

Notes from Meeting

Landscape Assessment Report Stakeholder Meeting

12 July 2005
Project: P167113
Ref: MinutesMtg_120705.doc/PWK/klf

Date/Time : 12th July 2005

Location : Burnby Hall, Pocklington

Participants : Simon Navas – ERYC – Project Manager
Stephen Hunt – ERYC – Forward Planning
Dave Cox – ERYC – Principal Planning Officer
Jan Falkingham – Golder Associates – Landscape Architect
Alex Stappard – Golder Associates
Harriet Burrows – Carl Bro – Project Manager
William Cooper – Doncaster Met. Borough Council
Margaret Cockbill – CPRE
Stephen Robinson – CPRE
Tony Atkin – Environment Agency
Richard Jennings – Environment Agency
Chris Marshall – Countryside Agency
Stephen Devey – ERYC – Conservation, Landscape and Archeology

Action

1.0 Introductions

All of the above introduced themselves and their interest in the scheme.

2.0 ERYC Landscape Character Assessment Project

Stephen Hunt gave a presentation introducing the project. Stephen detailed how it fits into the Local Development Framework, how it will be used in the determination of planning applications and who has been contacted in terms of consultees.

The Council has submitted its Local Development Scheme which sets out what the council is going to do over the next 3 years. This has been approved by the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber.

Carl Bro Consultants

An issues and options paper has been reported to the Council's Cabinet raising key issues to be addressed i.e. Housing, employment, smaller settlements, and generic development control policies. This will be subject to a consultation exercise commencing Monday 8 August.

The Local Development Framework timetable has been approved by government office. A draft Statement of Community involvement has been produced and will be subject to public consultation at the same time as the Issues and Options Paper. Work on the Environment DPD is due to commence in 3 years and will deal with local landscape designations. The LCA is needed before then to feed into other DPDs e.g. Housing and Employment.

The EA raised the issue of Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. SH said no progress has been made on this since the last meeting although the Council had identified it as an important piece of work to be undertaken as soon as possible.

Following on from the Stakeholder meeting in March consultation letters were sent to various local organizations including parish councils, civic societies and local environmental organisations. 25 responses have been received. The information will be used during the making judgements phase of the landscape character assessment.

CPRE thanked ERYC for their approach to consultation on this project.

There followed a brief discussion regarding the status of the LCA and whether or not it would be better if it was adopted as SPG. It remains the intention that the document will not be SPG. The LCA could be used when developing concept statements detailing how sites could be developed.

Further discussion is needed with development control officers to explain how the assessment will be used to determine/guide planning decisions.

3.0 Draft Landscape Types and Areas

Jan Falkingham gave a presentation on the progress to date of the study.

Desk study had included geology, soils, topography, fields (size, pattern, boundaries, condition of boundaries), drainage pattern, tree and woodland cover (the Forestry Commission only have one site so 1:25000 OS maps and aerial photographs were used in the main), land use (from aerial photographs and verified in survey), settlement patterns (e.g. town or village, scattered or nucleated), cultural heritage and ecology (nature reserves/woodlands/grasslands/beaches etc)

Jan tabled the Draft Character Area Descriptions and Draft Character Types and Areas map.

East Riding of Yorkshire Landscape Character Areas Types and Areas

Jan described that there were 23 types identified which were split into 81

character areas.

It was reported that the field surveys were underway and that the work would be completed by 31st August 2005. This is shown in the timetable below:

**TIMESCALE
ACTIVITY**

OUTPUT

March 2005

Workshop
Stakeholders informed

Feb – June 2005

Desk study
Draft character areas

Mar – July 2005

Field survey
Verify draft character area

June 2004

Article in East Riding News
People informed and given opportunity to comment

July 2005

Making judgments
Guidance and recommendations

31st August 2005

Landscape Character Assessment Report

It was raised that there had been an assessment carried out 10 years ago although this was done at 1:50000 scale rather than 1:25000 an is more 'broad brush' than the assessment that is currently being carried out. Methods of assessment have also moved on and a result it will be difficult to accurately identify changes in landscape character as the two assessments are not comparable. However, it should be possible to identify significant changes in the last ten years using the two assessments.

Landscape Character Assessments for neighbouring authorities was also

raised. Scarborough, Selby and Doncaster have landscape character assessments. Ryedale uses the same assessment as the East Riding for the wolds area on the southern edge of the district. The assessments of neighbouring authorities are not comparable to this assessment as they have been done at different scales and methods have progressed. However, they will be referred to in the final document and the reason for differences will be explained.

4.0 Making Judgments

The landscape character assessment is at the stage of making judgments about quality, value, sensitivity and capacity. This part of the meeting discussed the criteria for making judgments on the areas. When making judgements on the character areas it is important to consider the character e.g. landscape and quality, define objectives for the distinct character types and areas and consider approaches to achieving these.

