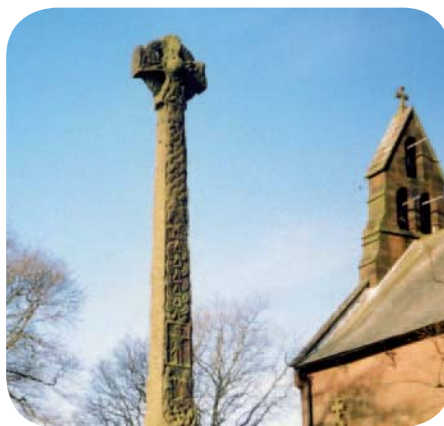




# Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit

PART TWO

Landscape Character Toolkit



Supporting Cumbria's Local Development Frameworks

This document has been prepared jointly for:

Cumbria County Council  
Allerdale Borough Council  
Barrow Borough Council  
Carlisle City Council  
Copeland Borough Council  
Eden District Council  
South Lakeland District Council

It provides evidence to support policy formulation and site allocations in the Local Development Frameworks being developed by each of the above local authorities.

## Acknowledgments

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Mark Brennand and Richard Newman provided historic input.

Matthew Armstrong provided support reviewing the original landscape character assessment and strategy, reviewing surveys and running workshops.

Alison Mofatt and Lucinda Weymouth, Landscape Architects at Capita Symonds provided expert input on Part Two of this document.

The document has been produced with the support and encouragement of the

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Chris Greenwood – Lake District National Park Authority

Richard Pearse – Friends of the Lake District

Stuart Pasley – Natural England

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Photographs are courtesy of Cumbria County Council and Brian Irving HELM Images.

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# I. Cumbria's Landscapes - why their character counts

## Summary

Cumbria's landscapes are of a high quality and valued by many. The quality of large areas of Cumbria is recognised nationally through the National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, historic environment and biodiversity designations. Many other landscapes are highly valued locally and more widely but have no formal designation. Landscapes are found everywhere, in our countryside, uplands, lowlands, coast, forests, villages, towns and cities.

We need to recognise that our landscapes are dynamic and constantly responding to external influences. We also need to understand the characteristics that make them distinctive. In doing this we can better manage, protect and plan for enhancement and change. This can help to ensure we retain distinctive and robust landscapes into the future that continue to provide life support systems to us all.

## Role of the Guidance and Toolkit

- 1.1 The Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit has been prepared in conjunction with the Cumbrian Local Planning Authorities.
- 1.2 Part One includes Cumbria's Landscape Character Assessment and links with other national, regional, and protected landscape assessments. Collectively these form Cumbria's landscape evidence base and support landscape policy and land allocations in the Local Development Frameworks. They should be referred to whenever land use strategies and proposals are being prepared and decided.
- 1.3 Part Two includes a toolkit to help understand the role of landscape character assessment and how and when to use it. It sets out an approach that recognises that all landscapes are important, not just those that may have been given a local landscape designation in the past or have a national designation now. Importantly it provides encouragement and guidance to district local planning authorities wanting to prepare district wide landscape character assessments.
- 1.4 It will help planners, environmental organisations, land managers and owners, developers and other interested groups and individuals to understand and manage our landscape resources. It will help local planning authorities develop policy and make decisions based on sound landscape character information to help manage, conserve and enhance landscape character in the future.

## What is landscape and why is it important to Cumbria?

- 1.5 Landscapes are everywhere and forever changing. We have some of the country's most stunning and highly valued landscapes in Cumbria. But the rest of the county's landscapes are also considered beautiful, highly valued locally and easily accessible which aids people's appreciation of them. Their character is important as it helps make places distinctive, provides breathing and playing space, space for nature and provides a life support system to us all. By understanding the character of our landscapes we can better manage, protect and plan for their futures.

1.6 A commonly accepted definition of what landscape means is set out in the European Landscape Convention<sup>1</sup>:

*“Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”.*

1.7 In general terms this means that

- Landscape is derived from natural and human factors including geology, landform, soils, land cover, wildlife and nature, historic features, cultural identity, settlement patterns, land use patterns and the inter relationship between these factors.
- Landscape can be any area; be it urban, rural or coastal.
- Landscape is what people perceive it to be and can be linked to memories, associations, sounds, smells and sight, time of day, seasons etc.

1.8 Landscape is made up of a large and diverse range of characteristics. Some are stable and unchanging, such as landform. Others are more ephemeral, such as seasonal colour and weather conditions. Perceptual matters such as associations and memories are considered alongside more ‘concrete’ aspects such as vegetation cover and settlement patterns. Together these characteristics give a landscape a ‘sense of place’.

1.9 Landscape is not just the picture perfect scenery associated with the national parks, nor even the more commonplace rural, countryside landscapes found in much of Cumbria. Landscapes are what we look at from our workplaces, the industrial estates where we have our cars serviced and the local parks where our children play. The docks at Barrow are much one of our landscapes as are Blencathra and Helvellyn. The photographs on the next page are included to illustrate this concept, both in terms of scenic value and in terms of types of landscapes.

1.10 The way in which we perceive our landscape has evolved, both in terms of how people see it, and in terms of academic, legislative and policy processes. The European Landscape Convention champions

a new trend, which is to consider all landscapes. Natural England is charged with promoting European Landscape Convention aims in England, and they have adopted the phrase ‘All Landscapes Matter’ to sum up the concept.

1.11 It is important to adopt this ‘All Landscapes Matter’ approach in order to:

- ensure that our ‘ordinary’ landscapes do not get forgotten;
- realise that a landscape is more than just scenery;
- ensure a consistent approach to land use and land management decisions.

### Living landscapes and managing change

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1.12 Landscapes are dynamic and will change over time. By understanding what is there now, and why, we can help manage future change and enhancement. Even the most heavily protected landscapes, such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, will change over time.

1.13 By describing and understanding what makes our landscapes distinctive and by understanding the influences affecting landscapes, we can develop guidelines that help to manage change that is appropriate and sustainable. When developing guidelines a range of options can be considered such as should a landscape be conserved, should change be low key and subtle, should the landscape be ‘reinvented’ or should a new feature be allowed to redefine the character?

1.14 In line with European Landscape Convention we should look to:

- **protect** landscapes which are valued so that their significant characteristics are conserved;
- **manage** landscapes so that changes due to social, economic or environmental processes are sustainable;
- **plan** with a strong forward-looking action to enhance, restore or create new landscapes.

This guidance seeks to do this.

1. The UK Government signed up to the European Landscape Convention in 2008. This is an international convention focussing specifically on landscape and it is dedicated exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. While the convention does not have any legal status, it has been signed and ratified by many European nations, including the UK Government, which is committed to supporting its aims.

# Cumbria's varied landscapes



## Cumbria's Stunning Fells and Lakes

*In the centre of Cumbria the Lake District is a special and nationally valued landscape with high scenic value and strong historic and cultural associations.*



## Cumbria's Working Countryside

*In the rural parts of Cumbria a simple and pleasant working farmed landscape forms a typical view.*



## Cumbria's Breathing Spaces

*Open spaces on the edges of towns and villages are often highly valued locally as they contrast with the built up character.*



## Cumbria's Fringe Landscape

*Sports and recreation functions can often be found at the edges of towns and villages forming a transition with the open countryside.*



## Cumbria's Urban Landscape

*For many in Cumbria our daily lives are linked to the urban places we live and work in*



## Cumbria's Coast and Seascapes

*Cumbria's coast is varied and can be dramatic and wild or link strongly with past and present industry.*

## 2. Understanding Landscape Character

### Summary

Landscape character assessment is a tool that helps us to understand what makes our landscapes distinctive. It can be carried out from a national scale right down to a site specific scale. It is an important tool to help guide proposals that change our landscapes' character and applies to all types of land management and development; from planting or felling woodland, creating lakes, building new houses on the edge of a town or siting major energy infrastructure. This section sets out how to develop and use landscape character assessment, how it can inform such land management and land use decisions and what to look for when designing for landscape compatibility.

### What is landscape character assessment and what is its role?

- 2.1 Landscape character assessment or landscape characterisation is the process of systematically characterising, describing and mapping landscapes. Landscape character assessment embraces themes of the physical, social, cultural, perceptual and natural environment, covers all landscapes and involves all people. They can be an aid to decision making – a tool to help understand what the landscape is like today, how it came to be like that, and how it may change in the future. They support a judgement making stage that can help protect, plan and manage landscapes into the future. Landscape character assessment is also the name given to a study's end product.
- 2.2 Landscape character assessment is widely undertaken across the UK, at a variety of scales. It is important for local planning authorities to develop landscape character assessments to provide detailed information on the characteristics which make their landscapes distinctive. This information can act as an evidence base and support planning, land use and land management decisions. Landscape character assessments will:
- assist policy formulation, help understand environmental capacity and determine site allocation in the emerging local development frameworks;
  - support local authority decision making;
  - support enhancement of 'ordinary' landscapes, as well as protection of 'special' landscapes;
  - improve the kinds of change which occur across districts and county;
  - make change sustainable, and support sustainability policy;
  - help to avoid public inquiries and planning appeals, because decisions (whether for or against development) should be more robust, and less vulnerable to challenge;
  - help developers 'get it right' because they can better understand the landscape in which their proposals would sit;
  - if developed with local communities they can help enhance their understanding of what is special to them and their sense of place;
  - support national planning policy for a natural and healthy environment.
- 2.3 Landscape character assessments are normally undertaken by landscape architects to map the character of regions, counties or districts. Community groups are also encouraged to undertake landscape character assessments for their own local area, for example through the parish plan process. Landscape character assessments are often carried out to help understand the environmental effects of individual development proposals. They should always be carried out in accordance with guidance contained

in *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* (Countryside Agency/ Scottish Natural Heritage 2002), or any successor guidance.

