

Landscape Character: An Assessment of Salisbury District Consultants Brief

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Salisbury District Council wishes to appoint a consultant to undertake an up to date and comprehensive assessment of the landscape character of the District.
- 1.2 The assessment will enable a better understanding of the District's landscapes and will provide the context for policies and proposals within the forthcoming Local Development Framework (LDF) for Salisbury District.
- 1.3 The landscape character assessment (LCA) will be used to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy and other development plan documents for the District. As such the assessment needs to be carried out in a rigorous manner in order to provide robust evidence to justify any future policy decisions. This will ensure that the LDF meets the test of soundness at Inquiry and meets with the provisions of Planning Policy Statement 7- Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.

2 Background

- 2.1 The district of Salisbury is located in the south of Wiltshire, around 90 miles south west of London. The district covers some 388 square miles and has a rich and diverse environment including 62 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), 70 Conservation Areas, 17 Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, part of the recently-established New Forest National Park, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as well as Stonehenge, a World Heritage Site.
- 2.2 The focus of the district is Salisbury itself. With a population of 44,175 at the 2001 Census, the city is an important commercial centre and provides many of the services for the surrounding area as well as being the main employment area in the district. The majority of the district however is rural, served by a number of smaller settlements providing local services, most notably at Amesbury, Mere, Wilton, Tisbury, and Downton.
- 2.3 In 1996 the former Countryside Commission surveyed the whole of England and divided it into 159 "Joint Character Areas" (JCAs) each sharing similar characteristics. These assessments take into account key landscape, natural and man-made features and provide insights into important issues affecting the countryside. The district of Salisbury comprises parts of four JCAs.
 - Dorset Downs & Cranborne Chase
 - New Forest
 - Salisbury Plain & West Wiltshire Downs
 - Blackmore Vale & Vale of Wardour
- 2.4 The River Avon rises in the Vale of Pewsey and flows through Wiltshire, Hampshire and Dorset to the sea at Christchurch. The River runs through the district and its tributaries and adjoining wetland form one of the most diverse chalk stream systems in the UK. Much of this area is designated as a Special

Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Regulations 1994 and is of European significance.

- 2.5 There are a number of existing landscape character assessments which cover elements of Salisbury District and these will form the background for this assessment. The Landscape assessment completed by Wiltshire County Council in 2005 is the main source of information for this project. The document is available online from the County Council's website (www.wiltshire.gov.uk). Full access to this document will be given to the successful consultant upon appointment.
- 2.6 The following table provides details of documents which provide baseline data for the assessment. These documents will be made available to the appointed consultants. Many of these documents are available from the commissioning Authorities website.

Recent Landscape Character Assessments and other relevant documents

Area covered	Document	Date	Client	Author
Wiltshire County	LCA	2005	Wiltshire County Council	Land Use Consultants (LUC)
Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB	LCA	Sept 2003	Countryside Agency	Land Use Consultants (LUC)
Salisbury Plain Training Area	LCA	May 2003	Defence Estates	Entec UK Ltd
Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB	Management Plan	2004	AONB	Internal
Salisbury Plain Training Area	Historic Landscape Characterisation	2002	Defence Estates	Wessex Archaeology
Various settlements within Salisbury District	Review of Salisbury District Local Plan	1998	Salisbury district Local Plan	Derek Lovejoy Partnership plc
New Forest	LCA	July 2000	New Forest District Council	Environmental Resources Management
West Wiltshire	West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment	April 2007	West Wiltshire District Council	Chris Blandford Associates

