



Forest of Dean District Council

## **Landscape Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

Adopted March 2007

Further copies of this document can be purchased at a cost of £25.

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# Foreword

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The new planning system has been designed to be more responsive, positive and inclusive. It also recognises that landscape character and sustainability are the cornerstones of good planning, design and decision making. In response to this, and as part of the Council's continued effort toward providing opportunities for prosperity and growth within an attractive and functional environment, Forest of Dean District Council have made the following commitment:

***The District Council will seek to conserve and enhance the unique qualities and characteristics of the landscape of the district and variations in its historic character, built heritage, natural diversity and other environmental and cultural assets with the goal of maintaining and managing a high quality environment that respects and enriches local distinctiveness and sense of place\*.***

This Landscape Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) reflects the District Council's commitment to the protection and enhancement of the district's varied and much valued landscape. In developing and taking this Landscape SPD forward, Forest of Dean District Council are responding to national guidance and applying the principles of good environmental planning. By acknowledging the importance of inclusivity and transparency, and promoting the concepts of landscape character and of sustainability, the Council are placed at the forefront of development planning in the UK.

It must be remembered that social and economic, along with environmental issues are all important considerations in the planning and decision making process. In developing the Landscape SPD, the Council are taking steps to ensure that the profile and importance of environmental and landscape issues are given due consideration in planning decisions. This will help ensure improved standards of planning and design and help to protect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the Forest of Dean landscape.

Compromises will still be required in balancing environmental, social and economic objectives in the planning process. These are an inevitable consequence of some forms of more complex development planning decisions. This document will help minimise the impacts of development on the landscape and ensure that where the loss of features is unavoidable, this is compensated with appropriate gains elsewhere.

Pete Williams  
Head of Planning



\* The Commitment to the Landscape was developed with Stakeholders and refined following wide consultation

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# Introduction

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## Purpose of this Guidance

In broad terms this document sets out important principles relating to the environment and more specifically, the landscape, and provides guidance for anyone with an interest in development, planning or design. Through adoption as Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), the document will be taken into account by the District Council and other decision makers when considering all planning proposals, applications and appeals. It will ensure that applicants are better informed about the development process and what is required of them, and encourage a higher quality of design. It will also encourage a more inclusive approach to planning in line with Government Guidance and raise awareness of design issues and the qualities of particular landscapes as perceived by local communities.

Good planning and design is important in ensuring that those living in and visiting the district continue to enjoy a high quality environment promoting a high standard of living and economic vitality. Good design also makes commercial sense helping to attract inward investment and providing attractive places in which people want to live, work and relax.

It is envisaged that this new approach to planning will help to ensure that future development in the district is well planned, sustainable, of high quality and capable of making a positive contribution to landscape character, distinctiveness and sense of place.

The objective of this document is to ensure planning applications:

- offer a good standard of design;
- are well sited in the landscape;
- are in keeping with the locality and make a positive contribution to local landscape character;
- function well, be safe and legible;
- conserve natural resources through appropriate siting, design and construction;
- provide good accessibility to potential users;
- reflect wherever possible the aspirations and responses of the local community and stakeholders.

## Using this Guidance

This SPD provides specific advice on how landscape issues should be considered as an integral part of the design and development process. It includes practical suggestions regarding the format and content of planning applications and sets out the sorts of questions the planning authority will be asking in its consideration of proposals.

Through adoption as SPD, this document will be a material consideration in relation to planning applications and planning appeals. It will guide the council and applicants through initial pre application discussions, the application process and the consideration of reserved matters and planning conditions relating to landscape, leading to greater openness and transparency in the decision making process.

A precedent is often cited as an argument for or against development. However, it should be recognised that each application is unique and applicants are encouraged to consider each development on its merits. It is important that development is appropriate to the location, well designed, considers the character of the site and its locality, and responds wherever possible, to the aspirations and responses of the local community and stakeholders.

### Structure of the SPD

This guidance document is divided into eight parts as summarised below and illustrated in Figure 1, page 16.

- Part 1:** outlines the policy context and the statutory obligations of the District Council with regard to landscape issues;
- Part 2:** establishes the importance of landscape character and a character led approach to environmental planning. It also identifies best practice guidance and resources for those undertaking landscape character assessments and provides an introduction to the Forest of Dean District Landscape Character Assessment (2002);
- Part 3:** outlines good practice guidance for considering landscape issues in the planning and design process including detailed guidance on landscape surveys and appraisal;
- Part 4:** provides further guidance on how the effects of development on the landscape can be assessed and how this information can help shape design and mitigation proposals;
- Part 5:** gives outline guidance and practical advice on consultation;
- Part 6:** provides guidance on preparing and presenting landscape information;
- Part 7:** provides guidance for applicants when submitting a planning application including details of the landscape information the Council may require;
- Part 8:** outlines the way in which the Council will consider a planning application and the landscape impacts and implications of a development proposal.

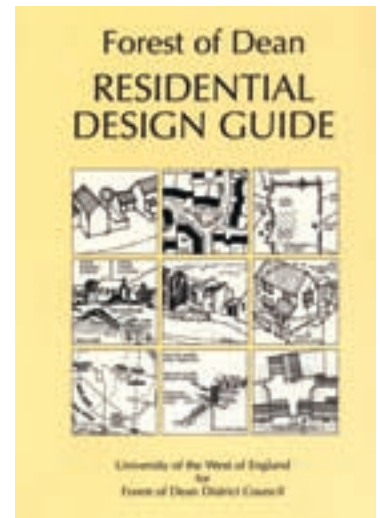
## Supporting Documents

This document should be read in conjunction with the supporting documents listed below:

- The Forest of Dean Residential Design Guide (Adopted as SPG, August 1998). A guidance document to assist those seeking planning permission for residential development in the district.
- The Forest of Dean District Landscape Character Assessment (2002) forms an annex to this document and provides a detailed description of the character of the district's varied landscape, a summary of the evolution of the landscape, and its principal cultural associations.
- The Forest of Dean District Landscape Strategy (2004). Identifies those issues likely to have an impact on the character of the landscape in the coming years and outlines a series of strategies that might help address these impacts. The strategies identified cover issues both of land management and land use planning.

## Useful Contacts

Appendix A provides a comprehensive list of key organisations and their contact details.



*Forest of Dean, Residential Design Guide*



*Forest of Dean District Landscape Character Assessment*



*Forest of Dean District Landscape Strategy*



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# Planning Policy Context and Obligations

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## 1.1 The National Policy Context

- 1.1.1 The government's commitment to sustainable development and planning for sustainable communities lies at the heart of the new planning legislation now in place. As a consequence there is a statutory requirement to consider and balance environmental issues with social and economic objectives, and ensure wider involvement of communities in the planning and decision making process. An understanding of, and appropriate response to environmental and landscape character, is an integral part of this process.
- 1.1.2 National government, regional and sub regional policies and strategies refer to landscape character assessment and environmental characteristics, and set out the basis for applying the principles and judgments required to take landscape character into account in a wide range of decision making. This process is now firmly embedded in Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) , notably PPS7, but also PPS1, PPS12, PPS22; and PPG 17. Defra's Rural Strategy, 2004 and Minerals Planning Guidance 7 also makes reference to the Countryside Character Programme.
- 1.1.3 In the context of this document, the principal extracts from PPS 7 are set out in Appendix B, since the landscape character assessment is identified as a key process and tool in informing planning processes and decision making, and underlines the statutory basis for its consideration.

## 1.2 Planning Policy Context

- 1.2.1 Regional Planning Policies refer to the environmental character issues notably Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) and the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (June 2006) which has a policy, ENV2, relating to Landscape Character Areas.
- 1.2.2 The Forest of Dean Local Plan (Adopted 2005)<sup>2</sup> contains policies related to landscape character and landscape design (see box to right). This SPD must relate to and confirm with these policies. The Forest of Dean Local Plan and the adopted Gloucestershire Structure Plan<sup>1</sup> will continue to be material consideration until such time as they are replaced by the appropriate development plan documents. Although not adopted, the 3rd review of the Gloucestershire Structure Plan<sup>3</sup> is also a material consideration in planning decisions.



*PPS7: Provides the Governments objectives for rural areas and makes explicit reference to the landscape character*

*Relevant Local Plan (Deposit Version) Strategies and Policies are listed below:*

*Strategy 2 - Sustainable Development Requirement*

*Strategy 3 - Priority for the Re-use of Land*

*FBE.7 - Protection of Important Open Areas*

*FBE.8 - Protection of Forest Waste and Other Statutory Crown Land in the Forest*

*FNE.1 - Protection of the Countryside*

*FNE.2 - Conservation and Enhancement of Landscape*

*FNE.3 - Protection of Important Natural Features*

*FNE.4 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty*

*FNE.6 - Protection of the Coastal Zone*

*FHE1 - Historic Environment*

<sup>1</sup> Gloucestershire Structure Plan (Second Review) Adopted November 1999

<sup>2</sup> Forest of Dean District Local Plan (Deposit Version) 2005

<sup>3</sup> Gloucestershire Structure Plan 3rd Alteration (Unadopted) 2005

1.2.3 Whilst the community plan 2004 - 2009 is not a statutory planning document it does provide aspiration guidance on how the community sees the development of the district. It therefore provides 'scene setting' as to the appropriateness of development proposals. The plan has nine sections covering:

- Health and Leisure
- Crime, Disorder and Community Safety
- Education and Lifelong Learning
- Environment
- Business and the Economy
- Tourism
- Arts
- Housing
- Transport and Access to Services

The Community Plan Vision is: to make the Forest of Dean an even better place to live, work and visit.

The Environment aim is: to protect and enhance what is special about the natural and built environment of the forest of dean and to build a sustainable landscape rich in wildlife for the benefit of future generations.



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## A Character Led Approach

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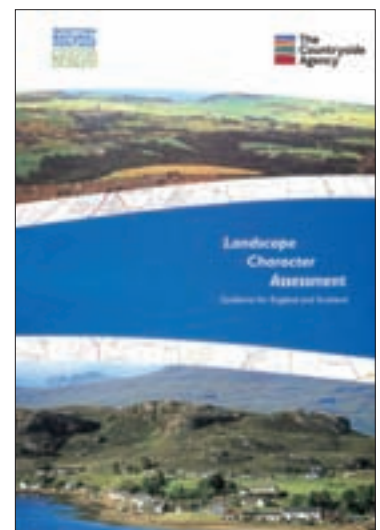


## 2.1 Why is Landscape Character Useful?

- 2.1.1 The assessment of an area or site's landscape character is an objective process that provides factual information about a particular locality. It does not attribute a subjective judgement of landscape quality, sensitivity or capacity, nor does it in itself prescribe whether particular forms of development or landscape change are appropriate or inappropriate, but it does assist in this process. Making judgements and producing development guidelines are important in shaping change in the landscape and are more robust when the character of the landscape is considered.
- 2.1.2 An understanding of landscape character can help ensure that development is well designed and integrated with its surroundings, taking reference from the locality to inform its siting, and aspects of design such as materials and architectural detailing and plant species. A good understanding of a site, its sense of place and character, can also help ensure that development is innovative, that landscapes are appropriately restored and enhanced, are well maintained and managed and that special or important features are conserved. In addition to being reactive in this way, an understanding of landscape character can make a valuable contribution to the formulation of planning policies, concept statements and area action plans, and help determine the suitability of land for certain types of development.

## 2.2 The National Context - Character Assessment Guidance

- 2.2.1 Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency) rightfully acknowledges that the landscape is a dynamic and ever changing entity and stresses the value of character assessment as a means of monitoring and planning landscape change. For almost 20 years the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) has provided best practice guidance on the methods of undertaking landscape character assessment. The most recent guidance document was produced in 2002<sup>4</sup> in conjunction with Scottish Natural Heritage, and represents a comprehensive introduction to the assessment process. It acknowledges that great advances have been made in the tools and technology available to those undertaking landscape character assessments, not least in the wide accessibility of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) that enable large amounts of geographic information to be analysed and assessed.
- 2.2.2 The Guidance sets out important principles for the assessment of landscape character. It does not explicitly identify a rigid methodology, but does outline best practice and key concepts. Topic Papers are also published periodically that deal with particular areas in detail. Landscape Character Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland, Topic Papers and other information is available in the Resources section of the Landscape Character Network (formerly Countryside Character Network) website: [www.landscapecharacter.org.uk](http://www.landscapecharacter.org.uk)



*Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland*

<sup>4</sup>Landscape Character Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland (CAX84F)



*The Wye Valley*



*Low hills and orchards north of Newent*



*The Severn Estuary*

## 2.3 Landscape Character in the Forest of Dean District

- 2.3.1 The Forest of Dean District is well known for its natural beauty and amenity value, but perhaps less so for the great diversity of landscapes it possesses. The combination of woodland, pasture, arable land, hills, ridge lines, scarp slopes, vales, valleys and riverine landscapes all contribute to a dramatically varied landscape.
- 2.3.2 Parts of the district such as the Wye Valley and the Malvern Hills are protected as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These landscapes are particularly well known and evoke strong images. Elsewhere particular features of the landscape are recognised and designated for their wildlife, historic or archaeological importance and the central 'Forest' is a well known tourist area.
- 2.3.3 However, beyond these recognisable and protected areas are vast landscapes of strong and coherent character. Examples include the distinctive vale landscapes bordering the Leadon and the Severn, the low hills containing numerous orchards and glasshouses north of Newent and the shifting landscapes of the Severn Sands.
- 2.3.4 **The Forest of Dean District Landscape Character Assessment, 2002**, provides a detailed review of the district's landscape and recognises that all landscapes matter, and not just those that are designated or formally protected. The assessment identifies differences in the character of the landscape without being influenced by perceptions of quality or value. The Forest of Dean District Landscape Character Assessment (2002) records and describes the varied landscapes that can be found within the district and summarises how the intricate interplay of numerous physical and human factors such as geology, landform, land cover and human use of the landscape have influenced and shaped character. It provides a new descriptive map of the district and draws attention to the contrasts in character and qualities of our everyday environment that we so often take for granted.