### Mapping and describing landscape character

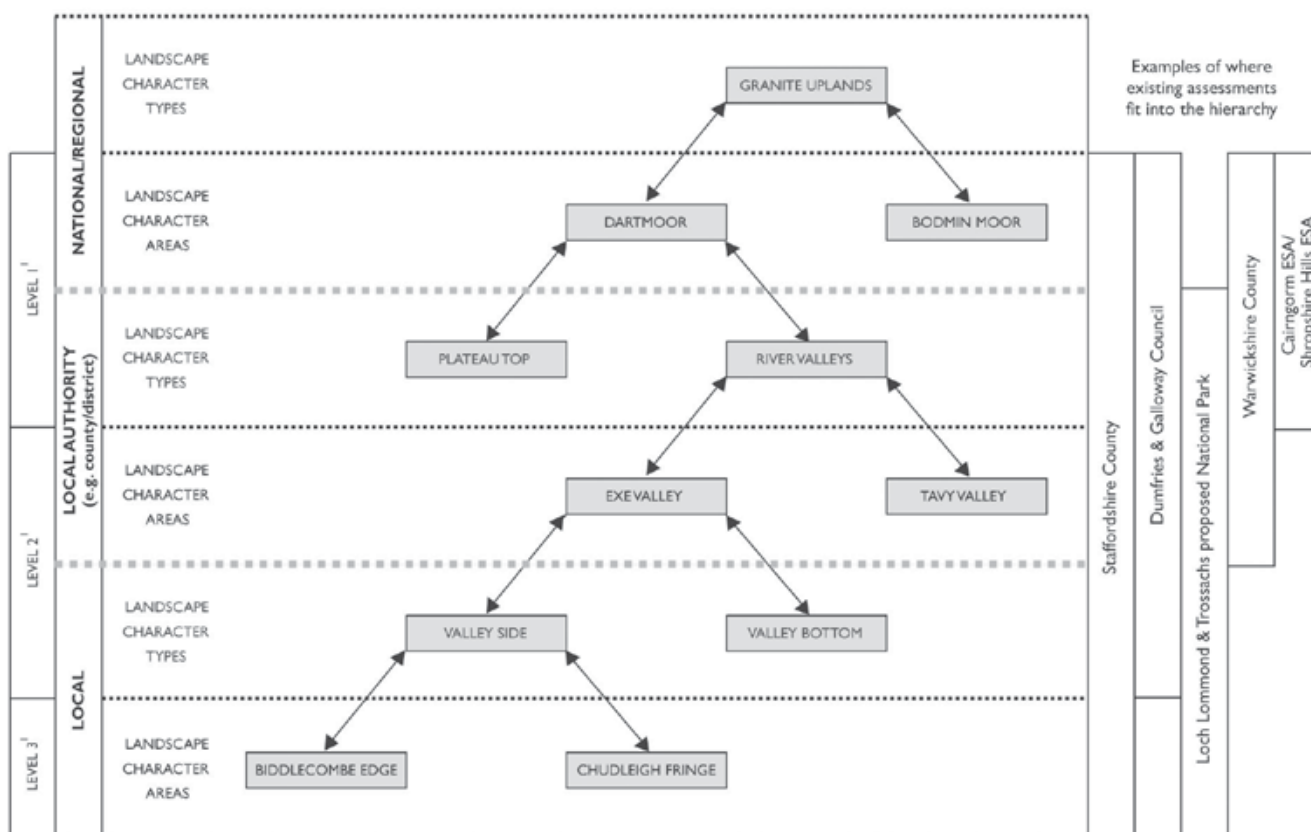
2.4 Usually, a landscape character assessment will map an area into generic landscape character types, sub types and geographically unique named character areas.

- Landscape character types and sub types are 'generic' and can occur in several different locations, at a district, county, regional or even national scale. They will all have the same characteristics, and be recognisably 'the same' as each other.
- Landscape character areas are unique and there will only ever be one area with that name, demonstrating the particular characteristics found in that area.

Figure 1, below, shows how types and areas can work together, like nesting Russian dolls: a generic type could be divided into a series of named character areas, and a named area could comprise several different character types.

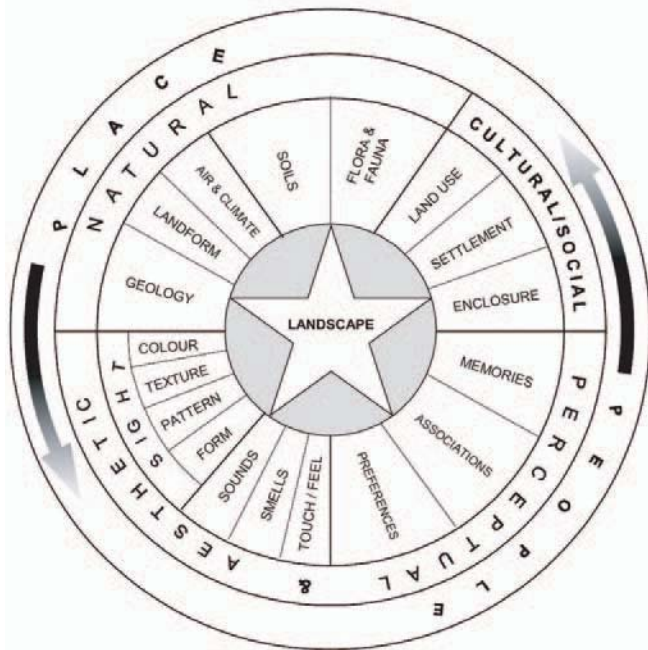
2.5 The characterisation process often includes the description of key characteristics of the types/sub types and/or areas. The descriptions should include physical biodiversity, cultural and historic features and perceptual impressions. From the descriptions it should be possible to envisage the landscape, and how it would feel to be there. It should also be possible to understand the forces which created it, and know the features it is made up of.

**Figure 1** The relationship between landscape types and landscape areas  
*'Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland' CA / SNH 2002*



<sup>1</sup>Some practitioners use this parallel system in parts of England but it is not used in Scotland

**Figure 2** The elements that make a 'landscape'  
 'Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for  
 England and Scotland' CA / SNH 2002



2.6 Figure 2, above, illustrates the characteristics which comprise landscape character. These are reflected in landscape descriptions. Because landscape characterisation considers physical, natural and cultural features along with aesthetics and perceptions the process is largely objective. In order to be robust the approach taken should always be consistent and based on transparent, best-practice characterisation techniques.

### Making judgements

2.7 The main value of carrying out landscape character assessments is to provide a basis to help manage change in a positive way. Making judgements on landscape character shouldn't focus only on maintaining the status quo, but instead consider how change can be accommodated in a way that is compatible with the local landscape character and where possible enhance it. Judgements are usually made in relation to site specific proposals, wider spatial planning considerations and to help develop landscape guidelines and strategies. They are often based on consideration of defined landscape character, quality or condition, value and the degree to which a landscape might be able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character.

### Involving people

2.8 As landscapes are what people perceive them to be, and everyone's views are important, views should be sought throughout the process. Views should be sought both when describing and mapping landscape character, and when making judgements. Judgement on whether, and how, landscapes should change will be more robust if stakeholders' views are taken into account. Involving people could mean anything from widespread involvement in new or revised landscape character assessments, or localised consultation in relation to specific development proposals or in preparing community led local landscape character assessments. Stakeholder views on perceptual matters are particularly valuable.

2.9 In summary, a landscape character assessment should paint a picture of the landscape as it is today, and will explain what physical and human forces have created it. It should also predict the forces which will cause it to change in the future and the nature of these changes whether they are welcomed or anticipated with concern.

### What landscape character assessment includes

2.10 A landscape character assessment would usually include:

- A map which indicates the boundaries of each landscape type and/or area.
- Descriptions for each type/sub type and/or area; including information about the topography, geology and soils, land use, vegetation cover, built form, boundary treatments, infrastructure, historical influences, biodiversity influences and a range of perceptual matters such as tranquillity and scale.
- Photographs or sketches to illustrate the key characteristics and typical appearance of each type and/or area.
- Information about the forces which have shaped the current landscape character, and the forces which could alter or influence the future landscape character.

2.11 And, if judgements follow on from the characterisation these can support the development of:

- Landscape and environmental planning policies.
- Landscape guidelines and strategies.
- Landscape enhancement proposals.
- Recommendations for landscape protection, such as extensions to national parks, or AONBs.
- Development proposals and spatial planning land allocations.

### Landscape character assessment in Cumbria

2.12 A number of different landscape character assessments have been produced for Cumbria, at a national, regional, county and nationally protected landscape level, as set out below. Parish and town councils are also embarking on local level assessments. Although the Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment is the only assessment that is published as part of this guidance and toolkit, other landscape character assessments are all linked to the toolkit and together form Cumbria's evidence base for landscape character. They should be used by decision makers, land owners and managers, environmental organisations and communities in Cumbria. All landscape character assessments provide important information and evidence, but the more localised the landscape character assessment, the more specific it becomes and the more relevant it might be to local decision making.

- National Character Areas (2009/10)
- North West Regional Landscape Character Framework (2009)
- Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment (2010)
- Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment (2008)
- Yorkshire Dales National Park Landscape Character Assessment (2001)
- Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2011)
- Solway Coast AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2011)
- North Pennines AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2011)

### **National Character Areas**

2.13 England has been divided up into a series of 159 national character areas that include information on landscape character assessment and biodiversity. Natural England is responsible for managing and updating information on the national character areas. These were reviewed in 2009/10. Each area is geographically unique and named to indicate a 'sense of place'. They describe, at a broad scale, the characteristics of the areas. In Cumbria there are 11 national character areas. Some cover landscapes found both within and beyond Cumbria's boundary. Some are very extensive, for example Cumbria High Fells covers most of the Lake District, while others are very small, such as the Howgill Fells.

2.14 The relevant National Character Areas are listed in Appendix I and their descriptions and maps are available on Natural England's website.

### **North West Regional Landscape Character Framework**

2.15 Natural England produced the '*North West Regional Landscape Character Framework*' in 2009. This maps and describes generic landscape types and areas for the north west region. It draws on information from existing county and district landscape character assessments, along with landform and physical feature information. Landscape types may occur throughout the region, for example the 'Upland Fringes' type could be found in Cumbria, Cheshire and Greater Manchester and all would have common characteristics. In contrast the character areas are geographically unique and draw on the national character areas above.

2.16 The framework has been further developed to include additional biodiversity, cultural heritage and seascape information. It is available on Natural England's website.

### **Cumbria's Landscape Character Assessment**

2.17 Cumbria's Landscape Character Assessment covers the area of the county which are not within the Lake District or Yorkshire Dales National Parks. It identifies generic landscape and seascape types and

sub types. It builds on and replaces the Cumbria Landscape Classification (1995) and the Cumbria Landscape Strategy (1997). Cumbria's Landscape Character Assessment is incorporated into Part One of this Toolkit.

### ***Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines***

2.18 The Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines was published in 2008. It maps both generic landscape types and geographically specific landscape areas (which are called 'Distinctive Character Areas'). In general the landscape types harmonise with those adjoining them outside the national park boundary. Distinctive character areas are generally larger; their boundaries often go beyond the boundaries of landscape types, and they are strongly driven by localised sense of place. This landscape character assessment focuses on countryside areas with some information about the character of settlements and other built up areas. The guidelines apply to both landscape types and distinctive character areas.

