

**From:** Diez, Louise (NE)

**Sent:** 25 October 2017 14:33

**To:** David Scully

**Subject:** Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Tunbridge Wells Draft Borough Landscape Character Assessment SPD

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Dear David,

**Re: Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Tunbridge Wells Draft Borough Landscape Character Assessment SPD**

Thank you for your consultation on the above and apologies once more for such a delayed response.

As you may know, due to the current pressure of consultations on land-use plans, I have not been able to spend the time I would have wished reviewing and commenting on this document. Nevertheless, I hope you find the following general comments helpful.

We recognise the public consultation and in particular the innovative approach of using ESRI StoryMap and the "your View" app as part of the evidence to produce this LCA. A Landscape Character Assessment SPD (LCA) has an essential role in plan-making as a core component of the environmental evidence base and underpins a planning authority's approach to landscape protection and enhancement and guide the drafting of landscape, design and green infrastructure policies in Local Plans and Neighbourhood Development Plans. It also has an important role in identifying the capacity of areas to accept new built development and in shaping development allocations.

#### **Other advice for Tunbridge Wells Landscape Character Assessment SPD**

##### *Climate change*

The preparation of landscape guidelines could consider the potential effects, good or bad, of climate change impacts on landscape character and the need for any appropriate planning and management measures. One of the key indicators of whether and how fast climate change is occurring is the observed response of flora and fauna to changes in temperature and hydrological balance. Climate change will have consequences for landscape character changes in habitat and species composition; the fragmentation of habitats; changes in water resources; and changes in air quality and soils. The LCA is an opportunity to recognise these changes and prepare for them.

##### *Ecosystem Services*

It can also be useful to explain landscape in terms of ecosystem services (supporting, provisioning, regulatory, and cultural) in part explain why our landscapes vary in character from place to place. The services perform a range of functions, for example woodlands and forests can have a hydrological function, soils facilitate plant growth, trees can provide shelter and influence micro-climates, plants in tandem with landform/topography, and sometimes water, can contribute to sense of place and give us the landscapes we all know and love. Landscape Character Assessment can help us to understand and value ecosystem goods and services and vice versa.

I hope this is of help.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me

With kind regards

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**We are here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.**

In an effort to reduce Natural England's carbon footprint, I will, wherever possible, avoid travelling to meetings and attend via audio, video or web conferencing.