3 The Planning Policy Context

- 3.1 The protection and enhancement of landscape character is a key theme identified within planning policy at the national, regional and local level. Paragraphs 17, 20, 27 (ix) of Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, and policies *ENV2*, *ENV3*, *F* and *SD3* of the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) are particularly relevant as these identify protection and enhancement landscapes as intrinsic to good planning.
- 3.2 A substantial portion of the western part of the District includes the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB which is a national designation. The remainder of the district except the urban areas of Salisbury and Wilton and the Amesbury / Bulford / Durrington / Larkhill Area, is afforded protection as a Special Landscape Area (SLA).
- 3.3 The SLA was originally designated in the Wiltshire Landscape Local Plan adopted in 1986. The designation has been carried through into the most recent County Structure Plan adopted in 2006. Policy C9 of Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan identifies the extent of the SLA. The designation is reinforced at the local level by policy C6 of the Salisbury Local Plan Adopted 2003. Policy C7 of the Salisbury Local Plan provides additional protection for the landscape setting of Salisbury and Wilton by taking a restrictive stance on development over the plan period (2003 – 2011).
- 3.4 The RSS is due to replace the adopted Structure Plan and takes a somewhat different approach to landscape designation. Policy *ENV2* of the RSS sets out a framework where Local Planning Authorities are required to undertake assessments of landscape character at the local level, rather than these areas being designated at the regional and county level.
- 3.5 The New Forest remains one of the largest areas of mainly unenclosed land in southern England and it is extremely significant in terms of biodiversity, landscape and historic value, as well as for recreation and other uses. The New Forest extends into Salisbury District, although for planning purposes it is now under the control of the recently established New Forest National Park Authority. In 1985 the “New Forest Heritage Area” was designated and extends into the Salisbury district, however the boundary is not the same as that of the National Park. Policies under Local Plans in the New Forest act to conserve and protect it, and will do so until the adoption by the New Forest National Park Authority of LDF policies, which will supersede them.

4 Purpose and Potential uses of the Report

- 4.1 It is intended that the report will be used for the following purposes;
 - To provide an up to date and integrated description of Salisbury District's landscape, identifying key landscape features
 - To assess the justification for providing policy protection in the forthcoming LDF for the Special Landscape Area (policy C6) and the Landscape Setting of Salisbury and Wilton (policy C7) which are currently designated in the adopted plan.
 - To identify, in broad terms, the key capacities and sensitivities of the landscape to development and change with particular reference to the main settlements of Salisbury District.

- To inform Local Development Framework policy formation for a variety of issues.
- To produce a concise management strategy to inform future activities connected with the conservation of the District's landscape.
- To raise public, developer, Member and Officer awareness of landscape issues generally.
- To provide information for the Environmental Assessment of plans
- To act as a tool for the purposes of performing the District Council's forward planning and development control functions, particularly decision making on the siting and design of new housing, employment, telecommunications and wind energy proposals.
- To act as a reference and provide justification for future environmental enhancements, design and restoration projects and management initiatives
- To guide and inform the process for the assessment of external grant applications

5 Program and Methodology

- 5.1 The appointed consultants will be expected to carry out the assessment in accordance with the latest best practice guidance and with reference to *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* - April 2002 produced by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage.
- 5.2 The assessment will be informed by other relevant publications and studies, particularly those of Wiltshire County and of the AONB areas within the District as set out in the table in section 2.
- 5.3 It is envisaged that the assessment will involve the classification and mapping of the constituent character areas within the landscape types – based on the national character areas and the Wiltshire County study; then for each character area, identification of the location and boundaries, a list of key characteristics, information about the key sensitivities, key positive landscape features and landscape condition and a statement regarding the management strategy. The Assessment should also include analysis of the landscape setting and landscape capacity of the Districts main settlements.
- 5.4 In addition, it is envisaged that the assessment will include the following Ordnance Survey based GIS maps:
- Topography/ Geology /Hydrology (*baseline data for these maps already exists in the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment and permission has been obtained from WCC for the appointed consultants to make use of these maps.*)
 - Principal Settlements
 - National Character Area Context
 - Landscape Character Areas (all)
 - Landscape Character Areas (one for each)
 - Landscape Character Types
 - Landforms around the main settlements and villages of Salisbury/Alderbury/Wilton, Amesbury/Durrington/Bulford, Mere, Tisbury, and Downton
 - Landscape setting boundaries and landscape capacity around these main settlements

5.5 It is anticipated that the assessment will be carried out in four stages:

Stage 1 (Scoping)