### ***Yorkshire Dales National Park Landscape Character Assessment***

2.19 The Yorkshire Dales Landscape Character Assessment was published in 2001 and is currently being reviewed. Like the Lake District assessment it identifies landscape character types and areas. It also includes guidance on changes linked to a quality of life assessment. It covers a small part of Cumbria.

### ***Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) landscape character assessments***

2.20 Landscape character assessments for Arnside and Silverdale AONB, North Pennines AONB and Solway Coast AONB were originally carried out in the early to mid 1990s and identified landscape types. These have recently been reviewed and new landscape character assessments will be available in 2011. These will map and describe landscape types and areas, and set out guidelines for managing change.

### ***District-wide landscape character assessments***

2.21 There are currently no district scale landscape character assessments in Cumbria. District councils are being encouraged to undertake landscape character assessments for their areas, to provide them with more detailed information on their landscape character than is available at a county level and to help better inform planning and development decision making. Carrying out assessments at this scale provide a good opportunity to describe local vernacular, building materials and styles in more detail and develop landscape character areas. Where districts are in a position to develop these, they should include more detail than that of the county level landscape character assessment, and mapping should be at a scale of 1:25,000. In the absence of a district scale landscape character assessment the county scale Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment should provide local authorities and others with sufficient information to support landscape character policy and guide development decisions.

2.22 Guidance to help and encourage local authorities to produce district wide landscape character assessments is set out in section 4 of this part of the Toolkit and in '*Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland*' CA/SNH 2002.

### ***Parish, town and village landscape character assessments***

2.23 In some parts of the country, parishes and villages have undertaken their own localised landscape character assessment. This can sometimes take place as part of the parish plan process. These documents are useful because they enable local communities to record what is important about their own environment, and influence decisions about local development. They also provide a good opportunity to describe local vernacular, building materials and styles. It is anticipated that local assessments will be produced for Levens and Kendal and surrounds in 2011. If published in accordance with national guidance and guidance in this toolkit these, and other local assessments, should form part of Cumbria's family of landscape character assessments and should be referred to when

developing policy and projects. More information on carrying out this scale of landscape character assessment can be found on CPRE's website and in its *'Unlocking the Landscape Toolkit'* 2006.

### **Site specific landscape character assessment**

2.24 Site specific landscape character assessments are often produced to enable robust impact assessments to be made for development proposals. Local planning authorities can carry them out on a site by site basis, or around the edges of settlements to help determine where development might be appropriate and to support site allocations for housing and employment in local development frameworks. They may be legally required under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, or they can be discretionary, undertaken by developers who are committed to the best quality of development. The more complex or large the development the more important it is for a landscape character assessment to be undertaken, and the more likely that a development specific landscape character assessment would be needed as part of an Environmental Statement (to meet the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations). This kind of landscape character assessment normally focuses on the site and wider area around the proposed development.

### **Landscape character and policy development**

2.25 Change in landscape character is to a large extent inevitable, has happened across the ages, and for many landscapes change is not only desirable, but necessary. The fact that landscape character needs to be taken into account in decision making does not mean that change should necessarily be resisted. But change should be carefully considered, should ideally be complementary to landscape character and decision making should be supported by robust landscape character evidence.

2.26 The need to develop policy to support landscape character is recognised in national and regional policy. These identify the need for landscape assessments and strategies to be put in place to support local landscape character policy.

2.27 The North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Policy EMI will provide guidance on landscape character until it is formally revoked. This is supported by Policy E37 of the Cumbria Joint Structure Plan which was extended, but not replaced, on approval of the RSS. Policy E37 is a criteria based policy that sets out the issues that need to be addressed to help determine if a proposal is likely to be compatible with local landscape character or not. This policy will remain until it is replaced by each district through the adoption of landscape policy in their local development frameworks or until such time that it is revoked through an act or a direction from government.

2.28 At a local level most local planning authorities have local plan policy relating to landscape character. These are being reviewed and new policies are being developed to support the natural environment and landscape character in their emerging local development frameworks.

2.29 In line with the European Landscape Convention and Natural England's approach to landscape character, policy should recognise that all landscapes matter and shouldn't only seek to protect national landscape designations. Policy should also move away from protecting county wide or local landscape designations. Instead it should be criteria based, and cover all landscapes. More information on moving away from local landscape designations and policy is set out in Section 3.

2.30 This toolkit provides the information and evidence base to support policy development and implementation in the local development frameworks. Core strategies should include a strategic policy addressing the protection and where appropriate the restoration and enhancement of our landscapes as part of the sustainable long term vision for the area.

2.31 Other local development documents should develop the core strategy through a range of policies and proposals that:

- Protect, conserve and enhance nationally designated landscapes, and their settings, in accordance with the purposes for which they were designated, maintaining and enhancing their character and distinctiveness.
- Protect, conserve and enhance the distinctive character, qualities and features of Cumbria's landscapes, seascapes and townscapes in line with the Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment contained in this guidance and toolkit and other relevant landscape character assessments.
- Ensure development proposals are assessed for their compatibility against the full range of characteristics that contribute to the local landscape including soils, land form, land cover, biodiversity, historic environment, cultural heritage and traditional land use patterns in development and regeneration proposals.
- Seek landscaping and planting schemes that are compatible with the local landscape character, that complements the locality and help achieve biodiversity objectives.

### Landscape character and land use decisions

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2.32 Landscape character evidence should be taken into account when implementing planning policy and making land use decisions. It can also influence the overall development strategy in local development frameworks, spatial planning decisions for housing and employment land allocation, and the formulation and decisions for individual development proposals.

2.33 Landscape character assessment can also help support land use decisions for other organisations such as:

- assisting funding agencies decide where and how to spend money on anything from local environmental improvements to agri-environmental schemes to national lottery funding;

- local authorities, government agencies and land managers recording the landscape at a particular point in time. Change in the landscape can be monitored against this benchmark;
- local communities wanting to help make (or plan) changes to their landscapes and guide their response to local authority land allocation proposals or specific development proposals;
- land managers and landowners wanting to understand their land past and present, and frame decisions on future management and change, for example in planning new forestry or agricultural land use;
- individuals wanting to gain a better understanding of the area in which they live.

### Landscape character assessment and decision making

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2.34 Development management planners should firstly use the landscape character assessments to help them decide whether change is appropriate for the landscape in question, and if so, what kind of change is appropriate. Following on from this the landscape character assessments will help them decide whether a development is in the right place, if it will fit well into the existing (or evolving) landscape, whether modifications to the siting or design are required, and ultimately whether the planning application should be approved or not.

2.35 Developers should use landscape character assessments to guide their decision from the earliest site selection stage right through to detailed design. It is vital that both the characterisation evidence and any strategies and guidelines inform decisions. In the case of large scale, complex or controversial development proposals the landscape character assessment will be essential to assist in statutory environmental impact assessment. It can help determine site development, what shape it should take, and what landscaping could help integrate it into the local landscape and townscape.

2.36 Other interested parties, for example people living near the proposed development, should use the landscape character assessment to help them

decide whether they wish to support or object to a development, or suggest changes to improve a proposal.

2.37 There may be instances where additional site specific evidence needs to be collected. For example, a site specific landscape character assessment may be needed to determine a planning application, or to inform decisions about land allocation. It should also be remembered that detailed information might also be need to be collected for heritage and biodiversity characteristics that relate to the site. Surveys may be needed to determine whether specific archaeological, historical resources or wildlife species could be affected by a development. In these cases the evidence collected will supplement that of Cumbria’s existing evidence base for landscape, biodiversity and historic environment. This evidence may be required by the planning authority, or be volunteered by the developer.

2.38 The table below provides some general guidelines on what kind of information will be needed for different scales and complexities of development. However, it is important to remember that more detailed information may need to be used even for

some smaller development proposals, particularly if they are in sensitive locations. Similarly, it may be necessary to collect more site specific evidence (e.g. field surveys into landscape character, biodiversity and cultural heritage) for even the smallest of development proposals.

### Landscape character design principles and checklist

2.39 All decisions which could affect landscape character should be made on their own merit. The existing landscape character, strategies for the future of that landscape, and the nature of proposed development all need to be taken into account. However, there are some ‘general issues’ which are applicable to almost all development proposals and other proposed landscape change. These can be applied to site allocations and development proposals alike.

Type of development	Scale of Landscape Character Assessment information needed
Developments which do not require planning permission on the edges of settlements or in the countryside.	Developers, private home owners etc should aim to design and site development that complements the local landscape character, paying attention to local characteristics.
Small scale domestic extensions etc requiring planning permission on the edges of settlements or in the countryside.	Developers, private home owners should aim to design and site development that complements the local landscape character, paying attention to local characteristics. If available it would be good practice to check the district scale and/or County Landscape Character Assessments.
Small developments such as clusters of houses, small industrial or retail units, requiring planning permission.	National, regional, county and district (if available) Landscape Character Assessments should be referred to. It is unlikely that further development-specific landscape character assessments would be needed. More detailed biodiversity and cultural heritage surveys may be needed.
Large scale or complex developments requiring planning permission and submission of an Environmental Statement to accompany the planning application.	All levels of evidence should be referred to and further evidence in the form of detailed site-specific Landscape Character Assessments should be used to help site and design any schemes. More detailed biodiversity and cultural heritage surveys may be needed.

2.40 When considering development proposals, land allocations, or other landscape change, such as woodland felling or planting energy crops etc, the following questions should be considered with regard to landscape character:

- Should the landscape in this area remain the same or should change be allowed or even encouraged?
- What kind of changes should be encouraged or discouraged?
- Is investment in environmental improvement needed here?
- Should this area have a local development framework land allocation, and if so, what would it be?
- Where would development fit best into the landscape?
- What shape and size should development be, and what materials should it be made of?
- Does the development fit well in the local landscape?
- Should this planning application be approved?
- Should there be planning conditions attached to this planning approval, and if so, what should they be? Will these conditions benefit landscape character?

2.41 Following on from these the following issues should be addressed when considering the location, siting and design of a proposal:

- **Scale:** Consider whether the development will be at the right scale for the landscape. Will it look 'in proportion'? And should it look 'in proportion'?
- **Landform:** Do the proposed landforms sit well with existing landforms, or do they contrast?
- **Colour:** Is the existing landscape muted or vibrant, and are the proposals harmonious or contrasting? Which is more appropriate: harmony or contrast?
- **Mass:** Is the size and shape of the development appropriate in relation to the massing of existing elements?
- **Two dimensional patterns:** Would the development change the pattern on the ground? Would field shapes and sizes, and the relationship between buildings and open spaces change?
- **Skylines:** Would the skyline remain unaffected – from all angles? Would a new skyline be created,

and would this have beneficial or adverse impacts on landscape character?

