Appendices

Appendix 1
Change in the Landscape

APPENDIX 1 : CHANGE IN THE LANDSCAPE

Introduction

The landscape character of the area is a confirmation of the intrinsic qualities of the physical landscape and man's use of the land. This has evolved over many centuries to create the subtle mosaic of landscape types that we see today.

A healthy sustainable landscape, like a vibrant community, is dynamic. Some change is not only inevitable, it is desirable, but the emphasis must be on the appropriateness of the change and the balance or equity between the needs of the environment and those of development.

The twentieth century has been extraordinary in terms of the magnitude and pace of change and the landscape continues to face pressures for change from a wide range of activities.

Technology has brought many benefits and undeniable improvements to the quality of people's lives. With these improvements, however, has come a move to standardised solutions for building and other activities that tend to ignore, rather than reflect, the landscape character of a place and the sensitive balance of the ecosystem.

Associated with development is the change brought about by the destruction of existing features, wildlife and ecological areas and dereliction, which all have important implications for the landscape qualities of the countryside.

☐ *New Housing*
☐ *Extensions to Settlements*
☐ *Large Buildings*
☐ *Tourism and Recreation*
☐ *Agriculture and Forestry*
☐ *Quarrying and Extraction*
☐ *Roads*
☐ *Communications and Infrastructure*

The discussions set out in this appendix relate to the general pressures for change that currently apply in parts of the English countryside. Detailed guidelines for specific parts of the northern Ryedale study area are discussed in the main body of this report.

New Housing

As the most extensive new urban land use, housing has a major impact on our standard of environment. It must be seen to make a positive contribution in fulfilling the principle of sustainable development to which the Government is committed.

Recent projections of national demand for new housing (up to 4.4 million new households by AD2016) take into account the changing nature of society and the increased number of single people. This demand will inevitably place pressure on the urban fringe, on existing villages and may be accommodated by construction of new settlements. Growth accommodated in villages may be to the benefit of small village communities on the margins of economic viability but the landscape impact, felt at a local level, will usually be controversial.

Although present planning policies strictly limit the scope for new housing in open countryside, there will always be some demand for re-use of old farm building, construction of dwellings for agricultural workers/retired farmers and new dwellings.

The countryside is also under threat from the 'suburbanising' effects of cumulative small-scale change. Traditional buildings are extended and double garages constructed using inappropriate materials, whilst in the garden, suburban ranch style fencing and exotic conifers are used to demarcate boundaries. The introduction of new lighting as part of road improvement or developments is a further suburbanising influence and can cause problems of light pollution in unspoilt rural areas. The cumulative effects of these changes can be as erosive as development to the character of rural settlements.

Proposals for development should be sufficiently responsive to the sense of place, and to the general and particular character of the landscape. The capacity of the landscape to absorb development needs to be given proper attention, alongside other considerations such as the need and demand for housing, the availability of land, energy and the provision of infrastructure.

The guiding principle of new housing development is that it should help to enhance its immediate setting and wider surroundings. Housing developers should give careful attention to how a development will fit into the landscape and the principles of good design should be applied consistently by in planning decisions.

The key principles that should be applied when deciding on the siting and design of new houses are:

- *Consider the shape, layout and form of the development and its impact on its immediate setting and the wider landscape. On sloping ground, fit the buildings to the contours of the site.*
- *Use landform to provide shelter, screening or background for new houses. Avoid locating new buildings on the skyline.*
- *Refer to differences in the architectural style of traditional buildings that occur in different parts of an area. These should be interpreted and reflected in a modern context.*
- *Ensure that the design and materials are in keeping with the surrounding landscape and in accordance with any Village Design Guides.*
- *Treat the outdoor space, outbuildings and garden area associated with the house as an integral part of the development. Design property boundaries to assist the integration of the buildings with their surroundings.*
- *Minimise the likely visual impact of development as seen from major roads and rail routes.*

Extensions to Settlements

Environmental quality objectives for the structure and layout of new residential areas around existing towns should be asserted as a primary consideration in any development proposal.

The promotion of development in existing settled areas should only be to a scale and density that does not detract from the existing landscape and visual character. Edge of settlement development requires particularly sensitive treatment possibly requiring a design concept to help assimilate the edge of the settlement into the surrounding countryside.

