

Malvern Wells
Neighbourhood Development Plan
Landscape Assessment



STAGE 1 SUMMARY REPORT

On behalf of Malvern Wells Parish Council

March 2017

Document Version Control

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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 In February 2017, as part of its Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) process, Malvern Wells Parish Council (MWPC) commissioned chartered landscape architect Carly Tinkler to carry out a baseline landscape and visual assessment of the village, the parish, and the surrounding areas.
- 1.2 The baseline study (Stage 1) is the first part of a more comprehensive assessment process (Stage 2, which is currently subject to further funding), the aim of which is to determine the sensitivity of the parish's landscapes - and those who see and enjoy them - to change, and whether any parts of the parish have the 'capacity' to accept new residential development or not, from a landscape, visual and environmental perspective.
- 1.3 The assessment's findings will provide an important evidence-base for, and will be used to guide and inform, the emerging NDP. They will help to determine if, and if so, where, and what type of, new development could potentially be accommodated in the future. They will also help to identify areas in and around the village which the community may consider to be worthy of protection from new development.
- 1.4 The findings can also be used to help develop detailed landscape strategies and future environmental and recreational projects / initiatives / enhancements / design guides for the local area, the village, and individual sites. These could be the subject of specific NDP policies.
- 1.5 The objective of the Stage 1 commission was to establish an overview of the landscape and visual baseline situation in the parish and the wider landscapes which form its context, and determine - within the parish - broad levels of landscape and visual value, susceptibility to change, and sensitivity (definitions of, and more information about, the technical words and terms commonly used in landscape assessments can be found in Appendix A. The methods used and processes followed for Stage 1 are summarised in the next section).
- 1.6 The baseline information gathered has been analysed, and is summarised in Section 3 of this report; it is also shown on the mostly hand-drawn plans which are contained in Appendix B.
- 1.7 The Stage 1 study forms the basis of the Stage 2 assessment which, if commissioned, would entail the identification of individual zones / parcels of land within the parish; these would be subject to a more fine-grained and in-depth assessment. Levels of value, sensitivity and capacity for each parcel would then be evaluated.
- 1.8 Stage 1 identifies matters which would require further consideration during Stage 2, and makes recommendations where appropriate (see Section 4 below).
- 1.9 Where relevant to landscape and environmental matters, results of public consultation exercises would also be factored in to Stage 2, as one of the study's key objectives is to understand what is important and of value to people, and why.
- 1.10 At the end of Stage 2, the findings of both the Stage 1 baseline and Stage 2 sensitivity / capacity assessments would be written up in full and illustrated with photographs. The report would be accompanied by digitised versions of the plans and maps (both baseline and capacity study findings), and by schedules of information for each parcel identified. Further recommendations would be made where appropriate.

Relevant Experience

- 1.13 Carly Tinkler is a chartered landscape architect with over 30 years' experience in public and private landscape practice, specialising in landscape, environmental and colour assessment. She was a contributor to the Landscape Institute's Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 1st edition, and is a member of working groups set up by the Landscape Institute and Natural England to review and update landscape assessment guidance and techniques. She also judges awards and competitions for the Institute.
- 1.14 She advises bodies such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) partnerships and local planning authorities, providing comments on planning applications, attending Design Review Panel meetings, and acting as an expert evidence at public inquiries. On behalf of Herefordshire Council, she carried out landscape appraisals of over 100 sites for Herefordshire's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in 2014, and developed the method for the

exercise. She has carried out several landscape and visual assessments for NDPs, helping local communities to develop a more in-depth and informed understanding of matters such as landscape assessment and planning policy.

- 1.15 She also acts for private and commercial developers in the UK and abroad, and has been responsible for the planning, design, co-ordination, management and implementation of large and small scale schemes such as urban extensions and eco-resorts.
- 1.16 She is familiar with the site and surrounding area, having lived and worked in Worcestershire and Herefordshire for much of her life.

2. Summary of Method and Process

- 2.1 New development usually results in certain changes to the existing 'baseline' landscape and visual situation, which are likely to subsequently affect landscape character and views in some way.
- 2.2 Judgements about what and who will be affected, and what the degree of change will be, have to be made in order to inform the decision-making process. Such judgements are based on a wide range of factors. At the outset, questions have to be asked such as:
- What is there, and who sees it?
 - How important is what is there, to whom, and why?
 - Is it, and / or the people who see it, tolerant of, or sensitive to, certain types of change?
 - What is the nature of the proposed change?
 - What would the degree of change be?
 - How, and to what degree, would change affect what is there and those who see it?
 - Is the degree of change / likely level of effect acceptable or not, especially in relation to current planning policy and guidance?
- 2.3 Landscape and other technical assessments can help to answer these questions. Landscape assessment is a complex process, but it is important to understand it in order to properly understand the findings, and draw conclusions.
- 2.4 The issues involved in this study are wide-ranging, and a variety of published methods and techniques for carrying out the different types of landscape and visual assessments required have been used and combined in order to provide the evidence-based and objective results which are needed here.
- 2.5 The three main forms of assessment used are Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (LSCA) and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)¹.
- 2.6 The starting point for all landscape assessments is a comprehensive understanding of the existing landscape character and visual baseline situation ('what is there and who sees it'). That is the objective of this Stage 1 assessment.
- 2.7 Stage 1 also determines broad (parish-wide) levels of landscape and visual value ('how important is what is there, to whom, and why?'), and the levels of the receptors' susceptibility to change and sensitivity ('is it - and / or the people who see it - tolerant of, or sensitive to, certain types of change?').
- 2.8 This information is required in order to make judgements about the landscape's capacity to accept change in the form of new residential development, and identify areas which are worthy of protection, which are objectives of the Stage 2 process.
- 2.9 During Stage 2, the wider study area would be subdivided into individual parcels of land, or 'zones', which would be the subject of the detailed sensitivity and capacity assessment, or LSCA. The parcels and zones would be determined through a combination of the Stage 1 baseline exercises, further on-the-ground visits, and taking into account areas around the settlement which could potentially attract interest from commercial developers in the future.
- 2.10 In order to understand all the elements, features and factors that contribute to an area's baseline landscape character and visual / social amenity, it is firstly necessary to carry out desktop research, including reviewing and recording (on maps, schedules and in note-form) relevant background material from sources such as books, reports and studies, historic maps and

¹ For further technical information on methods, techniques and processes, see Appendix A. Also see *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (October 2014) Natural England; *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland - Topic Paper 6: Techniques and criteria for judging sensitivity and capacity* The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002); and *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition* (2013) Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Assessment (usually referred to as 'GLVIA3').

- documents, local archives and historians, government and other websites, and the local community.
- 2.11 The baseline study for Malvern Wells took into account national and / or local landscape-related designations, strategies, policies and guidance (especially that produced by the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership (MHAONBP)); the landscape's natural history and cultural heritage; its character; hydrology; topography; significant vegetation; settlement and land use patterns; public rights of way (PRsoW); recreation and so on, in order to establish its value.
- 2.12 If any of these was considered to have the potential to be affected by, or act as a constraint to, development, it was noted so that it could be carried forward for further verification in Stage 2.
- 2.13 Views and visual amenity are also part of the baseline study stage. The process involved a combination of desktop studies, and driving and walking around the area. Both publicly-accessible and (where possible / accessible with permission) privately-owned areas were visited.
- 2.14 This step also 'tests' the mapped desktop baseline findings 'on-the-ground', and refines them in the light of what the landscape reveals. Broad landscape 'zones' or 'sectors' are established, constraints checked, landscape characteristics noted, the extent of the areas of influence and visual envelopes modified, visibility checked, and the nature of the views, and the visual receptors, recorded. The potential for both adverse and beneficial effects is considered further, and scope for mitigation is also factored in. During Stage 2, this information would be supplemented with more detailed assessments, which consider these and the other aspects noted above in relation to individual land parcels.
- 2.15 The outer boundary of the Stage 1 landscape character assessment study area was defined by the wider 'landscape context' of the village, and its 'area of influence'. This is partly determined by the 'visual envelope', i.e. the places from which a given area is visible, but it also takes into account the characteristics of a particular landscape type, the extent of which is not necessarily determined by visibility. The preliminary assessment covers areas well-beyond the parish boundary (see Figure 1A in Appendix B).
- 2.16 The study area boundaries for features or places of importance such as sites of nature conservation interest and heritage assets were drawn with consideration given to the potential area of influence of the individual feature.
- 2.17 For ease of reference, the study area was divided into four geographical sectors (North to East, East to South, South to West, and West to North, usually abbreviated). The central point is at the south-western corner of the Three Counties Showground on the B4209 Hanley Road; the sectors radiate outwards following roads and physical features in and around the outskirts of the village.
- 2.18 Once the baseline information had been gathered, recorded, processed and synthesised, broad levels of landscape and visual value, susceptibility to change, and receptor sensitivity throughout the parish were determined (the criteria which have been used in the landscape assessment to determine levels of value, sensitivity and so on are set out in the tables in Appendix C).
- 2.19 The report, figures and appendices were issued in draft for comments by the PC, and were updated to take these into account.

3. Summary of Stage 1 Baseline Study Findings

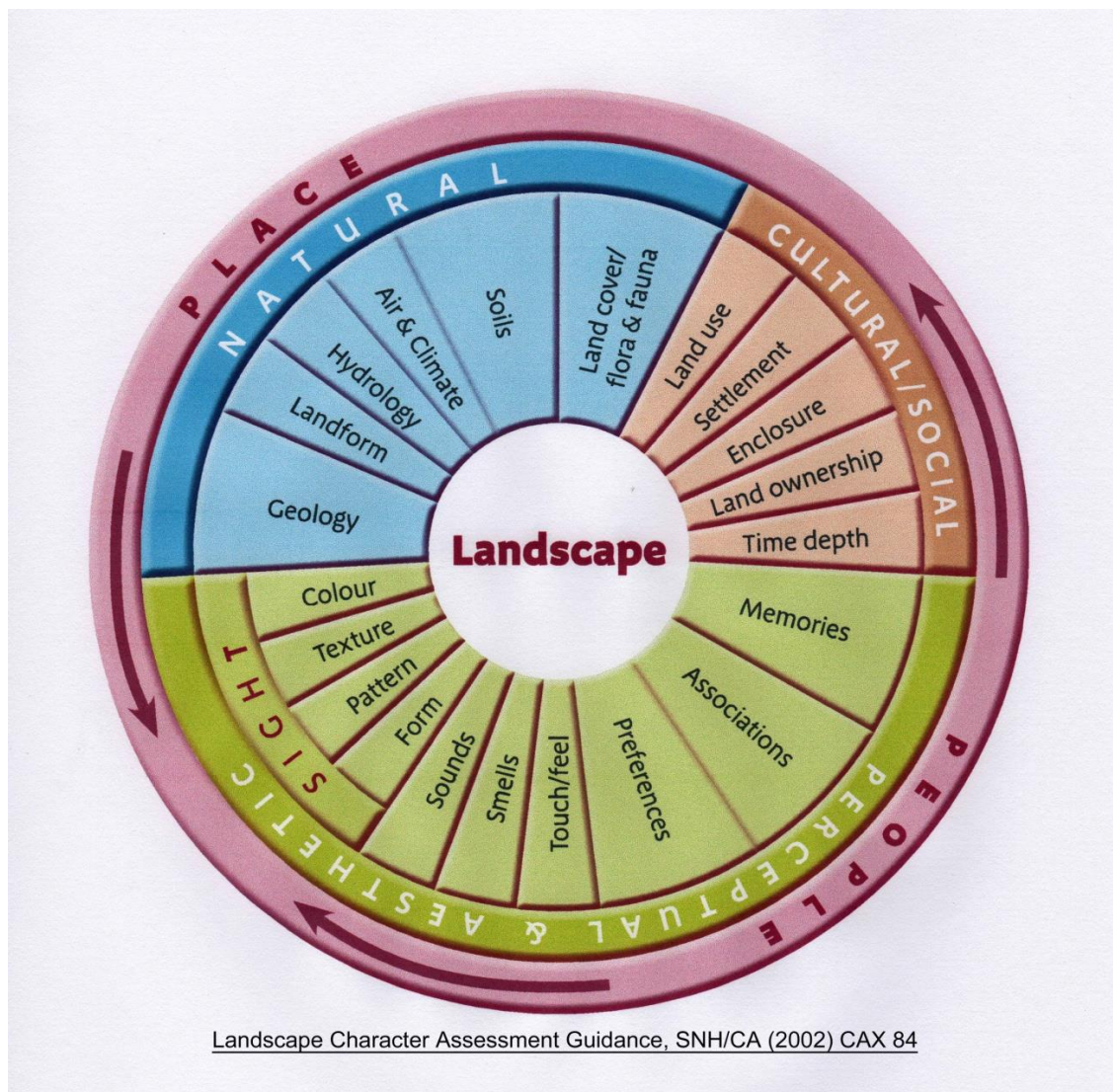
3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section summarises the key aspects of the baseline landscape character, visual, and social amenity of the study area.

3.1.2 Whilst the Stage 2 report would explain these matters in more detail, Appendix A provides an introduction to landscape character, and what factors and elements the assessment should cover.

3.1.3 In its published guidance *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (October 2014), Natural England defines LCA as ‘... 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 (Fig. 1. What is Landscape?) ... [see below] By setting down a robust, auditable and transparent, baseline, Landscape Character Assessment can not only help us to understand our landscapes, it can also assist in informing judgements and decisions concerning the management of change’.

LCA Guidance Figure 1: What is Landscape?



3.1.4 In this case, the information collected during the Stage 1 baseline studies is comprehensive, and has enabled a very detailed picture of the landscapes of the study area to emerge.

3.1.5 Most of it has been captured in note-form, and the location of the various features identified have been recorded by hand on base maps of the study area at different scales (see the figures in Appendix B).

- 3.1.6 Although the findings are only summarised here, some of the data which informed them is contained in the appendices, as follows:

Appendix D: Summary Descriptions of National and Countywide Landscape Character

Appendix E: Historic Environment Record Search Report (March 2017)

Appendix F: Worcestershire Biological Records Centre Data (March 2017)

- 3.1.7 If Stage 2 of the landscape assessment goes ahead, the Stage 1 baseline study findings would be written up in full (and added to, as further information comes to light through the more detailed work and public consultation), and illustrated with photographs. The hand-drawn plans would also be digitised.
- 3.1.8 The Stage 1 assessment has provided enough information to enable judgements about broad levels of the parish's landscape and visual value, susceptibility to change, and sensitivity, to be made. These are set out in Section 4.
- 3.1.9 The Stage 1 report follows the same structure and uses the same headings that would normally be found in the full Stage 2 report. The Stage 2 studies would involve more detailed assessments focussing on the landscapes within the parish; the results of these would be written up as a separate section on local landscape character, which would follow the landscape character baseline overview summarised here.
- 3.1.10 Similarly, the summary visual baseline findings would be amplified by further on-the-ground assessments and public consultation during Stage 2. The information would be summarised in individual parcel schedules.