- **Boundary Treatment:** What are existing boundaries made of: dry stone walling, brick, fencing or hedgerows? Would the development's boundaries be similar? If not, is change appropriate?
- **Vegetation Cover:** Would the development change the proportion of tree/ shrub cover and if so, is this desirable or not? What about the pattern of vegetation cover; is it (and will it be) in informal shapes, regular blocks, or linear? Will the plant species be similar or different, and how would this affect landscape character?
- **Materials:** Would the development be constructed of materials which are characteristic, or would it introduce new materials? Do new materials represent a new vernacular style?
- **Tranquillity:** Is the existing area peaceful or bustling? How would development affect the level of activity?
- **Wildness:** Does the area feel wild and remote or more civilised? Would the development affect this, and would change be desirable or not?
- **Enclosure or Exposure:** Is the area expansive or intimate and how would the development affect the characteristic?
- **Proximity:** Would the development affect landscape character between nearby settlements?

### *Exceptions to the Rules*

2.42 Sometimes a new development may be acceptable even if it changes the area's landscape character or 'breaks' some of the rules. However, it is likely that some of the other rules will be followed. For example, a steel and glass fronted earth sheltered building may be made of uncharacteristic materials, but it may be acceptable if its scale is appropriate and its landform marries into the existing contours.

2.43 In some rare cases, a development may 'break all the rules', these types of development tend to be iconic, unique and occasional in the landscape, and subject to a great deal of planning scrutiny.

## 3. All Landscapes Matter

### Summary

In recent years there has been a shift in emphasis from local landscape designation to one focussing on the principle that all landscapes matter. As a result there is a need for local authorities to take a different approach to protecting, managing and planning their landscapes. By using the landscape character approach the key characteristics and sensitivities of a landscape can be recorded and understood. This assists in making decisions in relation to development, management and planning for all landscapes and not just those previously considered to be more highly valued. This section provides guidance to local authorities to encourage the 'all landscapes matter' approach when reviewing landscape policy, strategies and protection.

### Moving away from Local Landscape Designations

- 3.1 In 2008 the United Kingdom signed up to the European Landscape Convention. This emphasises that landscape exists everywhere, and whether they are considered beautiful or degraded, they are a part of everyone's shared inheritance. It seeks to effect a transition from policy which focuses on outstanding areas to one focusing on the quality of all living surroundings. As a result of signing up to the convention, Natural England is promoting the principle that 'all landscapes matter'. All landscapes should be managed, planned and protected to be distinctive, valued and support a healthy natural environment.
- 3.2 This approach builds on Planning Policy Statement 7, which promotes a move away from local landscape designations, and encourages the use of landscape character assessment to work with criteria based policies to cover all landscape. Although the government recognises and accepts that there are areas of landscape outside nationally designated areas that are particularly highly valued locally it believes that carefully drafted, criteria based policies in local development documents, utilising tools such as landscape character assessment, should provide sufficient protection for these areas, without the need for rigid local designation that may unduly restrict acceptable, sustainable development and the economic activity that underpins the vitality of rural areas. Landscape character assessment is recognised as a key tool to support the shift to the 'all landscapes matter' approach.
- 3.3 When developing their local development framework, local planning authorities should consider the justification for retaining local landscape designations. Current policy suggests that local landscape designations should only be maintained or exceptionally extended where it can be clearly shown that criteria based planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection. If there is a desire to retain local landscape designations they must be based on an up to date landscape character assessment. This should identify the area's special qualities and provide the justification in local development documents for what it is that requires extra protection, and why.
- 3.4 In summary international convention and national policy and guidance are expecting local authorities to use to inform future landscape decisions and move away from a continued reliance on local landscape designations.

## What are Local Landscape Designations?

- 3.5 Local landscape designations have been part of the planning system for a number of decades in England. They are non-statutory designations, mainly applied by local planning authorities to:
- Protect landscapes and landscape features by their designation;
  - promote understanding and awareness of distinctive landscapes and features;
  - identify specific management requirements.
- 3.6 Local landscape designations are predominantly included in structure and local plans and regularly supported by specific policies.
- 3.7 However as these designations are created at a local level, there are often differences, not only in the varying titles authorities use, such as 'Special Landscape Areas', and 'Areas of Attractive Landscape' but also in the values the local landscape designations are given.
- 3.8 In Cumbria a countywide policy framework supported local landscape designations as Landscapes of County Importance in the Joint Cumbria Structure Plan until September 2008. Landscapes of County Importance were applied to areas throughout the county outside nationally designated areas. These included large areas of South Lakeland; southern parts of Eden; around the western edges of the Lake District National Park; around the Solway Coast; adjacent to the North Pennines AONB; and close to the Scottish and Northumbrian borders in the north. They originated in the 1980's and were subject to a review in 2002. This policy was not 'saved' in the Joint Cumbria Structure Plan.
- 3.9 In the past a number of the local authorities developed district level local landscape designations (see 3.13) which were supported by policy in their local plans. Some of the districts have 'saved' local plan policy relating to both local landscape designations and Landscape of County Importance designations as part of the transition to adopting local development framework.

## How are they used?

- 3.10 Local landscape designations are proposed and implemented predominantly by local planning authorities and have been mainly used to:
- Aid Planning decisions.
  - Enhance development quality.
  - Design and deliver landscape enhancement schemes and proposals.
- 3.11 A review of local authorities with local landscape designations was carried out in 2006<sup>2</sup> and found that:
- Local landscape designations policies do not typically facilitate appropriate development or actively promote the enhancement of local character and distinctiveness within these areas;
  - the approach is often accompanied by a lack of policy guidance on securing opportunities for conservation and enhancement benefits in the wider or 'everyday' landscapes outside of local landscape designations;
  - that focusing on the 'best landscapes' can exclude improvements to degraded landscapes;
  - Local landscape designations are often not fully justified by a robust evidence base;
  - Local landscape designations were often not used as primary reasons for refusal in planning applications, due to their interpretation by local planning authorities as having less weight than in the past based on PPS7 requirements.
  - A significant proportion of local authorities (43%) stated that they were considering alternative approaches to local landscape designations in their Local Development Frameworks.
- 3.12 There are a number of reasons for the above issues arising, however, many are due to the time lapsed since the areas were designated; inadequate evidence to explain or evaluate the reasons for the original designations and/or the landscape itself has changed but the designation and respective policies have remained.

2. Review of Local Landscape Designations – June 2006, Chris Blandford Associates.

### *Local landscape designations in Cumbria*

3.13 In Cumbria there is no longer a county wide policy supporting Landscape of County Importance. The Joint Cumbria Structure Plan Policy E36 was not retained when the North West Regional Spatial Strategy was adopted in September 2008 to reflect the shift away from the approach in line with PPS7. It is expected that Policy EM1 of North West Regional Spatial Strategy and Saved Policy E37 of the Joint Cumbria Structure Plan, until revoked or replaced, will continue to provide criteria based policies for landscape that support the principle of 'all landscapes matter'.

3.14 In response to PPS7 many local authorities are in the process of moving away from local landscape designations in favour of criteria based policies based on the landscape character assessment based approach. There is a good opportunity to do this as local authorities are preparing local development frameworks. Several local authorities in Cumbria have 'saved' landscape of county importance policy from their local plans to prevent a policy gap whilst their local development frameworks are prepared. They will be reviewing their approach through the local development framework process, but the policy position in 2010 is as follows:

- Allerdale Borough Council has retained policy EN22 in respect to Landscapes of County Importance but has not saved policy EN23 in relation to Locally Important Landscapes.
- Barrow Borough Council has retained several policies in relation to Local Landscape Designations, these include, D2, Landscapes of County Importance, D3, Areas of Special Landscape Value and D4, Green Wedges.
- Carlisle City Council retained policy EP10 in relation to Landscapes of County Importance however the Local Plan (2008) recognises that the approach needs to be taken.
- Copeland Borough Council has retained all policies to Local Landscape Designations and have stated a commitment to landscape character assessment in relation to PPS7, these policies are: ENV6 Landscapes of County Importance and Policy ENV9 Areas of Local Landscape Importance.

- Eden District Council has retained policy NE3, in relation Landscapes of County Importance.
- South Lakeland District has 'saved' policy C2 in relation to 'Green Gaps.'
- Within the Lake District National Park there are no Local Landscape Designations as the area is a nationally protected landscape.

3.15 Through the development of local development frameworks the opportunity exists to reassess local landscape policy and specifically local landscape designations policy to determine the best way to protect sensitive landscape from inappropriate development whilst actively promoting the enhancement of local character and distinctiveness in all areas. If local authorities are considering retaining local landscape designations in their local development framework they need to recognise that these should be based on an up to date and robust landscape character assessment. This is necessary to provide a rigorous and transparent means of identifying the areas of local landscape quality and value.

### *Moving forward*

3.16 'All Landscapes Matter' does not challenge the concept behind local landscape designations rather it builds on it. It recognises that local landscape designations were set in place 'to safeguard' 'special landscapes' not protected by national designation. However, importantly, the principle recognises that all landscapes are special in some way to someone. It is considered appropriate in Cumbria for local planning authorities to move away from local designations and towards an all landscapes matter approach. In certain parts of the county the landscapes are well recognised and valued, and in other parts they are not as well recognised. Despite this we all agree that Cumbria has a very high landscape quality. Using a landscape character assessment approach will enable us to protect, manage and appropriately plan and change all of our landscapes, and not just those that have had greater recognition in the past. Local authorities can be more reactive to changes within the landscape and not tied into local landscape designations. This provides a more flexible approach to protection.

- 3.17 The landscape character assessment approach in conjunction with understanding the evolving nature of our landscape will help us to understand how development may or may not affect the special aspects of the landscape. All landscapes are different; a specific development in one area may be totally inappropriate due to the landscape's specific sensitivities, however, the same development may enhance the character of another area. It is in this way that "All Landscapes Matter" challenges the blanket approach of local landscape designations.
- 3.18 District wide landscape character assessments would help provide a more detailed level of information than available at the county level and provide extra detail to help make sure all landscapes matter at the local level. Guidance is provided in Section 4 for local authorities wishing to carry out a district wide landscape character assessment to provide additional detail.
- 3.19 Local authorities that choose not to include new local landscape designations policy in their local development framework can ensure they have a strong approach to protecting, managing and planning the landscape by developing criteria based policies and referring to existing landscape character assessments, such as the Cumbria National Parks and Areas of Natural Beauty Landscape Character Assessments. Until they are replaced or revoked, "saved" policy E37 of the Joint Cumbria Structure Plan and Policy EMI of the North West Regional Spatial Strategy, can be drawn on to help devise policy. In addition more detailed information can be provided through:
- Site specific landscape character assessments in relation to specific development proposals or land allocations, and
  - Supplementary planning documents on landscape character.
- 3.20 The Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document 2007 provides additional landscape character information. Attention has been given to particular sensitivities within a landscape such as scale and enclosure, remoteness and tranquillity in relation to wind turbines. This guidance covers both rural and urban areas. It includes a strategic landscape capacity assessment and provides guidance for siting, design and cumulative effects for landscape and visual issues.
- 3.21 As local authorities review their 'saved' local development documents policy and develop their local development framework, serious consideration should be given to why they might want to create new policy for local landscape designations in their local development framework. If new policy is to be developed it should be based on an up to date and detailed landscape character assessments carried out at a district scale. This should determine the boundaries of local landscape designations, its special and distinctive characteristics, and its sensitivities to development. It would also help to determine how to manage, plan and protect these landscapes appropriately.

