

Pembrokeshire County Council
Cyngor Sir Penfro



Landscape Character Assessment

Consultation Draft

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This draft Landscape Character Assessment will be published for consultation between

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Overview

'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', Natural England October 2014, has been used to help guide the process and stages of this Landscape Character Assessment. It aims to provide a neutral interpretation of the landscape which encompasses physical landscape features and sensory qualities identified through desktop and field studies. It provides an assessment of the landscape character within the County, outside of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and is intended to increase the understanding of the qualities, key characteristics and sensitivities of the landscape.

In total 29 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) were identified, following an initial assessment of LANDMAP layers, and amendment by members of the steering group. Each LCA was refined during desk top study and subsequent field study.

This draft Landscape Character Assessment will be subject to public consultation and is intended to form supplementary planning guidance to the Local Development Plan and evidence base to the Local Development Plan review.



LCA Ref	LCA Name
LCA01	Treffynnon
LCA02	St Nicholas
LCA03	Fishguard Coastal
LCA04	Mynydd Cilciffeth
LCA05	Scleddau Lowlands
LCA06	Treffgarne and Plumstone Mountains
LCA07	Pelcomb and Simpsons Cross
LCA08	Haverfordwest
LCA09	Johnston Lowlands
LCA10	The Haven North
LCA11	Western Cleddau
LCA12	Landsker Lowlands
LCA13	St Dogmaels
LCA14	Afon Cych & Afon Taf Wooded Valleys
LCA15	Boncath
LCA16	Southern Haven Developed
LCA17	Mynydd Preseli Uplands
LCA18	Eastern Cleddau Valleys
LCA19	Narberth and Lampeter Vale
LCA20	Jeffreyston Lowlands
LCA21	Penally
LCA22	Milford Haven
LCA23	Southern Haven Industrial Fringe
LCA24	Southern Haven mudflats
LCA25	Hundleton and Lamphey
LCA26	Maenclochog
LCA27	Trecwn
LCA28	Treffgarne Gorge
LCA29	Cosheston Peninsula

Glossary of Technical Terms¹

Characterisation The process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.

Characteristics Elements, or combinations of elements, which make a particular contribution to distinctive character.

Classification is concerned with dividing the landscape into areas of distinct, recognisable and consistent common character and grouping areas of similar character together.

Elements Individual components which make up the landscape such as trees and hedges.

Features Particularly prominent or eye catching elements, like tree clumps, church towers, or wooded skylines.

***Landscape Change (forces for change)*.** These are the influences which have changed the landscape. They can be natural processes or man-made influences and be historic, current or trends going into or likely pressures for the future.

Key Characteristics Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place.

Landscape Character A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

Landscape Character Areas These are single **unique** areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type. Each has its own individual character and identity, even though it shares the same generic characteristics with other types.

Landscape Character Assessment – This is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive. This process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment.

¹ Extracted from 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', October 2014, Natural England.

*Locally defined

Introduction

Background

This Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for Pembrokeshire outside of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park will, following consultation, form Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Pembrokeshire County Council Local Development Plan (adopted 28th February 2013), including Policy GN.1 'General Development Policy'. The Local Development Plan policy seeks to resist development which would have an adverse effect on landscape character, quality or diversity. It will also form part of the evidence base to the review of the Local Development Plan (LDP2).

The primary source of desk based information is LANDMAP. LANDMAP stands for Landscape Assessment and Decision Making Process and is the recognised approach to landscape assessment in Wales. It can assist with decision making over a range of topics including planning, landscape management and environmental enhancement. Further information about LANDMAP can be found at [Appendix 1](#).

Purpose

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), when adopted by the Authority, will be a material consideration in deciding whether development proposals have an adverse impact on the landscape, contrary to Policy GN.1 'General Development Policy' and other relevant national and local policies.

It will provide an understanding of the character and sensitivities of the landscape and help to understand potential impact on landscape character. It sets out key characteristics, identifiable trends, sensitivities to development and guidelines to protect, conserve or enhance key features. Its main purpose is to ensure that the landscapes of the county are considered when development or land management is proposed and decisions should include the potential to preserve or enhance landscape character. It should be weighed against all other material considerations.