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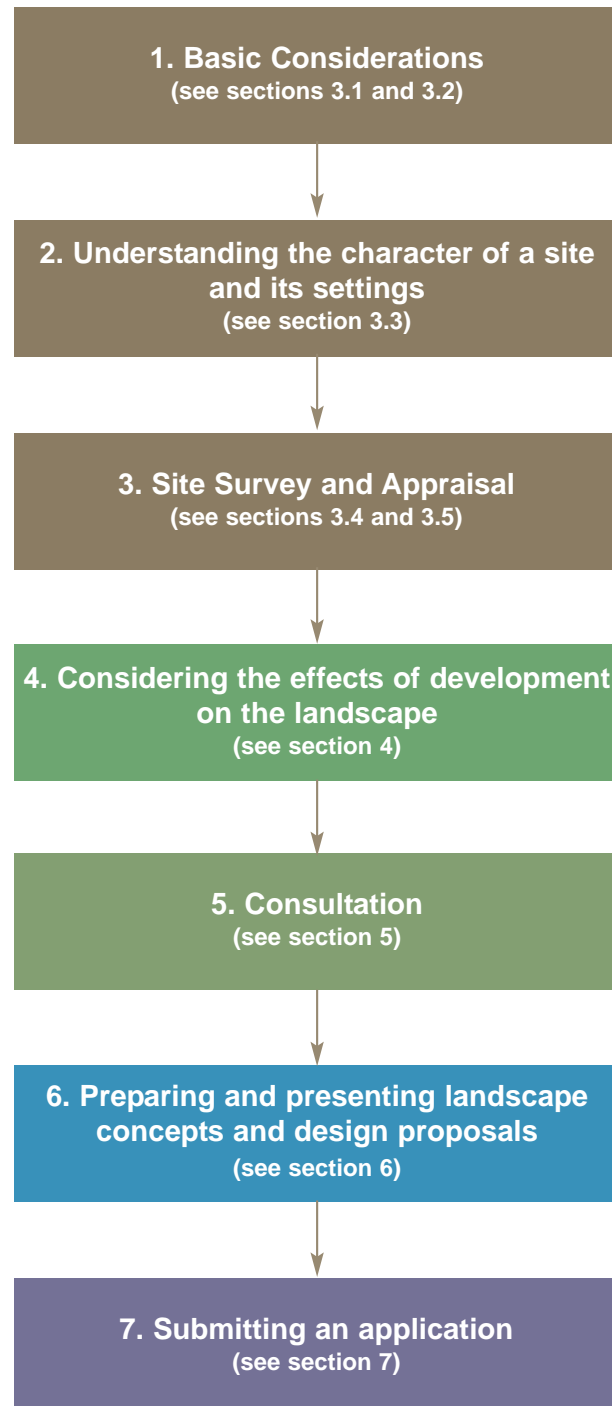
## Practical Guidance for Applicants **Landscape Survey and Appraisal**

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**Figure 1**

This diagram sets out the key stages of information gathering and analysis and appraisal of landscape matters which are described in detail within this document.





### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section provides detailed guidance on the range of landscape issues that may need to be considered when preparing a planning application for a development proposal. Whilst much of the guidance will only be applicable to major development proposals, aspects of it remain nonetheless relevant to smaller developments particularly those in sensitive locations, or where landscape issues are considered to be a particularly important issue. The key stages in the process are illustrated on the diagram opposite which will assist those using the guidance as a practical tool.
- 3.1.1 This section provides detailed guidance on the range of landscape issues that may need to be considered when preparing a planning application for a development proposal. Whilst much of the guidance will only be applicable to major development proposals, aspects of it remain nonetheless relevant to smaller developments particularly those in sensitive locations, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), or where landscape issues are considered to be a particularly important issue. The cumulative impact of numerous developments is also a consideration. Whilst individual schemes may cause little impact, the impact of several schemes when assessed together may result in significant harm.
- 3.1.2 Pre application discussions with the Planning Officer should determine the requirements of each particular application and further guidance on this is included in Section 7.0 of this document. This judgement will be made based on a number of factors, including the location, scale and type of development proposed but will always be appropriate and proportionate. By following the guidance it should be possible to:
- identify problems or issues of contention early on in the application process;
  - arrive at a scheme that makes the most of the site and its setting; and
  - demonstrate that the application meets planning requirements and the aspirations of the local community.
- 3.1.3 In some instances it will be necessary for the applicant to appoint a landscape architect. A qualified landscape architect will be able to contribute experience and inspiration and coordinate surveys, design and consultation. Landscape Architects are accredited by a Chartered Institute (the Landscape Institute) and represent a professional body that can assist in a range of areas of expertise and take the scheme through the planning process. A list of accredited landscape practices can be obtained from the Landscape Institute website ([www.l-i.org.uk](http://www.l-i.org.uk)).

## 3.2 Basic Considerations and Policy Context

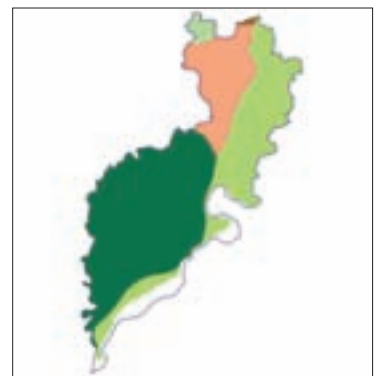
- 3.2.1 **Location Plan:** All applications should be accompanied by a location plan. This will be at an appropriate scale and illustrate the site on an Ordnance Survey map base. The Application Site should be illustrated by a red line boundary, with any other land owned by the applicant outlined in blue. The location plan should also illustrate something of the locality, surrounding properties, features and access points. Depending on the scale and nature of the application more detailed plans and information may be required.
- 3.2.2 **Legal Issues:** At the outset, any legal restrictions that affect the land or property, such as restrictive covenants, easements or planning conditions should be established. All boundaries of site ownership should also be verified. A solicitor will be able to assist with this if the information is not already available.
- 3.2.3 It may also be advisable to notify neighbouring landowners or occupiers about the work that is intended. This may reveal issues that are of relevance to the application.
- 3.2.4 **Planning Policy:** The planning policies that apply to the site and development proposal will vary depending on the location and the nature of development proposed. If the application site lies within or affects the setting of a Conservation Area or could affect a Listed Building or protected trees, additional controls on development may be imposed.
- 3.2.5 Planning policies are contained in the Forest of Dean District Local Plan and the Gloucestershire Structure Plan. Other considerations, such as Supplementary Planning Guidance notes (SPG) for example the Residential Design Guide or Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) for example this one, may also need to be considered.
- 3.2.6 Some planning documents are available for reference at public libraries and can also be obtained direct from the District Council.
- 3.2.7 The planning history of the site should also be established, especially where the site has been subject to a previous development proposal or planning application. It is possible to check this by visiting the Forest of Dean District Council offices in Coleford and speaking with a Planning Officer.
- 3.2.8 **Additional Guidance:** For certain developments the District Council prepares Development Briefs. These are available from the Council by request and should be referred to as part of the planning and design process.
- 3.2.9 Additional sources of information include Parish Plans and Village Design Statements. Parish Plans are produced by a local community and set out the views of the Parish Council. Village Design Statements are produced by communities to describe local character and distinctiveness and set out design considerations for future development.

### 3.3 Understanding the Character of the Site and Its Setting

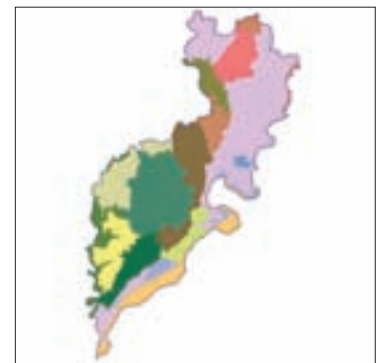
- 3.3.1 A sound understanding of the character of a site and its wider setting or context is essential. This section of the guidance provides details of the steps necessary to assess the overall character of the application site and the surrounding landscape or townscape. It is important to assess the character of the site and its setting and to note opportunities for integrating development into the surrounding landscape/townscape. This invariably leads to a scheme that is much more in scale and in keeping with the locality, and that reinforces or enhances the local sense of place, rather than detracting from the qualities of the surroundings.
- 3.3.2 In very broad terms, this is achieved by assessing existing national and local landscape character assessments and undertaking site specific character assessment. Essential to the assessment of landscape character is an understanding of the assessment hierarchy, and the difference between landscape character types and landscape character areas. Reference should be made to Chapter 2 of the joint publication Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland on how to do this, but further details of the hierarchy of assessment from national to local are set out below.
- 3.3.3 **Countryside Character:** The first stage in assessing the character of a site and its setting is to establish which Countryside Character Area(s) are relevant. Countryside Character Areas were developed as part of a National programme by the Countryside Agency in the late 1990s and represent the top tier in the assessment hierarchy. It is important that the review of the mapping and descriptive text verifies which key characteristics are present or absent as these are very much the core elements which characterise the landscape and make it distinct from other Countryside Character Areas. The descriptive text also provides some interesting background on physical and cultural influences on the landscape, land cover patterns and the form of buildings and settlements. Further information is available on the forces for change affecting the landscape and broad guidance on how the landscape should be managed in the future, which may be of relevance in shaping development proposals.
- 3.3.4 Countryside Character Areas relevant to the Forest of Dean District are contained in Countryside Character, Volume 8: South West (CA 14, Countryside Agency, 1999. ISBN 0 86170 6145). This is available for purchase from the Natural England Publications Department and for download on the Natural England website.
- 3.3.5 **Landscape Character Assessment:** Having established the broad pattern of the landscape and the key characteristics of the wider countryside, a more detailed study of the character of the application site should be carried out. This should be carried out with reference to the Forest of Dean District Landscape Character Assessment (Forest of Dean District Council, 2002).



*Countryside Character, Volume 8: South West, 1999*



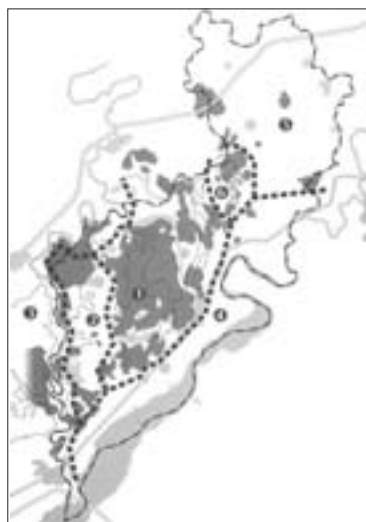
*Countryside Character Areas in the Forest of Dean District*



*Forest of Dean District Landscape Character Assessment*



*Extract from Forest of Dean District Landscape Character Assessment*



*Residential Design Guide Sub Areas*

1. Forest Core, 2. Commons, 3. Wye Valley,  
4. Severn Vale, 5. Northern Farmlands,  
6. May Hill



*The historic character of the landscape should also be considered where relevant.*

- 3.3.6 This assessment identifies the pattern of fifteen Landscape Character Types and forty two Landscape Character Areas across the district and describes the physical and human influences that have shaped them. Cultural associations are also explored. The assessment sits below the Countryside Character Assessment in the assessment hierarchy and uses this and the National Landscape Typology as a framework for more detailed assessment.
- 3.3.7 Applicants should again assess the site and its setting by verifying the presence or absence of key characteristics of the landscape that may need to be considered in the development of the scheme. It is the framework of this study that should also inform the basis for more detailed site specific character assessment.
- 3.3.8 The Forest of Dean Residential Design Guide is also important to consider at this stage as this identifies broad variations in building styles and materials across the district. Character Areas in this study are much broader than in the Forest of Dean District Landscape Character Assessment, but contain important considerations for applicants wishing to understand the built heritage of a locality.
- 3.3.9 Other assessments are available at the district scale although they have now been superseded by the Forest of Dean District Landscape Character Assessment. Nonetheless, landscape character assessments of the Wye Valley AONB (1996) and The Malvern Hills AONB (1993) are both important sources of additional information for applicants wishing to understand more about the character of the areas of the district designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan and Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, both covering the period 2004 to 2009, should also be referred to.
- 3.3.10 The historic character of the landscape should also be considered where relevant. The Gloucestershire Historic Landscape Character Assessment provides a detailed review of historic landscape character and is particularly important where the historic pattern of landscape features such as hedgerows, woodlands and meadows need to be understood. This is a specialist document available for consultation on request from the County Archaeologist. It is advisable that information and guidance on its use is sought from the County Archaeologist prior to analysis of its findings.
- 3.3.11 Plans illustrating the wider character context of the site should be presented on appropriate Ordnance Survey base mapping and at an appropriate scale. 1: 25,000 is typically used to illustrate the location of a site in its wider character context.
- 3.3.12 **Site Scale Character Assessment:** A site specific landscape and townscape character assessment will build upon information already established through the analysis of existing character assessments, but will also provide a picture of the character of the application site and its surrounding context in more detail. It should establish the essence of the place and underlying character. As a minimum, site specific assessment should consider:

### 3.3.13 Landscape:

- A description of landscape character within and around the site, with specific reference made to issues such as geology, landform, soils, land cover, and the pattern of built and natural features.
- The visual character of the landscape and a record of views to, from and across the site.
- A review of the opportunities to reinforce, or enhance the character of the site and its surroundings or the opportunities that might exist to create new character, where there is a proven absence of positive character in the locality (possibly as a result of landscape degradation).
- A review of the opportunities to strengthen links between the site and its surroundings. This is in terms of visual (views/vistas) and physical (footpaths/access routes) connectivity. Wherever possible, the review should identify opportunities for appropriate linkage of habitats for example through the provision of hedgerows or other features such as wet ditches or woodland.
- An overall statement on the sense of place, overall character and identity of the site and its setting.