## How to go Forward

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- 3.19 Local authorities that choose not to include new local landscape designations policy in their local development framework can ensure they have a strong approach to protecting, managing and planning the landscape by developing criteria based policies and referring to existing landscape character assessments, such as the Cumbria National Parks and Areas of Natural Beauty Landscape Character Assessments. Until they are replaced or revoked, "saved" policy E37 of the Joint Cumbria Structure Plan and Policy EMI of the North West Regional Spatial Strategy, can be drawn on to help devise policy. In addition more detailed information can be provided through:
- Site specific landscape character assessments in relation to specific development proposals or land allocations, and
  - Supplementary planning documents on landscape character.
- 3.20 The Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document 2007 provides additional landscape character information. Attention has

## 4. An Integrated Framework for Cumbria

### Summary

To help provide more detailed landscape character information and better support future planning and land management decision, Cumbria's Local Authorities are being encouraged to develop district level landscape character assessments. For those that choose to take this approach, this section sets out guidance and advice on how to do it. This guidance aims to encourage a consistent approach to be taken so a coherent framework of assessments can be developed across the county.

It should be noted that this section does not provide local authorities with a detailed brief upon which they could base a landscape character assessment.

### Why undertake landscape character assessment at a district scale?

- 4.1 As highlighted previously, Cumbria comprises a very diverse range of landscapes, many of which are highly valued and statutorily protected at a national level. The county also includes large tracts of land which have in the past been recognised as being important at a county or local authority level. Even beyond these locally designated areas, there are many undesignated but valued landscapes. It is important to understand the character of a landscape and its condition, and for judgements to be made on its sensitivity to change and value. Landscape character assessments can assist with this, and these judgements will in turn, support decision making by planners, developers and others.
- 4.2 At present landscape character assessment exists at a county scale for Cumbria and within the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks. District level scale landscape character assessments are being developed for the AONBs. District level landscape character assessments can provide a more detailed level of information on landscape types and areas, and are usually mapped at a scale of 1:25,000.
- 4.3 A 'finer grained' or more detailed assessment can better support local decision making and can ensure all landscapes are considered equally. District level landscape character assessments should complement and build upon county level assessment.
- 4.4 District level landscape character assessments can also support a move away from local landscape designations, as set out in the previous section. However if, as part of the local development framework process, local authorities consider there are exceptional circumstances to carry forward 'saved' policy then a robust and up to date district level landscape character assessment should be carried out to determine where local landscape designation might be appropriate.
- 4.5 District level landscape character assessments are a helpful tool to support the work of planners, whether they are involved in policy development, land allocation or development control. It also assists developers to site and design schemes that are compatible with the local landscape and should help them to be more environmentally sound and acceptable. Communities and individuals can use it to inform their views on landscape change in their areas. Better landscape information could also help save time, money and conflict.

4.6 The same can be said for more local level character assessments and the guidance below equally applies to them as it does to district level assessments.

### ***Compatibility with existing landscape character assessments in Cumbria***

4.7 As set out in section 2, a range of landscape character assessments already apply at higher levels to Cumbria. In addition some districts are carrying out landscape character assessments around key settlements to help determine land allocations in the local development framework.

4.8 In the past landscape character assessments have been carried out at different scales and at different times. This has led to some differences in the landscape character assessment. There are different ways of expressing the characterisation, especially relating to the use of landscape character types, landscape areas, and distinctive or unique character areas.

4.9 Across Cumbria there is generally a good relationship between character types, with the more recent mapping of types in the national park 'tying-in' well with the pre-existing county landscape types. However, the Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment only characterises and maps generic landscape character types and sub types at a scale of 1:50,000. It does not identify unique character areas, nor describe the character of towns or cities. The National Parks map and describe types and sub types at the same scale, and distinctive character areas at a more detailed scale of 1:25,000.

4.10 It is important that any future district scale, or more local scale, landscape character assessments are compatible with both existing landscape character assessments and with each other. Compatibility is important because it will make the landscape character evidence base easier to understand, easier to use and more robust.

4.11 In Cumbria, district level landscape character assessment will work best if it builds upon the landscape character types and sub-types

developed at county level, in other words, district level landscape character assessments should be a finer grained version of the county landscape character assessment. Importantly they provide the opportunity to include landscape character areas, and characterise built up areas too. The same principle applies to more local level assessments too.

### **Supporting landscape evidence**

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4.12 When putting together landscape character evidence for Cumbria other studies have been drawn upon. These should also inform any district level landscape character assessments. Of particular note are the Cumbria Historic Landscape Character Assessment and the Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence base. Landscape history and biodiversity strongly influence an area's landscape character and it is important to use this information when carrying out landscape character assessments.

### ***Cumbria's Historic Environment evidence***

4.13 When considering historic and cultural influences the following sources should be used:

- *Cumbria Historic Landscape Characterisation* - This characterises historic landscape types and historic landscape areas within Cumbria. As with landscape character, types are generic and areas are geographically specific. General guidelines are provided for key landscape types. The definition of areas is designed to help lay people to take historic landscape character into account in decision making. Landscape types can also be used but they require more expert interpretation. This is available as a GIS resource. This is supported by a guide to the *Cumbria Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Database for Cumbria's Planning Authorities* gives guidance on how to use the Cumbria Historic Landscape Characterisation. A series of succinct descriptions for each of the Character Areas, plus some guidelines on managing change are contained in an appendix to the guidance.

- *Cumbria Historic Environment Record*. This provides information on known archaeological sites, finds, landscapes, buildings, heritage assets and other aspects of the historic environment
- *Extensive Urban Survey*. This contains information similar to that of the historic landscape characterisation, but covering urban areas, except Carlisle.
- *Archaeological Database for Carlisle*. This is a record of archaeological finds in the Carlisle area; it does not describe the character of the areas where the finds were made.

This information is available to planners in Cumbria on their internal websites. For others, information can be obtained from the County Council or Local Planning Authorities.

#### 4.14 Data is also held on:

- commons and village greens, from the county and the districts;
- registered parks and gardens and registered battlefields, from MAGIC website or English Heritage;
- conservation areas, from districts and;
- settlement scale characterisation, part of the Historic Environment Record.

### **Cumbria's Biodiversity evidence**

#### 4.15 When considering biodiversity, habitat and species influences the following sources should be used:

- Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence Base for Cumbria's Planning Authorities is a series of documents, spreadsheets, species and habitat statements and information on GIS. It contains information about plant and animal species and the habitats which sustain them.
- A Guide to the Use of the Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence Base is a companion document which explains how the extensive evidence base should be used. This resource should be used to understand the biodiversity issues across Cumbria. Importantly it provides more detailed guidelines for restoration and enhancement of key habitats and species than can be included in the Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment.

This information is available to all on [www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk](http://www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk) or from the County Records Centre, Tullie House, Carlisle.

### **Tranquillity mapping**

4.16 The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) has mapped areas of tranquillity in England. While the scale of the mapping is relatively crude, there may be instances where this evidence is useful. The information is available on CPRE's website. It has been used to inform the review of the Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment and should be used in the production of district wide landscape character assessments. Areas of Open Access could also be used to help identify more tranquil areas.

4.17 District level landscape character assessment should be developed in accordance with established national guidance and methodology contained in '*Landscape Character Assessment Guidelines for England and Scotland*' (*The Countryside Agency/SNH 2002*) and its supplementary Topic Papers. This was updated in 2010 and in future the most up to date version of the guidance should be followed. The key stages for carrying out any landscape character assessment are classifying and describing the landscape character and making judgments to guide future landscape change. Appendix 2, Extracts from '*Landscape Character Assessment Guidelines for England and Scotland*', explains these stages in more detail. It is especially important that judgement making is kept separate, and undertaken after the characterisation stage, to ensure objectivity.

### **The methodology for landscape character assessment in Cumbria**

4.18 The following guidance draws on the national landscape character assessment guidelines and attempts to set out a framework for landscape character assessment preparation in Cumbria.

4.19 Landscape character assessment needs to be undertaken by experienced landscape architects or specialists. It can either be undertaken in-house by

local authorities or by consultants. There may be opportunities for several local authorities to pool resources and staff to share the work across their area. This could also improve the compatibility and consistency of the work. The same principle could apply to more local level assessments.

4.20 A successful landscape character assessment depends upon clear objectives and an unambiguous brief being established at the very beginning. Time spent here, is time well spent and it will pay huge dividends, both during the assessment process and after the work is published. Appendix 3 lists organisations and websites which can offer more detailed guidance, examples of other organisations' landscape character assessments, and discussion fora. Close liaison and collaboration between the districts, and with the county council and Natural England is essential.

4.21 The information below focuses on the approach that should be taken by districts. However, the approach and principles equally apply to organisations seeking to undertake more local level assessments too.

### *Preliminary planning work*

Liaise with other districts and the county council to:

- **Determine the purpose of the landscape character assessment**
- **Appraise the existing county landscape character assessment** to decide how to build upon it at district level.
- **Consider scale and level of detail:** it should seek to develop landscape types, sub-types and distinctive character areas. It should be at a scale of 1:25,000.
- **Identify all landscapes to be covered:** urban, peri-urban (the urban edge) and rural areas; seascapes, waterscapes and terrestrial landscapes.
- **Determine stakeholder involvement;** stakeholders' views should be taken into account in the early characterisation stages. Workshops and surveys are a standard approach in the county.
- **What resources might be needed:** Consider who needs to be involved internally and externally. Identify how long will the project

will take, a minimum of 6-12 months is usual. Determine if the project can run across seasons to get an impression of the landscape at different times of year. Identify how much time and money can be spent. Identify how GIS will be used. Consider if any costs or resources can be shared with other local authorities/ organisations.

