open field, and which is usually associated with settlement clusters. The historic origins of these areas should be recognised and their visual cohesion conserved. The dominant land use is of mixed farming, interspersed with large, ancient semi-natural woods that frame the views. The hedgerow structure and streamside tree cover is particularly important in providing visual unity to these areas, linking the woodland blocks and integrating them with the areas of farmland. Within the farmed areas, the upper slopes may include areas of permanent pasture of botanical interest.

These are landscapes that often lack a strong sense of visual cohesion today, due to the variable amount of woodland cover and the decline in both hedgerow pattern and fabric. The mixed broadleaf composition may also have been diluted by the presence of conifer planting. The strength and scale of the landscape becomes diluted if the large woodland blocks become fragmented if the structure of hedgerow and streamlines broken, or if features of an inappropriately small scale are introduced.
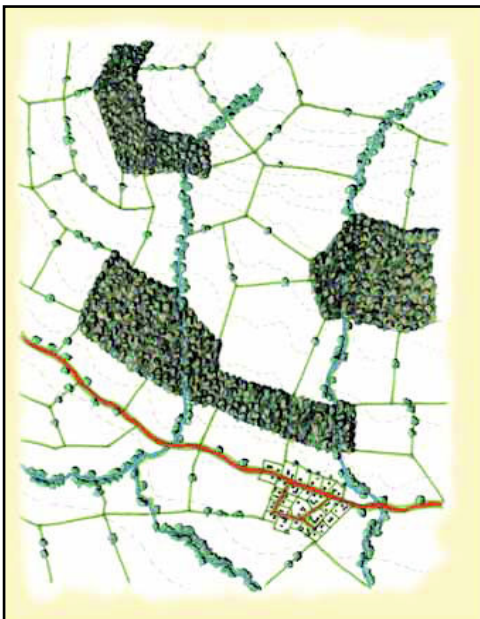
MODERN IMPACTS ON CHARACTER

Settlement Pattern:
Settlement in these landscapes is usually clustered dwellings associated with the areas of open fields. Small villages and hamlets are therefore typical but are sparsely dispersed through a landscape that does not feel well populated. Opportunities for additional housing should be in accordance with policies and should respect the settlement pattern and be concentrated on the existing clustered communities in order to maintain the low settlement density.

Enclosure Pattern:
The sub-regular enclosure pattern reflects the scale of woodland clearance and historical land enclosure. Loss of hedges will disrupt this pattern, as will the addition of hedges or fences seeking to subdivide fields.

Tree Cover Pattern:
There are considerable opportunities for planting new large woodland blocks particularly in areas of recent clearance. At the same time, the importance of the patterns of historical land clearance should be recognised and conserved. Emphasis should also be placed on perpetuating the corridors that link the woodlands together.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- Conserve existing blocks of woodland.
- Seek opportunities to restore the balance of woodland cover throughout these landscapes.
- Conserve and restore the ancient woodland character of all woodlands.
- Conserve the historic pattern of large hedged fields, with priority being given to strengthening and restoring primary hedge lines.
- Enhance tree cover along watercourses and dingles.
- Conserve all remaining areas of permanent pasture.

APPENDIX A: HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

A.1 Historic Landscape Characterisation

Additional data sets that support LCA: Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), Historic Environment Assessment (HEA) and The Farmsteads Project.

A.1.1 Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is a process that is reciprocal to Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). English Heritage describes the HLC in terms of time-depth, this being the legibility of the past in the present landscape.

A.1.2 Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (WHEAS) are currently undertaking an HLC of Worcestershire as part of English Heritage's national programme of HLC. The Worcestershire HLC project aims to improve the understanding of the County's landscape, and provide a context for its archaeological sites and monuments. HLC will also provide a framework for informed landscape management strategies, spatial planning, development control and conservation issues at a local, regional and national level. It will underpin historic environment advice given to district councils and other environmental or conservation agencies, enabling future changes within the historic environment to be monitored.
The Worcestershire HLC project is split into four stages:

- **Stage 1.** Pilot study. The purpose of this stage is familiarisation with sources and assessment of the project methodology;

- **Stage 2.** Data collection through HLC mapping for the remainder of the county using a refined project methodology;
- **Stage 3.** Review, analysis and interpretation of the data. Secondary sources will be used to assess and inform emerging patterns and trends within the Stage 2 data;
- **Stage 4.** Preparation of a report, archive and dissemination of the results.

