

Appendix 7.3

# STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

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## Introduction

A consultation event was held at Beaumanor Hall in Woodhouse on Wednesday 1st May 2019 for key stakeholders in order to inform them about the Landscape Character Assessment work and to obtain their views and feedback to inform the production of the final report. A number of interested parties were invited including members of Leicestershire County Council, Hinckley and Bosworth District Council and Charnwood Borough Council as well as members of the Local Parish Councils and representatives from the National Forest Company and Natural England. FPCR presented the initial findings of the Landscape Character Assessment, outlining the baseline information of the area along with describing the proposed draft Character Areas and Key Characteristics.



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Below is the list of attendees:

- **Julie Attard - CFRP Development Team**
- **Rachel Dexter - Hinckley and Bosworth District Council**
- **Wendy Crawford - Leicestershire County Council**
- **Nola O'Donnell - Charnwood Borough Council**
- **Matt Bradford - Charnwood Borough Council**
- **Peter Tyldesley - Bradgate Park Trust**
- **Hannah Rigden - Natural England**
- **Sam Lattaway - National Forest Company**
- **Zoe Sewter - National Forest Company**
- **Claire Install - LRWT**
- **Uta Hamzaoui - LRWT**
- **Sam Village - Leicestershire County Council**
- **Paul Day - Friends of Charnwood Forest**
- **John Howells - Local Access Forum**
- **Susan Ripper - Leicestershire County Council**
- **Cathy Schou - Woodhouse Parish Council**
- **Kate Moore - Woodhouse Parish Council**
- **Tony Lockley - Markfield Parish Council**
- **Maureen Havers - Charley Parish Council**
- **Dick Howard - Newtown Linford Parish Council**
- **Chris Peat - Open Spaces Society**
- **Brain Waters - Quorn Parish Council**

After the information was presented, the attendees were then invited to comment on the updated findings. The attendees worked in groups with a number of questions posed for their consideration:

- **Area Boundaries - Do you agree with where the boundary lines are drawn?**
- **Area Names - Do you agree with the names given to the Character Areas?**
- **Area Descriptions - Do you think the descriptions adequately reflect the areas identified?**
- **Key Characteristics - Do you think the Key Characteristics identify the main features of each area?**
- **Key Issues and Management - Are you aware of any key forces for change in each character area?**
- **What are the key objectives for each of the areas?**

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## Feedback

The feedback was as follows:

### General Points and Questions after Presentation:

- Check the areas of open access and ensure all are included.
- Charnwood Lodge is not a publicly accessible location.
- How is the Strava heatmap information gathered?
- How does management feed into the work you are doing?
- How to Local Wildlife Sites feed in? Are they mapped and have they influenced your decision making?
- Swithland slate is a generic term – slate also comes from Groby and Woodhouse – there are three different colours.
- Would be helpful to have geology information – the bid will be heavily based on geology – could be shown in a basic way, relating to local building materials etc?
- Bring the geology information out more.
- Flag up the difference between boundaries, which are clearer and which are more blurred.
- Where have the views been taken from?
- Importance of geology, local geology is everywhere you go.
- There were a lot of local brickworks which have also affected local building material types, two in Markfield Parish, Whitwick, Mountsorrel, Quorn and Charley also.
- The Historic Environment Record may be useful and contains a lot of historical information.
- Should we have a landscape vulnerability assessment? e.g. not putting car parks on top of hills.
- There is a Landscape and Green Infrastructure Sensitivity study that was done by LCC.
- A Biodiversity Study is also being done, how do they relate and tie in?
- Concern over aggressive planning applications, how will this report be used in that respect.
- Concern about Bradgate Park becoming an urban park with new larger houses overlooking the Park.
- Charnwood has become a very desirable postcode.

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## Feedback on Questions after Group Sessions:

### Area Boundaries - Do you agree with where the boundary lines are drawn?

- Markfield only high village in the area, Markfield and Fieldhead are currently in Area 11, should they be in Area 2? More in common with Stanton under Bardon.
- Markfield only hilltop village, it is quite well hidden. Hill Hole quarry is integral to the Markfield character. It is a Nature Reserve also.
- Billa Barra Common should be included with Markfield.
- Charnwood area isn't on the surface very accessible however including permissive paths and open access land it is – this needs highlighting as a specific feature of this area.
- Are there three or four main overarching areas of similarity within the character areas that could be identified?
- Bringing out some similarities will help with project delivery and tailoring projects.
- Loughborough edge is in Areas 4 and 6 – should it be? Should Area 4 carry along the edge of the southern Loughborough fringe?
- Highlight edge in Area 6 description.

### Area Names - Do you agree with the names given to the Character Areas?

- Area 7 shouldn't be called Farmland – not sure what it should be? Maybe Granite Outcrop?
- Area 1, Valley should be in the name, it is a valley – Ulverscroft Valley.
- Charley is not tranquil, balance of influence from human impact – M1 not intrusive however significant recent development has created lots of traffic noise, birdsong is disappearing, tremendous human influence in this area. There have been 56 accidents in the last 3 years. Charley/ Shepshed Road is noisy and there are frequent accidents.
- Area 2 should be called Settlements not Wooded Farmland.
- Area 2 should include 'quarries' in the title.
- Area 3 has busy straight roads.
- Area 11, Markfield is unique and distinct, it is not rolling.
- Should Markfield be in its own area?
- Area 5 should be called Heathland and Forest.

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Area Descriptions - Do you think the descriptions adequately reflect the areas identified?

Key Characteristics - Do you think the Key Characteristics identify the main features of each area?