3.2 Malvern Wells Parish

- 3.2.1 Malvern Wells parish lies on the eastern side of the Malvern Hills. Its boundaries are well-defined, mostly following distinct physical features which contribute to, and form part of, its local context and setting, and influence its character to varying degrees.
- 3.2.2 The parish's northern boundary zig-zags eastwards from the Worcestershire Beacon along the southern edge of Great Malvern town centre (Malvern College / Barnards Green / Poolbrook).
- 3.2.3 To the east it runs along the B4208 Blackmore Park Road.
- 3.2.4 To the south it follows the line of Mere Brook and skirts the southern end of the settlement which includes part of Upper Welland.
- 3.2.5 Its western boundary runs along the ridgeline of the Malvern Hills, from Black Hill in the south to the Worcestershire Beacon in the north.
- 3.2.6 To the north, the 'area of influence' of the parish itself is partially limited by built form and mature vegetation in and on the edges of Great Malvern, and by the Hills themselves from certain viewpoints.
- 3.2.7 The area of influence to the east extends for several kilometres, although it is limited at certain lower-level viewpoints by vegetation and localised topography.
- 3.2.8 To the south, the area of influence varies, also depending on vegetation and topography. Views of the Wells are possible from parts of Castlemorton Common, although they are oblique, and south of the Common the land drops away and / or the Hills themselves screen views.
- 3.2.9 To the west, the Hills' ridgeline acts as both a physical and a visual barrier, although as the parish boundary runs along it, from many high-level viewpoints there are 360° views of the whole of the surrounding landscape.

3.3 Designated Landscapes

- 3.3.1 The whole of Malvern Wells parish lies within the Malvern Hills AONB. Both the parish and the AONB's eastern boundaries run along Blackmore Park Road.
- 3.3.2 AONBs are of national importance (and indeed of international importance, being recognised as Category V protected landscapes by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature). They are designated solely for their special landscape qualities. They are considered to be of such outstanding natural (or 'scenic') beauty that they require, and enjoy, a high level of protection through European, national and local planning policies and plans, in order to '*secure their*

permanent protection against development that would damage their special qualities, thus conserving a number of the finest landscapes in England for the nation's benefit.²

- 3.3.3 The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape. An area's 'natural beauty' includes its geology, climate, soils, animals, communities, archaeology, buildings, the people who live in it (past and present) and the perceptions of those who visit it.
- 3.3.4 Public appreciation is a key component of natural beauty, and the secondary purposes of AONB designation include meeting the need for quiet enjoyment of the countryside, and having regard for the interests of those who live and work there. The natural beauty of these areas is recognised as contributing significantly to economic activities and well-being through tourism and inward investment.

3.4 National, Regional and Countywide Landscape Character

National Landscape Character

- 3.4.1 Nationally, the country is divided into National Character Areas (NCAs)³.
- 3.4.2 NCAs are the responsibility of Natural England. They are '*... areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.*'
- 3.4.3 Importantly, NCA profiles are '*... guidance documents which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change.*'
- 3.4.4 The NCA profiles contain specific 'Statements of Environmental Opportunity' (SEOs) for each area, which offer guidance on the critical issues identified, and which can '*... help to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future.*'
- 3.4.5 The landscape in the majority of the study area is covered by NCA 106 Severn and Avon Vales⁴, although the western edges are covered by NCA 103 Malvern Hills⁵, and NCA 100 Herefordshire Lowlands. NCA 100 lies west of NCA 103, but the Malvern Hills' upstanding topography means that there is a very limited physical relationship between the two, and it is not considered further in the assessment.
- 3.4.6 The location of the NCAs is shown on Figures 2A and 2B, and further information, including the key characteristics, Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) and 'key drivers' which are relevant to Malvern Wells, is provided in Appendix D (see also links in the footnotes below).

Regional and Countywide Landscape Character

- 3.4.7 NCAs are relevant to this study for the reasons set out above, and it is important that the assessment evaluates whether the landscapes are good representations of landscape character at a national level, which can increase their value. However, the NCA descriptions usually cover large geographical areas, so it is necessary to look at character at a regional scale, where landscape character 'types' (LCTs) have been surveyed and categorised by both Worcestershire County Council (WCC)⁶ and the MHAONBP⁷.
- 3.4.8 The locations of the LCTs are shown on Figures 2A and 2B; those of most relevance to the study are summarised below, with more information and detailed descriptions in Appendix D.
- 3.4.9 WCC's Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) begins with classifying regional landscape areas. The study area east of the Hills lies within the extensive Mid-Worcestershire Forest, and

² <http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/further-information-about-aonbs.html>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

⁴ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/1831421?category=587130>

⁵ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3039205?category=587130>

⁶ For more information about WCC's LCA see http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20014/planning/1006/landscape_character_assessment

⁷ Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Landscape Strategy and Guidelines 2011

the Malvern Hills are covered by the Malvern and Abberley Hills character area (for further information see WCC's Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance Technical Handbook (August 2013)).

- 3.4.10 The Malvern Hills are categorised as the 'High Hills and Slopes' landscape type, the boundaries of which coincide almost exactly with the boundary of the NCA. West of the Hills, the undulating lower slopes are categorised as 'Principal Wooded Hills', and the flatter landscapes beyond as 'Principal Settled Farmlands'. These landscapes have very different characteristics from those to the east of the Hills. This is due to differences in geology, topography and hydrology, and subsequent variations in historic landuse and landcover, as explained in more detail below. They have little or no influence on Malvern Wells' landscapes.
- 3.4.11 East of the Hills and beyond Malvern's urban areas, the 'Enclosed Commons' and 'Principal Timbered Farmlands' types dominate, although there are no 'Principal Timbered Farmlands' in Malvern Wells parish, which is predominantly 'Enclosed Commons'.
- 3.4.12 There are remnants of the 'Unenclosed Commons' type south of Great Malvern (on Malvern Commons), although beyond the study area boundary there are more extensive areas of 'Unenclosed Commons' between Welland and Hollybush (especially Castlemorton Common).
- 3.4.13 East of the 'Unenclosed Commons' and south of the 'Principal Timbered Farmlands' types, the landscape is categorised as 'Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use'. It is some distance away from the parish boundary and so has limited influence on the character of the Wells, although it forms an important part of the AONB's wider context and setting.
- 3.4.14 Of most relevance to the parish are the High Hills and Slopes, and the Enclosed Commons LCTs. These are very contrasting landscapes, which reflect how differences in physical features and processes, and human intervention, are responsible for the character of the landscape today.
- 3.4.15 The key characteristics of High Hills and Slopes speak for themselves:
- Dominant, steeply sloping 'highland' topography
 - Exposed character, with panoramic views over surrounding lower lying land
 - Ancient pre-Cambrian hard rock geology with numerous accessible rock outcrops
 - Water spouts and springs at the boundary between granite and impervious, sedimentary and volcanic rocks
 - Shallow mineral soils supporting acid grassland and heath
 - Unenclosed rough grazing land with few signs of human habitation
 - Heavily wooded lower slopes.
- 3.4.16 Those of the Enclosed Commons type, however, are less obvious until the reasons for the forms and patterns which are visible in the landscape are understood. This LCT's key characteristics are:
- Gently rolling, lowland landform
 - Impoverished, poorly draining soils derived from fan gravels
 - A planned enclosure pattern with straight hedgerows and roads
 - Pastoral land use with some arable farming
 - An open landscape with views through scattered hedgerow trees
 - Strips of linear tree cover along watercourses
 - Wayside dwellings and scattered 19th century farmsteads.
- 3.4.17 'Planned enclosure' explains the pattern of geometrically-shaped roads, fields and plantation woodlands which characterises the landscapes on lower ground east of this part of the Hills (more information is provided in the Heritage and Historic Landscape Character section below, but in summary, it is the result of the Enclosure Act of 1795).
- 3.4.18 WCC's LCA also includes a more localised assessment of the county landscape types, subdividing them into smaller Landscape Description Units (LDUs). Their locations (within / adjacent to the parish only) are shown on Figure 2B; summary descriptions are also provided in Appendix D. The on-the-ground assessment found that whilst the LDU surveys were carried out in 2008

and 2009, there had been few changes to the general baseline situation in the intervening years, apart from some new built development and changes in landuse. The LDU information in the LCA is therefore a good source of reference for understanding the landscapes of the wider study area.

- 3.4.19 WCC's countywide assessment and the MHAONBP's Guidelines cover broad areas which share similar characteristics, but the level of detail provided is not sufficient for the purpose of more fine-grained assessments such as this; clearly, within these landscapes there are likely to be local variations which must be understood and factored into the baseline studies.
- 3.4.20 The landscapes within the study area were therefore subject to more detailed on-the-ground survey and analysis to supplement the information available.
- 3.4.21 Before going into the field, however, it was necessary to complete the desktop baseline and inform the on-the-ground assessment by studying the area's natural and cultural history, as this provides an understanding of how the landscape has evolved and developed into what we see and experience today.

3.5 Local Landscape Character: Study Area Overview

Local Landscape Context

- 3.5.1 This section describes and illustrates the landscape character - and the elements which are integral to landscape character - within the wider study area. It would form the basis for the more detailed character descriptions of the parish required during the Stage 2 process. The character descriptions are also used to inform the visual baseline studies. Figures 2A & 2B - 7A & 7B in Appendix B show the location and distribution of the key elements and features identified.
- 3.5.2 The area's geology, topography and hydrology are complex; they also give rise to abundant springs, fertile soils and wooded hills which were exploited by the communities which settled here. The landscape of the study area is characterised by locally-distinct patterns of contrasting elements and features shaped by nature and culture. It provides a wide range of highly valuable and valued resources for visitors and residents, as well as flora and fauna.

Natural Landscape

GEOLOGY

- 3.5.3 The Malvern Hills form a chain of peaks which run north-south, from the River Teme west of Worcester to the northern Gloucestershire border at Chase End. The Herefordshire / Worcestershire border (and the parish's western boundary) runs along the Hills' ridgeline. The Hills act as a barrier between the drift deposits of the Severn Valley river terraces to the east and the undulating Old Red Sandstone claylands to the west, with great contrasts in the resulting landcover and landuses.
- 3.5.4 The geology of the Hills is complex. The majority of the rocks are extremely hard and resistant to erosion, which explains the elevated nature of the Hills today, but there is a wide variety of rock forms in the area including soft and easily-weathered shales, which gives rise to great diversity in landscape character.
- 3.5.5 From Victorian times, the Hills were seen as an infinite resource of building material (see 20th century landscape history below), and locally, many houses and walls – especially retaining walls – were built with the hard chunks of Malvern stone quarried from the slopes. Further afield, the chippings were used extensively for road building.
- 3.5.6 The Malvern Hills have been a focus of geological interest for centuries, and now form part of the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark, which covers 1250 square kilometres and takes in parts of the four counties of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. Geoparks '*promote excellence in geoconservation and make a contribution to local economies through sustainable geotourism*'⁸.
- 3.5.7 All of the exposures of pre-Cambrian geology are notified features of the Malvern Hills Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and many are designated as Local Geological Sites (LGSs).
- 3.5.8 The location of the LGSs within and / or close to the boundaries of the parish is shown on Figure 6B. They include:

⁸ <http://geopark.org.uk/pub/>

- Little Malvern Quarry (just south of parish boundary, S to W sector)
- Wide Valley (in parish, W to N sector)
- Earnslaw Quarry (in parish, W to N sector)
- Upper Wyche Quarry (in parish, W to N sector).

3.5.9 These features contribute greatly to our understanding landscape character, and many are also now important for their biodiversity.

SOILS

3.5.10 Soilscape (England) classifies the soils of the Malvern Hills as 16 - *Very acid loamy upland soils with a wet peaty surface*, and those on the land east of the Hills (within the study area) as 18 - *Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils*.

3.5.11 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) of the soils in the area shows the Malvern Hills as Grade 5 (very poor), and the foothills and much of the lowland commons as Grade 4 (poor). The rest of the area is either Grade 3 (good to moderate) in the rural / agricultural areas, or *Land predominantly in urban use* i.e. the town.

TOPOGRAPHY

3.5.12 The Malvern Hills exert a strong and widespread influence on the landscape in all directions. From the highest of the summits strung along their length (the Worcestershire Beacon at 425m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)), it is believed that there is intervisibility between them and up to nineteen 'historic' counties, the furthest point visible being Shining Tor in Cheshire, 130km away. The Hills' 13km long, distinctive humpbacked ridgeline is oriented north-south, so the silhouette changes relative to the location of the viewer.

3.5.13 However, the Hills also physically divide the landscapes to the west from those to the east, which means that below the ridgeline, and in the landscapes beyond, there is little relationship between the two.

3.5.14 West of the ridgeline, the land falls away steeply at first, but then descends in a series of undulations and folds before flattening out to join the Herefordshire Lowlands.

3.5.15 East of the ridgeline, the steep slope continues all the way down to the toe of the Hills, before beginning to flatten out along the 60m contour line which runs east of Barnards Green, through the Three Counties Showground (TCS), and through Marlbank, west of Welland. These areas form part of the transition zone between the Hills and the Severn plain (the River Severn lies just under 4km east of the town boundary).

3.5.16 From the Hills' ridges and upper / mid-slopes, the perception is that the landscape to the east is very flat, but at lower levels, localised undulations are evident, especially when wooded, being the result of the underlying geology and erosion along watercourses.

HYDROLOGY

3.5.17 The Malvern Hills outcrop is a 'bedrock aquifer', meaning that the body of rock receives, stores and releases rainwater. Rain falls directly onto the rock and / or infiltrates into the soils. The hard igneous and metamorphic rock types are not permeable, but their highly-fractured and fissured nature mean that water enters the aquifer and travels quickly through this network of voids. Water leaves the aquifer at springs, streams, wet seepages and where man has manipulated it at boreholes, spouts, wells, quarries and ponds.

3.5.18 The history of Malvern Water is set out in the historic landscape character section below, but it is important to note that the resource has had a significant influence on the area's land-, town- and villagescapes.

3.5.19 Most of the water coming off the Hills drains away relatively quickly on the lower slopes, especially where the soils are gravelly; however, where the soils are clay, the runoff tends to take longer to soak away.

3.5.20 The softer areas of soil have been eroded, forming collection channels for the main watercourses which flow eastwards across the plain and discharge into the River Severn. These include the

Mere Brook, which forms part of the parish's southern boundary and rises in Upper Welland, and Pool Brook, which rises in Barnards Green.