*Site specific assessment should provide a statement on the sense of place, overall character and identity of the site and...*



*...a record of views to, from and across the site.*

### 3.3.14 Townscape:

Where a development proposal is located within or in close proximity to an existing settlement or area of built development a townscape assessment should also be carried out. This should consider the following issues where relevant:

- The character of key townscape features such as land use, massing, layout, streets, frontages, size of plots, density.
- Historic street patterns and an understanding of the evolution of the settlement.
- The presence of local landmarks, vistas and memorable places.
- Architectural styles, materials, design and detailing that characterise local buildings and structures.
- The character of boundary treatments such as walls and hedgerows.
- The character of open spaces and the relationship these have to areas of built development.



*Townscape assessments should consider local landmarks, vistas and memorable places and...*



*...identify architectural styles, materials, design and detailing that characterise local buildings.*

- 3.3.15 When carrying out townscape assessment reference should be made to the joint Scottish Natural Heritage and Countryside Agency Guidance document Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (CAX84F).



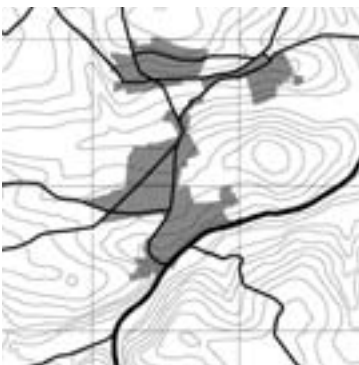
- 3.3.16 Plans and photographs illustrating the character of a site and its setting should be presented on appropriate Ordnance Survey base mapping and at an appropriate scale. 1:10,000 mapping is typically used to illustrate the extent of character types and areas at the local scale.

### 3.4 Site Survey and Appraisal

- 3.4.1 It is essential that a thorough study of a site and its context is undertaken prior to any design work. This landscape survey and appraisal is very different but complementary to the character assessment, and identifies the landscape constraints and opportunities present on the site that need to be considered. It also provides details of how the site is used. It is completed through a combination of site visits and desk based research and analysis of documents and other available information.
- 3.4.2 It is recommended that the District Council is consulted at an early stage to agree which surveys will be necessary and to provide advice on the scope of these. Many of the surveys will require the appointment of specialist consultants and it is often helpful to appoint a lead consultant to bring all the relevant studies together.
- 3.4.3 Site survey and appraisal plans will vary in scale and degree of detail, depending on the nature of the subject and the standard of information available. Typically site appraisal drawings will be presented at 1: 200 scale and should normally be no greater than 1: 500.

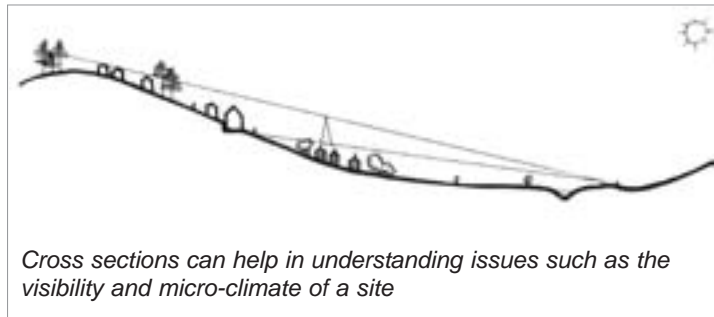
The surveys may include the following:

- 3.4.4 **Topographic Survey:** An understanding of landform and topography is critical to appreciating what form and scale of development is appropriate for a site. It also helps assess the potential visual impact of development. This may include:
- 3.4.5 **Contour Plan:** This will give a clear representation of the landform of the site, its setting and information on site levels. Contour plans are generally available at a range of scales with contour lines drawn at different intervals. Topographic surveys often generate spot height data that can often be more accurate but more difficult to interpret than a contour plan. These can be drawn although many computer packages now enable 3D models to be generated that can be viewed from any angle.
- 3.4.6 **Slope Analysis:** Generated from contour survey information, these will indicate the steepness of slopes, aspect and areas that may be more or less suitable for development.



*Understanding landform is critical to appreciating what form and scale of development is appropriate*

- 3.4.7 **Cross Sections:** These can communicate very effectively key aspects of the sites landform and issues such as visibility, visual context and references, micro-climate and views into and out of the site. Cross sections should indicate the location of screening elements such as trees and buildings. Cross sections should be drawn with consistent vertical and horizontal scales whenever possible.



- 3.4.8 **Orientation:** Landform can dictate the orientation of a site or parts of a site. Upstanding ridges and hills generally have an outwards orientation, whereas sites within valleys tend to be overlooked and look inward on themselves. An understanding of orientation helps appreciate the visible character of the site and its setting and issues such as enclosure, openness and intimacy.
- 3.4.9 **Ground Conditions:** An understanding of ground conditions is critical and particularly important in areas of former mining or industry. An engineer may need to assess the stability of the land and the extent and type of any contamination. This will normally be required where land has been previously used for industry, mineral working, quarrying or waste disposal. Contamination comes in many forms and older structures may contain asbestos. Where contamination is found mitigation or remediation will usually be required.
- 3.4.10 **Existing Features:** All existing landscape features should be recorded accurately and an assessment made of the contribution they make to the site and the surrounding area. Such an understanding may affect the layout of development and may offer opportunities to incorporate valued or established features into the scheme.

The following surveys might be required:

- 3.4.11 **Boundaries:** Details of all boundaries around the site, whether these are built (brick or stone walls, timber fence or railings) or natural (earth bunds, shrub borders or hedgerows) and an assessment of their visual character and state of repair/condition. The contribution that hedges, wall and other boundary features such as shelterbelts make to local habitat networks should also be assessed. The age of boundaries may also need to be considered and the contribution they make to the integrity of the historic character of a place assessed. Issues of visibility and the screening



*Boundary wall sometimes have distinctive copings such as this 'cock and hen' cope.*



*Field boundaries such as hedges can create strong patterns and emphasise relief.*



*A survey of trees should be carried out where they are likely to be effected by development.*



*Trees, tree groups and woodland all contribute significantly to landscape character.*



*Current land use within and surrounding the site should be illustrated on a plan at an appropriate scale.*

and enclosure provided by boundaries may need to be assessed and recorded. A photographic record may be required to supplement this survey.

**3.4.12 Field Patterns:** For rural sites, where the pattern of the landscape is dictated or influenced by field boundaries, the type, nature and their general condition should be recorded. The type of boundary, such as dry stone walls or hedgerows, age of boundaries, species composition of hedgerows, methods of construction or management technique (such as local styles or detailing), contribution to landscape patterns and relationship to other landscape features should all be recorded where appropriate. Hedgerow surveys should be undertaken in accordance with Hedgerow Regulations 1999.

**3.4.13 Trees:** A survey of trees on the site should be carried out where trees are a consideration or are likely to be affected by the development. Tree surveys should be undertaken in accordance with BS5837 (2005) and contain information such as location plans, and details of tree species, age, height, girth, crown spread, condition and useful life expectancy. An arboricultural consultant can provide specialist advice if required. Specific requirements may also be specified for trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Written permission is required to undertake any works to trees designated as TPO. All trees within Conservation Areas are regarded as being of TPO status.

**3.4.14 Woodland and Vegetation:** Where appropriate or necessary, surveys of woodlands and other areas of significant vegetation such as shrub borders and structural planting should be undertaken. The survey might include producing a record of condition, species mixes, longevity, and contribution made to screening or visual containment. The location of all woodland and existing vegetation should be clearly identified on a plan at an appropriate scale. Special consideration should be given to areas of ancient woodland and any veteran trees. Ancient woodlands are defined as woodlands that have been continuously wooded since 1600AD. Many were managed historically and show evidence of former coppicing. Others might contain other historic features such as boundary ditches and banks that once defined their limits. Ancient woodland sites, even those that have been replanted or recently felled, contain a seed bank that if managed appropriately can regenerate and add to the diversity of new planting.

**3.4.15 Land Use:** Current land use within and surrounding the site should be illustrated on a plan at an appropriate scale. Typical categories might include residential, commercial, business, retail, industry, public open space, accessible green space, brownfield/derelict, open water and woodland. Where existing buildings are to be retained on site, details of the use of these buildings and their external design and appearance should be recorded.



3.4.16 **Services:** Pylons, sub stations and other functional buildings, as well as other major underground utilities, such as cabling and easements, should be marked on plans at an appropriate scale to illustrate key constraints and considerations that might influence the layout of the design. Whilst many utilities can be relocated (in consultation with the relevant authority) it is often costly and it may be more prudent to design around physical constraints. Specific guidance exists on the distance from utilities certain activities can take place. This might influence the choice of plants or the design of hard landscape, irrigation or cabling for lights or additional services. Reference should be made to National Joint Utilities Guidance (NJUG) and any specific guidance from individual utilities companies.



*Provision of rights of way should be considered for new development.*

3.4.17 **Access and Movement:** Reference should be made to the Definitive Rights of Way Maps held by Gloucestershire County Council (contact Gloucestershire County Council Public Rights of Way Team) and also to non statutory but locally valued routes, especially if the site is within the Statutory Forest. The Definitive Map shows the route of byways, roads used as public paths, bridleways and footpaths and an understanding of the regulations that apply to each is essential. Site survey should confirm the location and continued use of all routes in the vicinity of the site. Barriers to movement should also be noted, as well as key nodes and approaches. Some routes may be designated as National Trails or Recreational Paths. Cycle routes should also be considered, and further information about the National Cycle Network can be obtained from Sustrans ([www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)).



*Many rights of way are ancient and contribute to local historic character.*

3.4.18 Integrating new development requires consideration of the potential for visual as well as physical connections, and ease of access is especially important. Analysis of the site and its surroundings in relation to surrounding land uses and facilities is important to ensure that wherever possible, development is well linked to existing facilities and communities. Design and landscaping of accesses promoting cycle or walking are especially important in encouraging 'non car' modes of transport. It will be important to create the right environment to promote their use.

3.4.19 Consideration should be given to the provision of access for all. The elderly and disabled have particular needs which should be considered and incorporated wherever necessary. Access to public transport services is also an important consideration in some schemes.

3.4.20 New Access Rights commenced on 31 October 2005 and opportunities now exist to open areas of the countryside and registered common land for statutory access. Further information is available from the Gloucestershire County Council Public Rights of Way Team.



*Some areas retain a tranquil and remote character.*



*The Gloucestershire BAP provides a useful guide to nature conservation priorities.*



*A Phase 1 Habitat Survey provides a good record of existing habitats.*



*Specific surveys, in this case bats, may be required for some development projects.*

3.4.21 **Tranquillity:** Tranquillity is a subjective response to a landscape but may be an important consideration in some areas that are distant from development, or represent havens away from particularly busy or noisy places in the locality. Whilst difficult to measure and articulate, if perceived as an important consideration, applicants will be encouraged to undertake some form of tranquillity assessment. The Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) and the have simple guidelines determining if a location is 'tranquil'. Further information and details of maps and publications is available on the CPRE website ([www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk)).

3.4.22 **Ecology and Nature Conservation:** Sites in both urban and rural locations have the potential to be valued habitats for wildlife or contain important and protected species. The nature conservation value of the application site should be established with reference to existing ecological records and a habitat survey will normally be required for larger applications. Any ecological surveys should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist in order to identify any significant ecological constraints, and assess the opportunities for habitat enhancement or creation.

3.4.23 Statutory, and non statutory nature conservation sites, such as Key Wildlife Sites, should be identified for the application site and surrounding area and consideration given to the interrelationship and linkage of habitats. Consideration should also be given to any activities or potential impacts arising from the development that may have an effect on neighbouring nature conservation interests. Natural England (formerly English Nature) can provide citations for all statutory designations (Site of Special Scientific Interest, etc). Reference should also be made to the UK and Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for information of appropriate conservation and enhancement opportunities. Details and further information can be obtained from the South West Regional Biodiversity Partnership website ([www.swbiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.swbiodiversity.org.uk).) A link to the Gloucestershire BAP is available on this website. Further information on Key Wildlife Sites and details of species records can be obtained from the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records website ([www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk](http://www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk)).