Approach

This document contains the following

- An overview of the county area landscape and settlements.
- Identification of specific landscape character areas, a description of their intrinsic value and key characteristics, their key qualities, and Landscape Change. These encompass past changes, current and potential future influences on the landscape.

The following information sources and guidance have influenced the approach taken:

- LANDMAP information system resource. LANDMAP describes and evaluates aspects of the landscape and provides the basis of a consistent Wales wide approach to landscape assessment. There is no existing Landscape Character Assessment for Pembrokeshire outside the National Park. ²

² All Pembrokeshire LANDMAP layers are quality assured at 2013 or 2011.

- The Landscape Character Map for Wales which provides regional scale landscape character areas and was devised by the former Countryside Council for Wales 2013.
- Studies in adjacent areas to enable consistency with existing defined landscapes [Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance, PCNPA, June 2011 and; Seascape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance, PCNPA December 2013; Carmarthenshire Special Landscape Areas, 2011 and Ceredigion County Council Designation of Special Landscape Areas, October 2010].

Character Assessment Methodology

The Landscape Character Assessment is based on identified Landscape Character Areas. Landscape Character Areas are *'single unique areas which are discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type. Each has its own individual character and identity, even though it shares the same generic characteristics with other types'*.

The Landscape Character Areas are unique individual geographical areas. They share generic characteristics with other areas of the same type, but have their own particular identity, for example they may have a strong sense of place. Landscape types are generic in nature and share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historic land use and settlement and result in a common pattern'

The Landscape Character Assessment *'is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It looks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive. This process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment'*³.

The Landscape Character Areas were identified using information available from the Quality Assured LANDMAP dataset for Pembrokeshire, the national landscape classification system for Wales, and from local stakeholder input. LANDMAP has been developed by Natural Resources Wales and is endorsed by the Welsh Government.

The following 4 Step methodology has been used and accords with current available guidance ⁴.

Step 1: Definition of Purpose and Scope of the Assessment

The Landscape Character Assessment is intended to:-

1. Form supplementary planning guidance to the Local Development Plan,
2. Provide an evidence base for the review of the Local Development Plan,
3. Provide a landscape context for development management decisions on planning applications
4. Provide a context for further studies, including capacity and sensitivity studies which consider the ability of the landscape to accommodate specific development.

The LCA identifies areas of landscape character and describes the main landscape characteristics, including defining features, landscape elements, landform, vegetation, land use and settlement pattern and presents it in an accessible way using written and mapped information. The LCA will be undertaken at a scale of

³ An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, October 2014, Natural England

⁴ 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, October 2014, Natural England.

1:20,000⁵ and conducted by Officers of Pembrokeshire County Council in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

A steering group has been formed and comprises

Pembrokeshire County Council GIS Information Co-ordinator, Landscape Officer (Conservation Team), Development Plans and Conservation Manager

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Planning Officer (Park Direction)

Natural Resources Wales Senior Landscape Officer

Step 2 Desk Study

In order to achieve the required outputs the LCA will provide candidate landscape character areas from the LANDMAPⁱ information set. All layers have been quality assured and provided by specialists in accord with the approved LANDMAP methodology⁶.

The quality assured layers at October 2015 were used for this assessment and were as follows at the time of data collation.

LANDMAP layer	QA Date
Geological Landscape	25/10/13
Landscape Habitats	04/02/13
Visual and Sensory	17/10/13
Historic Landscape	18/10/13
Cultural Landscape	20/12/11

Updates to LANDMAP layers have taken place since the commencement of this assessment. Recommendations for changes to the Habitats landscape layer were made in 2015. Changes recommended are due to the expansion of urban areas and changes to habitat cover, such as increases in woodland and scrub.

A summary of changes and influences in Pembrokeshire identified within the ‘Pembrokeshire: LANDMAP Change Detection: Visual and Sensory Aspect Monitoring Report Final: March 2015’ are

⁵ The LANDMAP data is verified at this scale.

⁶ <https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/business-sectors/planning-and-development/evidence-to-inform-development-planning/landmap-the-welsh-landscape-baseline/?lang=en>

Expansion of settlements.