- **Judgements:** Agree what judgements need to be made and how are they going to be made. Agree criteria for value judgements, meanings of technical terms, monitoring requirements etc. Sensitivity and guidelines to manage change should be included in any landscape character assessment.
- **Outputs:** Consider what the end product will look like, how will it be made available to everyone who needs to use it and how it will be promoted. Consider how it will be kept up to date. It should be made available in hard and electronic versions. If resources allow it should include an interactive map on the council's website. The county council will include links to it on its website.
- **Monitoring:** Consider how landscape guidelines are going to be made effective and monitored.
- **Common approaches:** agree common approaches (especially if you consider there are a need to retain local landscape designations)
- **Determine study area** – ideally it should extend beyond the district boundary. 3 - 5km could be an appropriate amount.
- **Share information and learn from others:** Set up a cross boundary steering or working group with internal staff, the county council, adjacent local planning authorities and other interested bodies.

4.22 As the landscape character assessment progresses, close liaison with other districts will be valuable; to test results, learn from each others' experience, standardise terminology, etc.

4.23 This preliminary work will help develop a project plan and a tender package or brief for consultant or in house landscape architects. A steering group or working group could be set up with other districts and key stakeholders to help guide and support the landscape character assessment process.

4.24 Once the above preliminary work has been undertaken the landscape character assessment can start in earnest. The guidance below in to the key stages associated with the standard landscape character assessment methodology.

### *Define scope*

4.25 Much of the scope defining will have been considered at the preliminary stages, but it will be necessary to focus again on the purpose of the landscape character assessment. As a team of consultants or in-house staff prepare to begin steps in set out above should be revisited.

### *Desk study*

4.26 Firstly, a wide range of information needs to be collected at this stage. The natural and historic environments are vital components contributing to the overall landscape character and information on these should be fully integrated into the process. Information that should be included, among many other aspects:

- **Existing landscape character studies:** at a local, county, regional and national scale. Landscape Description Units should also be referred to.
- **Wildlife data:** including Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence Base
- **Historic and Cultural Heritage:** including Cumbria Historic Environment Record and Historic Landscape Characterisation.
- **Other Evidence Bases:** including tranquillity mapping
- **Literature and Art:** relating to the area in question, local groups can often help provide this
- **Geological, geomorphological and topographic mapping:** information should be obtained from British Geological Survey Maps, National Soil Maps, The Cumberland and Westmorland Geological Society and the North Pennines Geopark.
- **Climate and micro climate information:** use where available
- **Land use patterns:** including current and historic farming, leisure and urbanisation information. Historic maps and Cumbria Historic Landscape Characterisation can help with this.

- **Perceptual matters:** the sense of wildness, enclosure or exposure, levels of tranquillity, stimulus, pleasure, cultural associations, scenic beauty. Engaging with communities can help with this.

4.27 Once this data is collected it can be synthesised to draw up draft landscape character types, working from the basis of the county's own landscape character types and sub-types. The pattern of distinctive character areas may also be emerging.

### *Field study*

4.28 Field work is used to test and refine the type/ area boundaries established at the desk, and to inform the written text. It is essential that field surveyors work in teams of two, so that subjective judgements can be tested and regulated. Where there is more than one team of two people, it is important for team members to 'swap around' to ensure results are standardised.

4.29 Field work is normally undertaken from a series of viewpoints chosen at the desk study stage. These could include public roads, public open space, public rights of way and open access land. A standard field survey sheet is used; key words are selected, descriptive text is written, photographs are taken and sketches made. Notes are made on the physical attributes, land use patterns, vegetation, human influences, and the condition and quality of the landscape. Viewpoints should be identified outside the LPA boundary as appropriate.

4.30 Distinctive character areas will become more evident during the field work, as each area will have a different sense of place.

4.31 The result of the field study will be:

- **A refinement of the draft type/area boundaries:** taking into account the findings of the field work.
- **Draft descriptions:** written to capture the character of the area.
- **A photographic and drawn record of the area.**

See Appendix 4 for an example field survey recording sheet.

### *Classification and description*

4.32 The desk and field study work leads to the classification of landscape types, sub-types and distinctive character areas. The results of this stage will be:

- **Mapped landscape types, sub-types and distinctive character areas**
- **Written descriptions**, following the headings in the template shown in Appendix 5: use of this template will allow patterns in the landscape to be ‘followed through’ from county to district level. This description includes physical features, heritage and biodiversity, human influences, perceptual aspects, forces for change etc.
- **Annotated Photographs and sketches**: to illustrate the key characteristics of each type / area.

### *Deciding the approach to judgements*

4.33 It is essential that the criteria for making judgements are clearly and transparently established at the outset.

4.34 Criteria for making judgements on condition or quality include:

- **Its physical state of repair**
- **Intactness: from a visual, ecological and functional perspective**
- **Condition of individual features**

4.35 Criteria for making judgements on value include:

- Statutory designation
- Stakeholder views
- Condition of individual features

4.36 Criteria for making judgements on capacity and sensitivity need careful consideration. There is much debate on these subjects among landscape professionals and latest research, best practice examples and fora should be consulted. The Landscape Character Network provides resources, seminar notes and fora on these subjects; the website address is included in Appendix 3.

4.37 If sensitivity analysis is carried out for certain development type’s consideration should be given to existing studies, such as the Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document.

4.38 Once criteria have been firmly established, and agreed it is possible to make these kinds of judgements:

- **Condition:** what condition is the landscape in, does it need to be protected, managed or planned (see 4.41)
- **Strategy:** What is the strategy or ‘vision’ for this landscape?
- **Guidelines:** What guidelines (do’s and don’ts) will help support this vision?
- **Sensitivity:** Does this landscape have particular sensitivities? How should these be addressed?
- **Capacity:** What capacity does this landscape have for change, relating to different kinds of development.

The latter two aspects could be the subject of a separate study and publication. This would reflect the approach taken at a county level.

### *Stakeholder involvement*

4.39 Stakeholders can and should be involved in all stages of landscape character assessment. Careful consultation will improve the quality and relevance of outputs. It needs to be planned and undertaken carefully to ensure findings are representative. A meaningful level of consultation should be undertaken as part of the district level landscape character assessment. They have an important role to play in helping determine the perceptual characteristics of landscape and distinctive character areas.

4.40 Stakeholders can be involved in a variety of ways. Taking part in survey work, at workshops through radio and TV programmes, by letter, and through parish councils are just some of the techniques which can be employed. It is advantageous to involve stakeholders at all the key stages of the landscape character assessment– as illustrated in the flow diagram in Appendix 2.

## Technical requirements

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### Terminology

- 4.41 Terminology should match that of the European Landscape Convention, especially in relation to the actions for all landscapes:
- **identify** landscapes, then;
  - **assess** landscapes, then;
  - **set landscape objectives**, then;
  - define objectives in terms of various combinations of these three verbs:
    - **protect**
    - **manage**
    - **plan** to enhance, restore or create landscapes, and finally;
  - **monitor** change.
- 4.42 Appendix 6 shows a key diagram of the process to which this terminology applies.

### Use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

- 4.43 The use of GIS will benefit the project in many ways. During the characterisation stage, and perhaps mostly at the desktop stage, it will help with the analysis of a range of different sets of information relating to topography, land use, biodiversity, culture etc, and this analysis will improve the quality and robustness of the mapping.
- 4.44 GIS will also be a useful medium in which to present the finished assessment; it should be linked to databases of landscape character descriptions and other environmental evidence bases. The GIS should be accessible to local authority staff and all other interested parties, including the county council.
- 4.45 It will be easier to monitor and update landscape character evidence and guidelines if the information is collected on GIS.
- 4.46 GIS data formats need to be compatible across districts, the county and national park authorities. Map Info, Arc View and GGP are the three systems commonly used across the county.

### Scale

- 4.47 District level landscape character assessment should be undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000. Use of this scale will naturally result in a more finely grained assessment than that produced at county level. In some places, for example those where landscape change is likely, an even larger scale may be needed.

### Photography and illustrations

- 4.48 As described above, photography and illustration are essential parts of a landscape character assessment, they help the reader to understand the landscape, and how different characteristics make different places.
- 4.49 Photos are also useful to illustrate “do’s and don’ts” for development guidelines.

### Access to information

- 4.50 The landscape character assessment should be made available digitally and consideration should be given to whether or not the resource can be made available on an interactive website. The landscape character assessment should also be available in “pdf” and paper format.

### Expertise

- 4.51 It is likely that the landscape character assessment project team will include all these people:
- **Project co-ordinator:** to drive the project, liaise with stakeholders and other local authorities, and to control quality and cost;
  - **Landscape architects:** to undertake the landscape character assessment. A team of at least two landscape architects is needed because field work must be undertaken in pairs;
  - **Policy makers, forward planning and development control planners:** to contribute to the document and to ensure that the landscape character assessment complies with and supports policy;
  - **GIS and mapping expertise:** to support an integrated approach to analysis of the various

characteristics, and the publication of the landscape character assessment.

- **Web-site designers and / or conventional graphic designers.**
- **On-call ecologists and cultural heritage experts:** to ensure these important themes are considered, and integrated in a meaningful way.
- **Community liaison staff:** to organise and facilitate stakeholder consultation events.

## Compatibility

4.52 It is essential for district level landscape character assessments to be compatible with county and adjacent district level landscape character assessments. The district landscape character assessments should include a commentary identifying where boundaries are compatible and where they are not. Ideally where landscape types go beyond a boundary they should be given the same name. If districts choose not to do this, then cross referencing should be made to adjacent types with different names but the same characteristics. This will help with the understanding of how the various landscape character assessments nest together. If a district thinks there are special circumstances that support the retention of local landscape designations the compatibility between districts will be even more important.

## Final outputs

4.53 The expected outputs from each local authority's landscape character assessment will be:

- A **map** which indicates the boundaries of each landscape type and distinctive area, recognising local subtleties which have not been mapped at a county level, capturing the local sense of place, and nesting into the hierarchy of landscape types and sub-types;
- **Descriptions** for each type / area including information about the topography, geology and soils, land use, vegetation cover, built form, boundary treatments, infrastructure, historical influences, biodiversity influences and a range of perceptual matters such as tranquillity and scale;
- **Photographs and / or sketches** to illustrate the

key characteristics and typical appearance of each type and / or area;

- **Information about the forces which have shaped** the current landscape character, and the forces which could alter or influence the future landscape character. More information about the issues which influence the landscape than is included at a county level.
- **Strategy / Vision and guidelines** more detailed guidelines what measures are needed at a local level to protect, manage and plan the landscapes
- **A plan for monitoring and updating the district level Landscape Character Assessments.**

## Examples from other Districts

4.54 Districts may have arrived at detailed landscape character assessments from various different start points. Some will have started with a county level classification, others may have worked from national character areas, some may be built from landscape description units and others may be refinements of old, out of date district level landscape character assessments. Not all the examples below show evolution from county to district landscape character assessments (which Cumbria County Council is promoting), but all show some elements of good practice and ideas for districts in Cumbria.