3.4.24 A Phase 1 Habitat survey might be required. In addition an Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey may be necessary. This can be used to ascertain whether detailed surveys for protected species such as bats, badgers, snakes and newts may be required. General guidance on the timing of ecological surveys is provided in Appendix C.

Other ecological requirements may include:

- Ascertaining the types and extent of vegetation cover on and around the site and note any opportunities for extending habitats. The concept of habitat connectivity is also important and new development should always seek to provide linkage between adjacent areas of like habitat, and should always seek to avoid habitat fragmentation. Key features might include the presence of ancient woodland, species rich grasslands or wetland/ open water environments.

- Noting locally occurring tree and shrub species, both native and non native. This may indicate a suitable palette of plants to be used in the creation of habitats and planting more generally. Seed and plant materials should always be sought from the locality and from reputable suppliers.
- The maturity of existing vegetation may be an issue and consideration of future management may be necessary. If important species or habitats are present the District Council may require an ecological management plan to be prepared.
- Geological Conservation sites should also be a consideration where relevant. Further guidance is available from the County Council and the Gloucestershire Geoconservation Trust ([www.glosgeotrust.org.uk](http://www.glosgeotrust.org.uk)) with regard to this issue.

3.4.25 **Archaeology and Cultural Heritage:** All landscapes are a result of human activity, and the product of many generations of change. It will be necessary to understand the history of the landscape and the archaeological sites contained within it, in order to identify significant elements which merit preservation or recording. This may include:

- A record of all known archaeological sites and monuments as held on the County Sites and Monuments Record (CSMR). Currently, c.7,500 sites and monuments are known within the Forest of Dean District. A number of nationally important sites are protected under statute as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs). Within the planning process there is a presumption in favour of the preservation in situ of nationally important archaeological remains, whether Scheduled or not. Where sites of lesser importance would be adversely affected by development, there will be a need to undertake recording of the archaeology so as to mitigate the development impact. The County Archaeologist can advise on whether archaeological assessment and field evaluation is required as part of an application, taking into account the nature and location of the proposed development.
- Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings are designations that apply to areas of built heritage and individual structures. Details such as the reason for designation and detailed designation boundaries are available on request from the District Council.
- The Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest in England represents an important designation that should be considered where development proposals are likely to affect these sites. English Heritage register those sites such as parks, gardens and cemeteries and areas of particular historic or design interest that warrant protection. The County Council can advise on this although detailed information is also available from the English Heritage Regional Office in Bristol. In addition to the English Heritage Register, Parks and Gardens of Local Importance have also been identified. Further information is available from the Gloucestershire Gardens and Landscape Trust which is part of the Association of Gardens Trusts ([www.gardenstrusts.org.uk](http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk)).



*The District is rich in heritage assets from medieval architecture such as this tithe barn.....*



*....to a wealth of industrial remains in the Forest.*





*Flood risk is a consideration along much of the Severn but also along minor rivers in the District.*

- The landscape has inspired numerous artists, writers and poets. Some landscapes may continue to evoke particular feelings and emotions and indeed some works may influence how we see or respond to particular places today. An appreciation of the cultural and artistic dimension of a place can help generate imaginative ideas which reflect local distinctiveness and encourage the involvement of local communities. Cultural associations are often revealed during the process of community consultation, although the Forest of Dean District Landscape Assessment has a chapter dedicated to the subject.

3.4.26 **Hydrology, Drainage and Flood Risk:** Hydrological features and characteristics are an important consideration for many application sites. They offer important opportunities to enhance the nature conservation value of an area and can also be a major asset offering opportunities for visual enhancement or recreation. An understanding of hydrological issues can also help shape flood storage and management issues, as well as grey water run off and site drainage and the creation of sustainable drainage systems.

- Flood risk potential can be determined by reviewing the Environment Agency Flood Zone maps, although these are only able to provide an approximate indication of flood risk. Please contact the Environment Agency for details. ([www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)).
- The Environment Agency should be contacted for advice on whether a flood risk assessment is needed and whether any specific aspects need to be taken into consideration. Appropriate space should be allowed along watercourses for management and maintenance, a 9m strip in case of main river and 5m for an ordinary watercourse. Reference should also be made to any local drainage requirements or By-Laws.
- Consideration should be given to all watercourses and permission must be obtained from the Environment Agency before any works to a main watercourse can be undertaken.
- The Environment Agency and District Council will also provide advice about design, planting and management of water features and waterside landscapes.
- The seasonality of watercourses should be considered as ditches surveyed in the summer or during prolonged dry weather may be important for drainage or as wetland habitats during wetter periods.

3.4.27 **Agricultural Land Classification:** For application sites including agricultural land, an Agricultural Land Classification Survey may be required, as there is a presumption against development on the best and most versatile agricultural land (Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7). Defra hold an archive of all Agricultural Land

Classifications undertaken by MAFF and these are available from the Defra Bristol office. The District Council also holds limited information. If no existing assessment is available, an Agricultural Land Survey may be required. This should be undertaken by specialist consultants. For guidance on suitable consultants reference can be made to the Institute of Professional Soil Scientists who hold a database. Additional guidance and information on Agricultural Land Classification is available on the Defra website ([www.Defra.gov.uk](http://www.Defra.gov.uk)).

**3.4.28 Visual Analysis:** Any form of development has the potential to have a visual impact, whether it is through the introduction of new features or the removal of existing ones. A thorough understanding of the visibility of the site and its setting is essential as this can guide the layout and placement of buildings, structures and planting. For example it might be necessary to preserve important views or block/filter unattractive ones from within the site. Similar consideration should also be given to how the development might be viewed from its surroundings. Visual analysis at this stage is different from visual impact assessment undertaken later in the application process and generally might consist of the following:

- Analysis of memorable, positive or attractive views from within the site and the location of key viewpoints and vistas.
- The location of local landmarks that might form the focal point of vistas and views from the site.
- Analysis of vistas that run through the site that should not be obstructed.
- Analysis of negative views from the site that might require screening.
- Analysis of views into the site, and the identification of areas that are particularly visible, such as on exposed landform, that might be inappropriate for development.
- Analysis of the scale of the site, in relation to its setting. Careful consideration of scale will assist in determining the massing and location of proposals and their appropriateness.



*Local landmarks might form the focal point of vistas and views from the site.*

### 3.5 Presenting the Survey Results and Conclusions

- 3.5.1 Having undertaken the appropriate surveys and collated the information, the results of individual studies and assessments should be brought together in a way that shows that the applicant has understood and considered all relevant aspects of the site in relation to the proposal.
- 3.5.2 Large and complex applications and those for sensitive sites are likely to require a variety of written and illustrative material. However, applications that deal with small development proposals should also be able to demonstrate that the site and its setting are understood and that the design and planning of the scheme has been informed by the appropriate landscape information.
- 3.5.3 Whatever the scale and nature of the application, it is important that the information is summarised and illustrated in a clear and concise manner.
- 3.5.4 Character Assessment and Site Appraisal should be supplemented with a photographic record. Photographs taken need not be taken by professional photographers to any particular specification; however, the location of the viewpoint and orientation of view should be recorded. It is often useful to also record prevailing weather conditions and other factors influencing visibility.



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## Practical Guidance for Applicants Considering the Effects of Development on the Landscape

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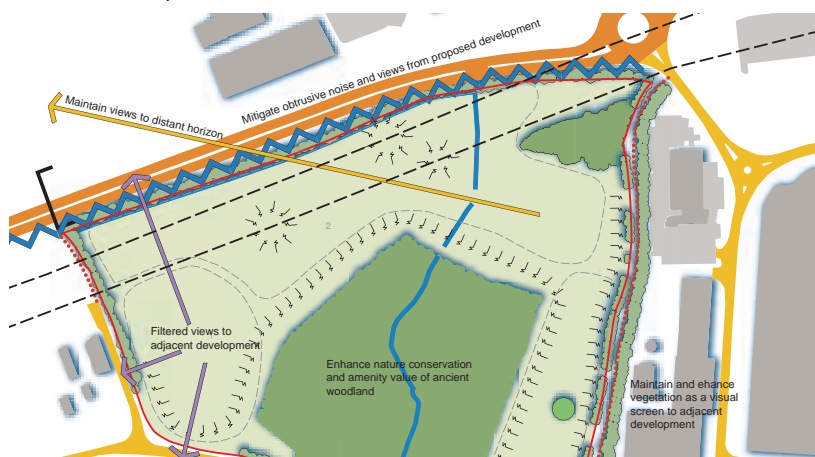


## 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 In considering a planning application, the Council will make an assessment on how the proposals address local landscape character, the features of the site and its setting and visual amenity. These are one of a number of considerations, but increasingly, environmental and landscape issues are a critical part of the decision making process.
- 4.1.2 Much of the information set out earlier in this guidance will help the Council establish what the effects of the development will be. Consideration will also be given to the findings of public consultation and the results of discussions with statutory agencies which will help establish the most important features, elements or aspects of the site.

## 4.2 Site Appraisal and Evaluation

- 4.2.1 The surveys and studies outlined earlier in the document should be brought together as part of an overall appraisal of the site which should consider where relevant, its relationship to the surrounding landscape. This appraisal should summarise any significant landscape constraints and/or opportunities and represents an important stage in the design process, helping to generate imaginative and appropriate schemes. The site appraisal should identify the key physical and contextual influences that need to be taken account of and should inform the overall development concept and the preparation of an appropriate landscape strategy or landscape masterplan.
- 4.2.2 The appraisal may have a direct influence on the design proposals and identify natural and built features for retention, or locally distinctive building styles, materials and patterns of planting, for example.



*A Landscape Appraisal is a good way of summarising any significant landscape constraints and opportunities but will not in itself ensure good design.*

## 4.3 Establishing What Matters and Why

- 4.3.1 The site appraisal along with other baseline information should be used to identify what landscape features and characteristics should be retained and protected, and which could be lost or removed in the development of the design proposals. The findings of consultation should also be considered, especially where stakeholders and local



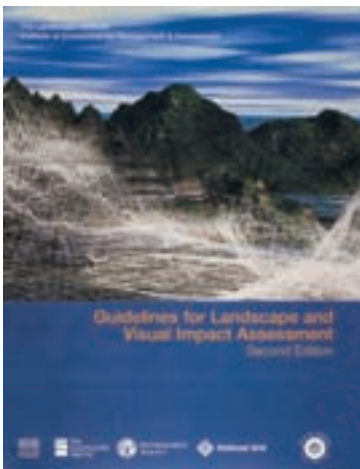
communities have specifically been asked to identify landscape features that they would like to see retained or addressed by the development. This process might identify for example, trees and other areas of vegetation that will need to be retained and protected during construction, important vistas and views, or opportunities for landscape improvement or enhancement.

#### 4.4 Evaluation and Design

- 4.4.1 The conclusions of the landscape appraisal, including the outcome of any consultations, should be drawn together as part of a landscape evaluation. This evaluation should consider the overall landscape suitability of the site for development and help formulate a series of key design principles to which the masterplan should respond. For example, the evaluation may determine that certain areas of the site are more sensitive than others and development in these areas may be regarded as inappropriate, or it could establish the maximum height of new buildings to avoid adversely affecting adjacent properties.
- 4.4.2 The evaluation should also consider the overall design approach to be adopted. In some locations, a bold 'imposed' design could be preferable to one based upon a continuation of vernacular architecture and existing materials and details. Both have their merits and it is important that the overall approach to the design is appropriate.
- 4.4.3 How this stage of the process is completed and presented will vary depending on the nature and scale of the development proposed and the character and context of the site. A written 'vision statement' is often a good way of articulating broad concepts although this need not necessarily restrict itself wholly to landscape issues. More typically, drawings, models and visualisations will be required in order that the council can assess how baseline information has been considered and what impacts the application will have on the site and the local landscape.

#### 4.5 Considering Landscape and Visual Impact

- 4.5.1 Any development will result in some degree of change, whether this is through the introduction of new features, or the loss of existing features. Change is not necessarily bad, and indeed it is change that makes the landscape dynamic and interesting. The nature, scale and type of change dictate whether it is perceived as positive or negative. This also depends very much on the point of view of the individual.
- 4.5.2 The impact or effects of a development will need to be considered by the Council and other agencies when assessing the acceptability of an application. This assessment will influence the decision on whether an application should be approved or rejected and whether any further planning conditions are required.



*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Second Edition. (Spon Press, 2002, ISBN 0-415-23185-X).*

- 4.5.3 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will generally be required when it is anticipated that development could have a significant effect upon the character of the landscape or townscape or result in the loss of important features of the site. Consideration will also be given to important views and vistas.
- 4.5.4 Major, larger scale projects are likely to be subject to a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This will provide all of the information that the District Council will require to determine the environmental impact of the development. This applies to applications for outline permission as well as those for full permission. Further details are provided in section 7.