LANDCOVER

- 3.5.21 In terms of a broad overview of the wider study area, beyond the urban areas in the North to East sector, landcover comprises predominantly agricultural land (arable and pasture), interspersed with scattered, geometrically-shaped blocks and belts of mature woodland (mostly broadleaved native but some coniferous and other plantations). There is also unimproved grassland on verges and commons, a few orchards, and some woodpasture and parkland habitat at Blackmore Park. The TCS and various campsites in the area are mixtures of utilitarian amenity grass, trees, hard surfacing and built form.
- 3.5.22 Landcover in the East to South sector is predominantly arable and pasture farmland, with little woodland cover apart from along the watercourses. There are areas where the land is intensively-grazed, especially at equestrian establishments, but there are also remnant fragments of traditional hay meadows and historic parkland. St. Wulstan's Nature Reserve is a rich mosaic of habitats ranging from semi-improved grassland to scrub, mature woodland and ornamental trees.
- 3.5.23 Topography determines much of the landcover in the South to West sector, which includes the Malvern Hills. The Hills' ridges and upper slopes are predominantly unimproved acid grassland with patches of bracken, gorse and some heathland. Extensive areas of secondary woodland and scrub are also a feature, especially on the lower slopes, and there are a few ancient woodland remnants at Little Malvern. Within the settlement of Malvern Wells there is extensive mature native and ornamental tree cover, mostly in the gardens and grounds of residential properties and educational establishments.
- 3.5.24 Landcover on the Hills is the same in the West to North sector, and the settlement is similarly characterised by native and ornamental tree cover. However, there is also unimproved grassland on verges and commons, an ancient woodland remnant, and an old orchard. The golf course and adjacent areas are a combination of amenity and rough grassland, scrub, woodland and built form. The housing estate at Fruitlands has less tree cover, but at the edge of the town centre to the north, the land associated with Malvern College and adjacent areas is well-wooded in places, with ornamental / parkland trees a key feature.

Designated / Key Landscape Areas and Features

- 3.5.25 The baseline assessment identified several designated / key landscape areas and features within the study area. Some of these are also sites of heritage and nature conservation importance / interest (see sections below).
- 3.5.26 They are predominantly associated with trees and tree cover including woodlands, orchards, parks and gardens, and other significant vegetation which makes a valuable contribution to (or may detract from) landscape character and local distinctiveness. However, they also include areas and spaces which perform an important function within the landscape, such as:
- Forming part of the setting and / or context of features such as the Malvern Hills, heritage assets and the village.
 - Gateways and approaches.
 - Green gaps, especially in built-up areas - for example fields along the east side of Wells Road north of its junction with Holywell Road.
 - Buffer zones - required between areas of tranquillity and activity, for example, or to protect sensitive wildlife and other sites.
 - Green corridors: these perform a wide variety of functions which contribute to green infrastructure, especially recreational, ecological and visual. An example is the green corridor which runs along the northern edge of Upper Welland Road, which forms an integral part of the character of one of the key approaches to the Hills.
- 3.5.27 The significant vegetation (tree cover and hedgerows) is shown on Figures 3A and 3B. The information is also useful in understanding ecological connectivity, and in determining which 'corridors' are likely to be most valuable, which are intact and in good health, and which could benefit from restoration. The same applies to landscape elements and features.

- 3.5.28 There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the study area, the nearest being at Madresfield Court (Grade II*), north east of Malvern, and Eastnor Castle and Deerpark (also Grade II*) to the south west of the Hills.
- 3.5.29 At Little Malvern Court, the ornamental gardens scattered with fine, mature trees are part of the former monastic grounds, and extend over c. 4ha (10 acres) on the mid-slopes of the Hills, south of the parish.
- 3.5.30 Within the study area, significant belts of dense, mature native woodland (interspersed with occasional ornamental trees) run along the Hills' mid-slopes, strongly characterising Jubilee Drive on the west side, and the A449 Wells Road on the east side.
- 3.5.31 West of Jubilee Drive and West Malvern Road, the tree cover extends across the undulating hills and valleys, forming an interconnected mosaic of woodland from north to south within which there are numerous blocks and belts of Ancient Semi-natural Woodland.
- 3.5.32 Several of the woodlands are included in the National Forest Inventory (NFI) (GB), and are also an integral part of the local landscape's history.
- 3.5.33 The significant vegetation on the east side of the Hills, the Wells Road and the town illustrates very clearly the nature of the landscape here, what has influenced it, and how it has evolved over time. Broadly-speaking, the majority of mature native tree cover in this area comprises narrow belts along the meandering watercourses and ditches which drain eastwards off the Hills and discharge into the River Severn.
- 3.5.34 The lack of ancient woodland in the area confirms that this is now a 'modern' landscape which has been exploited extensively for agriculture. In between Guarford and the Old Hills to the north there are several Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands (ASNWs), but in the broad swathe of land between Guarford, Blackmore and Welland (most of the North to East sector and all of the East to South sector) there are none. In the South to West sector, there is one distinctive, isolated triangular ASNW lying just south of Malvern Wells, and another small belt east of the A449 above The Court (both outside the parish boundary). In the West to North Sector, another small block (Hornyold Wood) remains on the slopes in between the Wells Road and the TCS - of high local value and importance as it is the only ASNW left in the parish.
- 3.5.35 Other significant vegetation within the parish and / or close to its boundaries includes:
- Langdale Wood and associated woodlands
 - The woodlands at St. Wulstan's Nature Reserve
 - The tree belts and coppices on the golf course and at Woodfarm Camp
 - Woodland on the slopes of the Hills
 - Trees along the line of the dismantled railway
 - Mature hedges and scattered, escaped mature trees
 - Mature trees growing in and around the settlement and along the main roads into the town centre
 - Locally-distinctive avenues of mature lime, horse chestnut and other species
 - Trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)
 - Ancient and veteran trees.

Cultural and Social

LANDUSE

- 3.5.36 Beyond the Hills and the urban / village areas, the land is predominantly in agricultural use, although the landscapes also accommodate the TCS, recreational facilities such as the golf course and campsites, and commercial / light-industrial development. There are also woodlands and nature reserves.

SETTLEMENT / BUILT FORM

- 3.5.37 Settlement on Malvern's Hills and slopes has been constrained primarily by topography, and influenced by access to spring water, and by infrastructure such as roads and railways which were also subject to topographical constraints.
- 3.5.38 More recently, development on the Hills and commons has been constrained by various protective measures including an Act of Parliament under which the Malvern Hills Conservators (MHC) were set up in 1884 (further information about MHC and the Act is included in the sections below).
- 3.5.39 'Malvern' comprises a series of quite distinct settlements, although the boundaries between them are not always immediately obvious. As well as Great Malvern town centre, there is Malvern Link, which forms the gateway into the town from the north east, North Malvern, Malvern Wells, Little Malvern and West Malvern. In between / close by are smaller pockets of predominantly residential development, at Upper Welland, Upper Colwall and the Wyche.
- 3.5.40 The history of Malvern Water is set out in more detail below, but it is important to note that the resource has had a significant influence on character and distinctiveness of the area's land-, town- and villagescapes.
- 3.5.41 For example, many of the springs emerge along a line that encircles the northern section of the Hills from British Camp to End Hill. Although its elevation varies, in places the line is fairly consistent. As a result, the routes along and across the Hills, and the associated settlements, have been aligned to take maximum advantage of this natural bounty, and is one of the main reasons why the majority of residential properties are on or below the spring line. This narrow linear settlement pattern is clearly visible even in long-distance views, not just during the day but at night, when it is articulated by lights from street lamps and houses.
- 3.5.42 Great Malvern has now spread down the east side of the Hills and expanded to incorporate lower-lying areas such as Newland, Poolbrook and Barnard's Green; however, until the large housing estate at Fruitlands was built in the 1970s, and which now juts out like an elbow to the north east, the southern edge of the town and Malvern Wells were separated by the Malvern Commons and orchards (from which Fruitlands got its name), with only a narrow belt of residential properties along the south side of Peachfield Road.
- 3.5.43 Malvern Wells' settlement pattern is linear for the most part, forming a tight corridor along both sides of the A449 with occasional gaps formed by the commons and grassed / wooded hillslopes, and the fields on the west side of the golf course and Woodfarm Camp.
- 3.5.44 The settlement also extends westwards up the slopes to the Wyche Cutting, with built form scattered along the B4218 Wyche Road and lining the several narrow roads which criss-cross and snake their way from bottom to top. This has the effect of creating a swathe of tightly-packed built form from the Wyche, through Fruitlands and on to the southern end of Barnards Green along St. Andrews Road, with only the railway bridge and the triangle of grassland on the east side of the railway maintaining the gap.
- 3.5.45 The 'heart' of the village is more open, where built form clusters along both sides of the A449 (rising up the slope to the Cottage-in-the-Wood and Holywell), at the north-western end of Hanley Road, and along both sides of Green Lane. The corridor narrows again to the south as far as the western end of Upper Welland Road, at which point the settlement runs down the Hills' mid-slopes to the south east, mainly on the north side of the road, although there are pockets of houses on the south side.
- 3.5.46 Here, the land falls quite steeply down to the edge of the Severn plain, with scattered houses and farmsteads characterising the area between Upper Welland and Welland village.
- 3.5.47 Beyond the eastern edges of the settlement, built form is scattered (mainly residential properties and farmsteads with a few villages - Guarford, Hanley Swan and Welland - and hamlets), and on the whole it is relatively-well integrated into the wider landscape. There are exceptions - the TCS is clearly 'development' in character terms, and on a locally-large scale, with several buildings, roads and associated structures. Similarly, Blackmore Park is a large-scale commercial / light-industrial area known as Merebrook Business Park.

ENCLOSURE

- 3.5.48 Generally, throughout the study area, the patterns and types of enclosure reflect those which are typical of the landscape types within which they are found, which in themselves reflect history and landuse.
- 3.5.49 The Hills and commons are unenclosed.
- 3.5.50 The Enclosed Commons type covers the majority of the parish and extends as far as Hanley Swan and Welland village. Although some of the individual field patterns have been eroded or lost, on the whole the post-Enclosure Act geometrically-shaped field pattern is intact. Hedges are typically hawthorn.
- 3.5.51 The Principal Timbered Farmlands type, the south-western extent of which covers Blackmore Park, is characterised by an organic pattern of small to medium sized fields, bounded by mixed species hedgerows.
- 3.5.52 Enclosure patterns within the Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Landuse type, which lies to the east, tend to be of two types - either a prominent pattern of hedged fields forming a small-scale landscape, or a sub-regular enclosure pattern with small and medium sized fields.

TIME-DEPTH

- 3.5.53 Understanding an area's 'time-depth' is a very important and integral part of the landscape character assessment process. This is explained in more detail in the historic landscape section below.

Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities

- 3.5.54 The aesthetic and perceptual qualities of a landscape's character (see Figure 1 - What is Landscape?) play an integral part in understanding its value, susceptibility to change, and sensitivity.
- 3.5.55 Aesthetic qualities include a landscape's patterns and shapes, its scale, texture, colour, balance and so on. Clearly there is a degree of subjectivity in determining what is 'pleasing' to the eye or what is 'discordant' - a good example of this is the TCS: some people enjoy the visual spectacle, especially on show days when the white tents gleam, coloured banners flutter, thousands of vehicles stream in and spread out on the adjoining fields, and crowds can be seen milling around even from the Hills. Others consider that this 'spoils their view'.
- 3.5.56 Perceptual qualities include noise, smell, touch, sense of remoteness / busyness, quality of light, scenic beauty, associations and memories. It is possible to be objective about some of these up to a point - the Malvern Hills are an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and so there is consensus about many of their aesthetic and perceptual qualities. Noise and smell can be measured. However, again, some may enjoy hearing events such as concerts, others may not.
- 3.5.57 On the ridges and upper slopes of the Hills, both aesthetic and perceptual qualities are evident - the levels of quality and condition of the Hills are high due to careful management, and the panoramic views in all directions are breath-taking. The landscape is seen spread out like an open book on the floor below, making it easy to read and appreciate its patterns and textures, but difficult to appreciate scale. On the whole, the patterns, colours and textures are harmonious, but because of this, a single feature such as a glinting white roof in the distance can stand out.
- 3.5.58 There is also a strong sense of separation from the activity below, and often the surrounding landscape appears very still, with only a train moving through the landscape to distract the eye. Sometimes the summits are deserted, and the only sounds that can be heard are the wind and a skylark. The constant changes in seasons and light conditions ensures that every day, the views are different.
- 3.5.59 The Hills look very special at night, in particular when viewed from the east, when the lights of buildings and street lamps punctuate the darkness, accentuating the linear settlement pattern and small clusters of built form.
- 3.5.60 Victorian gas street lamps are a highly-distinctive feature of many of Malvern's streetscapes. Those along the A449 through Malvern Wells are a fine example (many have recently been restored, and there are plans to replace eleven 'missing' ones); there is an almost eerie quality of light that emanates from them at night. Local people consider them to be emblematic of the parish.

According to local lore, they are believed to have inspired elements of the 'Chronicles of Narnia' novels by C. S. Lewis (see cultural associations section below).

3.6 Heritage, Landscape History and Local Historic Landscape Character

- 3.6.1 Heritage and historic landscape character are integral elements of landscape character, and thus of landscape character assessment. This is emphasised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), for example in para. 170: *'Where appropriate, landscape character assessments should also be prepared, integrated with assessment of historic landscape character.'*
- 3.6.2 Landscape assessment guidance is also clear about the matter, setting out the range of historic and socio-cultural baseline information which needs to be gathered, analysed and factored in to the findings. It states, *'The history of the landscape, its historic character, the interaction between people and places through time, and the surviving features and their settings may be relevant to the LVIA baseline studies, as well as the cultural heritage topic'*.
- 3.6.3 Establishing and analysing an area's 'time-depth' is a very important part of the landscape character assessment process.
- 3.6.4 Several heritage assets were identified in the study area, both designated and undesignated. Although a detailed assessment of the assets and their significance is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to analyse the data and use the information to build up an understanding of how the landscapes and settlements evolved over time. Many of the features make important contributions to both landscape character and visual / social amenity, some at a national level, others at a regional and / or local level.
- 3.6.5 An Historic Environment Record (HER) search was carried out by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service in March 2017 to provide an evidence-base for both the landscape assessment and the NDP (the full HER report and maps are contained in Appendix E).
- 3.6.6 The search focused on the land within the parish boundary, but also took into consideration a 500m buffer around the parish, and a 2km overview of large landscape features.
- 3.6.7 A total of 200 monuments were recorded within the parish and 20 archaeological events. 238 monuments were recorded within 500m of the parish boundary and 114 large landscape features (landscape components and historic parks and gardens) were recorded within 2km.

