Malvern Wells
Neighbourhood Development Plan

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment

REPORT

On behalf of Malvern Wells Parish Council

October 2019 (Revision A November 2019)

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Foreword to the Report

The NDP process is extremely hard work, and many of those involved are local volunteers whose input, usually over a period of several years, often goes unrecognised. We are very grateful to everyone in Malvern Wells who generously provided their time, assistance, information and on-the-ground knowledge (and invited us into their homes), all of which have been invaluable to this study. Any errors in the text are likely to be mine, so if spotted, please let me know. Feedback can be via the Parish Council / NDP Steering Group representatives, or directly to the author of this report (carlytinkler@hotmail.co.uk). Thank you.

Carly Tinkler BA CMLI FRSA MIALE October 2019

Acronyms

Below are the acronyms most frequently used in the landscape report and schedules:

ALC	Agricultural Land Classification
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ASNW	Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BCE	Before Common Era
BRC	Biological Records Centre
CA	Conservation Area
CAA	Conservation Area Appraisal
CE	Common Era
CRoW	Countryside and Rights of Way
DPH	Dwellings per hectare
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ELC	European Landscape Convention
EPS	European Protected Species
GI	Green Infrastructure
GLVIA3	Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition
HC	Herefordshire Council
HE	Historic England
HER	Historic Environment Record
HLC	Historic Landscape Character / Characterisation
KFP	Key Focal Point
KVP	Key Viewpoint
KVR	Key View Route
KVZ	Key View Zone
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
LCP	Land Cover Parcel
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LDU	Landscape Description Unit
LGS	Local Green Space
LGeoS	Local Geological Site
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LSCA	Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MHAONBP	Malvern Hills AONB Partnership
MHDC	Malvern Hills District Council
MHC	Malvern Hills Conservators
MHT	Malvern Hills Trust
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MUGS	Malvern Urban Greenspace Study
MWPC	Malvern Wells Parish Council
NCA	National Character Area
NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan

NE	Natural England
NFI	National Forest Inventory
NPA	Neighbourhood Plan Area
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NVC	National Vegetation Classification
OS	Ordnance Survey
PC	Parish Council
PHI	Priority Habitat Inventory
POS	Public Open Space
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PRoW	Public Right of Way
QoL	Quality of Life
QoLC	Quality of Life Capital
RCA	Residential Character Area
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
SHELAA	Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment
SM	Scheduled Monument
SEO	Statement of Environmental Opportunity
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SWC	South Worcestershire Councils
SWDP	South Worcestershire Development Plan
TCAS	Three Counties Agricultural Society
TCS	Three Counties Showground
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
WCC	Worcestershire County Council
WFD	Water Framework Directive
VP	Viewpoint
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility
ZVI	Zone of Visual Influence

1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Planning Policy Context

1.1.1 In the UK today there is an urgent need to build new homes. In late 2018, the Government's Planning and Housing Minister announced that the target was to build at least one million houses over the next five years. This would represent an increase in the numbers built in the last few years, but would still be less than the amount required to keep pace with current demand.

1.1.2 As a result, almost every city, town and village in the country is under pressure to find suitable sites for future residential (and other) forms of development.

1.1.3 This section introduces the planning policy context relevant to this study. It briefly explains the concept of 'Neighbourhood Planning', how the study fits within the neighbourhood planning process, and its relevance to Malvern Wells parish and its community. More detailed information about these issues, the study's aims and objectives, definitions of the terms used, and explanations of the processes followed, are set out in the rest of the report.

1.1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[1] sets out the policies with which new development should comply. Broadly speaking, there are three factors that must be taken into account when planning new development, and an appropriate - ideally equal - balance should be struck between all of them: the factors are 'social', 'economic' and 'environmental'.

1.1.5 The NPPF states that development should be on land '*of the right types*' and '*in the right places*', and that '*Planning policies and decisions should… ensure that new development is appropriate for its location*.' It also states that development should '*contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment*', and places great emphasis on '*the creation of high quality buildings and places*', noting that '*Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*'.

1.1.6 Clearly, some areas are likely to be more appropriate for development than others, for example degraded, or previously-developed / 'brownfield' land[2]. However, in many cases it seems that regardless of what the NPPF's requirements and aspirations are, environmental factors do not carry as much weight as they should in the 'planning balance'; that places and features of high value are being lost, 'sense of place' and 'local distinctiveness' are being eroded, and 'high quality' design is rarely achieved.

1.1.7 One of the reasons for this is probably the time and effort involved in establishing exactly what is important, to whom and why, and justifying why it should be conserved, protected and enhanced (of course the onus of determining the latter usually falls on decision-makers / the local community as opposed to being volunteered by the developer).