- Review of current LCA coverage of Salisbury District Council based on the LCA produced by Wiltshire County and other relevant documents.
- Liaise with Wiltshire County LCA data owners/clients (contacts available from Salisbury District Council) to obtain LCA background information and baseline data for incorporation into the Salisbury LCA (permission will have been obtained by Salisbury District Council for the use of all current LCA information/data)
- Determine further work required, where necessary, to bring current assessments to an appropriate and consistent standard for incorporation into the Salisbury District LCA.
- Confirm shortfalls in detailed coverage of LCA's for the District

Stage 2 (Desk Study and Filed Work)

- Undertake desk top study and detailed field survey work, refining existing information, to bring current LCA coverage to common standard and an appropriate level of detail for incorporation into the Salisbury Landscape Character Assessment.
- As part of the above study and survey, assess the landscape character and elements of the Special Landscape Area and Landscape setting of Wilton and Salisbury and examine their relevance in the context of an up to date LCA.
- Detailed assessment of the landscape Character of the area within the New Forest National Park boundary is not required. Specific reference should however, be made to the character and qualities of the landscape around the fringe of the New Forest National Park boundary that falls within the Salisbury District.

Stage 3 (Evaluation and Decision making)

- Develop final characterisation and landscape management strategy
- Determine the relevance and justification for specific policy protection for the Landscape setting of Wilton and Salisbury and the Special Landscape Area.
- A meeting between the contract administrators, the consultants and stakeholders will take place between the submission of the draft and final reports.

Stage 4 (Settlement Settings)

- Undertake desk studies on townscape setting and evolution of settlement character and identify important surrounding topological features.
- Carry out detailed field survey work to confirm key features, key views, and landscape setting boundaries, landscape capacity and sensitivities around the District's main settlements to include Salisbury/Alderbury/Wilton, Amesbury/Durrington/Bulford, Mere, Tisbury, and Downton.

- 5.6 The methodology for carrying out the review of the settings and the criteria for determining their boundaries will be a key part of the assessment and will be discussed in detail at the inception meeting. However, due to the timescales set out within Local Development Scheme, stage 4 of the assessment will need to be completed by **31 October 2007** in order to inform the Core Strategy Preferred Options.

6 Project Outputs

- 6.1 The final report will include the following...
- GIS datasets captured at 1:25000 scale showing the landscape classification within Salisbury District.
 - A report which includes a summary, introduction, (which will include a brief resume of the context - local, regional and national), a section on the approach and methodology, and a section for each character area to include:
 - a key map
 - a list of key characteristics
 - an evaluation of the landscape, illustrated as appropriate with photos and maps
 - a management strategy statement
 - The final report will be preceded by a draft report which will be circulated for consultation and comment
- 6.2 The consultants will provide 5 bound and covered hard copies of the final report at standard A4 size, which will be the property of Salisbury District Council.
- 6.3 The report will also be provided electronically in Adobe portable document format (.pdf) to facilitate circulation.
- 6.4 The constituent parts of the final electronic report will also be provided electronically to the Council as appropriate, including:
- .doc or .rtf format for text;
 - .xls format for numerical workings and graphs;
 - .jpg, .gif or .tif format for photos or images.
 - SNAP format for survey responses (if possible)
 - GIS data to be compatible with the Councils GIS system

- 6.5 The consultants name will appear as the authors of the report and senior offices of the consultancy will sign the report.
- 6.6 The report should be “open for public use”. Any information that is critical to support the report, but which is considered to be commercially confidential should be supplied as a supplementary annex. The copyright in the completed report and any annexes will belong to the District Council. The Council will retain ownership of the final report, any data collected and any analysis that is undertaken as part of this study.
- 6.7 The final report should include a description of the aims of the study, methodology and suitable analysis of findings.

7 Project Management and Timescale

- 7.1 The appointed consultant will be expected to submit a project plan for agreement with the Council. The project will be carried out in strict accordance with this project plan unless with prior written agreement of the Council. However we anticipate the following timetable to be followed...