Site development guidelines drawing up key principles for the design of the new urban form and its 'fit' into the landscape should be prepared in the form of a brief for developers to follow. Such guidelines need not impede creativity and innovation but should set comprehensive urban design and landscape criteria to achieve appropriate standards of design and layout.

Principles that need to be applied in addition to those identified for new housing above include:

- *Consider whether growth should be by infill of appropriate open spaces within settlements or by settlement expansion.*
- *For safety considerations and to avoid 'suburbanising' settlements, there should be a general presumption against development alongside main roads.*
- *Where infill is appropriate, protect existing landscape features.*

Large Buildings

There is likely to be a continuing demand for the provision of large buildings e.g. agricultural stores, silos, and industrial units. In most instances, it is not possible to screen or hide such buildings and instead, attention should be given to the quality of the design, scale in the landscape and boundary treatments.

Where large buildings are required, the following principles should be applied, in addition to those identified for new housing above:

- *Site large buildings to minimise physical disturbance and visual impact.*
- *Pay attention to the scale, form and orientation of large new buildings, taking reference from the position and layout of existing buildings in order to retain the inherent visual and physical qualities of the area.*
- *Carefully consider the design and use of materials for the boundary treatment, access and hardstanding.*

Tourism and Recreation

Tourism is the third largest industry in Britain and is important at national level, in terms of foreign exchange earnings, and at a local level in terms of employment. There can be considerable visitor pressure on popular sites.

Sensitive sites require careful interpretation and advice if they are not to be damaged. Small-scale development such as the provision of additional accommodation utilising existing buildings, additional car parking and access, can be acceptable if handled sensitively. Large-scale development, involving new buildings or significant land use change is more difficult to integrate into the landscape. In addition, by attracting more people into an area, such development can lead to pressure for additional facilities. A careful balance is required in determining the degree to which an area is promoted in order that its special qualities are safeguarded and retained for the future.

Landscape issues should be considered as part of the strategic approach in the provision of tourist facilities:

❑ *Where built development is considered, the location and design of facilities should address the issues relevant to new houses and village expansion. Poor siting and design can lead to intrusion, particularly for areas such as caravan sites where it is difficult to control colours of vans.*
❑ *Tourism should be promoted in a sensitive manner that maximises the potential and qualities of the area. Signage of attractions can lead to clutter and confusion in the landscape. Design paths and signing materials to blend with their surroundings.*

Agriculture

Agricultural practices have reflected changed markets and the effects of Common Agricultural Policy subsidies. New and different crops continually emerge and it is impractical to consider proscribing any crop on landscape grounds. The process of agricultural intensification that has characterised post-war English agriculture is evident in the landscape. Field enlargement and the removal of stone walls and hedgerows, the widespread conversion of pasture to arable farmland, drainage of riverside land and the abandonment of traditional farm buildings have all had a noticeable affect on the countryside. In addition to these perceptible landscape changes, subtler effects relating to the cumulative impacts of intensification have also taken place. Greater chemical use and drainage has reduced the species variety of grassland; scrub has been removed and stream bank sides have been cleared.

European agricultural policy has seen recent shifts to contain, if not reduce, yields. This may reduce the intensity of arable production whilst requiring an increase in the area of set-aside land. Quotas on sheep and beef numbers may also reduce growth in these sectors. However, two other sectors may serve to increase development pressures in the farmed landscape. Firstly, new regulations relating to animal welfare and effluent disposal may require new farm buildings e.g. the banning of intensive pig farming methods is likely to lead to an increase in the growth of outdoor pig production. Secondly, efforts to contain agricultural development may lead farmers to seek alternative sources of income through diversification.