A.1.3 The Historic Landscape Characterisation is complementary to the Landscape Character Assessment. The two studies have different perspectives, the former being concerned with the underlying historical anthropogenic processes influencing landscape while the latter is primarily concerned with the combination of physical and cultural factors that are expressed visually in the landscape. However, these factors include historic landscape attributes such as the historic patterns of enclosure. It was originally thought that the two studies could share the same Land Cover Parcel boundaries but this has proved to be impractical. The historic study addresses the element of time-depth, this being the way that earlier landscapes and change can still be seen in the present-day landscape, while the landscape study encompasses a broader range of character- defining factors. This fundamental difference has led to the two studies being unique in their boundary definitions. The HLC has given us a much greater understanding of the derivation and evolution of the landscape that we see today.

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY

Ancient Woodland Character	Wooded landscapes characterised by mixed broadleaved woodlands with a varied age structure, often of ancient origin (as defined on the ancient woodland inventory). This pattern often displays clear signs of piecemeal woodland clearance, such as irregular woodland outlines, woodland place names etc.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	A statutory designation intended to conserve the natural scenic beauty of an area. Identified by the Countryside Commission and administered by Local Authorities.
Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV)	A regional planning designation, identifying those areas that are considered to be of special landscape quality and meriting special protection. These areas are shown in County Structure Plans and Local District Plans.
Attributes	The individual qualities that make up an indicator, eg. settlement pattern may be unsettled, clustered, wayside, dispersed or scattered.
Biodiversity	The total variety of life on earth or within any given part of it.
Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)	A plan setting out the current status, issues and threats for a species or habitat and a programme of specific and timed actions with identified responsible agencies to restore, maintain and enhance the biodiversity interest.
Buffer Zone	An area or zone that helps to protect a habitat from damage, disturbance or pollution.
Characteristic Features	The presence of natural or heritage features that recur with sufficient frequency to be considered an integral part of a particular landscape.
Conservation	The wise use, protection and thus continuance of a valued resource.
Consistency	The degree to which an attribute is recognisable and consistently represented throughout the landscape c - Consistent - clearly recognisable and consistently represented. v - Variable - not clearly recognisable and/or variably represented.
Corridor	A strip of a particular type that differs from the adjacent land on both sides (corridors have several important functions, including conduit, barrier and habitat).

Cropping	Dominance of arable farming characterised by field vegetables and/or market gardening.
Discrete Woods	Separate and clearly defined blocks of woodland. Some linkage may be afforded by hedgerows.
Ecology	The science of the inter-relationships between living organisms and their environment.
Enclosure Pattern	The form of the cultural dimension of the landscape as defined by the inherited pattern of fields and lanes.
Environment	The external surroundings (ie. physical and chemical conditions) that impact on every aspect of life on earth.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A statutory procedure requiring the application of a full assessment of environmental impacts for certain major categories of development proposal.
Exposed Spatial Character	Extensive areas, often unenclosed, where the lack of three dimensional elements allows wide, distant views which give a strong impression of sky and space.
Farmland	Areas occurring on a wide variety of soil types which have been under main-stream cultivation for a long time and which lack the distinct relic plant communities which would have a significant contribution to landscape character.
Farm Type (landuse)	The dominant type of farming enterprise that reflects the inherent capability of the land.
Field Boundaries	The physical boundaries defining the perimeter of agricultural fields.
Function	Is the combination of factors which gave rise to the attribute still relevant in today's landscape, in other words, does the attribute have a function today in the landscape? e - Economically and practically functional, potentially maintained without financial support. s - Functional but only maintained with support. c - Cosmetic, no practical or economic function but may have an aesthetic value.
Geodiversity	The variety of rocks, fossils, minerals and natural processes.
Geographic Information System (GIS)	A computer facility that enables the layering of map based information.
Green Infrastructure	A strategically planned and delivered network compromising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environment features.