## 4.6 Illustrating Impacts

- 4.6.1 A range of tools are now available to clearly illustrate the impacts of development on the landscape and on visual amenity, ranging from traditional illustrations and models to computer visualisations, photomontage and Zones of Visual Influence maps (ZVI).
- 4.6.2 Where photomontages are prepared, it is advisable that viewpoints are agreed with the Council and where possible, the local community. The most accurate photomontages are undertaken by specialist organisations using detailed ground models, rendered wire line design proposals and accurate high resolution photographs. More illustrative montages may however be admissible if these are a true and accurate representation of the proposals.
- 4.6.3 Consideration should, where necessary, be given to the seasonality of deciduous tree screening and the impact of night time lighting.
- 4.6.4 Where necessary, the Council may require the preparation of a Zone of Visual Influence map (ZVI). This records the extent to which development will be visible in the landscape. Manual or computer aided versions can be produced, and methodologies and tools exist for the production of each. Computer aided ZVI use specialist computer software and factor in landform, vegetation and sometimes buildings when considering the visibility of a proposed development. As a minimum, applicants should be able to demonstrate the areas and locations likely to be affected by the development.



*Photomontage showing proposed development at year 1 and year 10.*



*Example of an electronic ZVI with woodland blocks modelled to a height of 15m.*

## 4.7 Design Revisions and Mitigation

- 4.7.1 The landscape and visual impact assessment should be seen as an iterative process and the initial outcomes can often lead to beneficial design changes that help minimise adverse impacts. The Council will be keen to see that where adverse impacts are identified all necessary measures have been taken to design these out.
- 4.7.2 Applicants will be encouraged to consider the impact or effects of the development proposed throughout the design process and to avoid or 'design out' contentious or negative aspects wherever possible. This will be achieved by careful and considered review of landscape information and the findings of research, analysis, appraisal and assessment, listening to the views of the local authority, community and stakeholders and formulating appropriate designs.
- 4.7.3 Where this is not possible, mitigation measures may be required. Mitigation should however be seen as the last resort and where proposed, it is essential that its form and function pays due consideration to the physical and visual character of the locality. For example, where screen planting is proposed, it should be appropriate to the scale of development. For major developments advanced planting of structural landscape elements will be encouraged.

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## Practical Guidance for Applicants Consultation

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## 5.1 Effective Consultation

5.1.1 Every site has a social context and engagement with the local community, interest groups and organisations is an important way of obtaining valuable information and tailoring development proposals to more closely meet the aspirations of stakeholders. This section seeks to provide broad guidance on how consultation can be approached.

Public Consultation has many benefits and can:

- Provide information about a site and how it functions.
- Help applicants understand how an area is perceived and how people with a stake in it would like to see it change in the future.
- Identify aspirations for the site or features with in it and any aspects that should be incorporated into development.
- Help reduce and overcome conflicts and misunderstandings between different interests.
- Produce a scheme that integrates successfully.

5.1.2 The key to successful public consultation is openness and inclusivity. It is vital that all relevant people are involved from the outset and have an appropriate forum to have their views heard. Regular updates and involvement in the design process are important. It is also essential that consultees can see that their thoughts and aspirations have been considered and not simply disregarded and that they understand how the applicant has come to their conclusions. However, conflict is an inevitable part of some projects and where this is likely or anticipated, the appointment of an expert facilitator should be considered.

5.1.3 It is now a statutory requirement for developers to consider the community in the planning process and the Forest of Dean District Council has produced a Statement of Community Involvement that provides information and guidance with respect to this (Forest of Dean District Council, Statement of Community Involvement, Pre Submission draft. LDF2, 2005). The nature and scale of consultation depends very much on the type of development, and the Council should be able to provide guidance on what might be suitable in each case. By way of a guide, public consultation is unlikely to be necessary for smaller domestic applications and those that are judged as Minor Development Applications.

5.1.4 Consultees are often happy to be approached and appreciate the opportunity to 'have their say'. However, consultation fails when it is not followed up or where groups are repeatedly approached or their thoughts and aspirations are not acknowledged.



*Public exhibitions and workshops can be a valuable way of engaging the community.*

- 5.1.5 Consultation fatigue can occur when individuals and organisations are repeatedly approached for information. A coordinated approach is necessary that ensures that landscape issues are adequately discussed, which may necessitate workshops, meetings or mail outs that cover a range of issues. In most cases landscape issues should be discussed as an integral part of the development proposal although for complex or contentious schemes, it may be necessary to address this as a separate issue with relevant groups and residents.
- 5.1.6 Effective consultation is often necessary throughout the application process. Applicants should agree with the Council the type of consultation required and at what stage this should be carried out. It is essential that events and other forms of consultation are well organised and cause the minimum disruption or inconvenience to all parties. The following establishes broad stages in the consultation process.
- 5.1.7 **Pre Application/ Data Gathering:** During the data gathering stage, applicants can obtain useful local information about the site and related issues by consulting the local community, stakeholders and statutory and non statutory bodies and organisations.
- 5.1.8 **Analysis of What's Important and Why:** Once the data gathering exercise has been completed, it may be necessary to return to stakeholders and communities to verify the baseline data and establish what features or components of the site and it's surrounding landscape are considered to be particularly important or valued. This exercise should also establish features that can be lost or replaced. Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency) provide guidance in the form of a Quality of Life Assessment toolkit which can help identify what matters and why. Further information is available from the Natural England Website ([www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)).
- 5.1.9 **Planning for Real:** This is a planning technique developed by the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation (NIF) which uses a simple model as a focus for people to put forward and prioritise ideas as to how their area can be improved. Anyone using the technique should discuss their event with the NIF, as Planning for Real is a registered trademark.
- 5.1.10 **Presenting Proposals:** Once the applicant has established a thorough understanding of the site and issues relating to it, the draft development proposals should be made available for public scrutiny and comment. The Council will provide guidance on what consultation would be appropriate and the applicant should ensure that adequate time and budget is allocated to this as well as to making any alterations that may be required in response to these presentations.

## 5.2 Types of Consultee

5.2.1 Consultation and information gathering can engage a range of groups, organisations and individuals. Who is approached will vary upon the nature and scale of the application. The council can provide advice on this at pre application stage. Essentially, consultees fall into three main groups:

5.2.2 **Statutory and Non Statutory Consultees:** It is good practice to consider which of the following organisations are likely to have an interest in, or be affected by, the development and for applicants to consult them at an early stage.

- Natural England
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
- Wye valley AONB Office
- Malvern Hills AONB Office

5.2.3 Specifically, under the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988 (8.5), the Council is required to consult certain bodies when an Environmental Statement is required, and may provide guidance at the pre application stage.

5.2.4 Different departments within the Council may also need to be consulted on landscape related issues. Some of these may require consultation across the boundaries of the responsibilities of county and district authorities. They include:

- Environmental Health
- Engineer/Technical Services
- Highways (Gloucestershire County Council)
- Planning Policy
- Housing and Regeneration
- Built Heritage (Conservation Area, Listed Buildings)
- Waste Disposal (Gloucestershire County Council)
- Minerals (Gloucestershire County Council)

- Archaeology (Gloucestershire County Council)
- Environment/Countryside, Management/Wildlife, Conservation Stakeholders

5.2.5 **Stakeholders/Communities of Interest:** Communities of Interest are groups and individuals which are not necessarily defined by location, by profession or by socio-economic status but can offer important information or guidance. Their definition comes out of their specific area of expertise or need and provide critical thinking/opinions from the perspective of their special interests. The Statement of Community Involvement provides some guidance, although additional advice should be sought from the District Council who will be able to supply an up to date list of groups.



*Communities of interest can offer important information or guidance.*

5.2.6 **Public/Communities of Place:** Public consultation needs to be approached in a sensitive and imaginative way. It should happen early on in the process so that local knowledge and opinions can help shape the development.

5.2.7 Parish Councils often offer an ideal conduit into the thoughts and aspirations of the community and applicants are advised that as a minimum, a letter to the relevant Parish Council(s) should precede any application.

### 5.3 Forming Partnerships

5.3.1 Partnerships are a good way of ensuring large and complex schemes are delivered to the benefit of all parties involved. Essentially they help build relationships between organisations and individuals living and working in the area, those with particular expertise or knowledge and those with a social, economic or environmental interest in the scheme. Partnerships are generally drawn from representatives of local communities, businesses, authorities and other public sector agencies or voluntary bodies and should represent diverse social, economic and environmental interests.

5.3.2 Partnerships will vary in form and formality, and the structure and membership will depend on the focus of the project. It is essential, however, that the environment, and more specifically the landscape, is the focus of the group or a specialist sub group.



## 5.4 Establishing a Vision

- 5.4.1 Analysis of baseline information and exhaustive public consultation will not necessarily present applicants with the right answer or a scheme that is acceptable to all. Compromise is inevitable and it must be accepted that it is unlikely that all parties will be completely satisfied with a particular scheme. It is important that the appropriate questions are asked at the outset and that these relate primarily and fundamentally to what kind of place is desirable. The applicant, community and local authority all have a role in this and a key stage in the application process should be the formulation of a vision for the development, including the way in which the development responds to the landscape.
- 5.4.2 As highlighted earlier, a vision can be a simple and short statement that articulates the essence of the development and might also be extended to include a description of the social and economic aspects of the development as well as those that relate primarily to the environment.
- 5.4.3 Again, planning officers and stakeholders should help develop the objectives, as it is ultimately by these and the vision itself that the final scheme can be measured and monitored in the future. The objectives will help the applicant shape the design of the scheme and meet the needs and aspirations of other parties. The applicant should seek to integrate all objectives into the scheme but where compromises and trade offs are necessary, these should to be openly identified and discussed.

Examples of some objectives are listed below:

- Make efficient use of land.
- Ensure accessibility and ease of movement, for all modes - walking, cycling, bus users and motorists.
- Protect and enhance environmental capital.
- Respond positively to site character and wider context.
- Create a legible place.
- Ensure variety and diversity.
- Make the scheme adaptable.
- Minimise resource use and maximise energy efficiency.

## **5.5 Presenting the Findings of Consultation**

- 5.5.1 Details and information arising from consultation should be submitted to the District Council, with full details of the groups and organisations consulted. Details of the method of consultation adopted and lists of consultees should also be submitted if appropriate.

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Practical Guidance for Applicants  
**Preparing and Presenting Landscape  
Concepts and Design Proposals**

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## 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section provides broad guidance on aspects of landscape design and presents a range of tools that can be used to articulate landscape proposals. Design drafts and revisions should always be saved to illustrate the design process and to demonstrate how the design has evolved in response to feedback and comment from the Council and other stakeholders.

## 6.2 Making use of Existing Landscape Features

- 6.2.1 **Trees, Hedges and Vegetation:** Existing landscape features, that contribute positively to a particular space or place, for aesthetic, functional or ecological reasons perhaps, should be incorporated into the layout of a design proposal where appropriate. This helps to achieve a degree of continuity with the past, retains habitats and can also provide a landscape framework within which new development can more successfully integrate to its surroundings. Trees, hedges and other areas of vegetation to be retained will need adequate protection during construction work. This protection should also be positioned to avoid compaction and damage to roots.



*Existing vegetation and new planting can make a positive contribution to development.*

- 6.2.2 **Watercourses:** To promote biodiversity and create visual interest, new development should take advantage of existing watercourses or features such as ponds and ditches. Opportunities for the reinstatement of culverted water courses should be explored and conversely the culverting of existing water courses should be resisted. Consideration should be given to the impact of the development will have on site and wider setting drainage patterns. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and options for run off to be directed into existing watercourses should be explored. Consideration will need to be given to the way that highway run-off will be dealt with in consultation with the Highway's Authority. It will be important for applicants to discuss works that have the potential to impact on watercourses with the Environment Agency.



*Water can be important for biodiversity and aesthetic reasons.*

- 6.2.3 **Built Structures:** Development sites sometimes contain built structures that may be of local, architectural or historical interest, such as out houses, barns, boundary walls and gate lodges. Wherever appropriate, these should be retained and restored for incorporation into the development. Change of use may be necessary, and as such, proposals should be discussed with the Council at an early stage.

- 6.2.4 **Public Rights of Way:** Where these cross a site, their incorporation within the development of the scheme should be a consideration from the outset. They should be regarded as a potential benefit to the development, contributing to the pedestrian movement network and linking the site to the surrounding countryside and settlements. If possible, public rights of way should be maintained on their existing alignment. Their design treatment should suit the character of the site, their purpose and anticipated level of use and wherever possible, should be incorporated into areas of public open space to encourage the reduction in car use. They should also present an attractive and secure route, be suitably lit and benefit from overlooking.



*Rights of Way should present an attractive and secure route, be suitably lit and benefit from overlooking.*

## 6.3 Creating New Landscapes

6.3.1 For sites where there are few existing landscape features or where sites have been previously developed or are derelict, there will be a need to create a new landscape structure that responds to both the development proposed, and the adjacent land uses. Areas of open space such as parks, play areas, squares, informal spaces and semi natural areas may form a key part of the design proposals although other elements might include:

6.3.2 **Woodland and Vegetation Belts:** These often form the non built structural element of a landscape and dictate the scale of a place. The location and extent of these major landscape features can provide important screening but can also provide a backdrop or frame to views and vistas and should aim to contribute to landscape character. Semi natural woodlands are of most value to wildlife as they contain native species forming a diverse ground flora, in addition to a range of trees and shrubs.