1.1.8 The whole of Malvern Wells parish lies within the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB). The landscapes of the UK's AONBs and National Parks are agreed to be highly valuable (on a national and even international level) by common consensus, and are therefore afforded the highest level of protection in the NPPF (although even these designations do not preclude new development), whereas features and factors of high local and neighbourhood value are often overlooked.

1.1.9 Gaining an in-depth understanding of an area's character, and its importance / value, is a fundamental part of the process of understanding the effects of change on the landscape and those who use it, and the implications. The health and wellbeing of both the environment and the communities it supports are of paramount importance, and landscape makes a significant contribution to this.

1.1.10 Perhaps partly in recognition of these matters, although also due to the complexity of the old planning system, in 2010 the concept of 'Neighbourhood Planning' was introduced by the Government, and was subsequently included in the first version of the NPPF via the 2011 Localism Act. One of the

[1] The NPPF was first published in March 2012, and was revised in July 2018 and February 2019. In this report, all NPPF policy references relate to the February 2019 version unless stated otherwise.

[2] The revised (21st July 2019) version of the Government's Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) on the Natural Environment provides more information on this subject - see paragraph 003 Reference ID: 8-003-20190721 https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment

NPPF's original 'fundamental objectives' was *'to put unprecedented power in the hands of communities to shape the places in which they live*'.

1.1.11 According to the Government's website[3], '*Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.*

'They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead.

'*Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.*'

1.1.12 In other words, local communities can help to protect and enhance - and shape the future of - their local environment by producing their own Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs), with planning policies which are specific and relevant to the local area and its people. So long as the NDP policies do not conflict with national or local policies, the NDP will form part of and sit alongside the plans prepared by the local planning authority (LPA). Decisions on planning applications are made using both the Local Plan and the NDP.

1.1.13 It is also important to note that neighbourhood planning is not just about trying to find the most appropriate places for new development (of any form) to take place: it is also an opportunity for the community to identify the *least* appropriate places, and formally protect areas / features which it considers to be of high local value.

1.1.14 NDPs can designate certain areas as 'Local Green Spaces' (LGSs)[4]. Further information about LGSs is set out in Section 3.12, but in summary, the designation is '*a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities*'. Indeed, in its emerging NDP Malvern Wells considered and proposed four LGSs, and as a result of public consultation, several others were suggested (at the time the LSCA was completed, the public consultation exercises, analyses and reports had not been finalised - throughout, the LSCA refers to information contained in the June 2019 draft reports). The criteria for LGS designation include areas / features which are '*demonstrably special to a local community*', of '*particular local significance*', and '*local in character*'.

1.1.15 The background to Malvern Wells' NDP and information on the current situation should be available on Malvern Wells Parish Council (MWPC)'s website[5]; the processes followed during this study are explained in the sections below. MWPC agreed that at an early stage in the NDP process, an assessment of the area's landscape and visual 'sensitivity', and its 'capacity' to accept new residential development, should be carried out (the terms are explained in the relevant sections of the report). The findings would form an important part of the NDP's evidence-base; they would be used to guide and inform decisions about the Wells' future development / protection, and NDP policies.

1.1.16 In early 2017, in collaboration with the Malvern Hills AONB Unit, MWPC commissioned chartered landscape architect Carly Tinkler to undertake the first stage of a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (LSCA) - at the time, the second stage was subject to additional funding. The Stage 1 study was completed at the end of March 2017, and was submitted to MWPC and the AONB Unit.

1.1.17 Malvern Wells' Neighbourhood Plan Area (NPA) was designated on the 10th March 2017. The next step involved preparing a draft NDP, the aim being to issue the draft for 'Regulation 14' consultation when ready. In February 2019, MWPC commissioned the landscape architect to carry out and deliver the second stage of the LSCA.

1.1.18 The process took several months (see Section 2.2). In August 2019, a draft of the LSCA was issued to MWPC and certain stakeholders. A few adjustments were made in the light of comments made, new information, and updates to other studies. The LSCA was completed in October 2019.

1.1.19 During November 2019, as a result of new historic baseline information coming to light, the LSCA was updated and resubmitted as Revision A.

[3] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2

[4] https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/

[5] https://www.malvernwells-pc.gov.uk/

1.2 Aims and Objectives

1.2.1 The aim of the LSCA is to assess Malvern Wells' landscape and visual capacity to accept new residential development.

1.2.2 The LSCA will deliver the evidence-base required for the emerging NDP and its policies, and will help the community to decide objectively a) whether new residential development may be acceptable / appropriate in certain locations, given the likely implications, b) which areas are worthy of protection, and c) where the line of the future settlement boundary[6] should be drawn.

1.2.3 The LSCA's 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 settlement, and individual parcels of land (see Section 8). These could be the subject of specific NDP policies.