5.1 Most of the towns and larger villages have had some expansion and /or infill development, mainly housing development

Milford Haven

5.2 Changes to the large scale industrial complexes, including demolition, rebuilding, new jetties, wind turbines and increases in port traffic have all created significant change around the Haven.

Withybush

5.3 Expansion of industrial and other developments, plus more activity relating to the airfield and the showground means that there have been significant changes in this area.

New road schemes

5.4 The Robeston Wathen bypass (A40) passes through previously open countryside and has changed the views, tranquillity and activity of the aspect areas it passes through . Likewise the A477 has been re-aligned with larger junctions, and the previously-built Sageston bypass has matured. Therefore views and tranquillity have changed.

Wind turbines

5.5 Although there are no large windfarms in Pembrokeshire, there have been numerous single and small groups of turbines built (and more going through the planning process). Those around Milford Haven add to the visual 'clutter' of the area. Those on the central plateau farmland are starting to have cumulative effects.

5.6 Solar arrays are also being built in south Pembrokeshire.

Quarries

5.7 There has been expansion of several quarries in the south of the county, notably around Johnston and near Templeton. This has brought increases in traffic and noise and dust as well as visual impacts.

Large local tourist developments

5.8 Recent developments at Bluestone and Folly Farm have added to the activity in the south east of the county, as well as having significant visual impacts

Coastal Erosion

5.9 The cumulative effects of winter storms and continuing extreme weather are likely to continue. No significant landscape changes relating to sea defences and erosion, however have been detected.

5.10 The Pembrokeshire Seascapes Study identifies some forces for change and recent changes which are relevant to LANDMAP change.

These changes and updates, whilst they may be important to the consideration of individual development proposals and site specific assessments, do not introduced significant landscape scale change in relation to the Landscape Character Areas identified within this report.

The primary source of information is the Visual and Sensory Landscape Aspect Layer using landform, land cover and settlement pattern. This has been over-laid with Landscape Habitats and Geological Landscape layers followed by Historic and Cultural Landscapes⁷ available aerial photographs, and refined through this process.

This information has been used to define draft areas of common character. The desk study has consequently formed the basis for the field survey and stakeholder engagement and has been confirmed or refined through that process.

The LCA is intended to be consistent with assessments undertaken in adjacent authority areas. Stakeholders in the landscape⁸ were invited to be part of the steering group to scrutinise the proposed methodology and emerging candidate Landscape Character Area boundaries. Revisions were undertaken as a result.

The existing Landscape and Seascape Character assessments for the area of the National Park in Pembrokeshire, LANDMAP data, Regional Landscape Character Assessment have been reviewed to help inform this assessment and to ensure consistency across administrative boundaries.

Step 3 Field Study

Field study has been undertaken in order to ground-truth the findings of the desk study and to gather additional information. The field study also helped to identify discernible landscape trends, key qualities, existing development impacts and was used to provide additional detailed and specific information on the key characteristics and qualities of the character areas.

Whilst the LANDMAP information has been quality assured in recent years, there is a need to ensure that a rigorous assessment is made to test, refine and update the initial findings. Field study has been undertaken to:

1. Review/confirm desk study findings. In some cases, this has resulted in updated and amended character assessments.
2. Identify key detractors in the landscape wherever possible.
3. Confirm trends / landscape changes and identify key qualities.

⁷ Former CCW Methodology 2002 'The LANDMAP Information System' Chapter 5.

⁸ Natural Resources Wales landscape Specialist, expert Officers from PCC and PCNPA.

Step 4 Review Classification and Description

Consultation will be undertaken on the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and will include neighbouring authorities, Natural Resources Wales and other organisations, communities, and residents. Following consultation the SPG will be adopted by the Authority.

Pembrokeshire Landscapes

Overview

Pembrokeshire is a landscape of rolling open farmland. Upland character is stronger to the north where distinctive rocky outcrops atop hills and forestry plantations add to the sense of place. To the north east, wooded valleys, incised into the upland hills lie at the border with Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. To the south, lowland plateau forms rich and fertile farmland. Throughout, historic villages and market towns such as Haverfordwest, Narberth and St Dogmaels provide sense of place and places for community well-being. At the Milford Haven waterway, heavy industry along the flooded glacial valley or Ria, provides a setting which encompasses the industrial maritime towns of Milford Haven, Pembroke Dock and the historic market town of Pembroke. Where the eastern and western Cleddau join the Haven, wooded slopes adjoin broad areas of agricultural lowland, parkland and the Landsker line of castles provide a sense of long settled historic culture.