Quality Landscape

Discussion included what made areas such as the Yorkshire Wolds and around the River Derwent special.

It was stated that it may not be beneficial to designate areas of high landscape quality as areas that are not designated can become targeted for development. However, the benefits of designation were also recognised and overall it was felt that local landscape designations were important and should be retained in the East Riding. At present the only designated area of High Landscape Value is the Yorkshire Wolds. However, other areas should be considered e.g. Thorn Moors – Doncaster MBC have already designated the area in Doncaster as ‘special’ and perhaps this should be extended to include the area in the East Riding.

Parts of the River Derwent and the River Humber may also be of high landscape quality.

Criteria for designation was discussed. It was agreed that the criteria for designation may vary from place to place. E.g. Diversity may contribute to quality in one area but for other areas there may be little diversity but a strong sense of character and wilderness quality.

Discussion regarding the size of areas of high quality landscape designations. Generally felt they should not be too small as there would be more pressure on them and their character.

The possibility of the potential to identify within character areas development which would be detrimental to the area was discussed although it was recognized that, although possible, it would not be achievable within the timescale for the current study.

It was discussed in length the matter of the need of an open minded approach to the study in terms of descriptions e.g. because a tree does not have a

preservation order on it it does not mean that it is not important?

It was discussed that development on the edge of designated areas can be detrimental to the designated area as the development can detract from the quality of the designated area, especially on the outskirts.

It was commented that it was important to keep consistency in the designation throughout the district.

Landscape Value

Landscape value differs from quality and relates to how local people perceive the landscape around them. Therefore, a recreation ground on the edge of an urban area surrounded by grass fields may have high value to locals in the role that it plays but would not necessarily be of high landscape quality.

It was commented that it is easier to quantify value on smaller areas than on larger areas

It was recognized that landscape changes permanently with built development changing the landscape immediately. Changes due to agriculture tend to be larger scale and slower change.

Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity

This was agreed to be the capacity of landscape to accept change. Sensitivity of the landscape to change is related to its capacity to accept change.

The landscape character assessment will look at the capacity of the landscape character types to accept certain types of development e.g. residential and commercial, without detriment to landscape character. Capacity will depend upon the characteristics and features of the landscape and the characteristics of the development proposed. For example, wind turbines have moving elements which mean their impact differs from the impact of masts and pylons even though they are vertical structures.

Planning policy supports industrial development especially around the Humber where there are areas of land which are allocated for employment use. Therefore need to consider impact of development of allocated areas and the sensitivity of the landscape to that type of development.

Cumulative effects of development should be considered e.g. log cabins, it would be useful in these instances for developers to have guidelines to follow. Wind farms should also be considered in terms of potential cumulative effects in the East Riding and in neighbouring authorities.

Views are an important consideration when assessing capacity and sensitivity.

It was noted that developments such as log cabins can also provide some environmental benefit but this can depend on the type of development and location.

Sustainable urban drainage systems were discussed. These are looked at especially in concept statements and have not affected character areas as yet. Features such as balancing ponds and swales do have the potential to impact on landscape character. Generally they are associated with new road schemes e.g. Leven Bypass, Market Weighton bypass and Humber Bridge.

Water features are seen to be very important for development e.g. people like houses which have views of the river/lake/pond as well as ponds being used for drainage systems.

There are areas of large scale recreation and tourism development along the coast that have impacted on character. Policies in the existing Local Plans are not always consistent in their approach to development in the coastal zone. LCA could be used to develop guidelines to inform planning applications. One of the issues in the coastal area is erosion. The coast potentially has high sensitivity to change as a result of development and erosion. This needs to be considered in the assessment.

In addition there are seen to be options to enhance the rights of way network, at present there are no organised parking areas enabling walking along the River Derwent. The Wolds Way is a national route but there are few if any circular routes. It was noted that the Access Forum would be consulted on these issues.

It was noted that people do not tend to stop in the Wolds on their way to the coast. The area is still relatively tranquil and remote. It is a relatively featureless landscape of recognised high quality. Need to consider the capacity of the landscape to accept tourism and recreation development.

Strategies

Strategies were discussed briefly. There is the need to identify key actions e.g. hedgerow protection and replanting, for character types and areas.

Useful organisations that could be influential in land management and hence landscape character include DEFRA.

In Doncaster Thorn Moors is actively managed by English Nature to ensure the habitat is preserved and in some cases recreated – enhance maintaining landscape character where it would otherwise change.

Environmental Stewardship schemes may be influential in changing landscape character over the next few years.

Potential for ecotourism and recreation may contribute to landscape strategies.

The LCA needs to consider other documents e.g. the Biodiversity Action Plan which is currently being worked on.

The exercise was seen as being successful with comments being incorporated into the final submission.