4.55 Below, are listed a few recent district landscapes character assessments. There are other examples, and the Landscape Character Network holds a database of English Landscape Character Assessments. See Appendix 3. The examples listed here do not necessarily show appropriate or best approaches; they have been selected because they are recent and they show a variety of different approaches.

- **High Peak:** A district level landscape character network based on the classification carried out at (Derbyshire) county level. A succinct document with many photographs to illustrate guidelines.
- **South Gloucestershire:** A detailed landscape character assessment which provides criteria based evidence enabling the district to move away from local landscape designations.

- **Doncaster Borough:** A landscape character and capacity study, updating the original assessment of 1994.
- **Harrogate:** An update of an older district level landscape character network; Appendix 2 is a detailed brief for the updated assessment, which may be useful.
- **North Dorset District:** This landscape character network illustrates the use of both generic landscape types and distinctive landscape areas.

# Appendix I

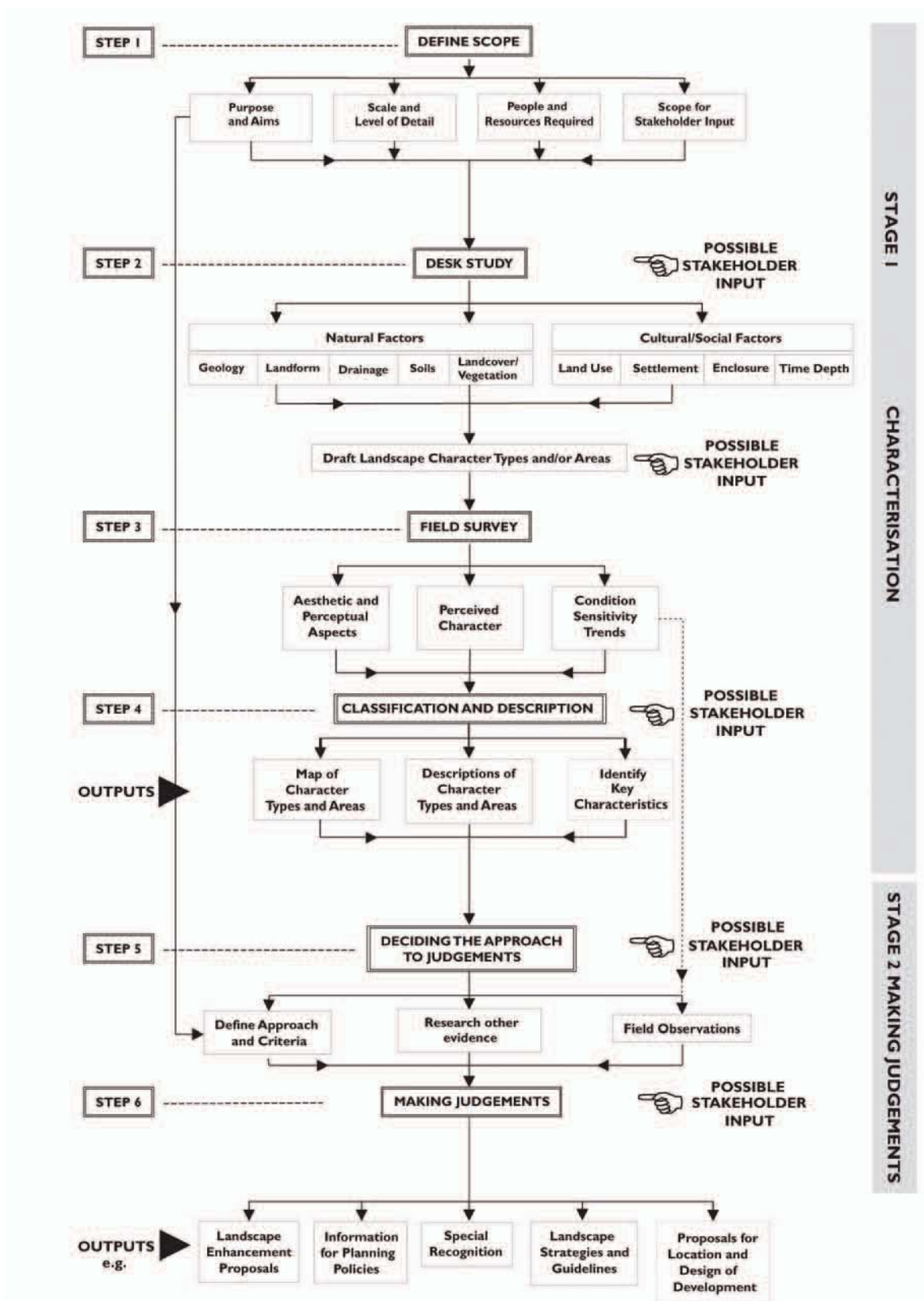
## National Character Areas in Cumbria

- Border Moors and Forests
- Solway Basin
- West Coast Coastal Plain
- Cumbria High Fells
- Eden Valley
- North Pennines
- Orton Fells
- Howgill Fells
- South Cumbria Low Fells
- Yorkshire Dales
- Morecambe Bay Limestones.

# Appendix 2

## Stages of Landscape Character Assessment

Guidance for England and Scotland, 2002 Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage



Footnote: Stakeholder contributions may be possible at all stages.  
The whole process may be iterative.

## STAGE 1: CHARACTERISATION

These are the practical steps involved in initiating a study, identifying areas of distinctive character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character:

- **Step 1: Defining the scope.** All Landscape Character Assessments need a clearly defined purpose. This will critically influence the scale and level of detail of the assessment, the resources required, those who should be involved in its preparation, and the types of judgement that are needed to inform decisions. As part of defining the scope, it is normally essential that a familiarisation visit is undertaken to allow those involved in commissioning or carrying out the assessment to learn more about the character of the location's landscape.
- **Step 2: Desk study.** This involves review of relevant background reports, other data and mapped information, and use of this information to develop a series of map overlays to assist in the identification of areas of common character (usually draft landscape character types and/or areas).
- **Step 3: Field survey.** Field data is collected in a rigorous way to test and refine the draft landscape character types/areas, to inform written descriptions of their character, to identify aesthetic and perceptual qualities which are unlikely to be evident from desk information, and to identify the current condition of landscape elements.
- **Step 4: Classification and description.** This step then refines and finalises the output of the characterisation process by classifying the landscape into landscape character types and/or areas and mapping their extent, based on all the information collected, followed by preparation of clear descriptions of their character. These descriptions will often recognise 'forces for change', such as key development pressures and trends in land management.

## STAGE 2: MAKING JUDGEMENTS

- **Step 5: Deciding the approach to judgements.** Further work is usually needed to decide on the approach to making the judgements that will be needed to meet the objectives of the assessment. This will require thought to be given to the overall approach, the criteria to be used and the information needed to support the judgements to be made. Decisions will be needed on the role to be played by the stakeholders. Sometimes, especially if judgements are needed about landscape value, it may be necessary to look for evidence about how others, such as artists and writers for example, have perceived the area. Additional field work may be necessary, especially when additional applications of the assessment only emerge after the original characterisation has been completed. Information from the field survey will need to be reviewed on topics such as the condition of landscape elements and features and the sensitivity of the landscape to change.
- **Step 6: Making judgements.** The nature of the judgements and the outputs that may result from the process will vary according to the purpose of the assessment (see **Chapter 7**). The main approaches to making judgements within the landscape assessment process are:
  - landscape strategies;
  - landscape guidelines;
  - attaching status to landscapes;
  - landscape capacity.

# Appendix 3

## Links and references to websites and other resources

*The resources below will help with district level landscape character assessment:*

### **Landscape Character Network**

[www.landscapecharacter.org.uk](http://www.landscapecharacter.org.uk)

Deals with:

- Landscape character assessment
- European Landscape Convention (ELC)
- Fora
- Database of existing landscape character assessments
- Advice
- Examples of recent landscape character assessments, and explanations of new approaches
- Newsletters in which key themes are discussed and new work showcased
- Resources on ELC
- Training courses

### **Landscape Institute**

[www.landscapeinstitute.org](http://www.landscapeinstitute.org)

Information about consultants who can undertake landscape character assessment

### **Cumbria's Biodiversity Evidence Base**

[www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk/biodiversity](http://www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk/biodiversity)

### **Cumbria's Historic Landscape Character Assessment**

[www.cumbria.gov.uk/planning-environment/countryside/historic-environment/histlandcharacter.asp](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/planning-environment/countryside/historic-environment/histlandcharacter.asp)

### **Natural England**

[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

Publish the Landscape Character Assessment guidelines (watch out for new version), also related topic papers  
Policy on ELC and Ecosystem Services

### **Department for Communities and Local Government**

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps7](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps7)

Planning Policy Statement 7 and successor documents.

### **CPRE**

[www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk)

The Campaign to Protect Rural England has mapped tranquillity levels, comparing current and historic levels. Their mapping is available on this website.