Page 253

Groups	Areas where the pattern of tree cover is solely characterised by discrete groups and/or small assemblages of trees, usually associated with farmsteads and or rural settlements.
Habitat	A place in which a particular plant or animal lives. Often used in a wider sense, referring to major assemblages of plants and animals found together, such as woodlands or grasslands.
Heath/acid grassland	Plant communities typically developed on free draining, nutrient poor soils. Indicator species may include gorse (Ulex), bracken(Pteridium), ling (Calluna), Purple heather (Erica cinerea). Localised areas of poor drainage may be present. Indicator species may include cross leaved heath (Erica tetralix) and rush (Juncus sp).
Heathy/acid grassland relic	Remnants of former plant communities developed on free draining nutrient poor soils, now represented by a restricted range of indicator species - gorse or bracken usually found along roadsides or woodland edges.
Hedges	A general category embracing hedgerows of single and mixed species composition.
Hedge and ditch	As above, with associated man made dry or wet drainage channels.
Indicative Ground Vegetation	Semi-natural plant communities (excluding woodland, scrub and hedges) that visually contribute to the interpretation of the landscape character.
Indicators	Individual aspects that make up landscape character. These are geology, topography, soils, tree cover character, tree cover pattern, landuse, enclosure pattern, settlement pattern, indicative ground vegetation, field boundaries, spatial character and special characteristics features.
Intimate Spatial Character	A landscape of restricted views where there is a consistently small field pattern (less than 4 hectares) and the close proximity of other elements creates a strong sense of enclosure.
Key Characteristics	Those attributes that prominently and consistently define the landscape character.

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY

Land Cover Parcel (LCP)

These are the sub-landscape units arising from the subdivision of the Landscape Description Units based on variations in modern land use and the historic patterns of field enclosure. They are totally homogenous units within which there are no variations of attribute.

Landscape

The human perception of the land at a scale that is smaller than the global environment but larger than the individual site.

Landscape Character

An expression of pattern, resulting from particular combinations of natural (physical and biological) and cultural factors that make one place different from another.

Landscape Character Assessment

An analysis of the character of the landscape based on predetermined objective criteria and characteristics.

Landscape Description Unit (LDU)

A Landscape Description Unit is a representation of a Landscape Type in a specific location. These are the basic building blocks of the landscape and are defined by a combination of six key characteristics relating to geology, topography, soils, tree cover character, land use and historic settlement pattern.
LDU's are identified by description and those with similar visual characteristics are grouped into Landscape Types.

Landscape Management Plan

A document that sets down the tasks that are necessary to achieve and sustain long term objectives for a site or area of landscape in order to maintain, enhance and strengthen its landscape character, natural habitats and design criteria.

Landscape Type (LT)

These are identified by certain combinations of the twelve characteristics, which define landscape character. Landscape types are areas that are visually different from one another, those differences being defined by particularly dominant key characteristics.

Large Spatial Character

Open areas usually with a large scale enclosure pattern (field size consistently greater than 8 hectares). The pattern defined by field boundaries and/ or other three dimensional elements such as woodland.

Linear

Areas where the tree cover is characterised by lines of trees or narrow bands of woodland normally associated with streams, ditches or other linear water features.

Linked	Frequent woodland blocks and/or wooded corridors forming physically or visually linking patterns, creating the impression of a heavily wooded landscape.
Meadow	Land, usually level and low lying, devoted to grasses and short herbs, which is mown annually for hay.
Medium-framed Spatial Character	Areas with medium to large sized fields, (consistently greater than 4 hectares), where views are typically framed by discrete blocks of woodland or lines of trees.
Medium-open Spatial Character	Open landscapes with a medium scale enclosure pattern (field size consistently greater than 4 hectares) defined by field boundaries and/or other three dimensional elements.
Mitigation	Measures taken to reduce adverse impacts, e.g., the provision of suitable planting to screen a development.
Mixed Landuse	Farming enterprises that have both a mix of arable and pasture land uses.
Moorland	Plant communities associated with peaty soils and impeded drainage in highland areas. Indicator species may include cotton grass (Eriophorum) or purple moor grass (Molinia).
Native Species	A species that occurs naturally in an area, not having been introduced by humans either accidentally or intentionally.
Organic Enclosure Pattern	A piece-meal enclosure pattern associated with an irregular network of winding lanes.
Parks	An area of land characterised by groups and/or individual mature trees usually associated with a castle or large country house. Ornamental planting, lodges, lakes etc are usually a feature.
Pastoral	Grassland landscapes characterised by grazing animals associated with dairying and/or stock rearing.
Pasture	An area of land dominated by grass, which is used only for grazing, as distinct from a meadow that is mown.
Planned Enclosure Pattern	An ordered pattern of lanes and rectilinear fields with mainly straight boundaries.