Improvements in agricultural practices are necessary to sustain the economic well being of the community but should be sensitively controlled to ensure that the traditional fabric of the landscape is retained. The landscape principles to be applied include:

❑ *Where possible encourage and promote traditional farming practices to reinforce the fabric of the farmed landscape.*
❑ *Exploit the potential ecological and landscape benefits of Countryside Stewardship Schemes or habitat creation grants.*
❑ *Make every effort to restore and conserve traditional farming features, particularly stone walls, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and farm buildings.*
❑ *Avoid damage to rough grazing, unimproved pasture, reverted improved wetlands and water margins.*
❑ *Promote the planting of sensitively sited new woodlands and introduce management regimes to conserve and enhance the nature conservation value of existing woodlands.*
❑ *Consider the reintroduction of locally native broad-leaved trees to restore landscape and ecological diversity into commercial coniferous forestry plantations.*
❑ *Explore the potential for restoring drained farmland back to water meadows and marshland, through the MAFF Habitat Scheme.*

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Quarrying and Extraction

Although most present-day quarries are subject to detailed conditions of restoration and aftercare, the quality of restoration can be variable and much depends on enforcement. In monitoring restoration and agreeing variations, advantage can be taken of opportunities to improve habitat restoration or visual mitigation.

Selection of sites for new quarries is subject to environmental assessment. Key landscape issues are:

- *The landscape character and nature conservation value of the proposed site.*
- *The visual prominence of the site and in particular its likely effect on the skyline and key viewpoints such as communication routes, landmarks and archaeological sites.*
- *The scale of the activity with reference to the nature and scale of the surrounding landscape.*
- *The screening of the buildings and access road from the surrounding landscape, through a combination of earth modelling and appropriate planting.*
- *The preparation of suitable reinstatement measures from the outset.*
- *The potential for the restoration of abandoned workings to maximise ecological and landscape benefits.*

Roads

The effects of road building, highway upgrading and the introduction of stringent highway standards can have a significant effect on the character of the landscape. Whilst recent government policy has reduced the immediate pressure for major new road building, a road improvements policy remains. This could have visual consequences, particularly in open, low-lying landscapes.

Principles to apply when making improvements to the road network include:

- *When considering different route options, aim to reduce the physical and visual impact of any new road by following the grain of the landscape as closely as possible.*
  The skyline should be avoided wherever possible.
- *Ensure that any widening schemes or bridges are in keeping with the scale of the surrounding landscape.*

- *Take advantage of any opportunities to create an interesting sequence of views from the road so long as this does not compromise the fit of the road in the landscape.*
- *Design fencing, crash barriers, lighting and bus shelters to blend in with their surroundings.*
- *Avoid disturbance to local drainage regimes, which can reduce the ecological diversity of the area.*
- *Contact appropriate conservation organisations and naturalist trusts to address the vulnerability of particularly sensitive areas and designated sites and to determine the occurrence of rare, endangered or vulnerable species within the area of interest as a whole.*
- *Where areas of natural habitat would be lost, recreate sites similar to those lost.*
- *The potential for appropriate mitigation measures to make a positive contribution to the conservation and enhancement of semi natural habitat should be explored.*
- *Incorporate active habitat creation to bring about visual and, ultimately, ecological benefits, for example through the creation of woodland, hedgerow and wetland habitats.*
- *To maximise wildlife value, consider planting proposals using indigenous native species as part of the landscape mitigation measures.*
- *Remove and reinstate redundant sections of carriageway for ecological and landscape benefits.*
- *To maximise nature conservation value and visual interest, road verges should be actively managed to promote the development of a more diverse ground flora.*
- *Carefully locate extraction and storage sites for salt, grit or other materials to reduce physical and visual influence.*

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Communications and Infrastructure

The Ryedale District is interrupted by a number of transmission and communication lines.

The following landscape principles should be applied:

- Examine the opportunity of rationalisation of routes to establish environmental and visual benefits, during the provision of any future electricity lines.
- Consider the undergrounding of low voltagetransmissionand telecommunications lines to avoid disturbing sensitive habitats.
- Pay particular attention to the siting and screening of electricity substations.
- Pay particular attention to the siting of telecommunication masts.
- Dismantle and remove redundant communications structures and reinstate the sites to the surrounding natural vegetation.

