

EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LANDSCAPE VALUE

**ADDENDUM
TO
2018 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY STUDY**

MARCH 29 2022

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A. Introduction

1. East Hampshire District Council appointed The terra firma Consultancy Limited in June 2018 to produce a Landscape Capacity Study to inform the evidence base for the emerging East Hampshire Local Plan. This addendum (2022) sets out in section B an explanation of landscape value in a general context, listing and briefly describing key documents which contribute to the understanding of landscape value in a general way. Section C goes on to explain how landscape value is considered and expressed within the 2018 Landscape Capacity Study.

B. Understanding and assessing landscape value - general

2. The understanding of the meaning of landscape value within the landscape profession and the wider community is still evolving, particularly in light of the current climate and biodiversity emergencies.

European Landscape Convention

3. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) recognises that all landscapes matter, be they ordinary, degraded or outstanding. There is however recognition that value is also ascribed to particular landscapes.

Natural England advice; Topic Paper 6

4. Topic Paper 6¹ identifies the need for judgements about landscape capacity to reflect that certain landscapes are valued by society for different reasons. As Topic Paper 6 notes, a valued landscape, whether nationally designated or not, does not automatically, and by definition, have high sensitivity.

The National Planning Policy Framework

5. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf
6. The NPPF does not define the meaning of valued landscapes but uses the term in paragraph 174 which is clear that policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by:

protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, ... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

¹ The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland. Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity

7. Parts of the area of study covered by the 2018 Landscape Capacity Study are adjacent to the nationally designated South Downs National Park (SDNP) and the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (SHAONB), both of which are afforded the highest protection within the NPPF:

Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues

8. Where parts of the study area were considered to be within the setting of either protected landscape, this was taken into account during the assessment process.

Planning appeal decisions

9. In 2015 the Court of Appeal found² that:

“To be valued, a landscape has to have demonstrable physical attributes which would take the site beyond ordinary countryside, rather than just popularity” (paras. 9, 13-16).

10. This was subsequently confirmed in a later case³:

“A landscape was ‘valued’ if it had physical attributes taking it out of the ordinary, and an absence of designation did not necessarily mean an absence of landscape value”

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

11. Guidance to assist the assessment of landscape value is set out by the Landscape Institute and IEMA⁴ as part of the process of landscape and visual assessments and appraisals. Assessment requires the physical, aesthetic, perceptual (scale, openness, complexity, tranquillity), ecological, historic and cultural aspects (including local or community assets) to be considered.

12. Information that will inform understanding of the value of the landscape is set out in paragraphs 5.19 and 5.20:

- *Information about areas recognised by statute, such as National Parks*

² Stroud District Council v SS CLG and Gladman Developments Ltd 2015

³ Forest of Dean DC v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government 2016

⁴ Guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment' (2013 – GLVIA3)

- *Local planning documents associated with local landscape designations*
 - *Information on the status of individual or groups of features, such as Conservation Areas, listed buildings, Tree Preservation Orders*
 - *Art and literature, including cultural associations*
 - *Information on landscapes of local / community interest*
13. Paragraphs 5.26 to 5.30 set out how the value of landscapes which lie outside of designated landscapes should be approached:
- “A starting reference to existing Landscape Character Assessments and associated planning policies and/or landscape strategies and guidelines may give an indication of which landscape types or areas, or individual elements or aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are particularly valued. A stated strategy of landscape conservation is usually a good indicator of this”.*
14. In addition to existing evidence (or in the absence of it) value should be determined through new survey and analysis using agreed criteria such as that set out in Box 5.1:
- *Landscape quality (condition): A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of the individual elements*
 - *Scenic quality: The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses)*
 - *Rarity: The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type (LCT)*
 - *Representativeness: Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples*
 - *Conservation interests: The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right*
 - *Recreation value: Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important*
 - *Perceptual aspects: A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and/or tranquillity*

- *Associations: Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area*

Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 ‘Assessing landscape value outside national designations’

15. In February 2021 the Landscape Institute published Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations (TGN 02/21)⁵. This was prompted in response to the need for landscape professionals and others who make decisions about the value of landscape to interpret the term valued landscape as used in the 2019 NPPF (and updated NPPF 20th July 2021).
16. TGN 02/21 provides the most up to date, comprehensive guidance currently available and therefore is set out in some detail below, starting with the definition they ascribe to the term valued landscapes, a definition which is consistent with GLVIA3, and with Natural England’s definition⁶:

Landscape value = the relative value or importance attached to different landscapes by society on account of their landscape qualities.