1.3 Relevant Experience

1.3.1 Carly Tinkler is a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI), a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA), and a Member of the International Association for Landscape Ecology (MIALE). She specialises in landscape, environmental and colour assessment, planning, masterplanning and design throughout the UK and abroad, and has done so for over 35 years. She also specialises in the field of historic landscapes.

1.3.2 Carly has been instrumental in the promotion of the 'landscape-led and iterative' approach to development, which is now being adopted by many local planning authorities and other bodies.

1.3.3 She was a contributor to the Landscape Institute's *Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* 1st edition, and a reviewer of the current 3rd edition ('GLVIA3'). She is a member of working groups set up by the Landscape Institute and Natural England which include producing guidance for carrying out LSCAs; she also judges awards and competitions for the Institute, and is a member of design review panels.

1.3.4 She advises bodies such as AONB partnerships and local planning authorities, developing guidance for publication, providing comments on planning applications, and acting as public witness at public inquiries. In 2014 she produced the method and criteria for, and led the team undertaking, landscape assessments of over 300 sites for Herefordshire Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

1.3.5 Since 2012, Carly has been carrying out landscape and visual assessments for, and providing ongoing advice on, neighbourhood plans, helping communities to develop a more in-depth and informed understanding of matters such as landscape character, visual amenity, and planning policy.

1.3.6 She also advises and 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-scale schemes including urban extensions and eco-resorts, working alongside architects such as Richard Rogers, Norman Foster and Terry Farrell. She has been involved in the design and delivery of urban regeneration programmes in places such as Great Malvern, Cheltenham (Civic Pride Initiative) and Longbridge (Birmingham), and has produced strategies for conservation, GI, open spaces, public art, signage and colour throughout the UK.

1.3.7 Carly is assisted by colleague Catherine Laidlaw. Cat has several years' experience of working on a range of landscape projects, including landscape character and visual impact assessments. She has been involved in several landscape and visual value and capacity studies, some of which were within AONBs and 'valued landscapes'.

1.3.8 Cat specialises in carrying out desktop studies, researching a wide range of topics including heritage / historic landscape character; also, in undertaking on-the-ground assessments of landscape and visual quality and value (including Green Flag Award quality assessments). She was the researcher on heritage and interpretation plan reports for parks and green spaces in various locations across England as part of Heritage Lottery-funded projects.

[6] Note that the SWDP uses the term 'development boundary' rather than 'settlement boundary'; the two are interchangeable, but the latter is used throughout the LSCA unless within a quote / extract.

1.4 Structure of Report

1.4.1 **Section 2** explains the landscape and visual assessment methods used, the approach to the commission, and the processes followed.

1.4.2 **Section 3** describes the baseline landscape character of the wider study area, identifying key features and factors such as designations, national, regional and local features and characteristics, landscape history, heritage assets, cultural associations, biodiversity, Green Infrastructure, and public and social amenity. Key constraints to development are also considered in this section.

1.4.3 **Section 4** describes the baseline character of the 'local' landscapes, explaining how the various features and factors identified in the wider baseline studies combine to give rise to different character zones within the parish.

1.4.4 In **Section 5**, the visual baseline of the area is described.

1.4.5 **Section 6** sets out and describes the processes followed in making judgements about landscape and visual sensitivity. It explains the key terms and phrases used, and summarises the information that was factored in to judgements about levels of capacity. The nature of the effects likely to arise from future development when operational are considered.

1.4.6 In **Section 7**, the overall levels of capacity of the individual LSCA Areas assessed are set out, along with summary capacity tables.

1.4.7 **Section 8** sets out the assessment's conclusions. The various recommendations arising from the study are also provided.

1.4.8 Appendices are as follows (all bound separately):

Appendix A contains the figures referred to in the report (see list of figures on Contents pages).

The information in **Appendix B** augments the baseline landscape character section of the report with more detailed descriptions of the Countywide Landscape Character and Landscape Description Units.

Appendix C contains the Historic Environment Record Search report.

Appendix D augments the 'springs and wells' baseline section of the report with more detailed descriptions.

Appendix E contains the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre Data.

Appendix F is a flowchart which sets out the steps in the LSCA process.

Appendix G sets out the criteria used in making judgements about levels of landscape and visual value, susceptibility to change, magnitudes of effect etc.

Appendix H contains the LSCA Area schedules. These set out the findings of the more detailed sensitivity and capacity assessments carried out for the individual LSCA Areas; they include summaries of the baseline landscape and visual information contained in the report, as well as additional information where relevant to an Area's character and / or views to / from it.

Appendix I contains diagrams showing the degree of / potential for visibility of LSCA Areas from KVPs.

Appendix J contains the baseline visual information which is summarised in the LSCA Area schedules.

Appendix K contains a series of tables produced to enable comparison between each LSCA Area's levels of landscape and visual value, susceptibility to change, sensitivity and capacity. The tables are set out in order of a) Area numbering; b) landscape capacity; c) visual capacity; and d) overall capacity.