Appendix 2
Methodology

APPENDIX 2 : METHODOLOGY

Background

The purpose of this landscape character assessment is to assess the special character, distinctiveness and qualities of the landscape of Northern Ryedale, in order to provide a framework for planning and policy development. A particular requirement of the study was that it should be set in the context

❑ The 'Character of England: landscape, wildlife and natural features' was completed in 1997 as a joint venture between the Countryside Commission and English Nature. It provides a comprehensive a consistent description of the varied character of the English countryside as viewed from a regional perspective. The map divides the country into a series of regional landscape character areas based on variations in its historic and cultural heritage, natural features and landscape character. Each is geographically distinct and the purpose of the assessment is to guide policy, implementation and establish operations.

❑ English Nature: the Natural Areas Programme was developed to provide a framework for setting nature conservation objectives across England, linking local and national nature conservation priorities. Natural Areas are broad areas of the English countryside with similar types of wildlife and natural features. In many cases, they also share similar landscapes. Their boundaries do not follow administrative boundaries but are, instead, defined by their wildlife and natural features, their land use and human history.

Introduction

The term landscape refers primarily to the scenic or visual appearance of the landscape, including its shape, textures and colour. It also reflects the ways in which these various components combine to create specific patterns and pictures that are distinctive to particular localities. However, the landscape is not purely a visual phenomenon; it relies heavily on other influences for its character. These include dimensions such as geology, topography, soils, ecology, archaeology, architecture

and cultural associations, all of which can influence the way in which the landscape is experienced and valued. To gather all these interrelated strands of information, it is essential that the process of landscape assessment is systematic and structured.

Methodology

The Countryside Commission approach to landscape assessment set out in their document Landscape Assessment Guidance, CCP 423 provided a framework for this study. Essentially, this approach combines fieldwork with information gathered from consultations and desk studies and follows a logical progression of four stages as set out in the accompanying method flow chart.

Familiarisation Tour and Definition of Task

Landscape assessment can be carried out at a variety of scales, from the national or regional, down to the county, district, and even to a specific parish or site level. Whilst the same principles and approach to assessment should apply at all of these scales of assessment, the detailed methods and techniques are likely to vary. At the outset of any landscape assessment, it is therefore essential to define the task and clarify what type and level of information is appropriate for the purpose in hand. In this case, the aim of the study was to achieve the following:

❑ Detailed identification of the boundaries between the Vale of Pickering, Fringe of the Moors, Yorkshire Wolds and the Howardian Hills regional character areas.

❑ Identification of the primary characteristics of the Fringe of the Moors and the Vale of Pickering regional character areas within Ryedale District (i.e. outside the North York Moors National Park).

❑ Identification of the sub-regional local landscape character types within Northern Ryedale, together with the identification of the principal issues affecting those landscapes and the formulation of detailed guidelines aimed at conserving/enhancing the character of those areas.

An initial tour of the study area provided an overall appreciation of the scale and variation in landscape character and the nature of the transitions between different local landscape types, and that between the Vale of Pickering and Fringe of the Moors as a whole.

Desk Study

An essential starting point to the study was the data collection or landscape inventory exercise, which involved the gathering and analysing of relevant information from a wide range of geological, geomorphologic, archaeological and historic sources. This information comprised:

❑   *Physical Background* - mapped information from a number of sources: OS 1:50,000 Landranger and 1:25,000 Pathfinder series maps; Geological Survey of England and Wales, 1:625,000 and 1:50,000 solid and drift geology maps; Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1:250,000 and 1:63,360 soil maps; MAFF 1:63,360 Agricultural Land Classification maps and recent aerial photographs at 1:10,000

❑   *Historic* – archaeological books and reports.

❑   *Ecological Associations* – Phase one Habi tat Surveys and local ecological reports.

❑   *Perception of the Landscape* - technical reports, guide books, contemporary tourist literature, paintings and other landscape studies.

Running concurrently with data acquisition this was a more systematic overlay analysis of map and aerial photographic data. This essentially involved the mapping and overlaying of different sets of information, as a means of identifying patterns and combinations of landscape features and elements that are characteristic of different localities. The two main sets of information used for this purpose were landform analysis and landcover analysis.
Landform analysis is useful as it uses topographic breaks, slope changes, major geologic divisions and drainage patterns as a means for identifying broad regional character areas, and to a lesser extent, local landscape types.