17. This definition makes it clear that it is ‘society’ that assigns value to landscapes. Additional wording states that landscape value means more than popularity and suggests that while value assessments should be undertaken by landscape professionals, they should draw on evidence from stakeholders where available.

18. The main body of TGN 02/21 comprises the following sections:

- *identifies the stages in the planning process at which landscape value might be assessed;*
- *reviews the tools available to enable practitioners to assess landscape value; and*
- *presents a list of factors that could be considered when identifying landscape value*

19. The appendices cover the following aspects:

- *a summary of historical background and context;*
- *a summary of the evolution of factors used to describe landscape value;*

⁵ Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations (TGN 02/21), Landscape Institute (TGN 02/21 2021)

⁶ An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014 Christine Tudor, Natural England)

- *a summary of policies and guidance relating to designated landscapes in the four nations of the UK;*
- *the Landscape Institute’s understanding of the term ‘valued landscape’ as it is used in the context of the (England) NPPF; and*
- *an analysis of planning decisions and judgements concerned with the term ‘valued landscape’.*

20. For the purposes of this 2022 addendum, the most relevant sections are parts of section 2.2 ‘Assessing landscape value as part of plan making (development planning)’. These set out 3 main ways in which planning authorities can assess and reflect landscape value, each followed by comment underlined and not italicized:

- *Identifying, mapping and locally designating areas based on studies which have identified valued landscape characteristics;*
- EHDC does not have locally designated landscapes
- *Identifying valued characteristics within published landscape character assessments, based on character areas or types;*
- The 2018 Landscape Capacity Study to which this 2022 addendum relates uses the East Hampshire Landscape Character Assessment (2006) as a starting point for the assessment process.
- *Assessing landscape value as part of a landscape sensitivity study. Value is one component, along with susceptibility, which is taken into account in assessing sensitivity.*
- The Landscape Capacity Study (2018) is very much based on the assessment of sensitivity and also takes a step beyond the sensitivity to consider the capacity of the landscape (divided into parcels based on character areas and types) to accommodate a particular type of development – hence the different terminology.

21. Table 1, which sets out a range of factors influencing landscape value when considering a site and its context, also has relevance to the ways in which the 2018 EHDC Landscape Capacity Study assessed sensitivity. The key factors are listed below:

- *Natural heritage*
- *Cultural heritage*
- *Landscape condition*
- *Associations*

- *Distinctiveness*
- *Recreational*
- *Perceptual (scenic, wildness, tranquility)*
- *Functional*

Summary of understanding and assessing landscape value – general

22. To summarise the range of reference material and guidance set out above, the key points of relevance to this 2022 Addendum are:

- *that value does not have to be expressed through designation; and*
- *that positive factors such as key sensitivities as set out in published landscape character assessments, sensitivity/capacity assessments and other supplementary planning documents at district and local level are expressions of landscape value.*

23. With these points in mind, the following section summarises how the 2018 EHDC Landscape Capacity Study expressed value through the assessment of sensitivity.

C. Understanding and assessing landscape value – in relation to the 2018 EHDC Landscape Capacity Study

24. The consideration of landscape value through identification of sensitivities is an integral part of the methodology used in the assessment of landscape capacity. Section C sets out the ways in which landscape value was considered, firstly through the assessment of sensitivity (landscape, visual and wider). In simplistic terms the 2018 Study's methodology involves the assessment of visual sensitivity, landscape sensitivity and wider sensitivity in a staged scoring process. The expression of sensitivity within the record sheets and report sheets for each study parcel can be viewed as aspects which contribute to the value of a landscape.

25. East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment⁷ (EHDCLCA) landscape character areas were the starting point in subdividing the Study area into reporting units called Local Areas. Key characteristics, qualities, sensitivities, landscape strategies and guidelines as set out in the EHDCLCA for each character area were reviewed and considered for their relevance to the Local Areas and how they therefore contributed to sensitivity. Further information was also gained from Hampshire County Council's Integrated

⁷ East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment (2006)

Character Assessment⁸, and local landscape character assessments for the parishes of Selborne⁹ and Rowlands Castle¹⁰ all of which were sources of reference for the Study and in particular informing the level of sensitivity which is one factor in assessing value e.g where key sensitivities are identified. Landscape character assessments for adjacent authorities were also considered, most importantly the South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (SDILCA)¹¹. The assessment of the smaller areas identified in the 2018 Study (Local Areas) enabled a more detailed review so that additional sensitivities were identified.