2 Method, Process and Approach

2.1 Landscape and Visual Assessment Methods

2.1.1 The aim of this LSCA is to assess Malvern Wells' landscape and visual sensitivity, and its capacity to accept new residential development.

2.1.2 Clearly, any new development will result in certain changes to the existing 'baseline' landscape and visual situation, which are likely to subsequently affect landscape character and views in some way.

2.1.3 In order to make decisions about whether the changes are 'acceptable' or not, firstly it is necessary to establish exactly what and who could be affected by these changes, and what the implications of the changes would be, taking into account a wide range of factors.

2.1.4 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?
- What is the nature of the change?
- Is what is there, and / or the people who see / experience it, tolerant of, or sensitive to, this type of change?
- How and to what degree would the changes affect what is there and those who see / experience it?
- Does the area have 'room', or 'capacity', for these types of changes?
- Is the change acceptable or not, especially in relation to current planning policy, guidance and strategy?

2.1.5 Technical studies are usually required to help answer these questions. The landscape and visual assessment process is complex, but it is important to understand it in order to interpret the findings and draw conclusions. The assessments' findings may be used by planning authorities and others to inform decisions about whether the change is 'acceptable' (for example in relation to planning policy and guidance), or whether it would result in 'unacceptable consequences', which are often expressed as 'harm', or 'negative' / 'adverse' effects.

2.1.6 In this case, a variety of published methods for carrying out the different types of assessments required have been used and combined in order to provide the fine-grained, evidence-based and objective results which are needed here. Other issues, such as certain physical constraints to development, have also been factored in.

2.1.7 The three main forms of assessment used are Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), LSCA, and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)[7]. However, for the purposes of this study, the title 'Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment' was considered most appropriate.

2.1.8 An explanation of these and other terms used in the LSCA, and more detailed information about the methods used and process followed, is set out in the following sections, but the footnote below lists the most relevant guidance and other documents[8].

2.1.9 LCA is really a stand-alone process / study, and may, for example, be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), simply describing the baseline landscape situation without necessarily making any 'value-judgements'. However, the information recorded in the LCA informs all aspects of the other types of landscape and visual assessments, so it is always carried out first.

[7] The term 'LVIA' is often used to describe all forms of landscape / visual effects assessment; however, it is important to note that a 'full and formal' LVIA is only carried out when proposed development is the subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). For developments which are not subject to the EIA Regulations, GLVIA3 recommends that an 'informal' Landscape and Visual Appraisal' of effects is carried out, following GLVIA3 but without the EIA requirements being factored in. For the purpose of this report, the term LVIA has been used throughout, but LVA could also be appropriate.

[8] For further information on the various methods, techniques, processes and advice, see *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (October 2014) Natural England; *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002); *Topic Paper 5: Understanding Historic Landscape Character* and *Topic Paper 6: Techniques and criteria for judging sensitivity and capacity* (ditto); and *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition* (2013) Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (usually referred to as 'GLVIA3').

2.1.10 In *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (October 2014), Natural England (NE) 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… 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*'.