The coastal National Park, with its rugged coastline, sandy beaches, and seaside towns, exposed Preseli Hills and off shore islands provide spectacular views from many inland areas and provide a strong inter-relationship.

Landscape Change

Past and Present

- Settlement growth and expansion has taken place, mostly in southern Pembrokeshire.
- Commercial and industrial development has capitalised on waterside locations at the Haven in particular, and Ferry activity at Fishguard and Pembroke Dock.
- Large scale / intensification of agriculture evident, but some traditional scale and land holdings remain, to the north of the County.
- Renewable energy developments including wind turbines and solar parks, particularly to the south of the County have sought to capitalise on grid connectivity and existing developments and can be visible across large areas (as can turbine developments outside of the area). Elsewhere, sporadic and smaller scale wind turbine developments have local impact.
- Tourist attractions and accommodation, particularly at caravan parks are a relatively modern addition to the landscape and proximity to the seaside towns, sandy beaches and rugged coastline along the southern coast providing opportunities to enjoy the National Park. Caravan parks are numerous to the south and can be large and intrusive.
- Pembrokeshire has a long association with military activity and military sites include coastal defensive forts, WWII airfields and current MoD sites at Brawdy and Templeton and which have helped to shape the landscape of the area.

Future

Land management and development pressures are key influences on future landscape, including at urban areas. The following are considered to be likely future location specific changes

- Pressure for residential development at settlements and as isolated development and loss of traditional development character of settlements
- Changes to the presence of the MoD within the county

- Changes to the agricultural landscape as a result of land management changes, including field boundaries, and scale and materials of agricultural buildings and pressure for large scale buildings and containment facilities.
- Changes to livestock and agricultural practices, including changes to sheep farming levels in north Pembrokeshire (including changes as a result of Brexit).
- Changes to interactions within the water environment, including potential changes to ferry operations, marina development and increased recreational use, including at Llys y Fran.
- Changes to land cover as a result of forestry plantations expansion or felling
- Changes to tree cover and dispersal as a result of pest and disease, e.g. ash die back.
- Changes to the location and intensity of light pollution
- Increasing risk to the historic environment as a result of development pressures
- Potential pressures for continued development of renewable energy developments and impact upon landscapes.
- Changes to travel patterns and potential for conflict between modes of transport, and further congestion leading to pressures for further road developments.
- Changes to the fossil fuel industry
- Pressures for further development to support the tourism industry, including attractions and accommodation.
- Changes to extent and dispersal of Welsh speaking communities will impact cultural landscape.
- Increased risk of flooding at low lying and other risk areas.

Changes to habitats due to climate change.

Further Climate change influences are considered separately below.

Key Qualities

- Much of Pembrokeshire is cultivated rolling lowland with small areas of woodland, hedges and hedgebanks and a dense network of narrow lanes provide a sense of enclosure and seclusion. Settlements are sparser in areas to the north, and
- Farmsteads frequently punctuate the landscape and traditional houses and buildings, alongside significant archaeology and historic buildings provide a sense of the long lived and human influence on the landscape.
- Large areas of open, exposed and rugged landscape particularly to the north where there are exposed rock and stone, and views out towards the Preseli Hills and the coast, provide strong sense of place and coastal association. Historic towns and villages can sit prominently along ridgelines or hilltops or sit secluded within valley bottoms.
- Quietness and tranquillity is still pervasive away from main roads and industrial areas. The naturalistic sounds of wind, birdcall or livestock complement the stillness of the soundscape. Narrow wooded valleys to the east with dense mixed woodland result in a sheltered, tranquil and peaceful setting, disturbed only by the presence of fast flowing streams which contribute significantly to the sense of place and local soundscape.
- Culturally, the generally English speaking communities to the south have thrived for centuries, and remain linked to the Landsker line of Norman defensive castles. To the north, the prevailing Welsh speaking communities are reflected in the language, place names, signage and buildings of the area

and retain strong culturally connected communities. In a landscape shaped by nature and humans, significant archaeological and historic development are rich and diverse. Locally culturally significant landmarks include the Treffgarne rocks, Preseli Hills, Cleddau Bridge, industrial development at the Haven, and Llys-y Fran reservoir.