Milestone	Date
Advertisement Published	Friday 8 June 2007
Pre-tender Response	Friday 6 July 2007 by 12:00 noon
Invitations to Tender Sent Out	Tuesday 10 July 2007
Tender response	Tuesday 7 August 2007 by 12:00 noon
Shortlist for selection presentation	By Friday 10 August 2007
Selection Presentations	Thursday 16 August 2007
Appoint consultant	By Monday 20 August 2007
Submission by consultant of project plan for agreement	Wednesday 22 August 2007
Inception Meeting	Thursday 23 August 2007
Agreement of project plan (with amendments as necessary) by the Council	Monday 27 August 2007
Consultant draft report for Settlement Setting and Sensitivity	Monday 31 October 2007
Consultant draft report (including electronic copy)	Monday 7 January 2008
Stakeholder Meeting	Date to be confirmed
Consultant final report	Thursday 31 January 2008

- 7.2 All dates in this timetable are non-negotiable, if you consider that you cannot meet these milestones, please be honest in your submission.

8 Tender Submissions

Introduction

The tender submission should include detail of the consultants understanding of the project brief. It should describe the process by which the study conducted and how key outcomes will be achieved.

Programme of work

The tender submission should include a description of the work programme and the main activities to be undertaken. This should include a full statement of the approach and methodology to the work. The methodology should include details of how data and information will be collected and how the character of the landscape will be assessed. The

methodology should also include details of how the landscape sensitivity and capacity around settlements will be investigated and judgements made. The methodology should demonstrate a sound process of landscape assessment which will ultimately lead to a final document that is robust enough to be used as part of the evidence base for policies in the LDF. A draft timetable based on the stages outlined in paragraph 5.5 of this document should also be included. The timetable should demonstrate how the work will be programmed in order to meet the deadlines for the submission of the interim and final documents. It should also include a breakdown of the time allowed for each allocated person, key stages, proposed meetings and proposed outputs.

Project management and staffing

Name of staff involved with main roles in the project and a summary CV showing level of recent, relevant experience and qualifications.

Time allocated to project for each staff member.

The same information for any sub-contractors.

Name of a member of staff nominated as project manager to have day to day contact with client.

Price and payment terms

Tender submissions should provide a detailed break down of costs under the following heading:

Consultants' fees (no. of work days and day/hourly rates) broken down on the basis of the project stages

Cost per unit of the final product

Travel and subsistence

Overheads and any other costs

Details of the day/hourly rate for assisting the Council at Public Inquiry should there be a need to defend the Landscape Character Assessment.

VAT charges must be shown separately.

References and Annexes

Provide two references.

(1) Full CVs of key staff taking part in the project.

- 8.1 5 copies of the tender documents must be provided to **Procurement, Salisbury District Council, 47 Endless St, Salisbury SP1 3UH**
- 8.2 Tenders must be submitted in the envelope marked "Tender". The envelope should be returned by **12 o'clock midday** on **Tuesday 7 August 2007**. No tender that is received after this time and date shall be considered, unless there is clear evidence that it was posted by first class post at least the day before tenders were due to be received. The envelope, including the franking mark and courier labels, should not identify the name of the tendering company. No tender will be considered unless it is submitted in accordance with these instructions.
- 8.3 Short-listed Consultants will, by **Friday 10 August 2007**, be invited to attend an interview on **Thursday 16 August 2007**. At the interview, the Consultants will be required to give a presentation lasting approximately 25 minutes, with a further 20 minutes for questions. The presentation should include:
- The proposed methodology and components of the study.
 - An outline of the experience in this type of work of those within the Consultancy who would be involved and their proposed input into the study.
 - Proposals for the presentation of the final report.
- 8.4 The successful Consultant will be notified by **Monday 20 August 2007** and work is expected to start immediately.
- 8.5 Any queries on this submission should be directed to David Milton, Team Leader, Forward Planning and Conservation, Salisbury District Council, Tel: 01722 434 354, dmilton@salisbury.gov.uk.
- 8.6 Salisbury District Council will not pay any costs connected with the quotation submission or subsequent presentations.

9 Workplace

- 9.1 It is envisaged that the work will be undertaken at the consultant's own offices.

- 9.2 Any meetings with the Contract Administrators will take place at the Salisbury District Council offices.
- 9.3 It is envisaged that much of the filed work can be undertaken from publicly accessible land. In the unlikely event that the consultant needs to gain access to private land, the council will exercise their powers under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning legislation. The consultant will obtain written consent from the council prior to entering the private land and will keep this ready for production upon demand. The consultant will be expected to give the occupier of the occupied land a minimum of 24 hours notice prior to entering. Where entry is obstructed the consultant should report back immediately to the council who will take action to secure entry to the land.