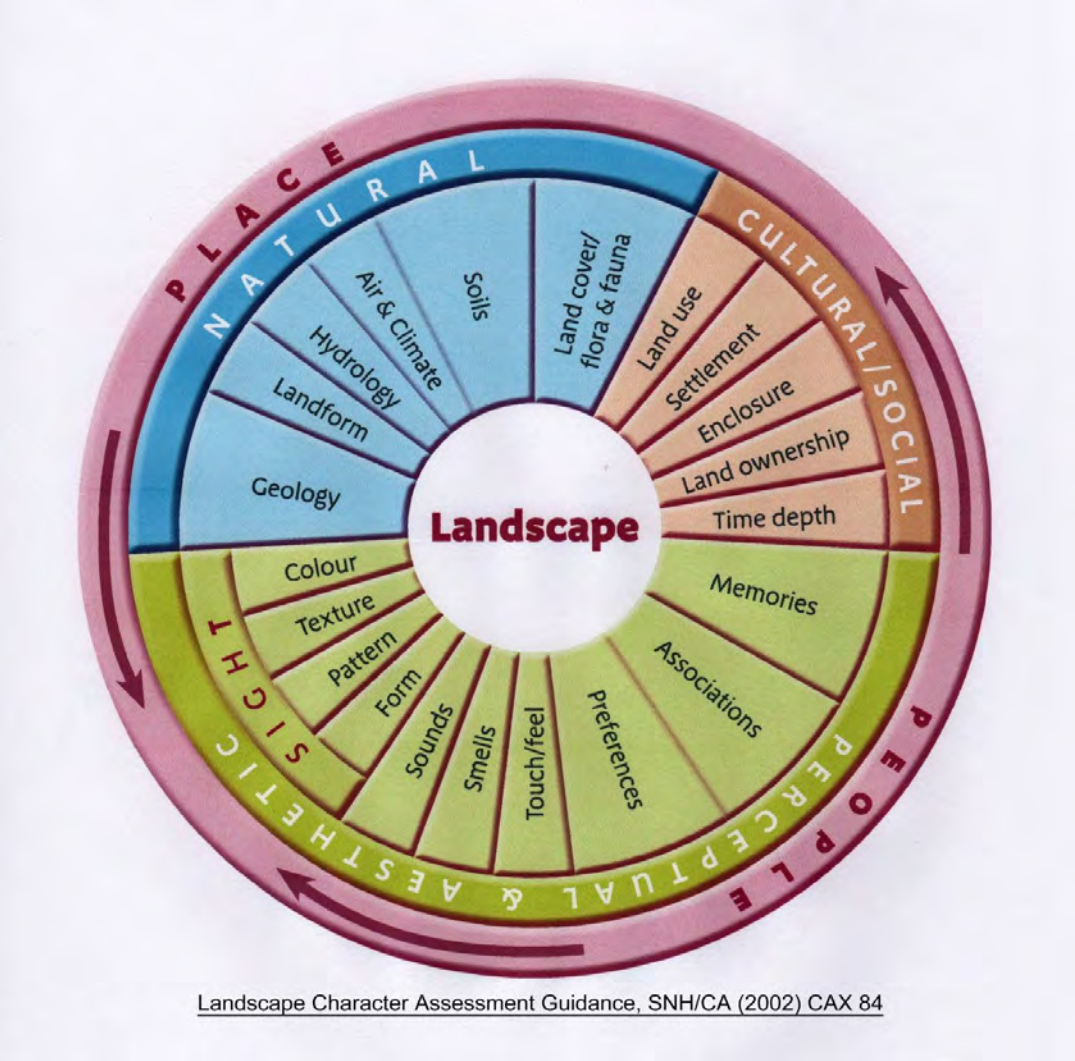
2.1.11 It is also important to understand what exactly is meant by 'landscape' in the above context. The definition given in the 2002 version of the LCA guidance (para. 1.11) is as follows:

'*Landscape is about the relationship between people and place. It provides the setting for our day-to-day lives. The term does not mean just special or designated landscapes and it does not only apply to the countryside. Landscape can mean a small patch of urban wasteland as much as a mountain range, and an urban park as much as an expanse of lowland plain. It results from the way that different components of our environment - both natural (the influences of geology, soils, climate, flora and fauna) and cultural (the historical and current impact of land use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions) - interact together and are perceived by us (**Figure 1.1**). People's perceptions turn land into the concept of landscape.*

'*This is not just about visual perception, or how we see the land, but also how we hear, smell and feel our surroundings, and the feelings, memories or associations that they evoke. Landscape character, which is the pattern that arises from particular combinations of the different components, can provide a sense of place to our surroundings*'.

2.1.12 The 2014 version of the 'Figure 1.1' referred to in the guidance is shown below; it illustrates all the different factors / qualities that LCA and other forms of landscape and visual assessment must consider.

LCA Guidance 2014 Figure 1: What is Landscape?



Landscape Character Assessment Guidance, SNH/CA (2002) CAX 84

2.1.13 It is also necessary to understand what is there and how valuable it is before making judgements about levels of sensitivity and capacity and / or potential effects. The 2002 LCA guidance explains that:

'*People value landscape for many different reasons, not all of them related to traditional concepts of aesthetics and beauty. It can provide habitats for wildlife and a cultural record of how people have lived on the land and harnessed its resources. Landscape can have social and community value, as an important part of people's day-to-day lives. It can contribute to a sense of identity, well-being, enjoyment and inspiration. It has economic value, providing the context for economic activity and often being a central factor in attracting business and tourism. Landscape Character Assessment has emerged as an appropriate way to look at landscape because it provides a structured approach to identifying character and distinctiveness as well as value*.'

2.1.14 Thus, in addition to character and views, landscape and visual assessments must cover a wide variety of subjects and topics, including heritage, biodiversity, public and social amenity and Green Infrastructure.

2.1.15 Landscape-related planning policy, strategy and guidance are also relevant to these assessments. For example, the planning context within which new development would have to be considered is an important factor - clearly, the most sensitive sites, and those with least capacity, are also most likely to be in conflict with landscape and other policies. LVIA guidance (GLVIA3 para. 5.40) notes that assessments should evaluate '*the ability of the landscape receptor… to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and / or the achievement of landscape planning polices and strategies*'.