6.3.3 **Avenues and Rows of Trees:** These may be straight or sinuous, with trees spaced regularly or randomly in naturalistic groupings to create formal or informal effects. Formal avenues and indeed rides cut through woodland are a particular feature of historic parkland landscapes, and often benefit from focal features at terminals. With all tree planting, careful consideration must be given to the choice of tree species. Avenues of cherry will be very different to those of lime. The spacing between trees should also be considered, as well as management regimes such as crown lifting or pleaching in order that the trees perform their function effectively.

6.3.4 **Hedgerows and Boundary Features:** Hedges form 'green walls' providing linear habitat, enclosure and screening. They may be clipped for formal effect in urban areas or managed using local traditions perhaps to form more informal features in a countryside setting. Boundary treatments should generally take account of the prevailing character of the area. Consideration should be given to issues of screening and privacy, but also of surveillance.

6.3.5 Metal railings, brick or stone walls, willow walls, timber fences, earth bunds or ditches all perform a role in defining boundaries, and the choice of materials and design should pay due regard to local character and the intended function.



*Woodlands provide important screening but can also provide a backdrop or frame to views.*



*Avenues can be spaced to create formal or informal effects.*



*The choice of materials and design of boundary features should pay due regard to local character.*



## 6.4 Planting Design

6.4.1 Planting is an important part of any landscape scheme providing structure, ornamentation and ecological benefit. It can be utilised to perform a range of functions and should be considered as an integral part of any development scheme to:

- Create a sense of enclosure.
- Frame views.
- Form visual stops.
- Provide shelter.
- Create, link and reinforce habitats.
- Soften the impact of buildings.
- Provide screening.
- Create a cohesive landscape setting and link disparate elements.
- Assimilate new development into the landscape.

6.4.2 The choice of plants used in landscape schemes should pay due consideration to function, intended purpose and location. Species selected should be:

- Attractive.
- Appropriate for the environment and location they are being used.
- Appropriate for the function they are to perform.
- Practical to maintain given their intended function and prevailing site conditions.

6.4.3 Native trees and shrubs should generally be specified in rural locations or where low key naturalistic effects are desired. Ornamental planting for urban contexts is acceptable, but should always be drawn from a suitable palette of species that enhance rather than detract from local townscape character. Consideration should also be given to the prevailing conditions and to future management and maintenance as these factors can have a major influence on the choice of species and the cost of future maintenance.



*Planting should provide structure, ornamentation and ecological benefit.*



*Planting can be utilised to form a range of functions such as provide screening and frame views.*

## 6.5 Hard Landscape

6.5.1 The design and specification of hard landscape elements is often an area that is overlooked or given scant regard. Paved areas are often a major element within larger developments and their design has the potential to have a significant impact on the overall character of a place. The choice of street furniture such as benches, lighting columns and bollards is also important in creating a distinctive identity for a development and avoiding visual clutter.

6.5.2 Natural, high quality paving materials such as stone, gravel and brick can provide durable and attractive hard surfaces. Modern materials are also available and can be used to great effect. Permeable surfaces (in conjunction with a permeable sub base) can also be important in Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and their use is widely encouraged. Where drainage is an issue, permeable paving solutions may be insisted upon by the District Council or by the Environment Agency and a range of solutions are available for most situations.

6.5.3 The materials used should be appropriate to the character of the development and to its wider context. For example, development within or perhaps adjacent to a Conservation Area or Listed Building, might require that hard landscape details complement local building traditions and materials, textures and colours. In some instances it may be necessary for materials to be matched exactly to ensure effective integration of old and new.

6.5.4 The position of functional elements such as drainage channels, gutters and man hole covers should be considered at an early stage so that they can be assimilated into the paving pattern rather than form unnecessary and obvious intrusions. Kerb detailing is also important, although in rural and forest situations it may be desirable to avoid over engineered roads, carriageways and hard edging. Any areas intended for adoption by the Highway Authority's will need to demonstrate they meet the required standards. Hard landscape details in many instances will need to be Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant.



*The choice of materials and design should be appropriate to the character of the development and its wider setting.*



*The position of functional elements should be considered at an early stage in the design detailing of hard landscapes.*

## 6.6 Presenting Landscape Proposals

6.6.1 The planning and design of large and complex sites is likely to require a variety of illustrative and explanatory material as the project proceeds. This may take the form of reports, models, plans or illustrations or a combination of all of these. If specialist consultants are employed, they are often able to provide advice on the best means by which information can be presented and the relative cost.

6.6.2 These should be prepared with the audience in mind and be fit for the intended purpose. Technical material prepared for a planning submission might be different to more illustrative work for communities and stakeholders.

- 6.6.3 It is also advisable that the right material is prepared at the right stage of the process. Investing in detailed design and visualisations at an early stage could be counter productive if significant changes are subsequently required. Such an approach may also imply to stakeholders that the design is nearly finished and that their thoughts and aspirations cannot be accommodated.

## 6.7 General Submission Requirements

- 6.7.1 All plans should use metric scales and include basic information, including date, drawing number, revision number, scale bar and north point.
- 6.7.2 Illustrative material, plans and drawings will be presented at an appropriate scale to articulate the necessary level of detail, depending upon the site and project. Elevations and cross sections will be produced at a scale consistent with plan drawings and at a scale suitable to adequately illustrate the proposals with, if possible, a consistent vertical and horizontal scale.
- 6.7.3 Reports and written statements should, wherever possible, be accompanied by illustrations and photographs that convey or elaborate details provided in the text.

## 6.8 Concept Diagram / Landscape Strategies

- 6.8.1 These should illustrate the key landscape principles of the development including the broad location and distribution of hard landscape areas, vegetation and areas of new structural planting. It builds on the site appraisal and should bear a close relationship to the constraints and opportunities assessment by displaying how fundamental landscape issues have been addressed. An important element of the concept diagram is that it suggests the overall form that the development might take without being too detailed. It highlights broad patterns of existing built development, principle movement corridors, visual considerations and existing and proposed landscape structure.
- 6.8.2 The concept diagram is an important part of the design process leading up to the final design, as well as an important means of conveying the applicant's ideas about how a site can be developed. Like site appraisal, it should be an integral part of any development brief or design framework.

## 6.9 Landscape Masterplans

- 6.9.1 In the case of large sites, a landscape masterplan may be needed to bridge the gap between the broad ideas set out in a Concept Diagram and the specific layouts of detailed design. Masterplanning is an important process and establishes the spatial structure of a scheme, including the layout of roads, streets, built areas, structural planting and open spaces, and indicates the uses to which different areas will be put. It builds upon the ideas expressed in the concept diagram and may also be accompanied by details of how the implementation of the scheme will be programmed.

6.9.2 The masterplan can be included in a development brief or a design statement, depending on the detail appropriate for the site or area. It is difficult to be too prescriptive as much depends on the spatial and developmental context. A landscape masterplan will be necessary to ensure sufficient details and information are available to allow the potential impacts and effects of the application to be assessed.

6.9.3 The scale at which a masterplan is produced depends upon the size and nature of the application, however, as a general rule a scale somewhere between 1:500 and 1: 1250 will usually be appropriate. Landscape masterplans might illustrate some or all of the following:

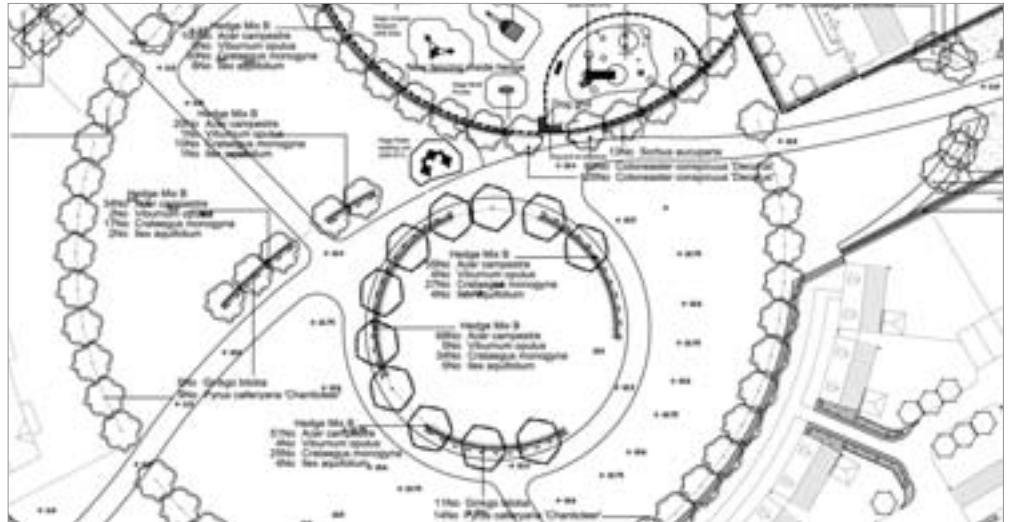
- Existing vegetation to be retained and removed.
- Structural planting.
- General arrangement of elements.
- Traffic route hierarchy.
- Pedestrian access route hierarchy.
- Land use compartments e.g. housing, retail, industry.
- Open spaces.
- Landmark features.



*A Landscape Masterplan can help bridge the gap between the broad ideas set out in a Concept Diagram and more detailed landscape proposals.*



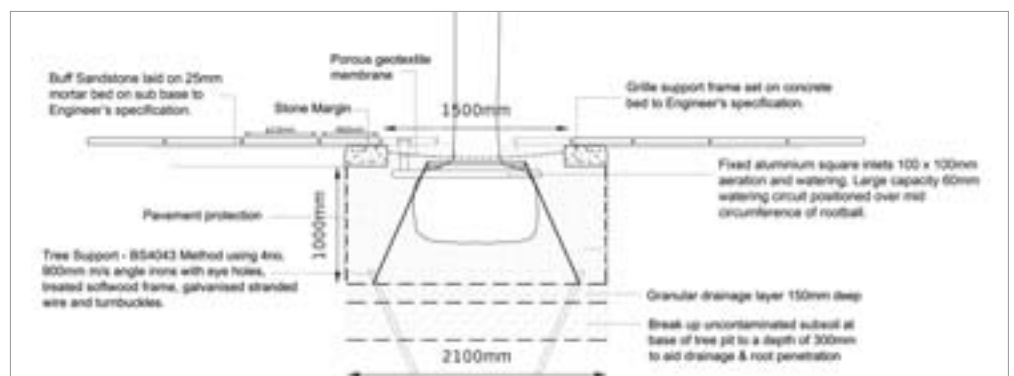




Planting plans indicate layout and structure of soft landscape proposals and provide details of the species to be used.

## 6.11 Additional Details

- 6.11.1 In some cases the District Council may request additional information on planting works. This might include tree planting pit specifications, topsoil depth, provision and details of soil improvement, tree staking, drainage, and irrigation. Typically these details would be provided in a landscape specification.
- 6.11.2 Where existing vegetation has been proposed to be retained, details of protection measures should be provided. As a minimum, protection will be in accordance with BS 5837 (Trees in Relation to Construction, 2005).
- 6.11.3 In some instances, it may be necessary for the applicant to provide long term management proposals, especially where the spaces concerned are likely to be adopted by the Council, and details of maintenance post practical completion. Long term management proposals should include reference to sustainable drainage features such as balancing ponds and swales.
- 6.11.4 Statutory agencies may also require additional information on specific matters as they arise in relation to their areas of interest.



Section of tree pit within building envelope.

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## Practical Guidance for Applicants Submitting an Application

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## 7.1 Government Guidance on Planning Applications

7.1.1 In March 2005 the Government published Best Practice Guidance on the Validation of Planning Applications as part of its commitment to provide a quicker, more predictable and efficient planning system.

The guidance outlines:

- The current procedures for the validation of planning applications made by planning authorities and;
- The scope of material that should be supplied with planning applications.

7.1.2 The guidance promotes the benefits of a validation checklist in helping authorities to achieve good standards of performance and provides planning authorities and applicants with greater certainty as to the nature and extent of information required to register and assess planning applications. The Government recommends that local authorities consult upon the validation checklist and adopt this as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

7.1.3 The validation checklist can be downloaded from the ODPM website ([www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)) and includes the compulsory requirements at point of application along with details of landscape and environmental information required for a range of application types.

### General submission requirements

All applications for planning permission MUST be accompanied by certain essentials which include the following:

- Completed planning application forms.
- A plan showing the application boundary (in red) and indicating any adjoining land or property owned or controlled by the applicant (in blue).
- An Article 7 (Agricultural Holdings Certificate).
- A completed land ownership certificate.
- A site location plan at an appropriate scale.
- Copies of all drawings and details as required.
- Copies of any correspondence with the planning authority prior to submitting the application.
- The correct planning fee.

- 7.1.4 The detailed guidance that follows deals primarily with landscape submission requirements and does not address other potential application requirements related to for example; traffic, archaeology, air quality, noise, hydrology, nature conservation, or access. The need for this additional information should be established during pre application discussions with planning officers as outlined below.

## 7.2 Pre Application Discussions

- 7.2.1 The Council will encourage applicants to engage in pre application discussions. These help minimise the risk of delay in processing and considering an application and provide an opportunity for applicants to discuss the development proposals with Planning Officers at an early stage. Planning Officers will also assist applicants by identifying the landscape information and details that will be requested as part of the planning application, such as the checklists contained in this document.
- 7.2.2 Meetings are particularly important for larger and more complex or contentious projects and can help identify whether any additional consents or approvals (for example Listed Building Consent) will be required. Applicants should not underestimate the period of time required at pre application stage for major development projects.