Assessment of landscape sensitivity

26. Following the identification of key characteristics, qualities, sensitivities, landscape strategies and guidelines as set out in the published character assessments, fieldwork was undertaken to confirm the extent to which the Local Areas represented the wider character areas and key sensitivities, as well as identifying additional, more localised aspects.
27. The assessment of landscape sensitivity considers the natural physical factors which make up the landscape character of the Local Areas, the cultural and built form aspects and the perceptual features. The greater the incidence of landscape interest and diversity, historically important features and cultural associations, and the greater the levels of access and perceptions of tranquility and strong landscape pattern; the greater the sensitivity. Guidance notes on factors influencing sensitivity are set out in Table 2 of the 2018 Study.

Assessment of visual sensitivity

28. Key aspects of visual sensitivity as set out in the published character assessments were reviewed for their relevance and additional qualities particular to the Local Areas described and taken into account in the overall assessment of visual sensitivity.
29. The assessment of visual sensitivity considered the types of views (e.g panoramic, distant, context), the nature of the viewers and the potential to mitigate visual impact on the identified viewpoints. The more viewpoints, the more exposed the area, the greater the sensitivity of the viewers (based on GLVIA) and the greater difficulties in screen planting to mitigate the impact without harm to the landscape and visual attributes of the area, the higher the sensitivity. Guidance notes on factors influencing visual sensitivity are set out in Table 1 of the 2018 Study.

⁸ Hampshire County Integrated Character Assessment (Hampshire County Council 2011)

⁹ Selborne Local Landscape Character Assessment (2014)

¹⁰ Rowlands Castle Local Landscape Character Assessment (2012)

¹¹ South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (2011)

Assessment of wider sensitivity

30. The sensitivity of each Local Area to development is also affected by its importance, and contribution, to the adjacent wider rural landscape and the influence of, and pattern of uses within, the settlement edge. Where a Local Area is heavily influenced by the built form of the adjacent urban settlement and not an important part of the adjacent wider landscape, its wider sensitivity is low. A high sensitivity is assigned to a Local Area which is an important part of the wider landscape with which it has strong visual and landscape links, and where the nearby settlement has little impact on the Local Area.

Determination of overall landscape sensitivity

31. The overall landscape sensitivity is determined by combining the landscape, visual and wider sensitivities with the wider sensitivity as shown in Matrix 4. The results of the assessment are set out in the Report Sheet for each Local Area.

Determination of landscape value

32. Landscape value is explicitly taken into account in the next stage of the process using a scale of 5 levels using the criteria set out in the table below¹² to give an assessment of landscape capacity. The capacity score was then tested against the five criteria for landscape capacity based on professional judgement and an overall full understanding of the Local Areas.

Landscape value criteria

Value	Typical criteria	Typical scale	Typical examples
High	Very High importance (or quality) and rarity. No or limited potential for substitution	International	World Heritage Site SAC SPA
Medium/high	High importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	National	National Park/ AONB SSSI SPA 400m Buffer SANG HE Register of Parks and Gardens Scheduled Monuments Grade I and II* listed buildings and their settings National recreational route or area e.g. South Downs Way

¹² The landscape value criteria table and notes below are reproduced from Table 3 and notes in the 2018 Study

Medium	Medium importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Regional	Setting of AONB / National Park Local landscape designation Open Access or common land Landscape value identified in the Local/Neighbourhood Plan SINC/Conservation Areas and their setting Grade II listed buildings and their setting Local Wildlife sites Regional recreational route/area
Medium/low	Local importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Local	Local buildings and parks/gardens of historic interest and their settings Local recreational facilities of landscape value
Low	Low importance (or quality) or rarity		Area of little value and identified for improvement

Notes with Table 3:

Designations: Although value is implicit in the assessment of sensitivities, the location of the Local Area within a designated area, or the presence of a designated area within the Local Area, is an important additional measure of the value society gives to the landscape of the Local Area. These include landscape, historic and ecological designations and recreational routes at a national/international level, regional or district level, or at the local level.

Local Associations: These are included as far as possible using available published data. In addition to the more formal designations above, Local Areas may sometimes have special scenic value, associations or meanings to the local community and therefore make a contribution to the value of the local landscape. This has been assessed through a review of readily available evidence of community value. Further research may be required as part of any detailed landscape and visual impact assessment.

Professional judgement: Professional judgement has been used to modify the value scoring where a particular designation has little effect on the sensitivity of a Local Area, e.g if there is only a single Grade I Listed Building which has little relationship with or influence over the wider Local Area, the value might be reduced from medium / high to medium.

D. Conclusion

33. This addendum (2022) sets out an explanation of landscape value as it is currently understood and interpreted generally within the landscape profession and wider community and goes on to describe how landscape value is expressed within the 2018 Landscape Capacity Study.