### *Other districts which have recently undertaken district level Landscape Character Assessments*

#### **High Peak**

[www.highpeak.gov.uk](http://www.highpeak.gov.uk)

#### **South Gloucestershire**

[www.southglos.gov.uk](http://www.southglos.gov.uk)

#### **Doncaster Borough:**

[www.doncaster.gov.uk](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk)

#### **Harrogate**

[www.harrogate.gov.uk/main.asp?page=0](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/main.asp?page=0)

#### **North Dorset District**

[www.north-dorset.gov.uk](http://www.north-dorset.gov.uk)

# Appendix 4

## Template for Field Survey Work

### CUMBRIA LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT REVIEW FIELD SURVEY SHEET 2009

Sheet No: \_\_\_\_\_ Photograph Nos: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Direction of view: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 OS Grid Reference: \_\_\_\_\_ Weather: \_\_\_\_\_

FINAL APPRAISAL (To be determined on completion of field and desk survey)

**FINAL LANDSCAPE TYPE:**

**EXISTING LANDSCAPE TYPE** \_\_\_\_\_

**Keywords describing the landscape:** \_\_\_\_\_

### PHYSICAL FEATURES

#### GEOLOGY

<input type="checkbox"/> Carboniferous	<input type="checkbox"/> Mudstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Permo trassic	<input type="checkbox"/> Limestone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### ELEVATION

<input type="checkbox"/> Lowland (<50m)	<input type="checkbox"/> Transitional (50-200)	<input type="checkbox"/> Upland (>200m)	<input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	---	--------------------------

#### LANDFORM

<input type="checkbox"/> Flat	<input type="checkbox"/> Steep slopes	<input type="checkbox"/> Escarpment	<input type="checkbox"/> Broad valley
<input type="checkbox"/> Shelving	<input type="checkbox"/> Gentle slopes	<input type="checkbox"/> Knoll	<input type="checkbox"/> Narrow valley
<input type="checkbox"/> Rolling	<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal	<input type="checkbox"/> Plateau	<input type="checkbox"/> Shallow valley
<input type="checkbox"/> Undulating	<input type="checkbox"/> Hills	<input type="checkbox"/> Scarp/cliffs	<input type="checkbox"/> Deep valley

#### WATER/HYDROLOGY

<input type="checkbox"/> River (S/,L)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stream/tributary	<input type="checkbox"/> Flooded gravel pits	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineered/artificial
<input type="checkbox"/> Speed (F/M/S)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Lake	<input type="checkbox"/> Weirs
<input type="checkbox"/> Clarity (C/M)	<input type="checkbox"/> Drainage ditches	<input type="checkbox"/> Ponds	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> River Meanders?	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring	<input type="checkbox"/> Bog	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

## LAND COVER

### LAND USE

<input type="checkbox"/>	Farmland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Residential	<input type="checkbox"/>	Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural
<input type="checkbox"/>	Forestry/woodland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Military
<input type="checkbox"/>	Historic Parkland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure/Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mineral Working	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

### LAND/VEGETATION COVER (INDICATE RELATIVE %)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Arable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amenity grassland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Small farm woods	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scrub
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pasture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conif. plantation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shelterbelts	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wetland/Marsh
<input type="checkbox"/>	Semi improved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decid. woodland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Copses/clumps	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gardens
<input type="checkbox"/>	Improved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed woodland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Woodland belt	<input type="checkbox"/>	Common
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rough grazing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parkland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hanging woodland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Green
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wet/Dry Meadow	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orchards (type...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scattered trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paddocks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moorland	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Hedgerow trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Heathland	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Hedgerows	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Notes on ecological character \_\_\_\_\_

## LANDSCAPE ELEMENT FEATURES

Subtle      Evident      Conspicuous

<input type="checkbox"/>	Motorway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Farm buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	Earthworks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nucleated settlem.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dual Carriageway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Manor/Parkland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moats	<input type="checkbox"/>	Linear settlement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural Road	<input type="checkbox"/>	Landmark Building	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ridge and Furrow	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dispersed settlem.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural Lanes Track	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tumuli	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial workings
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunken Lane	<input type="checkbox"/>	Church	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hamlet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mast/Poles
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bridleway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fortifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	Village	<input type="checkbox"/>	Telecom Masts
<input type="checkbox"/>	Footpath	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hill Forts	<input type="checkbox"/>	Town Edge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Railway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/>	Suberb	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

## BUILT/ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

<input type="checkbox"/>	Timber-frame	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brick- traditional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tile
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rendered	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brick - modern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scale
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Limestone	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Siting

Notes on built/settlement character \_\_\_\_\_



---

REPETITION OF ELEMENTS

---

**PERCEPTION**

stimulus                  uninteresting          featureless          interesting          challenging          inspiring

---

tranquillity          inaccessible          remote          unsettled/calm          settled/busy

---

Pleasure                  unpleasant          pleasant          attractive          beautiful

---

---

**LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION AND ADDITIONAL NOTES**

**LANDSCAPE CONDITION AND GUIDELINES**

**MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

(highlight condition/survival, threats/pressures, fragility/vulnerability, management issues and opportunities)

**Agriculture**

.....

**Field patterns/boundaries**

.....

**Trees and woodland**

.....

**Archaeology/historic components**

.....

**Building/settlement/development**

.....

**Linear features**

.....

**Other land uses**

.....

.....

**General**

# Appendix 5

## Structure for District level Assessments

The structure below has been influenced by recent landscape character assessment undertaken in Cumbria. It has been adopted as the structure for the Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment. Structuring the district or local level landscape character assessment in a similar way, using the headings would assist in continuity and understanding of both county and district scale landscape character assessments. It would also help ensure consistency between district landscape character assessments. These headings have been used to report on each of the county's different landscape types and sub-types, but can be used at district levels for both landscape types and distinctive landscape areas.

### **Name of Type**

### **Description**

A brief description of the common characteristics found in this type/area of landscape

### **Changes in the landscape**

A list of all the factors which could in the future influence this landscape type

### **Name of Sub-types**

### **Location**

Where these sub-types of landscapes can be found

### **Physical Character**

The physical characteristics, including an explanation of the forces which created them

### **Land cover and land use**

A description of what covers the land and how man uses the land

### **Ecology**

The key ecological characteristics of the sub-type, especially in context of how these ecological characteristic influence the overall landscape character.

### **Historic and Cultural character**

As above, the key historical/cultural characteristics which influence the landscape character

### **Perceptual character**

This should include text describing what it 'feels like' to be in that landscape.

### **Sensitivity to Change**

This should identify the features and characteristics that are most likely to be sensitive to change.

### **Vision**

A headline statement about what is important, and what strategy has been adopted (e.g. 'conserve'), followed by an explanation of how policy and legislation will support this strategy.

### **Changes in the Landscape**

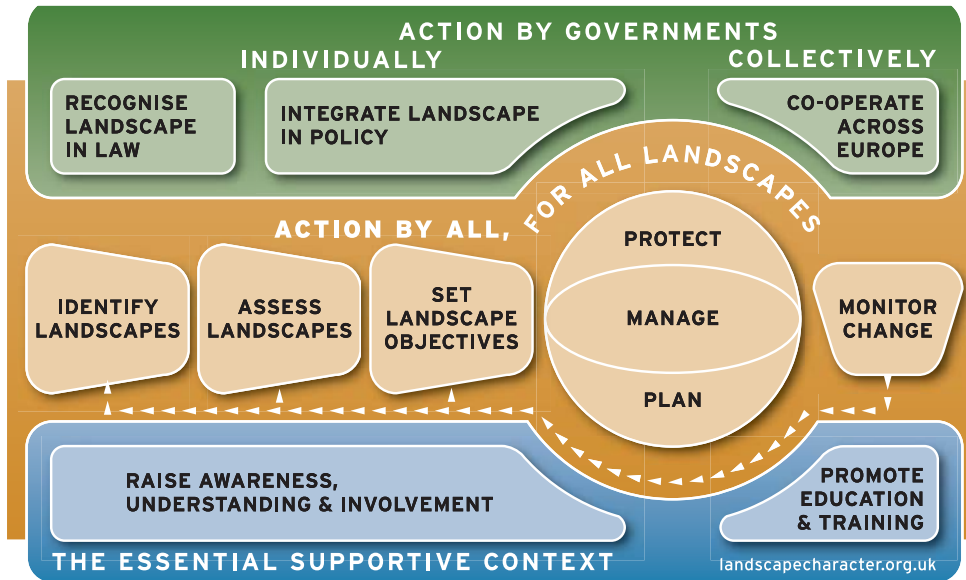
A list of all the factors which could in the future influence this landscape sub-type

### **Guidelines**

Detailed and specific 'do's and don't's for the landscape, themed around the particular factors which could influence the landscape.

# Appendix 6

## European Landscape Convention Processes



*The 'plan' stage is subdivided into these actions: enhance, restore and create, depending on the needs of the landscape in question.*

# Appendix 7

## Glossary

The following acronyms and terms have been used in this report and their explanations are provided below:

### Acronyms

---

- **CBA:** Chris Blandford Associates.
- **CWESPD:** Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document.
- **EIA:** Environmental Impact Assessment. The process of studying the environmental impacts which development proposals could cause, and attempting to reduce adverse impacts. An EIA is required by law for large and complex development proposals, and results in an Environmental Statement accompanying the planning application. EIA can also be discretionary, undertaken as a matter of good practice by developers who are keen to make their proposals 'environmentally friendly'. An EIA will almost always consider effects on landscape character.
- **ELC:** European Landscape Convention. This is a treaty adopted by the Council of Europe. It is binding on states which sign it, and the UK has done so. It provides an *'international context for landscape, placing this important resource alongside biodiversity and cultural heritage'*. The convention provides a series of fairly flexible obligations relating to the ways in which landscape should be considered and managed by individual nations.
- **GIS:** Geographical Information Systems. These are computer based mapping systems which are used to map spatial data, and analyse patterns. Because it has powerful analytical capabilities it is a very valuable tool in landscape character assessment.
- **LCA:** Landscape character assessment. The process of systematically assessing a landscape's qualities to map and describe defined landscape types and areas. 'Landscape Character Assessment' can be a verb - the action of undertaking assessment work, and a noun - the end product of an assessment. Sometimes the term 'landscape characterisation' is used to mean the same thing.
- **Local Development Documents.**
- **Local Landscape Designations:** Information on this is set out in Section 3.
- **National Character Areas:** In the past policies were contained in the Structure Plan to support Local Landscape Designations outside nationally designated landscapes. The Structure Plan policy no longer exists, although some Local Plan policies have been saved.
- **NE:** Natural England is the government's advisor on the natural environment, which includes landscape character.
- **North West Regional Spatial Strategy 2003-2021.** This sets out the strategic planning framework and policies for the North West region.
- **Policy E37:** Saved Landscape Character Policy from the Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 2001-2016. These policies provide the landscape planning framework in Cumbria. They were saved to the North West Regional Spatial Strategy in 2008.

### Terminology

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- **Peri-urban:** this is the term for the interface between urban and rural or coastal areas. The term urban fringe has a similar meaning.
- **Decision making:** In this context, decision making means making decisions which could directly or indirectly affect landscape character. It is clear that the decisions made by spatial and development control planners can affect landscape character, but developers and land managers also make decisions which have an effect. Even communities and individuals make day to day decisions which affect landscape character. Examples of these kinds of decisions are provided in Section 2.
- **Perceptual matters:** These are aspects of landscape character which *'may be more subjective and responses to them might be more personal and coloured by the experience of the individual. Such factors include a sense of wildness, sense of security,*

*the quality of light and perceptions of beauty or scenic attractiveness.*' from Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland.

- **Stakeholders:** anyone who can either make or influence decisions, or who could be affected by other peoples' decisions.
- **Characteristics:** the nature of the components (be they physical or perceptual) which make up a landscape's character.
- **Evidence base:** Existing evidence which can be used to inform decisions affecting landscape character.
- **Environmental Statement:** a document recording the predicted environmental impacts of a development proposal. Under the EIA regulations, this kind of document must accompany planning applications for large or complex development proposals, or those affecting sensitive sites.

If you require this document in another format (eg CD, audio cassette, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone 01228 606060.

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