## 7.3 Environmental Impact Assessment

- 7.3.1 Certain types of development require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Where required this will need to be submitted as part of any application for outline or full planning permission.
- 7.3.2 Guidance on the type and scale of project likely to require EIA is provided in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment England and Wales) Regulations 1999 and Government Circular 2/99. Applicants should consult with the Council at an early stage to determine whether an Environmental Statement is required and may request a formal Screening Opinion from the Council as confirmation of their decision. Most Environmental Statements include a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, the scope of which should be agreed with the Council in advance.
- 7.3.3 The benchmark guidance for landscape and visual impact assessment is provided by a joint Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment publication: Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Second Edition (Spon Press, 2002. ISBN 0-415-23185-X). For highway schemes guidance is also provided in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. This can be found on the Highways Authority website in the knowledge section ([www.highways.gov.uk](http://www.highways.gov.uk)).
- 7.3.4 It is essential that all impact assessments follow this best practice guidance and that all baseline information and analysis is presented in an accurate and unbiased way. Clear distinction needs to be made between landscape and visual effects, between the short term

and long term (residual) effects and between direct, indirect, and cumulative effects. Mitigation proposals need to display clear reference to the character and visual characteristics of the locality and need to be accurately factored in to the analysis of both landscape and visual impacts. Seasons also need to be considered and where appropriate the applicant may be requested to undertake assessment of both summer and winter impacts, especially where deciduous trees are an important element of mitigation or screening.

- 7.3.5 It is also important that clear, jargon free terminology is used and that the analysis of the significance of effects is articulated in a clear and concise manner. Subjectivity should be avoided and an objective and impartial analysis of impact presented in any documentation. Whilst a full landscape assessment, based on a sound understanding of baseline conditions and appreciation of all possible impacts arising from a specific proposal will normally be required, this assessment must be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed.

## 7.4 Checklist of Landscape Submission Requirements

- 7.4.1 The Council will require the submission of all relevant and appropriate landscape information as part of any planning application and may be unable to validate the application until this is provided. The Council may also request additional information following validation of an application.
- 7.4.2 Submission requirements will vary according to the nature and content of each individual development proposal and the character and context of the site. Whilst the requirements for smaller scale developments and domestic extensions will generally be less onerous than for major development projects, landscape details may still be required and applicants should, wherever possible, agree the submission requirements with the District Council at the pre application stage. In the absence of any specific agreement, applicants should assume that the landscape information set out in the following checklists will be required as the minimum unless it can be demonstrated that certain issues are not relevant.
- 7.4.3 The following checklists set out the scope of landscape information that the District Council may request for both outline and full applications in relation to both Major and Minor development projects.
- 7.4.4 For the purposes of this Guidance, **Major Development** means development involving one or more of the following:
- a) The winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral working deposits;
  - b) Waste development;

*Validation of planning applications will be carried out in accordance with Best Practice Guidance by ODPM<sup>4</sup>.*

*GDPO 1995<sup>5</sup> sets out the requirements for acknowledgment of planning applications. Where, after sending such an acknowledgment the District Council considers that the application is invalid by reason of a failure to comply with the requirements of Regulation 3 of the Application Regulations<sup>6</sup> 1988 or Article 4 of the GDPO or any other statutory requirement, the District Council must as soon as reasonably practical notify the applicant.*

<sup>4</sup> Best Practice Guidance on the Validation of Planning Applications, ODPM. 2005

<sup>5</sup> Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995

<sup>6</sup> Town and Country Planning (Applications) 1988



- c) the provision of dwelling houses where the number of dwellings to be provided is 10 or more, or the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of more than 0.5 hectares;
- d) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1000 square metres or more;
- e) development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more.

7.4.5 **Minor Development** is interpreted as development falling outside of the above definitions although the Council may request additional landscape information where the nature and location of the proposed development give rise to particular concerns in relation to the effect on the landscape.

7.4.6 In order to consider the effect of the proposed development on the landscape and on visual amenity, a written statement explaining the design principles should also accompany an application. For minor schemes such as domestic extensions, this need be no more than a few paragraphs explaining the key issues that have been considered and influenced the design. For larger and more complex proposals, or those in more sensitive locations, a separate Design Statement or Design Code may be required, of which landscape will only be one element. Further guidance on the preparation of Design Statements is set out in *By Design - Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice*. DETR. CABE. 2000. ISBN 0-7277-2937-3.

7.4.7 Key to Using the Landscape Checklists:

✓	Details required as part of a Planning Application.
*	Details required subject to confirmation of which issues are being reserved for later consideration at outline application stage.

## Application Checklist - Major Development Proposals

Item	Planning Stage		
	EIA	Outline	Full
<b>Baseline details</b>			
Details of any landscape or planning designations affecting the site including the location of any rights of way within and surrounding the site.	✓	✓	✓
A landscape character assessment confirming the character of the application site and its relationship to the wider landscape with reference to the appropriate guidance and baseline studies.	✓	✓	✓
A landscape survey including details of the current land use within the site, details of boundaries features, buildings in close proximity and adjacent land uses.	✓	✓	✓
A contour plan or topographic survey of the site and the surrounding area including details of landform and key levels.	✓	✓	✓
A vegetation survey including a tree survey in accordance with BS5837 (1991) and a hedgerow survey in accordance with the Hedgerow Regulations (1999)	✓	✓	✓
A visual appraisal of the site identifying the visual prominence of the site within the local landscape and the nature and sensitivity of key views. To include photographs of the site taken from viewpoints agreed with the planning authority and where appropriate, the local community.	✓	✓	✓
Details of any landscape constraints affecting the site or its development potential including statutory local designations, existing natural features of importance, key views etc.	✓	✓	✓

Item	Planning Stage		
	EIA	Outline	Full
<b>Landscape appraisal</b>			
A Landscape and Visual Assessment or Landscape Appraisal demonstrating that the character and context of the site have been considered and that the design proposals have taken account of any key issues.	✓	✓	✓
Details of any landscape mitigation proposed	✓	*	✓
Visualisations and photomontages of the development showing the landscape proposals.	✓	*	✓
Evidence of community consultation, the main outcomes of this including how the development proposal has been amended to reflect these outcomes.	✓	*	✓

Item	Planning Stage		
	EIA	Outline	Full
<b>Landscape proposals</b>			
An overall landscape strategy or landscape masterplan at an appropriate scale identifying existing landscape features, areas of open space and structural planting.	✓	*	✓
Details of the location of all trees to be retained and removed as part of the development including details of how vegetation will be protected during the construction period in accordance with BS 5837.	✓	*	✓
Details of existing and proposed ground levels particularly along site boundaries and in the proximity of trees and hedgerows to be retained.			✓
Detailed planting plans at an appropriate scale including details of species, planting sizes, density and numbers.			✓
Detailed hard landscape plans showing paving materials, walls fences and other means of enclosure, levels, drainage, street furniture etc.			✓
An outline Landscape Specification including details of any ground preparation required.			✓
A Landscape Management Plan covering the initial establishment period and details of any longer term vegetation management required.			✓

In addition to the above, further details of the development proposal may be required in order to fully assess the landscape implications of the application including:

- A description of the development in the form of plans and a written statement. For larger schemes a Design Statement may be required.
- Cross sections through the site and development.
- Plans and elevations of any proposed buildings including building heights shown in the context of adjacent buildings with storey heights indicated.
- Details of the materials and the external appearance of buildings and boundary features.

## Application Checklist - Minor Development Proposals

Item	Planning Stage	
	Outline	Full
<b>Baseline details</b>		
A landscape survey including details of the current land use within the site, details of boundaries features, buildings in close proximity and adjacent land uses.	✓	✓
A vegetation survey including a tree survey in accordance with BS5837 (1991) and a hedgerow survey in accordance with the Hedgerow Regulations (1999)	✓	✓
A visual appraisal of the site identifying the visual prominence of the site within the local landscape and the nature and sensitivity of key views. To include photographs of the site taken from viewpoints agreed with the planning authority and where appropriate, the local community.	✓	✓
Details of any landscape constraints affecting the site or its development potential including statutory designations, existing natural features of importance, key views etc.	✓	✓

Item	Planning Stage	
	Outline	Full
<b>Landscape appraisal</b>		
An appraisal of the findings of baseline conditions demonstrating that the character and visual context of the site have been considered and that the design proposals have taken account of any key issues	✓	✓
Details of any Landscape mitigation proposals	*	✓
Illustrations of the development showing the landscape proposals	*	✓
Evidence of any discussions with adjacent land owners and or third parties and the outcomes of this.	✓	✓

Item	Planning Stage	
	Outline	Full
<b>Landscape proposals</b>		
An overall landscape plan at an appropriate scale identifying existing vegetation areas of open space and new planting.	*	✓
Details of the location of all trees to be retained and removed as part of the development including details of how vegetation will be protected during the construction period in accordance with BS 5837.	✓	✓
Details of existing and proposed ground levels particularly along site boundaries and in the proximity of trees and hedgerows to be retained.		✓
Detailed planting plans at an appropriate scale including details of species, planting sizes, density and numbers.		✓
Detailed hard landscape plans showing paving materials, walls fences and other means of enclosure, levels, drainage, street furniture etc.		✓
An outline Landscape Specification including details of any ground preparation required.		✓

In addition to the above, further details of the development proposal may be required in order to fully assess the landscape implications of the application including:

- A description of the development in the form of plans and a written statement.
- Cross sections through the site and development.
- Plans and elevations of any proposed buildings including building heights shown in the context of adjacent buildings with storey heights indicated.
- Details of the materials and the external appearance of buildings and boundary features.



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# Design Checklist and Decision Making

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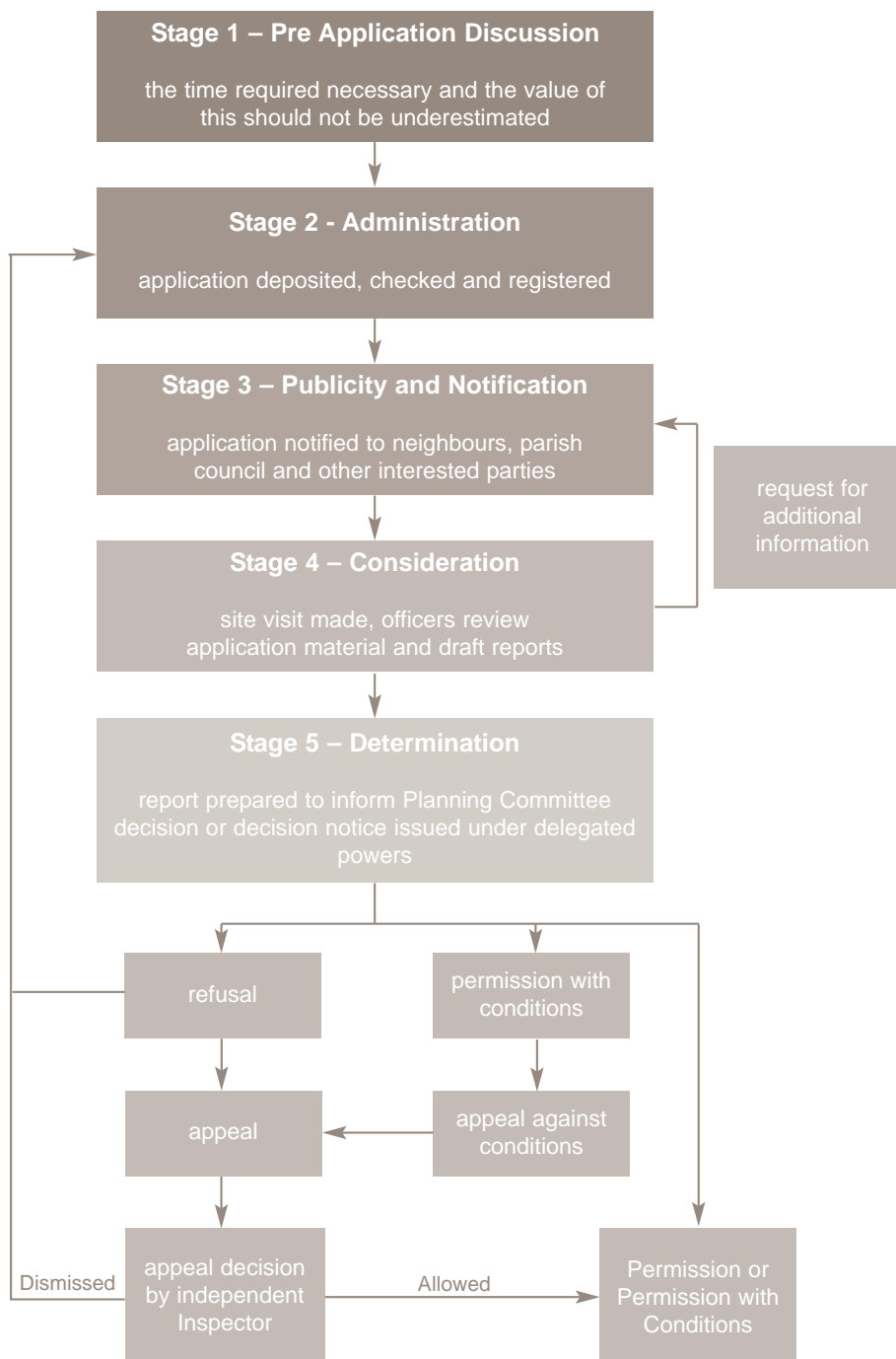


## 8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 The ways in which the District Council will consider planning applications are set out in legislation and guidance. The diagram below outlines the many stages in the submission of a planning application and the way in which a decision is made to approve or refuse an application. This is broad guidance relating to the application as a whole. Additional guidance is also provided on page 70 on the way in which the District Council will assess the specific landscape aspects of an application.