Heritage Assets

- 3.6.8 The designated assets which are of relevance to the study are shown on Figures 4A and 4B, summarised below.

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

- 3.6.9 Several Scheduled Monuments (SMs) were identified in the study area. Although none lie within the parish, some of the monuments form part of the parish's western boundary.
- SM - Iron Age Hillfort and viewpoint at British Camp (S to W sector, outside parish boundary).
 - SM - Shire Ditch - probable Late Bronze Age boundary feature running along Hills' ridgeline (S to W and W to N sectors, forms parish boundary).
 - SM - two possible Bronze Age round barrows located W of the Shire Ditch E of Gardener's Common (S to W sector, on parish boundary).
 - SM at Little Malvern Priory (the site of the remains of a medieval preaching cross situated within the monastic precinct to the south of Little Malvern Priory) (S to W sector, outside parish boundary).
 - SM at Priory Gateway (or Gatehouse - also called 'The Abbey Archway') - once the gatehouse to Malvern Priory, built c.1480 (W to N sector, outside parish boundary).
 - SM at Malvern Priory (medieval churchyard cross, probably late 14th century) (W to N sector, outside parish boundary).

LISTED BUILDINGS

- 3.6.10 There are no Grade I or II* listed buildings within the parish, but a few notable ones nearby in Great and Little Malvern. These comprise:
- Grade I listed Malvern Priory Church of St. Mary and St. Michael (Benedictine monastery c.1075 - 1540, now an Anglican parish church) (W to N sector, outside parish boundary).
 - Grade I listed Church of St. Giles at Little Malvern Priory (church, formerly part of Benedictine Priory founded in 1171. C14 and late C15 with some Norman remains) (S to W sector, outside parish boundary).
 - Grade II* listed buildings in Great Malvern include the main building of Malvern College, the Priory Gateway, the Council House, and the chapel and cloister of the Convent of the Holy Name (all W to N sector, outside parish boundary).
 - Little Malvern Court, which is adjacent to Little Malvern Priory, is also Grade II* listed.
- 3.6.11 A total of 115 historic buildings and structures were identified within the parish. Their distribution is another indication of how the landscape has evolved and changed over time.
- 3.6.12 Of these, 72 have been designated by Historic England (formally English Heritage) as Grade II listed. With the exception of two Victorian gas street lamps on Watery Lane, and single ones at the Wyche Cutting and the Holy Well, all lie along both sides of the A449 Wells Road.
- 3.6.13 The majority of the listed buildings / structures recorded are gas lamps; these provide a strong sense of character and distinctiveness to the area. A war memorial, two 19th century milestones, two 19th century hotels / inns, and the 19th century well house at Holy Well, are also Grade II listed. The remaining listed buildings are all 19th century dwellings apart from the 'The Ruby' at 110 Wells Road which is dated to the 18th century.
- 3.6.14 It is interesting to note that there are no monuments, listed buildings or structures in a broad swathe of land extending east of the Wells Road (from Lower Wyche) as far as the Guarlford Road, Hanley Swan, and Welland. The landscape character type is Enclosed Commons, and the paucity of historic remains is indicative of how much clearance took place when the enclosures occurred, and how 'modern' this landscape is, relatively-speaking.
- 3.6.15 Malvern Wells Conservation Area extends long both sides of the Wells Road, and includes the Malvern Commons to the north, the Wyche, and parts of Upper Welland Road. Apart from the individual gas street lamps on Watery Lane and at the Wyche Cutting, all the parish's listed buildings and structures lie within the Conservation Area.
- 3.6.16 43 unlisted building records were found within the parish. Where relevant, the features and their context are summarised in the landscape history section below, and would be described in more detail in the Stage 2 report, but in summary, most are typically 19th or 20th century. They include farm buildings, dwellings, two 19th century schools, a 19th century and a 20th century church, and the route of a 19th century branch railway line, now removed. The defence of Worcestershire during the Second World War also features strongly with a number of records relating to defence structures such as air raid shelters.
- 3.6.17 An Historic England-funded, Worcestershire Farmstead and Landscapes Project identified eight traditional farmsteads within the Parish. These farmsteads, which were mapped from early 20th century Ordnance Survey maps, vary in date from the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 3.6.18 Brickbarns (or Brick Barns) Farm, which by the early 20th century was a very large-scale farmstead with multi-yard character, is recorded on the 1797 enclosure map of Hanley Castle, alongside Wood Farm, now demolished.

Landscape History

- 3.6.19 Figures 4A, 4B and 4C provide a broad illustration of the time-depth both buried and visible in the landscapes of the area today.
- 3.6.20 Historic map regression exercises have also been very useful in understanding how and why the landscape has evolved as it has, and what relevance this has to current and future landscape-related matters, especially character. A range of maps dating from 1772 onwards (and old aerial photographs) were consulted and compared. It is possible to identify features in the landscape today and trace their history back for many centuries; from this information, their rarity and value can also be determined.

- 3.6.21 The assessment found that the landscapes of the area have significant time-depth, and a great deal of this is visible in and around Malvern Wells. It identified key historic assets, elements and features, many of which are important characteristics of the local and wider landscape. It also identified a number of cultural associations. All these contribute to landscape character, and must be factored in to judgements about landscape value and sensitivity.

ANCIENT HISTORY

- 3.6.22 The Malvern Hills and surrounding areas have been a focus for human activity and settlement since prehistoric times:
- 3.6.23 The earliest feature noted in the HER is deposits that hold potential for Palaeolithic (Stone Age) archaeology dating back to 476,050 BC. Palaeolithic finds have also been found at Hanley Castle and Colwall Stone.
- 3.6.24 Debris from flint tool-making dating from the Neolithic period (4000-1500 BC) has been found on the Malvern Hills, suggesting that the landscape was widely used in the Neolithic period, albeit not intensively.
- 3.6.25 There is evidence of Bronze Age (c. 2500 - c. 800 BC) activity in the Malverns, for example the Shire Ditch boundary, some sections of which were created at that time. There have also been Bronze Age finds on Malvern Link Common, and a Bronze Age boundary feature lies near what is now the Chase School. Fragments of a Bronze Age sword and razor were found (and subsequently lost) in a quarry to the north of the Wyche Cutting.
- 3.6.26 Hunter-gatherers and settlers were attracted to the Hills by the abundant source of spring water, and the fact that the foothills to the west in particular were fertile and sheltered. However, between the last post-glacial period (which ended around 10,000 years ago, having lasted for approximately 100,000 years) and the start of the Iron Age (c. 700 BCE), the east side of the Malvern Hills was less well-suited for settlement than the west side, being predominantly poorly-drained brackish marshland in contrast to the more favourable conditions to the west. Still, the large reed beds would have contained an abundance of mammals, birds and fish and would have provided good hunting grounds; the area would later provide rough grazing for domesticated herds in summer.
- 3.6.27 The Hills are also believed to have been an early sacred site, of importance for religious and cultural practices, especially due to the spring water. As a result of this, and the increase in trade of valuable raw materials such as salt, many of these trackways and pilgrims' trails criss-cross throughout the study area, with villages such as Welland forming a small but strategic focal point where many of them intersected. It is likely that Drake Street in Welland was originally an ancient trackway, connecting a river crossing near Upton-on-Severn to British Camp⁹, possibly via what is now Malvern Wells.
- 3.6.28 Although it is not known when the first man-made cutting was made through the Hills, the Wyche Cutting may have been along the route of a salt road from very early pre-historic times¹⁰ (Old Wyche Road is discernible on a 1772 map).
- 3.6.29 The Iron Age (700 BCE – CE 43) brought the construction of strategically-placed hillforts. In the local area; these included British Camp and Midsummer Hill. The Hills are visible from distant viewpoints, and also command exceptional views.
- 3.6.30 Potteries were established near Malvern during the Middle Iron Age, with distinct types of clayware being manufactured on both the east and west sides of the Hills¹¹.

ROMAN PERIOD - 6th CENTURY

- 3.6.31 During the Roman period, as demand increased, the potteries on the east side of the Hills became of increasing importance.

⁹ Hurle, Pamela. *Beneath the Malvern Hills: A history of the village of Welland* (1973)

¹⁰ Hurle, Pamela. *The Forest and Chase of Malvern* (2007) p. 5

¹¹ Bowden, Mark. *The Malvern Hills: An ancient landscape* (2005)

- 3.6.32 Although there are no Romano-British HER features or finds from this period in the parish, there is the potential for such archaeology to exist. According to local historian Pamela Hurle, in 1847, 300 Roman coins were found in Little Malvern.

7th - 10th CENTURIES

- 3.6.33 By the early 7th century, the Malvern Hills are known to have formed the boundary between the subordinate Mercian kingdom of Hwicce to the east and the Magonsaetan to the west. With the conversion of Mercia to Christianity in the later 7th century, the seats of the Bishops of Hereford and Worcester were created.
- 3.6.34 Bishop's Wood in Welland is described as an 'extensive area of woodland' held by successive Bishops of Worcester, who would have used it for hunting long before the Norman invasion. Well-wooded parishes in the area, such as Hanley Castle (in which what is now Malvern Wells once lay), would also have provided summer pastures and autumn pannage to estates to the east in the more cultivated Severn and Avon valleys
- 3.6.35 Very few landscape elements from this period, such as hedgeline boundaries, survive, but there are ancient semi-natural woodlands in the area which are almost certainly remnants of post-glacial wildwoods and the later medieval chases. Hornyold Wood, in the North to West sector of the parish, is a rare pocket of surviving ancient woodland.

11th & 12th CENTURIES

- 3.6.36 Following the Norman conquest of England in 1066, William the Conqueror established a Royal Forest in the area. Forest law was established at the same time, with the intention of protecting the deer and the woodland itself.
- 3.6.37 A motte and bailey fortress was built on British Camp in the 11th century. In 1085, building works commenced on Great Malvern Priory in a spot chosen by the Benedictine monks for its remoteness.
- 3.6.38 Little Malvern Court and Priory lie c. 900m south west of the southern parish boundary. The Priory was a small Benedictine monastery, formed in c. 1125 and associated with the Worcester Church.
- 3.6.39 The Holy Well is highly likely to have played an important part in the way that Malvern Wells in particular developed over time. Since the 12th century at least, the Well has been linked with cures of various disorders and diseases.

13th & 14th CENTURIES

- 3.6.40 In the mid-13th century, hunting rights in the Royal Forest were transferred from the monarch, and became known as Malvern Chase. Hanley Castle was the administrative point for the forest.
- 3.6.41 Although the Chase was well-wooded, there were also open areas used for cultivation. Arable fields in Chase parishes such as Hanley Castle and Welland, of which Malvern Wells formed part, were likely to have been used to grow crops such as wheat and barley. Evidence of the medieval ridge and furrow farming method is still scattered around the parish (see Figure 4C).
- 3.6.42 Features found at what is now Blackmore Park date from the medieval period (pottery production as well as ridge and furrow), this area having formed part of the 'Hanleys'.
- 3.6.43 The 'Red Earl's Dyke' was constructed in 1287, along sections of the ancient Shire Ditch, to form a boundary between hunting land owned by Gilbert de Clare (Earl of Gloucester) and Thomas de Cantiloupe (Bishop of Hereford). A further ditch, to the North of the Wyche Cutting, almost certainly dates from the same period.

15th & 16th CENTURIES

- 3.6.44 The 12th century church at Little Malvern Priory was rebuilt in 1480 - 1482 (the scheduled monument is the site of the remains of a medieval preaching cross).
- 3.6.45 The Holy Well may have formed part of a monastic hospital in the medieval period, linked to the Priory. In 1558, Queen Elizabeth I granted the Holy Well to John Hornyold, although it is unlikely that water was bottled there until the 17th century.
- 3.6.46 The HER report notes the existence of other medieval / post-medieval features in the local landscape, although their exact dates are uncertain. In summary, they include:

- Areas of 'Unimproved Open Hill Pasture' (HWR1706) relating to the medieval period (1066-1539).
- Malvern Common is a remaining landscape from the medieval period (HWR8102).
- Historic Landscape Characterisation places the Wells village core (HWR1714) as 1540 - 1799, although much of the village probably developed towards the latter end of this period.
- Other historic landscape areas noted as post-medieval include New Pool (N to E sector - it is shown on the preliminary 1812 OS map, but the HER notes that it is from between 1540 and 1799, created from diverted watercourse), and Hornyold Wood (W to N - ancient woodland remnant).
- Nucleated row settlement - Wells Road and into Upper Welland HER HLC 1540-1799.
- There are several records for 'Brickbarns Farm', but mainly relating to C19 buildings (no information regarding date of establishment). However, the HLC places it as a 1540 - 1799 feature in the parish (HWR1717). Although farmstead buildings do not remain from this period, it still retains the historic character of an Isolated Farmstead.

17th - 19th CENTURIES

- 3.6.47 After disafforestation in 1632, enclosure of parts of the Chase proceeded rapidly. Clearance and cultivation took place, and squatter settlements developed along the foot of the Hills and along the roads which lead towards them.
- 3.6.48 For many centuries, Malvern Wells had been famous for its springs, and by the 17th century it had become a small but popular centre which catered for visitors. Historic maps from 1772 show the area newly-labelled as 'Malvern Wells', taking its name principally from the popular springs at Holy Well and Eye Well. However, other than that it was simply a small cluster of buildings / farms lying along the well-trodden route between Little Malvern and Great Malvern.
- 3.6.49 Great Malvern itself came to prominence in the mid-18th century, following Dr. John Wall's decision to develop Holy Well as one of the first water cure centres (see Malvern Water history section below). Still, Malvern Wells remained the focus of Malvern Water for some time.
- 3.6.50 On the 1772 map, the area covered by the parish is called 'Malvern Wood Common', suggesting that potentially there were still remnants of the forested Malvern Chase in existence at this time.
- 3.6.51 Hanley Castle (inclusive of Malvern Wells) was the first parish in Malvern Chase to be enclosed under the Enclosure Act of 1795. Disafforestation, enclosure (and 'new' money), and the loss of common land, together with new farming methods and techniques, resulted in major and dramatic changes in the area's landscape. In many parts, enduring and familiar features of the parish which had existed for many centuries – including the mosaic of open commons, marshes, mature trees and woods – were replaced with the more planned, intensively-managed and less diverse landscape with which we are familiar today.
- 3.6.52 The baseline figures show the distribution of the various historic and natural features in the area such as ancient monuments, listed buildings and structures, heritage assets, and wildlife sites. The fact that there are so few found within the Enclosed Commons landscape type in and around the parish reflects just how extensive the clearance of the area must have been (although traces of medieval farms and farming practices do remain, such as Brick Barns Farm, and ridge and furrow).
- 3.6.53 Although the Malvern Hills had been quarried for centuries, initially extraction was on a small scale and purely for local purposes; however, it increased in 1836 when the Wyche Cutting was altered to make a more accessible road through the Hills. 1836 was the date that quarrying at Earnslaw began.
- 3.6.54 Even before the arrival of the railways, increasing industrialisation was changing and shaping Malvern's character. Many of the features dating from the mid-19th century are now defining characteristics of the settlement and surrounding areas. A gas works opened in Malvern in 1856, resulting in the whole of the town being provided with gas street lighting. As set out above, the lamps are highly-distinctive symbols of Malvern, and Malvern Wells in particular - almost half of the remaining working lamps (48 out of 105) are in the parish. They are not just of local, but of national heritage importance, and are Grade II listed.