Planned Woodland Character

Wooded landscapes characterised by estate plantations and/or belts of trees with regular outlines, a predominately even age structure and a limited range of non-ornamental native or exotic species.

Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG)

Central Government guidance on all aspects of planning law and policy.

Regional Character Areas

Individual, unique areas at a broadbrush, regional scale which are identified by description.

Replaceability

The degree to which it is possible to replace an element in its original form.

l - Possible to replace in its original form over the medium to long term (15-50 years).
m -Only possible to replace in a modified form. This modification may reflect the lack of time depth association with the attribute.
s - Possible to replace in its original form in the short term (up to 15 years).

Resilience

Vulnerability x Tolerance (at Landscape Type level)
A measure of the endurance of landscape character, defined by the likelihood of change in relation to the degree to which the landscape is able to tolerate that change.

Rough Grazing

Landscapes characterised by low intensity grazing of rough pasture associated with poor soils.

Scattered Tree Cover Pattern

Pattern defined by densely or thinly scattered trees most often associated with hedgerows, sometimes in association with woodlands.

Scattered Settlement Pattern

A very low dispersal of individual farmsteads and rural dwellings.

Sensitivity

Resilience x Condition (at Land Cover Parcel level)
The degree to which the Resilience of a landscape is influenced by its current condition.

Significance	Consistency x Visual Prominence (Then Converted To Primary, Secondary Or Tertiary) The degree to which an attribute contributes to the overall character of a landscape as defined by its consistency and visual prominence. P - Primary - both consistent and prominent. S - Secondary - either consistent and apparent or variable and prominent. T - Tertiary - either has insignificant prominence or a variable pattern that is apparent.
Small Spatial Character	A landscape of small to medium sized fields (field size consistently less than 4 hectares) where scattered trees and/or small woods and copses create filtered views.
Spatial Character	The visual perception of spatial character as defined by the combination of open spaces, views and elements that make up the landscape.
Sub-regular Enclosure Pattern	An interlocking, regular pattern of fields and lanes with curving boundaries.
Supplementary Planning Guidance	Additional planning guidance on individual topics to enable a greater understanding of Local Authority policies and strategies.
Sustainable Development	Defined by the Brundtland Report (1989) as development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations.
Tolerance	Replaceability X Trend X Significance The degree to which change is likely to cause irreparable damage to the essential components that contribute to landscape character.
Tree Cover	Relates to the overall cover of individual trees or woodland of the area.
Tree Cover Character	Relates to the origin and overall composition of tree and woodland cover.
Tree Cover Pattern	Relates to the spatial juxtaposition of individual trees and woodland cover and the shapes of woodlands.
Trees	Landscapes in which trees rather than woodland comprise the dominant visual element of cover.

Trend

The likelihood of future change to the inherent character of the landscape based on an analysis of recent and present day change.

< - An improvement in the quantity or quality of a particular attribute.
st - Attribute is stable.
> - A decline in the quantity or quality of a particular attribute.

Unenclosed

Open, usually rough mountain , marsh or common grazing land. Includes rough land sub divided into very large enclosures.

Unwooded

Areas where tree cover is virtually absent. These are areas in which past and present management practices have generally precluded the establishment of tree cover. The regeneration of tree cover may be evident if management practices are removed or reduced. Elsewhere poor soil depth or accumulations of peat may inhibit tree growth today.

Veteran Tree

A tree which is of interest biologically, aesthetically or culturally because of its age.

Visual Impact Assessment

A procedure designed to identify the visual impact on short, medium and long distance views of any particular development proposal.

Visual Prominence

The degree to which the defined attribute is visually prominent in the landscape.

p - Prominent - having an immediate visual impact.
a - Apparent - making a moderate contribution to the visual character of the landscape.
i - Insignificant - making little or no contribution to visual character.

Vulnerability

Function X Trend X Significance
The likelihood of change to an attribute or the landscape as a whole as expressed by the significance of predicted trends in relation to function.

Water Meadow

A riverside meadow laid out in such a way that the river water could be used to regularly irrigate the land.

Wetland

Plant communities associated with seasonally or permanently waterlogged soils. Indicators species may include rush or common reed (Phragmites).

Woodland

Land covered by trees that supports other physical, biological and cultural resources.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

This page is intentionally left blank

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank