

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 Council's 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 through 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)

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

7. KEY

LCA Landscape Character Assessment
SG Supplementary Guidance

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