- 3.6.55 The railway from Worcester to Malvern Link was built in 1859, and was extended to Great Malvern in 1860. In order for the line to reach Hereford as intended, it was decided to tunnel under the Malvern Hills from Malvern Wells to Colwall - a major engineering feat at that time.
- 3.6.56 The Malvern Wells Great Western railway station (on the west side of the existing railway line, south of Peachfield Road) opened on 25th May 1860. There was also a coal yard and a stationmaster's house (the latter still exists).
- 3.6.57 Malvern Wells Midland Station was on the branch line linking Malvern to Upton-upon-Severn, Tewkesbury and Ashchurch, where it joined the Midland main line. The line was opened in the 1860s. The station was situated at the south-western corner of what is now the TCS, on the south side of Hanley Road.
- 3.6.58 The new railways had a major effect on the town and its people, and resulted in Great Malvern becoming a bustling town centre and now the focus of attention for the 'water trade'.
- 3.6.59 By the 1860s, the Holy Well and Eye Well had become overshadowed by the popularity of St. Ann's Well. The growth of Great Malvern was hastened by the arrival of the railways, and resulted in the establishment of Malvern Link as a separate settlement. *'Despite the railway, Hanley and Malvern Wells never achieved the commercial success of Great Malvern, though there was steady residential development in Malvern Wells, where the Hornyolds continued to exercise considerable influence¹².*
- 3.6.60 John Marius Wilson's *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* from 1870-72, describes Malvern Wells as sharing Great Malvern's character of a 'watering-place', and in 1861 having a population of 558, and 104 houses¹³.
- 3.6.61 In the late 19th century, largely as a result of the popularity of the 'water cure' and demand for new accommodation, Great Malvern was rapidly expanding into the countryside, encroaching onto the public commons on its edges. This growth was largely uncontrolled. The need to protect the remaining public open spaces became an issue of widespread public concern. In 1884, an Act of Parliament (secured with the help of local landowners and under which MHC were set up) was passed, allowing the Conservators powers to protect, control and manage the land. They were to be responsible for preserving the natural aspects of the land and its use as an open space for public enjoyment.
- 3.6.62 According to MHC, *'The Malvern Hills Act was a major achievement establishing the principles of public access and protective measures for the Hills, chiefly to prevent enclosure and encroachment upon common land, to protect the rights of commoners, and to manage the increase in tourism. It provided a Board of Conservators to manage and supervise the Malvern Hills in accordance with the provisions of the original and subsequent Acts'*.
- 3.6.63 The Acts now protect most of Malvern's commons and the Hills themselves, and MHC currently have about 200 hectares (500 acres) of land under their jurisdiction.
- 3.6.64 In terms of the landscapes beyond the edges of the town, an 1873 map shows some landuse information - the TCS was common land, and the existing woodland (Langdale and associated woods) east of Blackmore Road was arable land.
- 3.6.65 The 1880s OS map shows that the field patterns have remained similar today in southern segments of the parish, but lost north of Hanley Road (especially land associated with the golf course and the TCS). There are orchards shown around Wood Farm and Brickbarns Farm, although no orchards from this time appear to remain within the parish boundary. On the map, the old and complex footpath network around Brickbarns Farm is as it exists today.
- 3.6.66 Malvern Wells was populated enough in the mid- to late-19th century to gain a church, post office, school and the railway stations. Settlement along the Wells Road increased. Many of the listed buildings in the area relate to this period, and reflect Malvern's 19th century boom years as a spa town. Victorian mansions - many of which are now listed buildings - are mixed with quarry workers' terraces. Wyche Road is only evident on the OS maps from the 1880s onwards – perhaps built to provide better access for the growing quarrying activities, but it also provided a more direct route to Great Malvern and the various attractions which were newly-available there.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

- 3.6.67 However, overall, Malvern Wells grew little in the 19th century, with the spa town shift and focus firmly on Great Malvern.
- 3.6.68 In 1894, the parish of Malvern Wells was officially formed, having originally formed parts of the civil parishes of Hanley Castle, Welland and the former parish of Great Malvern.

20th CENTURY

- 3.6.69 Maps suggest that there was little change in the wider landscape between the 1880s and the early 1900s; however, by 1914, the plantation woodlands of Langdale Wood and neighbouring woods had been established.
- 3.6.70 A golf course is shown on Malvern Common (east), this being the original location of the Worcestershire Golf Club (Elgar is likely to have played golf there) - the old club house is still standing at the top of the Common near the junction of Peachfield Road and Longridge Road.
- 3.6.71 The 1920s OS map shows that some larger areas of orchards had been established in and around the parish - a few small fragments of these around Warren Farm still remain today.
- 3.6.72 In 1907 a commercial quarrying company obtained a licence to quarry on land in the Hills. Previously, quarrying had been relatively small-scale, but demand for Malvern stone was increasing. Soon, quarrying became a major problem because it was disfiguring the landscape of the Hills, and apparently threatening the ridgeline in several places. However, there may possibly have been some agreement that the profile of the ridgeline should not be affected - for example, the quarries at North Hill and Upper Wyche extend almost as far as the summit, but from most angles the summit's distinctive silhouette is unchanged.
- 3.6.73 Quarrying was a major factor in the development of Upper Wyche, and determined much of the present character of this part of the settlement. Following the opening of Earnslaw Quarry in 1836 (and the smaller quarry south of it at around the same time), nucleated row development spread along Lower Wyche Road, and the section of Wells Road immediately below it.

Upper Wyche in 1933¹⁴



¹⁴ © Historic England. May not be reproduced except with any permission under licence.

- 3.6.74 In due course, the Malvern Hills Act 1924 was passed. This was an extremely important Act for the Hills, because it finally gave the Conservators the power to prevent further land use for quarrying through the compulsory purchase of land over the following five years, and to make byelaws to restrict and regulate existing quarrying operations.
- 3.6.75 The Golf Club moved to its current location at Wood Farm in 1926, opened in 1927, and play continued until WWII, when much of the golf course and land at Wood Farm was taken over by the MoD to build a hospital for anticipated D-Day casualties. Another hospital in Malvern Wells was on the land which is now St. Wulstan's Nature Reserve. After the war, Brickbarns Hospital became a TB hospital, and was renamed St. Wulstan's in 1949 prior to opening.
- 3.6.76 The section of the branch line railway between Malvern and Upton, which joined the Midland main line at Ashchurch, was closed in 1952, along with the Malvern Wells Midland Station (the remainder of the branch line was finally closed on 14 August 1961).
- 3.6.77 In 1958, the TCS gained its permanent home at its current location on the former Firs Farm site. The showground now covers c. 28 hectares / 70 acres.
- 3.6.78 Malvern Wells Great Western Station was closed on 5th April 1965, along with the rest of the minor stations on this line - this was because Great Western's new locomotives were unable to be used between Worcester and Hereford due to the small bore of the Victorian railway tunnels through the Hills.
- 3.6.79 Wood Farm Camp was recovered by the Worcestershire Golf Club from the MoD in the early 1970s; some of the post-war dwellings remain along Wood Farm Road.
- 3.6.80 From 1960 to 1986 'St. Wulstan's' (Wulstan was Bishop of Worcester in the 11th century, canonised in 1203) was a psychiatric hospital. Following its closure, planning permission was granted for housing on 40 acres of the land. In 1994, the derelict buildings on the rest of the site were demolished, and some 60 acres of land were dedicated to MHDC.
- 3.6.81 Over time, this land had become a haven for wildlife. It was therefore decided to designate the area as a Local Nature Reserve. St. Wulstan's LNR officially opened on April 25th 1997 and has since become a highly-valuable resource for both wildlife and the local community (see sections on biodiversity and public amenity below).
- 3.6.82 In the later years of the 20th century, several new houses were built in Malvern Wells. There was infill development around Green Lane and the Moorlands, between Upper and Lower Wyche, and around Assarts Lane. Most of this was small scale, but the most significant increase in houses was at the Fruitlands Estate south of Peachfield Road, where building began in 1971. This had a considerable effect on the character of the area and views from and towards the Hills, and resulted in built form in the Wells all but coalescing with Great Malvern.
- 3.6.83 Anecdotal evidence suggests that some local residents feel a sense of separation from the centre of the Malvern Wells and the village community, and more closely-connected to Barnards Green.

Local Historic Landscape Character

- 3.6.84 This part of the assessment was partly informed by WCC's Worcestershire Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) (2012)¹⁵. It is an important and valuable source of reference, especially in terms of considering the effects of future development in the area.
- 3.6.85 The aim of WCC's project was to record, map and interpret the current historic landscape character of the County, dividing it into parcels of land which share similarities through time. The information shows how places have developed over the centuries, and demonstrates how the past is present in today's landscapes.
- 3.6.86 The document's introduction explains the purpose of the study in more detail, explaining that it is '*... a powerful and flexible tool to manage and enhance Worcestershire's historic landscape character, especially for those with responsibility for setting frameworks for change or making decisions that might affect the County's historic landscape character...*

'The purpose of HLC is to provide relatively objective material to inform direction and guidance on how the different landscapes can be managed in respect of its historic character and sustainability... into the future, providing benefits for residents and visitors alike. Information

¹⁵ http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20230/archive_and_archaeology_projects/1062/historic_landscape_characterisation_hlc

contained within the HLC is also relevant to land-owners, land estate managers, or for commercial developers and others whose plans might result in landscape change...

'The historic landscape is sensitive to change and needs to be properly understood before change is planned, to ensure its effective management and enhancement, so that it can make its full contribution in shaping sustainable communities.'

3.6.87 Figure 5 shows the current historic character types, although there are often other layers and features underlying them. The time periods illustrated on the map are:

- Neolithic (4000BC - 2351BC)
- Medieval (1066-1539)
- 1540-1799
- 1800-1913
- 1914-1945
- Post 1945.

3.6.88 The distribution of the historic character types corresponds closely to the LCTs described above, in particular the Enclosed Commons type which covers most of the parish.

3.6.89 However, there are certain differences - for example, the fields immediately north of Langdale and Blackmore Woods, which are orientated north west to south east, are classified as Enclosed Commons, but the HLC map shows them as being 1550 - 1799. The Enclosure Act came into force in the area in 1795, so it is likely that these fields (probably connected with New Pool, which originated in the same period), were not affected by the enclosures. A public footpath runs along the north-eastern boundary of the fields, which is shown on old maps. This could once have been a key link between Hanley Castle and the Hills, via the Malvern Commons.

Malvern Water History

3.6.90 Malvern's innumerable springs, wells and spouts constitute valuable heritage assets (the location of those identified within the parish is shown on Figure 4B).

3.6.91 Some are very ancient, associated with early settlements and sacred practices. Many have changed their form over time, becoming shrines, chapels, statues and works of art.

3.6.92 The Malvern Hills and surrounding areas have been a focus for human activity and settlement since prehistoric times, with records of finds in the local area dating from the Stone Age. Hunter-gatherers and settlers were attracted to the Hills by the abundant source of spring water, and the fact that the lower-lying areas to the west in particular were fertile and sheltered.

3.6.93 The purported health-giving properties of the water were almost certainly well-known in medieval times. There are legends of St. Oswald revealing to a hermit the medicinal powers of what became known as the Holy Well, and of monks at Little Malvern Priory using water from another local well to cure people. The Holy Well may have formed part of a monastic hospital in the medieval period, linked to Little Malvern Priory¹⁶.

3.6.94 However, the 'discovery' of the therapeutic benefits of Malvern Water was more likely to be a 'post-Reformation phenomenon'. The first documented mention of the Holy Well, the most significant of the area's healing springs, appears to be in a grant of land in 1558. This was when the lordship of the Manor of Hanley Castle, in which the Holy Well was situated, was granted to John Hornyold under the premise that any pilgrim or traveller should be able to 'draw rest and refreshment from the Holy Well'.

3.6.95 The earliest written reference to both the medicinal value and the bottling of Malvern Water is in a poem attributed to the Reverend Edmund Rea, who became Vicar of Great Malvern in 1612.

3.6.96 However, 1622 is the first recording of spring water being bottled the UK, at Holy Well. It would also become the site where Malvern Water was first drawn for sale by Schweppes Company at the Great Exhibition in 1852¹⁷.

¹⁶ Osborne, B. and Weave, C. *Rediscovering 17th Century Springs and Spa* (1996)

¹⁷ <http://www.malvernwells-pc.gov.uk/home/about-malvern-wells>

- 3.6.97 Malvern Water's hey-day was in Victorian times, when rapid industrialisation resulted in city-dwellers suffering from the effects of pollution and over-work, and being sent to 'healthy' parts of the country such as Malvern, to take advantage of the fresh air and clean water. Various forms of therapies and water 'cures' were developed in the town and on its outskirts, and several hotels and other establishments associated with 'taking the waters' were built at that time.
- 3.6.98 In the 18th century, Dr John Wall, who treated patients in Worcester Infirmary (he was also one of the founders of the Infirmary, and of Worcester Porcelain), promoted the water for its clean taste and purity. Having analysed the water, he announced that it contained 'nothing at all', due to its very low mineral content. He used the profits from his book '*Experiments and Observations on the Malvern Water*', published in 1756, to treat the poor, and raised medical fees from the gentry to aid the less wealthy.
- 3.6.99 Over time, interest in Malvern Water dwindled again, although it was bottled by Coca-Cola Schweppes at Colwall until relatively recently. In the mid-1990s, as part of a project to regenerate Malvern's town centre, Malvern Water was put back on the map, leading to several initiatives that promoted its pivotal role in the town's heritage and culture.
- 3.6.100 These resulted in the restoration of many springs and spouts, the creation of a new town centre spout, and the bottling of spring water at the Holy Well for the first time since 1929. Even today, new springs are being discovered, and new ones planned, the latter playing their part in the ongoing history of Malvern Water and contributing to the distinctive character of the town.
- 3.6.101 Every year, Malvern Spa Association (MSA) organises a well-dressing event, which celebrates Malvern's spring water heritage.
- 3.6.102 Most of the currently-identified springs, spouts and wells within the parish lie in the West to North sector, apart from Tyrol House Fountain, Devil's Well and Goat Spring, which are in the South to West sector. In order travelling from north to south through Malvern Wells:
- 1) Lower Wyche Spout and Trough
 - 2) Railway Tunnel Spring
 - 3) Golf Club Spout
 - 4) Gothick Well
 - 5) Cottage-in-the-Wood Spout
 - 6) Jubilee Fountain
 - 7) The Holy Well
 - 8) Eye Well
 - 9) Devil's Well
 - 10) Tyrol House Fountain
 - 11) Goat Spring.
- 3.6.103 A spring has been identified which feeds water into a pond just east of Grundy's Lane, becoming a watercourse which runs into the brook on Hanley Road near Grundy's Road junction. This is probably the water that comes down from Holy Well but goes underground behind 200 Wells Road.
- 3.6.104 There are also built-in spring outlets at 6 and 12 Hanley Road, and adjacent to 262 Wells Road.