**Figure 2**

This diagram sets out the key stages in the Planning Application from pre application discussion through to determination.



## 8.2 Landscape Design Review

- 8.2.1 It is important that the right information is submitted with an application. The box below provides a summary of the main stages set out earlier in this document and is aimed at applicants and designers to ensure that the relevant steps in the planning and design process have been completed and that nothing important has been forgotten. Addressing these issues will not in itself guarantee good design or a successful outcome although it will help to make the process as comprehensive and inclusive as possible. It also echoes the kind of questions the Council will be considering in its own assessment of an application.

**Policy Context - Have the landscape policies relevant to the site and the development proposal been considered? This should include reference to any relevant planning guidance and the policies contained within the appropriate Development Plans.**

**Site and context appraisal - Has a landscape survey and appraisal of the site and its surrounding been carried out and have landscape constraints been identified? For sites at the urban fringe or within settlements, this should include an appraisal of townscape character and existing built form.**

**Landscape character appraisal - has a landscape character assessment been carried out? Check that this makes reference to the Forest of Dean Landscape Character Assessment and other local studies where available, and follows best practice guidance.**

**Vision and landscape design principles - Does the development proposal include a clear statement on the overall landscape objectives or landscape strategy for the site?**

**Design Development - Have details of the landscape proposals been prepared to a sufficient level of detail to allow the Council to consider the application?**

**Community Consultation - Has the local community been involved with the design development process and what evidence is available to confirm this?**

### 8.3 Considering Landscape Issues

- 8.3.1 Planning Officers at the District Council will assess the landscape implications of a development proposal along with other social and economic considerations in order to reach a decision on the acceptability of the proposal in relation to National, Regional and Local planning policies. The way in which this decision will be made is set out in the diagram on page 67.
- 8.3.2 Planning Officers will give particular regard to the guidance set out within this document and the Councils Statement of Commitment included in the foreword to this document. The outcome of any pre application discussion and agreements over the scope of landscape information required will also be considered.
- 8.3.3 Planning officers will carry out an appraisal of each application. This will take the form of a Landscape Review, which will consider the issues, and questions set out on page 70 where these are relevant to the application.
- 8.3.4 The outcomes of the Review will be recorded as part of the planning application report presented to the development control committee or as part of a 'delegated' planning decision.

## 8.4 Landscape Review Framework

The following landscape issues will be considered where relevant as part of the Councils assessment of the application:

Q1. Has the relevant landscape information agreed as part of pre application discussions or set out in the application checklist been provided and is any further landscape information required at this stage?

Q2. Have the landscape policies relevant to the site and the development proposal been accurately determined by the applicant and are there any conflicts with specific landscape or environmental policies?

Q3. Has a landscape survey, character assessment and appraisal of the site and its surroundings been carried out to an appropriate level of detail and are the conclusions broadly agreed as an accurate record and interpretation of the site and the key landscape issues?

Q4. Have any landscape constraints and opportunities been identified and are these reflected in the development proposal?

Q5. Does the development proposal include a clear statement on the overall landscape objectives or landscape strategy for the site and is this strategy considered appropriate for the location and the nature of development proposed? Have these been included in the masterplan?

Q6. Will the development result in the loss of any existing landscape features or have an adverse effect on important views or vistas or the character of the wider landscape or townscape and has mitigation been proposed to minimise any adverse effects of the development and is this considered acceptable?

Q8. Have detailed hard and soft landscape plans been submitted with the application and if so, are these considered acceptable? Is any additional landscape information required as part of a planning condition or reserved matters application?

Q9. Have any landscape issues been raised through the consultation process and have these been adequately addressed by the application?



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# Appendices

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**Appendix A:****Useful Contacts****Gloucestershire County Council**

Shire Hall  
Westgate Street  
Gloucester  
Gloucestershire  
GL1 2TG  
01452 425000

**Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records (GCER)**

Church House  
Standish  
Gloucestershire  
GL10 3EU  
01453 822761

**Forest of Dean District Council**

Council Offices  
High Street  
Coleford  
Gloucestershire  
GL16 8HG  
01594 810000

**The Arboricultural Association**

Ampfield House  
Romsey  
Hampshire  
SO51 9PA  
01794 368717

**Association of Garden Trusts**

70 Cowcross Street  
London  
EC1M 6EJ  
020 72512610

**CABE**

1 Kemble Street  
London  
WC2B 4AN  
020 70706700

**CPRE National Office**

128 Southwark Street  
London  
SE1 0SW  
020 79812800

**CPRE South West Local Group (Gloucestershire)**

Community House  
15 College Green  
Gloucester  
Gloucestershire  
GL1 2LZ  
01452 309783

**Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs**

Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London  
SW1P 3JR  
020 72386000

**Environment Agency**

Rio House  
Waterside Drive  
Aztec West  
Almondsbury  
Bristol  
BS32 4UD  
08708 506506

**Environment Agency Midlands Region, Lower Severn Area**

Riversmeet House  
Newton Industrial Estate  
Northway Lane  
Tewkesbury  
Gloucestershire  
GL20 8JG  
08708 506506

**English Heritage**

Customer Services Department  
PO Box 569  
Swindon  
SN2 2YP  
England  
0870 3331181

**English Heritage South West Region**

29 Queen Square  
Bristol  
BS1 4ND  
0117 9750700

**Forest Enterprise England**

340 Bristol Business Park  
Coldharbour Lane  
Bristol  
BS16 1EJ  
0117 9066000

**Forest Enterprise England  
Forest of Dean Forest District**

Bank House  
Bank Street  
Coleford  
Gloucestershire  
GL16 8BA  
01594 833057

**Gloucestershire Geoconservation  
Trust**

The Geological Records Centre  
The Tithe Barn Centre  
Brockworth  
Gloucester  
GL3 4QU  
01452 864438

**Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust**

Dulverton Building  
Robinswood Hill Country Park  
Reservoir Road  
Gloucester  
GL4 6SX  
01452 383333

**Landscape Institute**

33 Great Portland Street  
London  
W1W 8QG  
020 72994500

**Malvern Hills AONB**

Manor House  
Grange Road  
Malvern  
Worcestershire  
WR14 3EY  
01684 560616

**Natural England Head Office**

Natural England  
1 East Parade  
Sheffield  
S1 2ET  
0114 241 8920

**Natural England South West  
Region (Gloucestershire)**

Natural England  
Bronsil House  
Eastnor  
Ledbury,  
Herefordshire  
HR8 1EP  
01531 638500

**Sustrans**

National Cycle Network Centre  
2 Cathedral Square  
College Green  
Bristol  
BS1 5DD  
0117 9268893

**Wye Valley AONB**

Hadnock Road  
Monmouth  
Monmouthshire  
NP25 3NG  
01600 713977

## Appendix B:

### Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7

The Forest of Dean District Landscape SPD accords with important advice set out in the Government's Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. PPS 7 provides the Government's objectives for rural areas, and makes explicit reference to landscape character in the context of planning.

PPS 7 states that the Government's overall aim is to *"protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources..."* It also states that *"All development in rural areas should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness"*.

With specific regard to planning policy, PPS 7 states that *"Planning policies in Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Documents (LDDs) should facilitate and promote sustainable patterns of development and sustainable communities in rural areas. This should include policies to sustain, enhance and, where appropriate, revitalise country towns and villages and for strong, diverse, economic activity, whilst maintaining local character and a high quality environment"*.

With regard to the design and the character of rural settlements, PPS 7 acknowledges that *"many country towns and villages are of considerable historic and architectural value, or make an important contribution to local countryside character. Planning authorities should ensure that development respects and, where possible, enhances these particular qualities...Local planning authorities should prepare policies and guidance that encourage good quality design throughout their rural areas, in accordance with Annex C to PPS1, and utilising tools such as Landscape Character Assessments, and the design elements of Village or Parish Plans prepared by local communities."*

On the subject of local landscape designations the Government recognises and accepts that there are areas of landscape outside nationally designated areas that are particularly highly valued locally. The Government believes that carefully drafted, criteria based policies in Local Development Documents (LDDs), utilising tools such as landscape character assessment, should provide sufficient protection for these areas, without the need for rigid local designations that may unduly restrict acceptable sustainable development and the economic activity that underpins the vitality of rural areas. In response to this, Forest of Dean District Council has removed its local landscape designations comprising Special Landscape Areas in recognition of the belief that all landscapes matter and not just those that are particularly well known or evoke strong images. It will seek to protect the whole of the landscape resource through application of a robust landscape character assessment framework and the use of criteria based policies and landscape guidelines that respond to and reflect variations in the character of the landscape within the district.

This SPD is a valuable tool in achieving the effective implementation of PPS7.



## Appendix C:

## Protected Species and Key Habitats - Optimal Survey Time and Guidelines.

Species	Key Habitats	Optimal Survey Time/Survey Guidelines
<b>Bats (all British species)</b>	Most terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Hedgerows and watercourses can be vital corridors. Structures used as roosts include suitable buildings, cellars, bridges, tunnels, caves, mines, culverts and trees. Structures near foraging habitat are more likely to support roosting bats.	To enter and survey a known roost requires a licence. Surveys of summer roosts and feeding areas are best April-September. Surveys of winter roosts (e.g. caves & mines) are best November- February.
<b>Dormouse</b>	Woodland and hedgerows, usually old or ancient in character. Particularly with hazel, chestnut and a variety of flowering/fruited shrubs.	Best surveyed between April and September. Searches for characteristically chewed hazelnuts may be made year round. A licence to check dormouse boxes is required from English Nature due to the potential to disturb dormice.
<b>Great Crested Newt</b>	Rural and urban ponds, mineral extraction sites, ox-bow lakes – for breeding and aquatic stages of life cycle  Rough grassland (unimproved semi-natural grassland), scrub, hedgerows, deciduous woodland habitat - for terrestrial stages of life cycle. Refuges can include piles of logs, stone, bricks or rubble and sometimes around bases of buildings near suitable habitat.	Aquatic habitats best surveyed February –end of June dependent on method used. Terrestrial habitats best surveyed March – October  English Nature advocates that the survey methods detailed in the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (2001) are utilised.  Surveys are recommended when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are historical records for Great Crested Newts on site, or in the general area.</li> <li>• there is a pond on or near the site (within around 500m), even if only holds water seasonally.</li> <li>• there are refuges (piles of logs, stones, bricks or rubble), grassland, scrub, woodland or hedgerows within 500m of a pond.</li> </ul> A licence for torchlight surveys is required due to the potential to disturb great crested newts.
<b>Otter</b>	Watercourses such as rivers, streams, drainage ditches and canals as well as other water bodies (e.g. lakes and gravel pits).	Search for signs at any time of year (e.g. scats, footprints, potential resting and breeding places (holts)). Best results between November and January, but not after recent heavy rain.  As with other European protected species, a licence can be obtained from English Nature to survey places used by otters for breeding and resting because of the potential to disturb them.
<b>All wild species of birds</b> (protected by the Section 1 (1) Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended))	All terrestrial and aquatic habitats particularly trees and scrub and including built structures	Breeding birds: mainly in spring. For counts of wintering wetland birds, survey October to March.
<b>Birds included on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), e.g. barn owl, kingfisher &amp; goshawk.</b>	All terrestrial and aquatic habitats including built structures nearby (Eg. agricultural & sometimes commercial or public buildings, barns, bridges – dependent on design and condition of built structure and species)	Breeding birds: mainly in spring. For counts of wintering wetland birds, survey October to March.
<b>Water Vole</b>	Rivers, streams, ditches, canals and water bodies.	Best surveyed when voles are active and holding territories between March and October.
<b>Slow Worm, Grass Snake, Common Lizard and Adder</b>	Railway and derelict land, heath and dry & wet grassland. Metal sheets, wooden boards, piles of cut/composting vegetation, stones, bricks or rubble can be important refuges.	Throughout the summer, but best results are achieved in April, May, June and September.
<b>Atlantic White-Clawed Crayfish</b>	Rivers, streams and other water bodies.	Survey (under licence) by trapping or hand searching. Best when most active between late spring and autumn.
<b>Plants included on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), e.g. Red Tipped Cutweed</b>	All terrestrial and aquatic habitats	Spring to autumn when the species is in flower or fruit and can be easily identified.
<b>Badger</b>	Terrestrial habitats in both rural and urban settings. Badger setts may be located in deciduous woodland, rough grassland, embankments, under individual trees if they are near areas of cover, and within hedgerows.	Survey may be needed at different times of the year to determine badger activity throughout the year and status of a sett.