

**EAST DEVON AND BLACKDOWN HILLS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
ASSESSMENT**

From: Barry Rogers <barry.rogers@cranbrooktowncouncil.gov.uk>
Sent: 12 January 2019 16:31
To: Janine Gardner <clerk@cranbrooktowncouncil.gov.uk>
Subject: East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidelines

Janine,

As requested in the December 2108 CTC meeting I have reviewed this document (which I shall refer to as the LCA - in attachment) and all of its attendant links and information, including local and regional plans. It is essentially an update ten years on from the previous assessment, professionally produced.

By way of background, the specific context of Cranbrook and its immediate landscape is covered by the Cranbrook Master Plan Preferred approach published by EDDC in November 2017.

(also attached for information). I also attach the council's response to this document.

The 'LCA' however is a very broad reaching document specifically providing a geographical setting for the different types and classification criteria with the broader context of East Devon. Unsurprisingly, there are EU derived definitions and processes for quantifying and qualifying various 'landscapes' which help as a basis for assessment.

EU conventions also dictate that within the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) the environment needs to be considered - *to contribute to and enhance the landscape* - within the planning process.

What is probably more important is the potential for management of the landscape (in the planning process), recognising its vulnerability without some form of strategy and control.

Naturally, implementing any form of management strategy is a complex issue given the very broad church of stakeholders and agencies involved.

As for the report itself (as per the Heritage report recently evaluated) it should inform any regional and local planning considerations, and as such, needs to be understood by CTC Planning Committee.

As for the draft report:

it is a very professional document, providing up to date assessments.

It provides a clear understanding of the importance of landscape character assessment in the planning process.

It highlights the threats to the variety of the Landscape Character Types, and suggests practical mitigation measures, many of which can be implemented through a number of agencies and education (e.g. management of commercial woodlands, maximising re-use of redundant agricultural buildings)

A number of these mitigating measures (e.g. burying electricity transmission lines: siting communication masts against a wooded backdrop) appear to be unachievable.

It remind us of the importance of Heritage features in the landscape (from the prehistoric iron age 'forts', to listed buildings) and their importance to tourism, and importantly, to the sense of wellbeing in the local community and its ability to appreciate and engage with the landscape.

I think CTC should simply commend the report, and reinforce the recommendations in the Cranbrook Master plan, reminding EDDC planning of the need to adhere to principles shown in local plans - such as preserving the green spaces and corridors between neighbouring villages, thus preventing their absorption into a 'greater Cranbrook'.

The role of Cranbrook as a new town in providing housing in a structured, planned manner *preserves* the broader landscape, and the villages which make this part of Devon an attractive place to live and visit.

Please circulate this to the council before our next meeting, thanks.

Barry Rogers