Cultural Associations

- 3.6.105 The Malvern Hills are '*... a constituent part of the collective self-image of England through the cultural inspiration that they have provided in both literature and music*¹⁸' (in fact, the arts generally).
- 3.6.106 Malvern and the Hills also have many important cultural associations with a wide variety of notable individuals and events.
- 3.6.107 The information which has been collected for this section so far is summarised below. In the Stage 2 report, where of relevance to the study, it would be written up in full and supplemented with any new material which comes to light.

¹⁸ *The Malvern Hills: An ancient landscape* Mark Bowden (reprinted 2009) English Heritage

3.6.108 Notable individuals associated with Malvern - either who lived or worked here, or visited - include (in approximate chronological order):

- William Langland
- Dr. John Wall
- Peter Mark Roget
- Dr. James Wilson
- Dr. James Manby Gully
- Charles Dickens
- Charles Darwin
- Alfred Lord Tennyson
- Florence Nightingale
- Edward Elgar
- (Arthur) Troyte Griffith
- W H Auden
- Barry Jackson
- George Bernard Shaw
- J R R Tolkien
- C S Lewis
- Lascelles Abercrombie
- Dame Laura Knight
- Evelyn Waugh
- Margaret Thatcher
- Anne Diamond
- Nigel Kennedy
- David Prentice
- Michael Gooch
- Rose Garrard
- Various members of the Royal Family including Prince Andrew, who named Jubilee Hill in 2003.

3.6.109 Certain buildings within, or close to, the parish, are associated with some of the notable people identified above. These include:

- Holy Well
- Villa Nouva (now White Lodge) - Charles & Emma Darwin
- Craeg Lea, Wells Road - Elgar
- St. Wulstan's Church - Elgar
- Wells House - water cure, Elgar
- All Saint's Church, 'Greyroofs', war memorial, Fair View Cottage - (Arthur) Troyte Griffith
- Holbrooks' Grocer (Worcester Sauce) formerly at 207 Wells Road
- Cottage-in-the Wood Hotel - Elgar, CS Lewis, Margaret Thatcher
- 'Greenways' (200 Wells Road) - birthplace of the Ecology (Green) Party in 1973.

3.7 Biodiversity

3.7.1 Biodiversity is an important factor in the assessment of landscape and visual effects, as different habitats have different characteristics and features which contribute to a landscape's character. Loss or erosion of habitats can therefore lead to adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Changes to landscape features, elements and landcover can also result in changes to habitats and the species of flora and fauna they support.

- 3.7.2 On-the-ground ecological surveys are beyond the scope of landscape assessment, and that level of detail is not normally required at this stage (proposals for any future development should include an ecological survey in accordance with best practice if it is likely that habitats and / or species could be affected by it).
- 3.7.3 However, this assessment has taken into account information which is publicly available, supplemented with data supplied by Worcestershire Biological Records Centre (WBRC) in March 2017 - see Appendix F. The information includes maps which provide a very useful overview of the habitats in and adjacent to the parish.
- 3.7.4 Also, if obvious potential for biodiversity in undesignated areas is noted during the surveys, and where potentially relevant to landscape character, it is recorded and incorporated into judgements about value and sensitivity / capacity. The key information is shown on Figures 6A and 6B, and summarised below.
- The Malvern Hills are a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (S to W and W to N sectors).
 - Although just outside the study area boundary, Castlemorton Common (south of Welland) is also a SSSI, and there is a small SSSI in Welland village (Mutlow's Orchard).
 - The majority of the study area, and the whole of the parish, lie within one or several SSSI Impact Risk Zones. These zones indicate where proposed planned change to the environment could result in significant damage to a SSSI, and / or where future projects could require more planning and consultation in order to avoid affecting those sites.
 - St. Wulstan's Local Nature Reserve (LNR) (E to S sector).
 - Several Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) were identified:
 - Malvern Common (east) and grass verges along Poolbrook Road (N to E sector - Poolbrook Road lies beyond parish boundary).
 - Langdale Wood (N to E sector - wood lies along parish's eastern boundary, on the east side of Blackmore Park Road).
 - Merebrook and associated watercourses (E to S and S to W sectors - brook forms part of parish's southern boundary).
 - Section of dismantled railway line (E to S sector, outside parish boundary).
 - Malvern Common west and grassland on hillslopes (W to N sector).
 - Several Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI) and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat sites are scattered throughout the parish and on its boundaries. These include:
 - PHI Deciduous Woodland (DW) - characteristic belts along the length of the Hills' mid-slopes (and a feature of the Malvern Hills' SSSI notification), small belts and blocks scattered on the lower slopes, and some larger blocks on the plain, including Langdale and associated woods.
 - PHI Lowland Dry Acid Grassland predominates on the Malvern Hills' upper slopes.
 - Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat at Langdale Wood and Blackmore Park (uncommon east of the Hills).
 - PHI Traditional Orchards (three within the parish). Two of these lie within the TCS; the third is associated with a residential property on the east side of the Wells Road, west of Hornyold Wood.
 - The grassland which has become established in recent years at St. Wulstan's Nature Reserve is classified as PHI Good quality semi-improved grassland (Non-Priority).
 - Other areas are categorised as PHI 'No main habitat but additional habitat exists'. Within the parish, these are mostly on land associated with residential properties (e.g. gardens / paddocks).
 - Several nationally-rare, nationally-scarce and / or notable species of plants, mammals, birds, insects and amphibians.

- Other watercourses run through the study area. Although not designated, they may provide habitats for wildlife including protected species. New development has the potential to adversely affect water quality and may result in erosion / loss of habitat.
- Significant vegetation: Where significant vegetation exists, it is likely to provide habitats for wildlife which may include protected species.

3.7.5 It is important to understand the nature of the various habitats, reasons for any designation, and the range of species they may support, as this information is factored in to judgements about value, likely effects, and levels of sensitivity and capacity. The Stage 2 assessment would consider this aspect in more detail.

3.8 Green Infrastructure

3.8.1 'Green Infrastructure' (GI) is '*...the planned and managed network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages. GI comprises many different elements including biodiversity, the landscape, the historic environment, the water environment (also known as blue infrastructure) and publicly accessible green spaces and informal recreation sites*¹⁹.'

3.8.2 GI 'assets' are physical / natural / historic / recreational features and elements; GI functions are the roles the assets play. GI makes an important contribution to judgements about Landscape Value.

3.8.3 GI functions include the provision of:

- Access, recreation, movement and leisure
- Habitats for, and access to, nature
- Landscape setting and context for development
- Energy production and conservation
- Food production and productive landscapes
- Flood attenuation and water resource management
- Cooling effects.

3.8.4 Amongst its many benefits, GI has a vital role to play in peoples' health and wellbeing. According to WCC's GI Strategy, residents who live near nature generally cope better with the stress of everyday life and are considered happier than those who do not have easy access to green spaces.

3.8.5 GI can improve the community's experience and understanding of natural and historic places. Integrating access to green spaces with natural, cultural and heritage value into peoples' everyday lives can help to develop a connection with the local area and increase community participation. It can provide learning opportunities, reduce crime and encourage social activity. Education involving the natural environment and green spaces can positively influence the functioning of communities through reducing anti-social behaviour, increasing self-esteem and improving skills.

3.8.6 It can also benefit the natural and historic environment by creating and enhancing biodiversity, connecting wildlife corridors and networks, protecting and enhancing landscape character, and improving the quality of rivers and streams as well as conserving and enhancing heritage assets such as historic landscapes and archaeological features, and improving the setting of historic buildings and monuments.

3.8.7 The landscape assessment effectively includes and describes many of the area's GI assets, so they are not specifically mentioned here. However, GI should form an integral part of planning for the future (it is an important aspect of both national and local planning policy), and should be the subject of focused studies if and when required, especially as part of planning applications.

3.8.8 For reference, some examples of GI assets in both the local and wider study areas are given below:

¹⁹ Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013 – 2018 (WCC)

- Natural and semi-natural rural and urban green spaces – includes woodland and scrub, grassland, meadow, wetlands, open and running water, brownfield sites, bare rock / geological habitats (for example quarries).
- Parks and gardens – urban and country parks, formal / public and private gardens, and institutional grounds (for example schools).
- Amenity green spaces – informal recreation spaces, play areas, outdoor sports facilities, housing green spaces, domestic gardens, community gardens, roof gardens, village greens, commons, living roofs and walls, hedges, civic spaces, and highway trees and verges.
- Allotments, orchards, suburban and rural farmland.
- Cemeteries and churchyards.
- Green and blue corridors – watercourses (including their banks and floodplains), dismantled railway, road verges, old trackways.
- Sites of nature conservation value / importance (statutory and non-statutory) including SSSIs, LWSs and PHI sites; also LGSs.
- Green spaces (designated / undesignated) selected for historic significance, scenic beauty, recreation, wildlife, tranquillity etc.
- Archaeological, historic and cultural sites / features.
- Functional green spaces such as sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS) and flood storage areas.
- Built structures – living roofs and walls, bird and bat boxes, roost sites.

3.9 Public and Social Amenity

- 3.9.1 This section summarises the various key destinations, features and attractions which contribute to the public and social amenity of people living in and around the parish. It identifies footpaths, trails and other routes, and sites of value for both formal and informal recreation.
- 3.9.2 The open spaces and footpaths in particular are a very valuable community asset, providing access to most if not all of the GI assets listed above, and contributing to the health and well-being and quality of life of local people.
- 3.9.3 Many of the features and spaces are also used / visited by people from outside the area, including tourists, and thus they make an important contribution to the local economy. However, the nature of some of them, and the activities which take place, can also give rise to both temporary and permanent adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity.
- 3.9.4 If the Stage 2 assessment goes ahead, it would also factor in information collected by / from the local community during public consultation, so as to identify other key destinations, favourite walks, cycling / horse-riding routes and other recreational / social facilities within the parish (and possibly, future ones as well).
- 3.9.5 The key destinations and features are shown on Figures 7A and 7B.

Key Destinations

- 3.9.6 The Malvern Hills are a key destination, and attract visitors from all over the world.
- 3.9.7 They are an AONB, the primary purpose of the designation being to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape; public appreciation is a key component of natural beauty.
- 3.9.8 The beauty of the Hills, commons and associated areas within the AONB (and those outside but which form part of its setting) is recognised as contributing significantly to economic activities and well-being through tourism and inward investment. The Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan 2014 - 2019 (published April 2014) states that *'Each year, some 1.25 million visitors come to the AONB to enjoy its natural and cultural heritage. Tourism makes a significant contribution to the local economy.... Local authorities in Herefordshire and Worcestershire support tourism strategies that recognise the importance of AONBs as special landscapes and as important destinations for people seeking the natural environment'*.

- 3.9.9 However, it is important to note that the value of 'The Malverns' to local residents and workers is also very high, and most people living in the area fully appreciate not just its scenic qualities but its heritage, biodiversity, and opportunities for both formal and informal recreation.
- 3.9.10 There are extensive areas of Open Access / Registered Common Land throughout the Malvern area, as well as other green open spaces, both semi-urban and semi-natural, large and small, all of which provide an excellent recreational resource.
- 3.9.11 Excluding those in Great Malvern town centre, many of which have been mentioned elsewhere in this report, the key visitor destinations lying within the study area, and outside of but close to the parish (relevant sectors in brackets) include:
- Elgar's grave at St. Wulstan's Church (S to W).
 - Little Malvern Priory and Court (S to W)
 - Lovell's Vineyard, Welland (E to S)
 - Welland Steam Rally (annual event. E to S)
 - Several camping and caravanning sites
 - Several hotels, B & Bs, pubs and restaurants
- 3.9.12 Within Malvern Wells parish, key destinations used by both local people and visitors (relevant sectors in brackets) include:
- Malvern Water heritage and several springs and spouts (mostly S to W and W to N sectors - see Malvern Water History section above and Section 4 below for more detail)
 - Three Counties Showground (N to E)
 - St. Wulstan's LNR (E to S)
 - The Wyche Inn (W to N)
 - The Railway Inn (W to N)
 - Cottage-in-the-Wood hotel and restaurant (W to N)
 - Several B & Bs
 - The Village Hall and the Wells Club on Wells Road (S to W)
 - Malvern Wells Cemetery (S to W)
 - Worcestershire Golf Club (W to N)
 - Various shops and other commercial facilities
 - Recreational facilities e.g. sports pitches.

Recreation and Access

- 3.9.13 Most of the key destinations listed above are easily accessible via the local road network. Some are also accessible via public footpaths, cycleways and bridleways, which are summarised below.
- 3.9.14 As set out above, one of Malvern's key attributes is the large number of green open spaces which provide access to GI assets. Individually and combined, these spaces are of high value, and are usually protected by designations and / or other legislation.
- 3.9.15 The study identified the following within the study area, several of which are also within the parish:
- Open Access and Registered Common Land, and other land managed by MHC. On Open Access Land, walking, horse-riding, running, watching wildlife and climbing are permitted. Activities such as camping are not allowed.
 - A well-used network of footpaths, bridleways, trails and routes which connect to the wider area. Some of these are ancient trackways and pilgrims' paths to and from the Malvern Hills.
 - The Herefordshire Trail is a popular 150-mile long-distance footpath which runs outside the study area on the west side of the Hills. However, there are many points along this section where walkers can join footpaths which lead to the Malverns.
 - The Worcestershire Way starts in Great Malvern town centre and heads north to Bewdley.
 - The Three Choirs Way is a circular route between Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester, part of which runs along the Malvern Hills' ridgeline and the parish's western boundary. The Three

Choirs Way connects with the Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Wysis and Severn Ways and the Wye Valley Walk, and, via local PRsoW, with the Herefordshire Trail.