10 Subcontracting

- 10.1 The Consultant shall not subcontract the works or part of the works without prior written approval from the Contract Administrator.

11 Project Budget

- 11.1 Prices and details should be provided for the carrying out of the tasks specified in this brief. Consultants should provide a fixed price quotation for the study, including all expenses, and exclusive of VAT. An invoicing schedule will be subject to approval, with a final payment made following submission of the final report.
- 11.2 Details and costs of any sub-contractual arrangements should also be included within the tender.
- 11.3 It may be necessary for the Council to call upon the consultant to defend the assessment and its methodology at public Inquiry. An hourly rate should be quoted for such retention services.
- 11.4 The Council will choose the bid that is most economically advantageous to the organisation. The Council is not duty bound to accept the lowest or any bid.

12 Statutory Obligations

- 12.1 The Consultant and their contractors shall comply with, and give all notices required, by statute, any statutory instrument, rule or order or any regulation or byelaw applicable to the study. Breach of the Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889-1916 will result in the immediate termination of the contract.
- 12.2 The consultant must obtain any necessary licences to permit the research and development of the report including any written, drawn, photographic or printed material, maps or pictures. Such licences must extend to cover the reports further use by Salisbury District Council.
- 12.3 The contractor should acknowledge that the Council is the subject of the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). The contractor should assist and co-operate with the council to enable it to comply with their information disclosure requirements. The appointed contractor will be expected to pass any requests for information to the council immediately they

are received and to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the council responds to a request for Information within the time for compliance set out in FOIA and EIR. The council will have absolute discretion over which information is to be disclosed or is considered to be exempt from disclosure under the provisions of the FOIA. Under no circumstances should the contractor respond directly to a request for Information unless expressly authorised to do so by the Council.

13 Health and Safety

13.1 The appointed Consultant shall comply with all relevant Health and Safety legislation and shall include for any risk assessments / documentation deemed necessary.

14 Injury, Damage and Insurance

14.1 The Consultant shall maintain at his own cost a comprehensive or specific policy of insurance to cover professional indemnity and public liability.

14.2 The insurance cover shall, for one occurrence or series of occurrences arising out of one event, be not less than £5,000,000 for public liability and £2,000,000 million for professional indemnity.

14.3 The Consultant shall be responsible for ensuring that any sub-contractors provide evidence of insurance cover and that the Contract Administrator is informed of that cover before they are appointed.

15 Termination

15.1 Notices: Any notices of termination shall be in writing

15.2 Termination by Employer: If the Consultant without reasonable cause makes default by failing to proceed diligently and in accordance with the agreed timetable with the work required, the Contract Administrator may give notice to the Consultant which specifies the default and requires it to be ended. If the default is not ended within 7 days of the receipt of the notice, the Employer may by further notice to the Consultant determine the employment of the Consultant under this Agreement.

If the Consultant becomes bankrupt or insolvent in any way, the Employer may by notice to the Consultant determine the employment of the Consultant under this Agreement.

15.3 Termination by Consultant: If the Employer makes default by failing to pay the due amount by the final date, interferes with the carrying out of the works or fails to comply with the requirements of any relevant Health and Safety regulations, then the Consultant may give notice to the Employer specifying the default. If the default is not ended in 7 days the Consultant may by further notice to the Employer, determine the employment of the Consultant under this Agreement.

Upon termination of the employment of the Consultant, they shall prepare an account setting out the value of work properly carried out and the costs of withdrawing from the study. Work carried out up until the termination shall be

the property of Salisbury District Council and shall be handed over to the Council.

16 Conflicts of Interest

- 16.1 All consultants considering submitting a tender for this work should consider whether they have any conflicts of interest which may adversely affect the Council's interest, give the appearance that the consultant may not be acting solely in the best interests of the Council and / or may call into question the validity of the final report. Consultants should have regard to future or past relationships with parties acting in or likely to be acting in Salisbury District.