Guide to using the
Mendip Landscape Character Assessment 2020 website

Introduction

The Council is inviting views on its revised Landscape Character Assessment. This study divides the district into 8 main landscape areas and 56 individual character areas. The maps of these areas, as well as a wealth of further information relating to the landscape of Mendip, can be viewed on the Landscape Character Assessment website.

The information below is to assist you in navigating the website. It sets out what information you can find out about a specific location and how exactly you go about collecting it. Details of how to respond to the consultation are also set out to help you when making your comments.

What can the Landscape Character Assessment tell me about a specific location?

There are a number of things you can find out about a specific location. These are set out below.

1. How to find the character area of a place or settlement

   Click on the character area map on the homepage. The map automatically appears with the 56 character areas highlighted. To view the underlying OS map, click on the boxes to the right of the map.
   ➢ Find the location on the map.
   ➢ Click on the coloured section covering that location and an information box will appear. This will tell you:
      • the character area it is in (e.g. E1.1: Whitelake Valley - Evercreech Setting)
      • the type of landscape it is in (e.g. Lias Lowlands and Ridges)
   ➢ Click on the link (i.e. the landscape area) and it will take you to the relevant chapter in the report. Here you can find out lots of information about the landscape and character area of your location. This includes a table setting out the key characteristics of your character area under the following headings:
      • physical/natural characteristics
      • settlement and infrastructure
      • land use/management/human influences
      • perceived characteristics
      • special features
      • landmarks, views and viewpoints

   Further information about the landscape type and character area of your location can be found by:
   ➢ Clicking on 'Landscape Types and Character Areas' in the left hand menu and selecting the landscape type that your area is in (e.g. Lias Lowlands and Ridges).
   ➢ Clicking on the relevant 'Read More' button - a new document will appear. This contains lots of maps with information on the following:
      • geology
      • topography
      • drainage
      • settlements and major infrastructure
      • national assets and landscape designations

- historic, cultural heritage and landscape designations
- other environmental designations
- stewardship schemes
- sustrans and long distance paths
- tranquillity
- dark skies

The revised information in the landscape character study can be used together with formal landscape designations and those in the adopted Local Plan. These include Mendip's two areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the identified Special Landscape Features (in the Part 1 plan) and historic parks and gardens.

2. Changes from the previous study

The last full landscape assessment was undertaken in 1997. While many local areas are similar, there have been changes in boundaries and detail. The study includes a slider map which allows comparison from those in the adopted local plan . You can view this map by clicking here.

3. National Landscape Character areas

The Mendip study fits into national framework of landscape character areas (NCA). This can also provide useful higher level background information and links to other datasets and studies . The study links to the national areas.

➢ Open the National Character Area Profiles webpage.
➢ In the contents on the left hand side of the NCA homepage, click on NCAs in south west England.
➢ Click on the relevant national character area for your location – you can find this out by using the comparison map. The NCAs covering Mendip are:
  - 107: Cotswolds
  - 117: Avon Vales
  - 118: Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges
  - 133: Blackmore Vale and Vale or Wardour
  - 141: Mendip Hills
  - 142: Somerset Levels and Moors
  - 143: Mid Somerset Hills
  - 140: Yeovil Scarplands

➢ Click on the link under 'Downloads available for this record' and a new document will appear containing lots of information including:
  - a description of the natural and cultural features that shape the landscape
  - how the landscape has changed over time
  - the current drivers for ongoing change
  - a broad analysis of the characteristics and ecosystem services of the area

Consultation to the end of November

The Council is inviting views and comments on the Landscape Character Assessment. We would greatly value your local Knowledge and information to add or to or check the detail . The consultants are also seeking views on it approach to what makes a 'valued landscape'. This study is proposing 8 special characteristics – see below.   These characteristics will be used to help assess what is 'valued landscape' and should be taken into account in future plans and development decisions. The characteristics are

- A valuable collection of distinct and interesting landscapes
- Geology and geomorphology
- Biodiversity potential
- History
- Continuous landscape
- Tranquil, isolated and semi-natural landscape resource
- Views and landmarks
- Rich cultural heritage and recreational resource

Further information on these 8 special characteristics can be found here.

What do you think of this list? How do they apply to parts of the district that you know and love? Do you enjoy the landscape in Mendip for any of these reasons in particular? Are there any special characteristics that have been missed?

Please let us know your thoughts on these 8 special characteristics by filling in a questionnaire or emailing us at planningpolicy@mendip.gov.uk and inserting 'Landscape Character Assessment Consultation' in the subject line.

Favourite Walks, Views and Hidden Gems

We are keen to gather your views on what makes Mendip special and what you value most from the diverse collection of places. We would particularly like your thoughts on the following:
- Favourite walks/places to go – What are the best walks in Mendip? Why are they your favourite routes? How often do you go? How far do you travel to get there? How far do you walk/jog/ride?
- Favourite views – What are your favourite hills, vistas and landmarks? What makes this view special? Have there been any significant intrusions that have appeared in your view?
- Hidden gems – Are there any special places that have made an impression on you which you return to time and again? Why is this place special to you? How far do you travel to get there?

Please let us know your thoughts on this by filling in a questionnaire about your favourite walk/places to go, your favourite view or any hidden gems you know of. Alternatively you can email us at planningpolicy@mendip.gov.uk and insert 'Landscape Character Assessment Consultation' in the subject line. As locations are submitted we will update the map and you can see if you have added to multiple recommendations for a highly valued place or told us of a place that no one else has found.
All comments and responses received by the end of November 2020 will be used to revise and improve the study.