- The Malvern and Abberley Hills Geopark Way is another popular long-distance walking trail in the area. It runs for 109 miles between Bridgnorth and Gloucester, enabling people to 'explore 700 million years of geological history' whilst passing through 'stunning countryside'. Within the study area, it runs through Colwall Green along the line of an old pilgrim's trail and up the western slopes of the Hills to British Camp; it then turns northwards along the Hills' ridgeline, part of which forms the parish's western boundary.
- Several trails providing access to the area's geology, for example Earnslaw Quarry.
- Literary trails around the Malverns.
- Malvern Water springs, spouts, wells and heritage trails.
- Nature trails, for example a four-mile route around Malvern Wells beginning at St Wulstan's Nature Reserve.
- A stand-alone section of National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 46 runs through Great Malvern, linking Great Malvern station to Townsend Way via Poolbrook and Pound Bank. It is also possible to access NCN Route 45 (east of the River Severn) from Malvern via Upton-upon-Severn.

3.10 Key Constraints

3.10.1 Landscape assessments can identify some of the constraints which could affect the future development of certain areas. Many of the designations and features identified in the assessment are potential constraints to development at one level or another, although they do not necessarily preclude development *per se*.

3.10.2 During the Stage 1 desktop studies and on-the-ground assessments, the key landscape-related designations, policies, features, receptors and functions were identified. It was concluded that most of these were constraints in that they could be affected or changed - directly or indirectly - by new development in some way.

3.10.3 The brief for this study also required physical constraints to be taken into account, where relevant to landscape character and visual amenity. These would be considered further during the Stage 2 assessments, which would identify constraints relating to individual parcels of land and / or zones, but in summary they normally include factors such as:

Land on steep or very steep slopes: Building on steep slopes is likely to require large-scale engineering works which could give rise to significant adverse effects. Even if building can be achieved, it may not be possible to get access to the land without cutting into the slope, removing vegetation, roadside hedgerows and so on.

No direct access from public highway: Access to some areas may be possible through adjacent land which does have direct access, either now or in the future, but others are perhaps only reached via fields, or narrow lanes / stone tracks which would require widening / 'improving' which could give rise to adverse effects.

Flooding: As well as being a constraint to development, building in a flood plain may be uncharacteristic in terms of local landscape character. No parts of the parish lie within Flood Zones 2 and / or 3, but localised flash-flooding may occur.

3.10.4 It should be noted that there are other matters beyond the scope of a landscape assessment which have to be factored in to judgements about whether development of a site is feasible and / or viable, and whether it can be achieved without giving rise to unacceptable levels of adverse effects.

3.10.5 Land-ownership and / or the protection and / or management of land may have to be considered where relevant to landscape character and visual amenity in terms of how a landscape 'looks', for example. However, it is not usually factored in to judgements about levels of capacity, as the situation can change over time. In this case, large areas of land in and around the parish are protected by Acts of Parliament.

3.10.6 As explained in the historic landscape section above, the Malvern Hills Act 1884 was passed following the concern of a number of local people about the loss of common land caused by

Malvern's expansion, and general encroachment. The Act established MHC, charging them with several duties which included preventing building on the land, and enclosure.

- 3.10.7 This means that land under the jurisdiction of MHC is a major constraint to new development and / or access.

3.11 Visual Baseline

- 3.11.1 The visual baseline assessment relies heavily on the findings of the landscape character assessment summarised above, which includes reference to published guidance, and the mapping and analysis of designated sites, heritage / cultural assets, settings / areas of influence, landscape functions, important wildlife habitats, public and social amenity, access and so on. These inform the 'nature' of the view, which is influenced by matters such as how well-cared for and / or well-used the landscape is, and what its character 'tells' us about the area's sense of place and what it contributes to it.
- 3.11.2 Other aspects of landscape character, such as aesthetic and perceptual qualities, add to the understanding of the quality, value, function and importance of a view.
- 3.11.3 The numbers of people experiencing the view and the reason for the visit is also taken into account, and their sensitivity as 'visual receptors' is established by combining their susceptibility to change, and the value of the view (see next section).
- 3.11.4 A key source of reference for the visual assessment is MHAONBP's 2009 study of views to and from the Malvern Hills (which informed its publication '*Guidance on Identifying and Grading Views and Viewpoints*'²⁰).
- 3.11.5 The guidance emphasises that the key views and corridors are a material consideration in planning decisions, and that their protection is a priority in this respect. It also makes clear that effects on the AONB can arise, and therefore must be considered, beyond its boundaries (i.e. on its 'setting') as well as within them: '*In 2012, Defra and Natural England advised those carrying out management plan reviews that there is a greater imperative to consider the effect of development in the setting of protected landscapes. The setting of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is the surroundings in which the area is experienced. If the quality of the setting declines, then the appreciation and enjoyment of the AONB diminishes. Construction of a distant but high structure; development or change generating movement, noise, odour, artificial light, vibration or dust over a wide area; or a new understanding of the relationship between neighbouring landscapes may all impact on/extend the setting*'.
- 3.11.6 MHAONBP's key viewpoints (VPs) and associated view corridors were marked and / or noted on the base plans (see Figures 8A and 8B), and the information was factored in to judgements about value and sensitivity.
- 3.11.7 It is not always possible to fully assess views and visual amenity on-the-ground, as usually only places which are publicly-accessible are visited. However, many people were kind enough to allow us access to private land so that views could be considered from all angles. Where necessary, Google Earth was used to gain an impression of a certain view.
- 3.11.8 The visual assessment takes into account any 'functions' assigned to various parts of the study area during the baseline character assessments (gateway / gap / buffer / setting / green corridor etc. - gateways and approaches are shown on Figures 8A and 8B)), identifies others, and assesses potential effects on them from the visual receptor's perspective. Areas of built form which are physically separated on the ground may appear to coalesce from certain viewpoints, for example, whereas from others, the contribution made by an open, rural gap to landscape and villagescape character may be very clear and visually important.
- 3.11.9 Potential effects on the setting of heritage assets is another key consideration in both landscape and visual assessment. However, formal assessments of effects on settings (see for example Historic England's Good Practice Advice 3 - The Setting of Heritage Assets²¹) are beyond the scope of this study, and that level of detail is not normally required at this stage (proposals for any future development should include such an assessment in accordance with best practice if it is likely that heritage assets could be affected by it).

²⁰ http://www.malvernhillssaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/KEYVIEWSFinalreport-lowreswebsite_000.pdf

²¹ <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/gpa3.pdf/>

- 3.11.10 In assessing views and visual amenity, it is important to understand the landscape context of the view. For example, many views looking east from higher ground on the Malvern Hills are characterised by extensive panoramas which extend to the far-distant horizon. In middle- and long-distance views, the individual elements and features are perceived as forming a vast, integrated patchwork of patterns, textures and colours, creating the impression of green and tranquil agricultural landscapes.
- 3.11.11 As a result, the viewer tends not to focus on individual features unless they draw the eye for some reason. Examples include tall structures (e.g. church spires and pylons); large blocks of built form / colours / patterns / textures which contrast with the surrounding landscape (e.g. red brick housing estates, fields of bright yellow rapeseed, large white tents); surfaces / materials which glint and glare (water, glass, plastic, metal etc. - polytunnels, solar panels and certain modern roof tiles are particular culprits); and movement (road and rail corridors, wind turbines, and large numbers of people and / or cars for example those arriving and parking at the TCS, can create a noticeable contrast / disturbance in an otherwise relatively tranquil landscape).
- 3.11.12 In this assessment, 'near-distance' views are categorised as being up to 0.5km away from the 'target', middle-distance views between 0.5 and 3km, and long-distance views over 3km.

STUDY AREA VISUAL OVERVIEW

- 3.11.13 The Malvern Hills exert a strong and widespread influence on views from all directions. It is believed that there is intervisibility between the Hills and up to nineteen 'historic' counties, the furthest point visible being Shining Tor in Cheshire, 130km away. MHAONB's study on views referred to above identified key views of the Hills from beyond the north-eastern edges of Birmingham, the Cotswolds AONB, close to the M4 corridor, the Wye Valley AONB, Brecon Beacons National Park, the Welsh Mountains and the Shropshire Hills AONB.
- 3.11.14 The viewpoints and views associated with the AONB, both from and towards it, are of international importance. Many world-famous (and not-so-famous) writers, artists and musicians have been inspired by the area's scenic qualities and other attributes. For millennia, and for different reasons, the Hills have been a key destination, and today, each year they attract over a million visitors from all around the world.
- 3.11.15 MHAONBP's study classifies the AONB's VPs and view corridors as 'Exceptional' (i.e. 'most important'), 'Special' and 'Representative'.
- 3.11.16 Several of the 'Exceptional' and 'Special' VPs lie along the Malvern Hills ridgeline on the main summits, from North Hill in the north to Chase End Hill in the south. Views from these points are breath-taking, with the view corridors being 360° panoramas often stretching to far distant horizons.
- 3.11.17 However, particularly on the east side, because the land slopes away so sharply, the landscapes on the lower slopes and extending eastwards from the foot of the Hills are - subject to factors such as local topography, built form and vegetation and built form - highly visible. The higher the viewpoint, the more the angle of view renders the landscape as plan-form. This has the disadvantage of exposing usually unseen, unsightly roofscapes and other detracting elements, features, patterns and activities.
- 3.11.18 Looking towards the Hills from the east, there are 'Exceptional' VPs on Bredon Hill and at Croome Court, the view corridors from which cover the whole of the study area as far as the Malverns' ridgeline. There are also several 'Special' view corridors from VPs to the east which cover all or parts of the study area east of the Hills. Changes in the landscapes on and around the Malverns are unlikely to be visible from these long-distance viewpoints unless of a significant scale or height, or very brightly-lit.
- 3.11.19 MHAONBP's guidance on views, and the preliminary desktop and on-the-ground studies, only provide an indication of theoretical visibility, and over a wide area. The 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' (ZTV) of a particular area or feature is based on terrain mapping only, and does not take into account the localised effects of topography, built form and vegetation. Actual visibility must be determined as far as possible through on-the-ground assessment, driving and walking around the study area.
- 3.11.20 The Hills' 13km long, distinctive humpbacked ridgeline is oriented north-south, and as one approaches them, the silhouette changes relative to the location of the viewer - this is one of the Hills' enduring special qualities.

- 3.11.21 From many areas, the Hills are highly prominent and / or dominant, and views from them are open and uninterrupted. However, localised variations in topography, the amount, height and density of vegetation and built form all contribute to often very marked differences in the nature of the view along a short section of the route.
- 3.11.22 There are seasonal variations - unless the vegetation is evergreen, lack of leaf cover for several months during winter can open up views which are closed in summer. Changing weather conditions affect the extent, nature and quality of the view.

LOCAL VIEWS AND VISUAL AMENITY

- 3.11.23 The assessment considered the visual area of influence of the parish, noting the edges of the 'visual envelope' as far as possible.
- 3.11.24 On the whole, the areas on the west sides of the Hills, and the majority of the areas north and south of the Hills, have no or very limited intervisibility with Malvern Wells, and so the assessment has focussed on the areas which do - theoretically or otherwise.

Nationally-important Local Views and Viewpoints

- 3.11.25 The most important viewpoints are the VPs identified in MHAONB's study of views.
- 3.11.26 Whilst visual receptors on the west side of the Hills can be discounted from further assessment due to the total screening effect of the Hills, because the Malvern Hills ridgeline aligns with the parish's western boundary, views of the parish from there are an important consideration.
- 3.11.27 The 'Exceptional' VPs on the Malvern Hills' summits are (from north to south):
- VP47 (North End Hill) (outside parish)
 - VP48 (Worcestershire Beacon) (W to N sector)
 - VP49 (Herefordshire Beacon / British Camp) (outside parish)
 - VP50 (Chase End Hill) (outside parish).
- 3.11.28 The only 'Special' VP on the Malvern Hills with views to the east (and which lies within the parish), is VP25 (B4232 at Upper Wyche).
- 3.11.29 There is one 'Exceptional' VP within the study area (but not within the parish) looking towards the Malvern Hills (VP37). It is located on the A4104 Marlbank Road in between Welland and Little Malvern, mid-way between Upper Welland Road and Watery Lane. It lies just beyond the point where the land has risen quite sharply from the low-lying plain, and where it begins a more steady rise over the mid-slopes.
- 3.11.30 There is also one 'Special' VP within the study area (and within the parish) looking towards the Malvern Hills (VP36). It is located on the B4209 Hanley Road, just west of its junction with Blackmore Park Road, on the south side of the TCS.

Local Views and Visual Amenity

- 3.11.31 As the viewer draws closer to the Hills, so many different and complex factors affect views and visual amenity that it is difficult to assess and analyse them in anything other than broad terms. For example, much depends on the direction of travel, the elevation, angle and extent of the viewpoint, and screening from intervening topography, built form and vegetation.
- 3.11.32 During Stage 2, it will be necessary to assess and describe the views and visual amenity experienced throughout the parish in more detail, especially where specific to individual land parcels and zones.
- 3.11.33 The Stage 2 assessment would take into account the findings of the public and social amenity studies, so as to be able to draw conclusions about how views from key destinations, and from footpaths and trails which cross, or pass close by to, certain parcels, for example, could potentially be affected if new houses were built.
- 3.11.34 It would also identify locally-important views and viewpoints, ideally with the help of the local community during public consultation.
- 3.11.35 All the information would be used to inform judgements about an individual parcel's level of value and sensitivity, and its capacity to accept new residential development.

4. Landscape and Visual Sensitivity

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 The purpose of the Stage 1 landscape and visual assessment was to establish an overview of the landscape and visual baseline situation in the parish and the wider landscape which forms its context, and determine - within the parish - broad levels of landscape and visual value, susceptibility to change, and sensitivity.
- 4.1.2 The information would form the basis for the more comprehensive assessment process (LSCA) that would be carried out during Stage 2, if commissioned. This would entail the identification of individual zones / parcels of land within the parish which would be subject to a more fine-grained assessment. Levels of value, sensitivity and capacity for each parcel would then be evaluated.
- 4.1.3 The methods used to make judgments about levels of sensitivity are set out in published guidance, which would be explained in more detail in the Stage 2 report.
- 4.1.4 In summary, landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity are treated as separate topics, since although they are related, different factors have to be taken into account. However, both are incorporated into judgments about levels of capacity. The process of determining levels of sensitivity of both landscape and visual receptors is the same, but different criteria apply.
- 4.1.5 The steps for evaluating levels of sensitivity are as follows (the criteria used for judging the levels, and the matrices, are in Appendix C):
- 1) Establish levels of landscape and visual quality, and use to inform conclusions about levels of value.
 - 2) Establish levels landscape and visual value and susceptibility to change.
 - 3) Combine levels of value and susceptibility to change to determine levels of sensitivity.
 - 4) Test and compare the results and apply professional judgement.
- 4.1.6 Although capacity is dealt with in Stage 2, it should be noted that areas with Low levels of sensitivity do not necessarily have a High capacity for development, and vice versa.
- 4.1.7 The Stage 1 findings summarised below are only preliminary, providing a broad overview. The assessment of the landscape and visual sensitivity of individual zones / land parcels would be carried out as part of Stage 2.