2.1.16 LSCA has been developed in response to the growing need for people, communities and planning authorities to make informed decisions about the allocation of land for development of various types. It also responds to an increasing public interest in, and awareness of, what the term 'landscape' really means, as shown on *Figure 1: What is Landscape?* above. There is also a desire to understand for oneself how development can change the landscape, and what the effects and subsequent implications of this might be, both on the landscape itself and those who experience / use / benefit from it (for example, many people visit AONBs to enjoy the outstanding natural beauty, and this can bring economic benefits to local communities).

2.1.17 LSCA is a systematic, evidence-based process, providing an objective, impartial and transparent system for assessing the sensitivity of the landscape and its capacity to accommodate change of a certain type, whilst also retaining the aspects of the environment which - for a variety of reasons - are valued.

2.1.18 Such change is usually some form of social and / or economic expansion, for example new housing developments, although the method can be applied to other forms of development and changes in land use such as 'intensive' agriculture, energy production and commercial forestry. The LSCA should always specify the type of change which is being assessed.

2.1.19 Whilst '*Topic Paper 6*' 2002 sets out techniques and criteria for LSCA practitioners to use, and still broadly underpins the approach adopted here, the document was only ever intended to be '*An exploration of current thinking about landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity, to stimulate debate and encourage the development of common approaches*'; over time, more bespoke methods have evolved. These can be tailored to suit specific commissions such as this, where the findings are used to inform an NDP, and future planning and design decisions. Now, studies such as this are being used to establish more 'formal' LSCA methods and processes, and new LSCA guidance may be published by NE in the coming months.

2.1.20 LSCA considers the likelihood of certain types of development giving rise to certain effects (adverse or beneficial) on landscape character and visual amenity. This is factored in to conclusions about levels of capacity, in this case following the principles of LVIA, the guidance for which is set out in 'GLVIA3'.

2.1.21 However, it is important to note that LVIA is used mainly for assessing the effects of site-specific developments, where the type, scale and form of proposed new built form is known. LSCA tends to be carried out at an early stage in the planning process, as the findings are used to inform judgements about the suitability or otherwise of land for certain generalised forms of development such as housing, industry etc. The potential for likely effects is factored in, but only at a high-level. In this case, it was agreed that this 'combined' LVIA / LSCA would only consider residential development of a certain nature (see below), the 'generic' types and levels of effects of which should be relatively straightforward to predict.

2.1.22 The Government's Natural Environment Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) (revised in July 2019) notes that '*To help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can be completed. To demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used*'.

2.1.23 A flowchart showing the steps followed for the Malvern Wells LSCA process is contained in Appendix F.

2.1.24 It is important to note here that LSCAs / LVIAs do not state whether an area of land can or should be developed; they simply set out the various implications arising from a known type of development being built in a specific place, taking into account identified factors. Once the levels of capacity and likely effects throughout an area have been established, informed decisions can be made - by the community and other stakeholders / interested parties / decision-makers - about where to 'draw the line' in terms of which level of capacity or effect forms the 'threshold' between development being 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable.

2.1.25 It could be agreed in principle, for example, that only areas with a grading of 'Medium' capacity and higher would be considered further, on the basis of the acceptability or otherwise of the landscape and visual effects likely to arise. However, an area's level of landscape and visual capacity is only one of many matters that must be considered before any decisions are made about its suitability for future development, and in Malvern Wells' case, about where to draw the line of the settlement boundary.

2.1.26 Although the LSCA has factored in known constraints to development (explained in more detail below), they are landscape-related constraints only, relevant to an area's landscape and visual capacity, not its feasibility, viability, or deliverability. The LSCA does not consider matters such as land-ownership or rights of access: regardless of a landowner's opinions about the future development of their land, the LSCA simply states what the level of capacity of the land is judged to be. Whether or not it is included as a potential development site in the NDP is up to the community / decision-makers.

2.1.27 Even if the development of a certain parcel of land was found to be feasible, viable and deliverable, other factors would play an important role, including future allocations, planning applications, and the number of houses built during the plan period.

2.2 Malvern Wells LSCA Approach and Process

2.2.1 The LSCA's main objectives were to determine broad levels of landscape and visual value, susceptibility to change, and receptor sensitivity, and from this, draw conclusions about levels of value, sensitivity and capacity (all these terms are explained in more detail in the relevant sections below).

2.2.2 This section explains how the Malvern Wells landscape assessment commission was approached, and the project-specific processes followed.

2.2.3 For various reasons, the assessment process was divided into two stages (Stage 1 and Stage 2).

Stage 1

2.2.4 The purpose of Stage 1 was to establish the landscape and visual baseline situation in and around the parish, and determine broad levels of landscape and visual value, susceptibility to change, and receptor sensitivity. The information would be synthesised and summarised in a preliminary report at the end of Stage 1, providing the basis for Stage 2, which would comprise a full and fine-grained LSCA, augmenting the Stage 1 findings and establishing levels of value, sensitivity and capacity for certain individual parcels of land (all explained in more detail below).