- The historic cores of Pembrokeshire towns largely retain their historic character and are designated Conservation Areas, although 20th century development at the urban edge can be discordant. Many are also along key transport routes and lack the tranquillity of rural areas. They retain links to the marine environment, either at the coast or alongside rivers.
- Night time light pollution is increasingly evident, at industrial, commercial and community developments as well as domestic and agricultural buildings.
- Areas to the south and at the Haven in particular make a significant contribution to energy provision, including fossil and renewable sectors and can be visually intrusive. Noise and smell can also be evident at traditional industrial locations.
- The Haven and Cleddau Rivers' marine environment can provide marine smells, attractive coastal views, including intertidal mudflats and the evocative sight and sound of feeding birds.
- Tourist attractions and accommodation are significant sectors to the south east of the county. Sea views from higher land to the south and greater numbers of caravan and camping sites, some of which are prominent within the landscape, provide a connection to the coast.

Climate Change

Uncertainty remains about how much climate will change, and how quickly. There is however general consensus that the planet is warming and that human activity is responsible and that the speed of change and the frequency of extreme weather is increasing. In the UK, this could result in more and heavier rain days and drier hotter days – potentially leading to episodes of drought, flooding and storms. The seasons may be less distinct and arrive earlier or later than expected and sea levels could rise. Much depends on the influence of natural changes in weather and governments' ability to cut greenhouse gas emissions⁹.

The UK Climate Risk Assessment 2017 Evidence Report 2017 : Summary for Wales outlines that the risks of climate change to Wales. These include risks and opportunities for species and habitats, agriculture and forestry, soils and natural carbon stores, from temperature, sea level change, flooding and drought. Specific reference to risks and opportunities from changes in landscape character are stated as -

'Landscape character has changed in Wales over the last few decades. Climate change has been a contributing factor, both directly through its effects on land cover and indirectly by influencing some land uses over others in specific locations. Changes in land cover and land use will undoubtedly continue to occur into the future and the magnitude of climate change (and responses to it) will be a key factor in influencing this change. Ancient woodlands and hedgerows are not only important ecosystems, but are also historic assets containing evidence for past human use. The potential effects of climate change on forestry, ancient woodland and hedgerows may be

⁹ International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports <https://www.edf.org/blog/2014/03/31/6-key-insights-latest-ipcc-climate-report>

gradual but significant. Soil erosion, land-use change and replanting could all damage individual historic assets’.

This LCA does not identify generic changes to the landscape due to climate change unless there are specific and local influences which can be readily recognised.

General Forces for Change in the Landscape

These are identified as generic influences which can be seen as having a wider application, albeit that they may be location specific. The following forces for change in the landscape are not replicated across relevant LCAs.

- Changes to agricultural management. Whilst climate change may introduce both risks and opportunities for agriculture, trends towards more intensive agricultural management will have impacts upon overall biodiversity interest and loss of habitats. Extensions to cropped areas, may for example increase flooding risk and soil run-off and intensify climate change impact and fragmentation of habitats. Changes to field patterns due to intensification will also impact on landscape as does poor management and loss of traditional field boundaries and replacement by post and wire fencing.
- Loss of and inappropriate development at historic and archaeological features, including Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, and geological features has the potential to impact upon landscape and urban character across the county.
- Retention and maintenance of a well-defined and accessible the public rights of way network has significant implications for access to the natural environment and well-being of people.
- Land management such as grazing of commons and upland areas, moorland management, can be positive and negative for biodiversity and will have landscape and visual impacts
- Increased risk of flooding along river corridors and at the coast which could erode features and impact on developed areas, as well as increased risk of localised pollution from industrial, agricultural and other sources into watercourses. Flooding can also introduce new wetland features and visual changes to the landscape.

National and International Environmental Designations

Environmental Designations outside of the National Park include Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation including marine SACs, and Special Protection Areas. Their spatial distribution across the county in relation to Landscape Character Areas varies. Mapped areas are available via the Lle Geo-Portal online resource. <http://lle.gov.wales/home>