Landcover analysis permits a greater level of resolution of assessment detail and enables greater sub-division of more homogenous physiographic landscapes. Traditionally, it has been a tool used most usefully in lowland areas, where landform analysis may not provide sufficient variation in character. Landcover analysis in this case involved the following stages:

    i. Aggregation of fields into parcels of land, defined by features such as roads, parish boundaries, and watercourses.

    ii. Derivation of a coding system

    iii. Application of the coding to each parcel of land by means of studying aerial photographs and Phase One habitat surveys.

    iv. Colouring up of coded parcels of land.

The information was then be overlaid as a means of identifying patterns and combinations of landscape elements and features that are characteristic of different localities. This led to an initial definition of potential landscape character types that were then mapped in sketch form prior to verification through field survey.

The usefulness of landcover analysis in defining provisional boundaries between local landscape types varied. In some situations, the provisional boundaries were reasonable apparent on the ground, e.g. due to a greater level of tree cover or quite strong changes in field pattern. In other situations landcover analysis did identify changes in landscape character, but the boundaries required substantial refinement in the field, usually by repeatedly crossing the provisional boundary until a more satisfactory line was defined. In other situations, landcover analysis suggested boundaries that were not in fact apparent on the ground.

Structured Field Survey

The field survey complemented and built upon the work undertaken by desk study, refining the draft local landscape character type boundaries and providing a systematic classification of the countryside and an identification of its key qualities.

A formal observation of each landscape character type was made by completing a character assessment sheet and taking a series of photographs. To facilitate this process, a field map was drawn up

showing the location of each provisional landscape type on a 1: 50,000 OS base. To maximise efficiency and ensure a consistent approach, two qualified surveyors undertook the survey from a number of pre-selected points across the study area. Structured field record sheets provided the opportunity to record a combination of factual, visual information with creative description and a more subjective response. The assessment sheets consisted of the following sections:

❑ *Aesthetic Factors* – a subjective checklist covering characteristics such as scale, enclosure and unity. The list was drawn up after the preliminary field surveys, and included a range of factors that were considered most relevant to the landscape of Northern Ryedale. The aim was to complete this list as quickly as possible to capture an immediate impression of the landscape.

❑ *Landscape Elements* – a list of landscape elements from which the dominant element or elements was selected. Where landform was dominant, an indication was made of the main landform type e.g. plateau, scarp or valley.

❑ *Historical and Ecological Associations* – a record of the historical and ecological features that were felt to contribute most to the distinctive sense of place in the Northern Ryedale landscape. The procedure was simply to record the presence of these features.

❑ *Brief Description* – a short written description of the landscape, noting the overall impression and key features. This included brief comments on landscape condition, vulnerability and capacity to accommodate change. In addition, for each landscape character type, preliminary long-term strategy proposals were made, with initial suggestions on the landscape management guidelines required to achieve them.

A second and complementary part of the field survey included the annotation of 1:25,000 OS Pathfinder maps. This included the recording of particular landscape features such as, prominent slopes, river flood plains and patches of improved or semi-natural vegetation. This process also allowed any changes to the boundaries between the provisional landscape character types to be recorded.

Analysis and Reporting

The information derived from the field survey, landscape inventory and the map overlays was combined to identify the key characteristic features of each local landscape character type and build up a detailed understanding of the landscape of Northern Ryedale. The analysis focused in particular on the vulnerability of the landscape to change and on any threats or opportunities that might occur as a result of changes in local management practices or future development pressures.

Guidelines

The final stage in the process was to draw up a broad management strategy both for the local landscape types within Northern Ryedale and for the area as a whole. This set the framework within which a series of much more specific landscape management guidelines could then be formulated.

It is recognised that there are two main strategy options:

❑ Conservation of the existing landscape where the traditional character and sense of place is strong or where landscape features are especially characteristic of the area.

❑ *Enhancement through restoration, reconstruction or recreation* where the landscape character or features has suffered damage and loss of local identity and positive improvement is needed.

Consultation

A consultation draft of the landscape assessment report was sent to representatives of Ryedale District Council, North Yorkshire County Council, North York Moors National Park Authority and Scarborough Borough Council and the Countryside Agency.

The report was amended to reflect the comments and suggestions from those consulted.

Appendix 3
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