2.2.5 The study area boundaries for the baseline assessments were determined at the outset. The outer boundary of the landscape character assessment study area was defined by the wider 'landscape context' of the settlement, 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 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 beyond the parish boundary (see Figure 1: Location Plan and Study Area in Appendix A).

2.2.6 The study area boundaries for features or places of importance such as heritage assets and sites of nature conservation importance were drawn with consideration given to the potential area of influence of the individual feature / area.

2.2.7 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). The central point is at the south-western corner of the Three Counties Showground (TCS) on the B4209 Hanley Road; the sectors radiate outwards following roads and physical features in and around the outskirts of the settlement.

2.2.8 In order to understand all the elements, features and factors that contribute to an area's landscape character and value, it is necessary to carry out 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 documents, archives and historians, government and other websites, and the local community.

2.2.9 The baseline studies took into account national and / or local landscape-related designations, strategies, policies and guidance (especially that produced by the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership); the landscape's natural history and cultural heritage; its character; settlement and land use patterns; key views; public rights of way; recreation; hydrology; topography; significant vegetation and so on. The levels of value of the individual features, and the contribution they make to the landscape, was noted. Also, the studies noted whether any of the features were considered to have the potential to be affected by, or act as a constraint to, development within any of the LSCA Areas.

2.2.10 Landscape 'zones' or 'sectors' were established, constraints checked, landscape characteristics identified, and the extent of the areas of influence was adjusted as necessary. The nature and extent of landscape effects (both adverse and beneficial) that could arise from new residential development was considered.

2.2.11 Most areas must accept and adapt to various forms of natural, social and economic change; however, even small changes (both within the AONB and its setting) can incrementally accumulate and combine, ultimately having far-reaching adverse consequences. Planning policy mandates that if new development is planned within an AONB, it must not just protect the designated landscapes (and the settlements within them), it must also enhance them. That is a tall order, but it is the 'bottom line'. All claims that enhancements and high quality design can / will be achieved must be fully justified, evidence-based and measurable / quantifiable.

2.2.12 The LSCA therefore makes the assumption (which was agreed with the AONB Unit) that within the AONB, new residential development would necessarily be of high quality, and that the approach to its siting, layout and design would be landscape-led and iterative.

2.2.13 It is assumed that from the outset, schemes would demonstrate a strong, locally-appropriate and effective landscape framework, with siting, access, layout, scale, detailed design and engineering work being informed by in-depth landscape and other technical / environmental (especially GI) studies, using MHAONBP and other guidance as a key source of reference.

2.2.14 Built form would be sensitively sited and designed using locally-appropriate techniques and materials, especially those which reflect the local vernacular and key characteristics. These 'primary mitigation' measures, as well as enhancement measures, would be 'embedded' into the scheme from the outset.

2.2.15 Low-quality development would be very likely to reduce an Area's level of capacity.

2.2.16 Where relevant, the LSCA notes whether the use of secondary mitigation measures (i.e. over and above the various 'primary' measures assumed to be embedded in new built form on the basis of the AONB designation) may increase an Area's level of capacity.

2.2.17 Views and visual amenity are also an important part of the baseline study stage: the information is factored into judgements about an area's levels of visual sensitivity, and its overall capacity. It is very important to understand the difference between 'character' and 'views / visual amenity'.

2.2.18 Landscape character is a combination of 'natural' and 'cultural' factors. These factors include 'aesthetic' and 'perceptual' qualities such as 'scenic beauty', sounds, smell and touch (see *Figure 1: What is Landscape?* above). Changes will affect a landscape's character regardless of whether or not anyone can see or experience the changes. And even if people can see / experience them, the changes will affect different people in different ways (the matter of 'subjectivity' also has to be considered).

2.2.19 Therefore, consideration of views and visual amenity / sensitivity / capacity / effects entails separate processes, different from, but related to, those used in the consideration of landscape character / sensitivity / capacity / effects. Character is described first, followed by how that character is, or may be, perceived visually.

2.2.20 The Landscape Institute's guidance (GLVIA3) explains that the two distinct components of the effects assessment process are:

i. Landscape effects: assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right [i.e. regardless of how visible it is, or who can see it]

ii. Visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

2.2.21 Another very important point to note during both assessments and the decision-making process is the role that vegetation, and also temporary features / structures, play in screening views. Existing or proposed vegetation may, for example, frame a key view to or from British Camp, but screen a proposed building / other feature that would otherwise be a detractor in the view and reduce its level of value / sensitivity. However, there is no guarantee that the vegetation will remain in the longer term, so one must consider what the effects on the view would be if the vegetation was not there.