4.2 Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape Quality

- 4.2.1 Levels of landscape quality vary throughout the parish, and much depends on how the land is used and managed.
- 4.2.2 On the Malvern Hills and Malvern Commons, the quality is Very High. Elsewhere, levels are generally High or Moderate to High. The criteria indicate that the TCS would normally be classified as Low quality; this is due to the presence of 'intrusive elements', 'conspicuous infrastructure', 'disturbance', 'signs of urbanisation' and 'incongruous features / detractors'. In fact, the showground is well-managed. It is also the subject of long-terms plans for strategies and improvements which will help to integrate it into its surrounding landscape context. It also respects the Enclosed Commons LCT's characteristics up to a point. For these reasons, the level of landscape quality of the TCS is, at this preliminary stage and subject to further assessment, judged to be Low to Moderate.

Landscape Value

- 4.2.3 The level of value of the landscapes within the Malvern Hills AONB is Very High. This is not just due to the national designation, although that is an important factor - the majority of the criteria apply to many areas in this case, especially the Hills and Commons. However, the designation in itself is not necessarily an absolute constraint to new development.
- 4.2.4 In order to determine whether individual parcels of land have the capacity to accept new residential or other development or not, it is necessary to 'go beneath' the layer of that particular

designation and see what other factors contribute to an area's level of value. That would be the objective of the Stage 2 LSCA, although the Stage 1 assessment has already identified the majority of the relevant features, and has ascribed levels of value to them individually, in accordance with the criteria.

Landscape Susceptibility to Change

4.2.5 LVIA guidance (GLVIA3 para. 5.40) defines 'susceptibility to change' as follows:

'This means the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality / condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and / or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies'.

4.2.6 In making judgements about how susceptible the landscape's character is to the changes which are likely to occur, questions are asked such as, 'if lost, could something easily be replaced?' And, 'is it unique or rare?'

4.2.7 The criteria in Table 3 Appendix C are based on these concepts.

4.2.8 Again, the Stage 2 assessment would need to establish the susceptibility to change of individual parcels of land to the type of development proposed. The Stage 1 assessment concluded that within the parish, overall levels are generally Very High or High, but that there are considerable local variations in the landscape which would require further exploration and analysis during Stage 2.

Landscape Sensitivity

4.2.9 Where it occurs, the combination of Very High levels of landscape value and susceptibility to change theoretically results in Very High levels of sensitivity to the type of change proposed (see matrix in Table 4).

4.2.10 In the case of areas of lower levels of quality and susceptibility to change (such as the TCS), levels of sensitivity are likely to be lower; however, the fact that they within the AONB must be factored in, and at this stage it is considered unlikely that levels would be any lower than Moderate to High throughout the parish.

4.3 Visual Sensitivity

4.3.1 This part of the process entails an analysis of what is there, how visible is it, and who can see it.

4.3.2 Judgements about levels of visual sensitivity need to be informed by on-the-ground assessment wherever possible. However, they must also be informed by the findings of the landscape character assessment, as the designations and other elements are not always visible on the ground, or visually-obvious.

4.3.3 The information helps to explain the 'nature' of the view, which is influenced by matters such as how well-cared for and / or well-used the landscape is, and what its character 'tells' us about the area's sense of place and what it contributes to it.

4.3.4 Other aspects of landscape character, such as aesthetic and perceptual qualities, add to the understanding of the quality, value, function and importance of a view.

4.3.5 The numbers of people experiencing the view and the reason for the visit is also taken into account, and their sensitivity as 'visual receptors' is established by combining their susceptibility to change, and the value of the view.

4.3.6 LVIA assesses effects arising from new development where its location, and the type of development proposed, is known. Effects can therefore be considered from specific viewpoints, and specific 'visual receptors' can be identified. Because LSCAs are carried out without the location and nature of new development having been specified, except at a broad level, the visual sensitivity of the study area needs to be fully-evaluated. In LSCA, it is still necessary to identify key viewpoints and the likely visual receptors who could be affected. Levels of visual receptor sensitivity are determined by using the criteria, and applying professional judgement.

Visual Value

- 4.3.7 Judgements about visual value take into account the results of the assessment of levels of landscape quality, as perceived by the viewer.
- 4.3.8 Overall, in accordance with the criteria in Table 7, the level of visual value of the landscapes within the Malvern Hills AONB is judged to be Very High. However, as with landscape character, it is necessary to 'go beneath' the layer of the designation and see what other factors contribute to an area's level of visual value. It is important to understand, and factor in, views which are of high value to the local community, as well as those which are of national importance. That would be the objective of the Stage 2 LSCA, being informed by the more fine-grained landscape and on-the-ground assessments that would be carried out.

Visual Susceptibility to Change

- 4.3.9 Broadly-speaking, taking into account the baseline assessment findings and in accordance with the criteria in Table 8, levels of visual susceptibility to change throughout the parish are judged to be Very High or High. However, it is likely that the Stage 2 assessment would identify areas where levels would be lower, especially where localised topography, built form and vegetation result in a relatively high degree of containment.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.3.10 Where it occurs, the combination of Very High levels of visual value and susceptibility to change theoretically results in Very High levels of visual sensitivity to the type of change proposed (see matrix in Table 10).
- 4.3.11 In the case of areas of lower levels of visual quality and susceptibility to change (such as the TCS), levels of sensitivity are likely to be lower; however, the fact that they within the AONB must be factored in, and at this stage it is considered unlikely that levels would be any lower than Moderate to High throughout the parish.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

- 4.3.12 The Stage 1 assessment identified a range of visual receptors who could potentially be affected by new development within the parish. More detailed information about receptors and viewpoint locations relating to the individual land parcels and zones would be provided in Stage 2.
- 4.3.13 The matrix used to determine levels of visual receptor sensitivity is set out in Table 10. The highest sensitivity receptors comprise:

Very High Sensitivity

- People visiting the Malvern Hills AONB specifically to appreciate its scenic beauty and other attributes
- People visiting nationally-important heritage assets such as the various Scheduled Monuments and Grade I and II* listed buildings in the study area, and places with nationally-important cultural associations
- The community of Malvern Wells who live in / enjoy areas where the landscape setting makes a highly important contribution to visual and social amenity.

High Sensitivity

- People visiting Conservation Areas, designated / undesignated heritage assets, public open spaces and other locally-important places where the landscape / feature is part of the reason for the visit
- People in areas outside the AONB engaged in outdoor recreation and / or travelling through the landscape for whom the views are a factor in the enjoyment of the activity
- People living in residential properties with a proprietary interest in the view.

4.4 Potential Effects

- 4.4.1 Part of the process of judging a landscape's sensitivity and its capacity to accept change (in this case, in the form of new residential development), is to consider potential effects, both positive and negative.
- 4.4.2 Although an in-depth assessment of specific effects is beyond the scope of studies such as this (it is normally done when preliminary details of a proposed development are known), it is possible to identify the key landscape and visual receptors and other attributes which are most likely to be affected in some way, and the nature of the effects which are likely to, or could potentially, arise.

RECEPTORS

- 4.4.3 The key receptors and attributes identified during the Stage 1 study (which include designated areas and features) are summarised below:
- AONB
 - Landscape character (county)
 - Landscape character (local)
 - Landscape elements and features
 - Historic landscape character
 - Villagescape (character, setting etc.)
 - Function / value (context / setting / green corridor / gap / gateway / approach etc.)
 - Heritage assets / cultural heritage (including settings)
 - Significant vegetation and trees with TPOs
 - Biodiversity
 - Water quality
 - Soil quality
 - Visual amenity
 - Visual receptors (e.g. road users / tourists; residents; users of other PRsoW and trails / routes; users of recreational open spaces)
 - Public / social amenity.

NATURE OF EFFECTS

- 4.4.4 It is also necessary to consider the nature, or type, of effects that new residential development is likely to have on the environment, flora and fauna, people, views, and so on. Effects can be positive, negative, direct, indirect, permanent, temporary and cumulative.
- 4.4.5 Even if no details of the development and its location are available, it is possible to broadly identify the effects to which such developments would normally, or could potentially, give rise.
- 4.4.6 Some are direct and obvious, for example the extension of modern built form into open countryside, the change in character from rural to urban (including night-time lighting in areas of dark skies), and the loss of landscape characteristics, elements and features such as field patterns, ancient trees and hedgerows, narrow lanes and old trackways.
- 4.4.7 Some are direct but not immediately obvious and require further analysis – examples include loss of key functions which land may perform; loss of / change to key views; changes to the setting of an historic building or feature; and changes to aesthetic and perceptual qualities, general context, and sense of place / distinctiveness.
- 4.4.8 Other effects are indirect, such as those arising from human activity, disturbance, pressure and pollution which may also adversely affect landscape features, the quality of a view, wildlife, heritage assets, recreation, water quality and so on.
- 4.4.9 All would require more detailed consideration during Stage 2.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 During the landscape assessment process, it is likely that many issues will arise which require further consideration.
- 5.2 In this case, because the process has been divided into two stages, the Stage 1 study's findings include various recommendations which would, ideally, be factored in to Stage 2. Some of these may form part of the Stage 2 LSCA scope, others may involve additional technical studies which would need to be commissioned separately, and / or matters which could be factored in to public consultation exercises.

STAGE 2 RECOMMENDATIONS: SCOPE AND PROCESS

- 5.3 These issues are beyond the scope of the Stage 1 commission, but are considered necessary in order to inform the more detailed Stage 2 assessments, and to be able to fully assess factors such as sensitivity, potential effects, and whether the levels of any negative effects could be reduced by mitigating measures.
- 5.4 However, it is important to note that all are subject to a) discussion and agreement with stakeholders, and b) funding.
- 5.5 Those which would need to be treated as separate commissions, carried out by suitably-qualified experts, and which would be used to inform the landscape and visual assessment, include:
- Environmental Colour Assessment (ECA) - this would provide a colour palette unique to Malvern Wells which would be used to help ensure that new built form is better-integrated into the surrounding environment²².
 - Night time lighting assessment (baseline and consideration of effects arising from changes to the baseline).
- 5.6 Those which could form part of the Stage 2 LSCA include the identification of zones / parcels / sites which could potentially (from a landscape-related perspective only) be capable of accommodating / have the capacity for:
- Local Green Spaces - these are an important aspect of neighbourhood planning. The community can identify areas which it considers should be protected for various reasons. Protection is secured through NDP policies, and if protected, the land acquires a similar status to Green Belts under the NPPF²³.
 - A new village cemetery
 - Affordable housing, starter homes and 'down-sizing' homes esp. bungalows
 - Employment land / other landuses.
- 5.7 Other matters which would need to be included in the Stage 2 LSCA include:
- Supplementing the Stage 1 baseline landscape and visual studies with seasonal changes, especially when trees are in full-leaf.
 - Establishing whether the 'ancient trees' which are noted in WBRC's records of 2008 - 2009 still exist.
 - Public consultation - asking the community if they have useful baseline information, and ideally, helping to devise questions for them to answer which will inform judgements about value ('what is important to whom, and why').
- 5.8 Preliminary recommendations for the steps to be followed during the Stage 2 processes are as follows:
- 1) At an early stage, define the study area boundary for the LSCA, including any areas which - for specific reasons such as designations and / or constraints - would be excluded from the more detailed assessments.

²² See for example http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/guidance_on_colour_use_screen-1.pdf

²³ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>

- 2) Agree the boundaries of zones / individual parcels of land which would be the subject of the detailed LSCA. Add boundaries to new base plans.
- 3) The majority of the 'desktop' landscape character and visual / social baseline information has been captured and summarised in Stage 1, but much of it is still in note form; it therefore needs to be written up in full, illustrated with photographs, references provided and so on.
- 4) As well as the new baseline information which would be gathered during the additional surveys and studies mentioned above, further useful information is almost certain to come to light during Stage 2, especially during the public consultation process. The new information would need to be captured, recorded on base maps, analysed, factored in to the assessment of sensitivity and capacity, and then written up in full and illustrated with photographs.
- 5) The information on the hand-drawn figures, and any new information, needs to be digitised, so that the plans can be updated in future by the PC / others if required. (Even if Stage 2 does not go ahead, it may be a good idea to do this anyway, if funds are available.)
- 6) Complete the assessment of sensitivity and capacity, write up in full, illustrate with photographs, produce capacity tables and plans, and any other material such as additional appendices.
- 7) Produce summary schedules for each zone / parcel, summarising the key baseline information, and conclusions about levels of sensitivity and capacity. Include comments / recommendations where appropriate.
- 8) Make recommendations for any future landscape strategies / environmental and recreational projects / initiatives / enhancements / design guides for the local area, the village, and individual parcels of land (these could potentially be the subject of specific NDP policies).

One example is that consideration could be given to how to resolve the sense of separation from the 'heart of the village' and the community felt some local residents in outlying parts of the Wells. This could also be factored in to public consultation, and could potentially identify places where a central community venue could be sited.

Another example is an assessment of the condition of Malvern stone walls, especially those which retain the steep slopes west of the Wells Road, some of which do not appear entirely sound. A future initiative could be to build up a local stockpile of Malvern stone, if it becomes available for any reason, which could be used to restore walls and other key features, and build new ones.

- 5.9 Finally, one important issue that the Stage 1 assessment identified, although it may be beyond the scope of the Stage 2 LSCA, is the need to take an overview of the relationship between various key sites and areas both within the parish and on the land to the east.
- 5.10 Currently, areas such as Blackmore Park and the TCS are developing their own distinctly different characters within the confines of fixed boundaries; however, they form part of a much wider picture, the spaces in between being especially important to the context of the sites and determining how well-integrated or otherwise they are within the wider landscape. It is difficult to mitigate adverse effects on landscape character; in terms of adverse effects on views, factors such as careful choice of materials and colours can help.
- 5.11 Also, by taking account of the relationships between the different areas, it may be possible to develop guidance which would ensure that any further development properly respected its landscape character context.

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