- Markfield – discuss uniqueness.
- Area 1 – least intensively farmed, natural watercourse and grassland, source of River Lin, a very important feature.
- Area 5 – bring out nationally important geology.
- Area 2 – Whitwick, Bardon – highest point, heathland around the quarry is most important.
- Area 5 - Bradgate Park – not a scheduled monument but is of international importance and should be mentioned. Area is intensely managed for conservation and for people.
- Area 4 – views from Beacon Hill are very important. ‘Far reaching views’.
- Area 3 - mix of ancient habitat, woodland and heathland and intensively farmed land.
- Mention types of stone within the settlement areas information and include in general description.
- Area 11 – emphasis height of Hill Hole Quarry.
- Area 5 – fossils – Charnwood is the second richest place for ediacaran fossils.
- Area 5 is intensively managed but for conservation reasons.

Key Issues and Management - Are you aware of any key forces for change in each character area?

What are the key objectives for each of the areas?

- Traffic issues in Charley, but also through area as a whole.
- Quarry restoration in Bardon and others will lead to changes in landcover/habitats etc.
- Access vs ecology/ heathland – what is appropriate.
- Huge pressure from housing encroaching on the landscape.
- Urban edge of Leicester will need to meet housing need from Leicester – which settlements are suitable?
- Green wedge – have you included? Is it in the baseline or management opportunities, how does it tie in?
- Lack of correct management for habitats – a force for change.
- Big residential properties, not managed properly in terms of character of the buildings and landscape. I.e. pony paddocks etc. resulting in loss of species rich grassland.
- Not much mention of National Forest and plantation. Planting will mature and change the character over time.
- Living Landscape by the Wildlife Trust- relevance in report?
- Have you looked at the size of landholdings? In terms of management – larger/ smaller. DEFRA does a census every year. Larger land holders, larger homes these are a force for change.

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- Honey pot sites - management and tourist management is key.
- Keep people in honey pot locations rather than divert them to other places but must be managed properly.
- Increase in cafes and playgrounds at honeypot sites.
- Quorn/ Mountsorrel Quarry land owners are planning to expand.
- Also true at Cliff Hill, next to the M1.
- Access is an issue, want to make sure access is inclusive with good links to perimeter settlements and facilities.

## Further Comments:

- Locally listed buildings information could be included.
- An image to show the volcanic chain would be interesting to include.

We provided contact information for attendees to pass on any further thoughts or information they might have after the event. A number of emails were received with both comments and links to relevant data and reports. These included:

- Physical features should include a geological map. This need not be too detailed, but I suggest some discussion is needed about what is required. A map showing the outcrop area of the major rock types would be the starting point, but it might also be useful to show areas of actual rock exposure.
- Markfield has closer affinities with Area 2.
- It is not appropriate to describe Areas 2, 4 and 7 as farmland. 4 might be better described as urban fringe; 7 might be urban fringe and quarried.
- Area 1 - I would not describe the PProW network as good. Any circular walk would involve long stretches of road, there is no good through route from SW to NE, and there are no footpaths linking this area to Area 5.
- SE part is subject to significant noise from M1 and A50.
- Area 2 - One PProW crosses the M1 on a dedicated footbridge, but is not well connected to the wider RoW network. There are very few RoW links from the built-up areas into the countryside to the E.
- Area 3 - Accessibility to some areas of countryside is good, with some access land, though PProW link one road with another and do not provide off-road circular routes.
- Area 4 - Only two PProW connect the built-up areas with countryside to the south, and both end at a busy road.
- Area 5 - No PProW through NW to SE spine of area; no good PProW links from honeypot sites to Areas 1 and 3.
- Area 6 - There is a good network of PProW in the southern part of this area, with important links across the railway. There are no E-W links across the northern part of the area, and access from Shelthorpe to the open countryside is limited.
- Area 7 - Mountsorrel Common provides an important area of open access land.
- Area 8 - There is a good network of PProW in this area.
- Area 9 - "Network of PProW including National Forest Way" concentrated in the eastern part of the area.
- Area 10 - PProW cross the M1 motorway at Martinshaw Wood and Whittington Rough.
- Area 11 - " ..... numerous PProW " and permissive

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- paths and access land “provide good links through the area.”
- Development pressure, particularly Leicester urban fringe and Anstey areas.
  - Use of inappropriate building materials and intensification of development in villages.
  - Increasing traffic and noise.
  - Long term – negative effect of potential increase in quarry areas/spoil heaps, but also potential positive impact of land reclamation and restoration.
  - Long term – effects of climate change, particularly on water table, ground cover, and vegetation generally.
  - Improvements to PRoW, bridleways and cycle routes, particularly links between honeypot sites, to built up areas, across A6 corridor, and to Watermead Country Park.
  - The Leicestershire Historic Environment Records (LCC) hold numerous records (from which we can generate maps) showing, for instance, features such as earthworks or cropmarks that both shape the physical landscape and are important to local people. Archaeological Monument maps can also show the distribution of, for example, historic farmsteads or brickworks (which I think came up in the discussions).
  - My only other observation on the Area 5: Bradgate ‘Key characteristics’ section was to point out that the uncultivated uplands has allowed the extremely rare survival of an open-air Late Upper Palaeolithic flint scatter (c.15,000 years old & of international significance). The site is not a Scheduled Monument (it has been fully excavated), so would not appear on any list of Designated Sites but is nonetheless important in the landscape and unique to Leicestershire.

## Changes and Updates

As a result of the feedback and comments received through the consultation, FPCR have made a number of changes to the initial proposed character areas. The key changes are:

- **Markfield has been moved from the area associated with Thornton Reservoir to the area associated with Bardon Quarry.**
- **Several of the areas have been renamed to provide a closer association with the key characteristics identified and settlements within them.**
- **The areas have been renumbered to give more of a priority to the central areas which tend to have stronger Charnwood Forest characteristics.**
- **The consultation provided a number of smaller but key pieces of local knowledge which have been also included throughout the document.**