



Section 9

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9. Recommendations

9.1 Use of HLC by the Historic and Natural Environment Team

9.7.1 It is recommended that members of the Historic and Natural Environment Team at LCC should be fully familiarised with the HLC and positively encouraged to consult it when appropriate. Consultation of the HLC should become a matter of course when determining responses to planning applications, most particularly with larger schemes such as roads, wind farms and housing estates or those that require the use of a tool like HLC in predicting what below-ground remains might be expected to be affected by a proposal. An understanding of HLC is also desirable when responding to Farm Environment Plan (FEP) enquiries for Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Schemes and also in response to Woodland Grant Scheme consultations.

9.7.2 Where LCC's Historic and Natural Environment Team are asked to comment upon or take a central role in the development of strategy and policy the use of HLC should be actively encouraged.

9.2 Dissemination of HLC Data to Local Authorities

9.2.1 HLC has been designed, in the first instance, to be used by members of the Historic and Natural Environment Team at Leicestershire County Council. There is however no reason why this data set, or relevant sections of it, should not be made available to the local planning authorities. This may require a level of consultation in order to establish in what format the authorities would prefer to receive the material. It is possible that not all authorities will have the GIS capabilities to accommodate the HLC and so it may therefore be necessary to produce a series of paper maps meeting specific requirements. In tandem with such an approach it may prove useful for the County Council to host a training event targeted at conservation and planning officers.

9.3 Supplementary Planning Documents

9.3.1 It is recommended that, in partnership with the local authorities across the project area, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) relating to the historic environment should be produced. These will support the LDFs and provide guidance on the protection and management of the historic environment and its use in improving design of new development. In addition to dealing with Conservation Areas, historic and listed buildings and archaeology, the SPDs will consider the landscape character of the authority areas. Any assessment of the character of an authority area will be greatly enhanced if it is informed by HLC.

9.4 The National Forest

9.4.1 The Historic and Natural Environment Team at Leicestershire County Council will continue to work in partnership with the National Forest Company with a view to developing strategies relating to the historic environment and landscape character of the Forest area which is informed by HLC.

9.4.2 HLC projects following similar methodologies have now been carried out for both Staffordshire and Leicestershire; it would be logical to investigate the possibility of carrying out HLC at a similar level for the part of Derbyshire which lies within the National Forest. It may be possible for this work to be carried out as part of a pilot project for a suggested new Historic Landscape Characterisation of Derbyshire. A combination of the three HLCs, carried out to a similar standard, would produce a National Forest HLC. An HLC specific to the area would enable the National Forest to effectively manage changes to the landscape and target those areas most suited to new woodland creation schemes. A structured targeting of areas may be facilitated through the development of woodland capacity, sensitivity or opportunity mapping.

9.5 Capacity or Opportunity Mapping

9.5.1 HLC in itself attempts to be value free, however it is possible to assign values to HLC Types using agreed criteria such as time depth, rarity, visual sensitivity and fragility in order to produce capacity or opportunity maps. These maps should be designed with the effects or impacts of specific kinds of landscape change in mind and might include, for example, new woodland plantation, wind farms, new housing or industrial development. Capacity or opportunity maps would be indicative and enable planners to identify those areas most suited to particular forms of landscape change. It is recommended that further research be carried out with a view to creating a suite of capacity/opportunity maps for possible inclusion within SPDs.

9.6 Extensive Urban Survey

9.6.1 One of the strengths of the LLR HLC has been its detailed assessment of the built landscape. The project has produced a detailed assessment of the current character of the urban environments within the study area and sets them within the context of the surrounding landscape.

9.6.2 It is recommended that a survey of the archaeology, topography and historic buildings of the towns of Leicestershire and Rutland be carried out. Such a study, usually referred to as an Extensive Urban Survey (EUS), will be significantly enhanced by the baseline data provided by HLC. An EUS would be a significant aid for those working within development control characterising in detail both the below ground archaeology and the built environment.

9.7 Aggregates Resource Assessment

9.7.1 The Historic and Natural Environment Team has recently secured funding to carry out an archaeological resource assessment for Leicestershire and Rutland's aggregate landscapes (i.e. those areas where sands, gravels and hard rocks are likely to be excavated). The project will focus upon areas of past, present and potential future aggregate extraction with the primary aim of improving knowledge of Leicestershire and Rutland's archaeological resource. HLC data should be used to enhance the analysis of the proposed aggregates areas.

9.8 Toolkits for Developers and Consultants

9.8.1 The Historic and Natural Environment Team regularly requests that work is carried out prior to development or to inform determination of a planning application. This may be in the form of an ecological or archaeological assessment. It is recommended that to assist developers and their consultants a 'toolkit' should be produced. This will be particularly relevant to larger development schemes and will specify what information will generally be required of them and how best to interpret data supplied by the Historic and Natural Environment Team, including HLC and HER information. Many developers and consultants may not yet be familiar with HLC and an information pack or toolkit will be an aid to data interpretation.

9.9 Outreach

9.9.1 Perhaps most obviously HLC can have an outreach role. There are many active local history and archaeology societies operating across the study area wishing to carry out research in their area. It is a relatively simple process to provide HLC maps to these groups together with other data contained within the HER. In a similar vein to the 'toolkits' for developers and consultants outlined above, information packs could be devised for researchers to aid in their understanding of the data and suggest possible areas for research. This research could for instance include study of field and place-name evidence, map regression, earthwork study and recording, field walking and more detailed characterisation of an area.

9.9.2 Other outreach potentials for HLC include its use by schools and youth groups. HLC can help such groups to understand the landscape history of their local area and can easily be accommodated within National Curriculum objectives and have the benefit of fostering a sense of place.

9.9.3 Research should investigate the viability of producing HLC information packs or 'toolkits' aimed at interest groups and young people. Such 'toolkits' could be made easily downloadable from the County Council's website.

9.10 Web Presence

9.10.1 It should be made a priority for the material held within the LLR HLC to be placed on the internet along with an investigation into developing an interactive HLC map with the data being made easily accessible to the general public. The HLC data should be accompanied by easily understandable explanatory documentation.

10 Conclusion

10.1 It is anticipated that the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation will become an indispensable tool with a wide variety of applications. The Historic and Natural Environment Team at Leicestershire County Council will continue to promote the use of material generated through HLC and in partnership with English Heritage, local authorities, other relevant organisations and interest groups develop its applications. It is clear that HLC material will be of benefit to a number of other specialists, for example planners, ecologists and landscape architects. It is important that HLC be recognised as a primary source of information to be consulted as a matter of routine, particularly in relation to matters concerning the conservation and appropriate management of landscapes and their components. It follows that the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland HLC should be made available to as wide an audience as is practicable and that some facility should be made available for consultees and other interested parties to feedback and comment upon the material.