2.2.22 The subject of significant vegetation and the problems of relying upon it when considering capacity / effects is dealt with in more depth in the following sections, but in summary, landscape and visual assessments should consider whether there is physical 'interinfluence' / association / relationship between one feature / place and another, which is there regardless of any intervening screening which prevents intended / desirable 'intervisibility'.

2.2.23 To determine interinfluence it is helpful to map a given area's 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' using digital terrain models (see Section 5), as these do not show intervening vegetation or built form.

2.2.24 Most of the preliminary visual baseline studies were carried out in mid-winter; the advantage is that it represents the 'worst-case' visual scenario i.e. when there is no deciduous leaf cover (in fact, in this area, the situation can last for several months, with full leaf-fall by the end of November and full leafing-up not until late April / early May).

2.2.25 Mid-winter is also a good time for carrying out character assessments: at that time of year the landscape's bare bones are exposed, and it is seen at its most elemental. Foliage does not screen, and the play of light and shade upon it does not distract the eye. It should also be recognised that whilst the incidence, proportions and visibility of landscape patterns and colours will vary through the seasons, there is a consistency of many patterns and colours present throughout the year.

2.2.26 The purpose of this stage of the visual assessment is to 'test' the mapped desktop baseline findings 'on-the-ground', and refine them in the light of what the landscape reveals.

2.2.27 The visual study involved a combination of driving and walking around the study area's public rights of way (roads, footpaths, bridleways, byways open to all traffic, restricted byways), making notes and taking photographs. Both publicly-accessible and - where possible and accessible with permission - privately-owned areas were visited.

2.2.28 At the end of Stage 1, once the 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 (these terms are explained more fully in Section 6).

2.2.29 The Stage 1 report was published in March 2017. It summarised the baseline assessments and findings, identified key issues, and recommendations for the Stage 2 studies. It was accompanied by copies of the hand-drawn landscape and visual assessment baseline plans.

Stage 2

2.2.30 Stage 2 commenced in March 2019. The Stage 1 baseline studies set the context for, and informed, the detailed LSCA.

2.2.31 The first step in Stage 2 was to review the various recommendations which had been made in the Stage 1 report (Stage 1 report Section 5), several of which were relevant to / required for Stage 2.

2.2.32 For ease of reference, the recommendations have been tabulated and comments added:

Stage 1 Recommendations / Comments and / or Stage 2 Actions

Item	Recommendation	Comment / Stage 2 Action
1	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 environment.	Not included in Stage 2 but going forward as recommendation
2	Night time lighting assessment (baseline and consideration of effects arising from changes to the baseline).	Not included Stage 2
3	Identify sites which could potentially accommodate non-residential landuses e.g. LGSs, new cemetery, employment land.	Other uses identified include school and central community facility. Not specifically included in Stage 2, but a) LGS candidates may be identified during the process, and b) in future the sensitivity study results can be used to determine capacity of land for other landuses.
4	Supplement Stage 1 baseline landscape and visual studies with seasonal changes, especially when trees are in full-leaf.	Included in Stage 2
5	Establish whether 'ancient trees' noted in WBRC's records of 2008 - 2009 still exist.	Not included Stage 2: recommend taking forward as future community project
6	Public consultation - ask the community if they have useful baseline information, and ideally, help devise questions for them to answer which will inform judgements about landscape / visual value.	Consultation carried out in April 2019: responses incorporated into Stage 2.
7	Define study area boundary for the LSCA.	Included in Stage 2
8	Agree LSCA Area boundaries	Included in Stage 2
9	Write up Stage 1 summary baseline sections in full, illustrate with photographs, provide references. Also 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.	Included in Stage 2
10	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.	Included in Stage 2

11	Complete sensitivity and capacity assessment, write up in full	Included in Stage 2
12	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	Included in Stage 2
13	Make recommendations for any future landscape strategies / environmental and recreational projects / initiatives / enhancements / design guides for the local area, the settlement, and individual parcels of land	Included in Stage 2
14	Take an overview of the relationship between various key sites and areas both within the parish and on the land to the east [relating especially to future development at Blackmore Park and the TCS]. Develop guidance which would ensure that any further development properly respected its landscape character context.	Not included in Stage 2. However, a) the LSCA's findings can inform and guide future studies / proposals for these areas, and b) MHAONBP has recently published '*Guidance on how development can respect landscape in views*' which, although not area-specific, will help ensure that the key objectives are met. Also, the TCS is currently the subject of its own LSCA.

2.2.33 Accordingly, the second step in Stage 2 was to check / update / augment the Stage 1 baseline studies as required, especially as there had been certain changes to the baseline situation in the intervening period and new background / other information was available. Recent planning applications / permissions / appeals / constructed developments were also identified and factored in. Note that the LSCA is a record of the situation at midsummer 2019. Such issues will need to be monitored and the information updated as required (see Recommendations).

2.2.34 The third step was to establish the boundaries of areas of land ('LSCA Areas') which would be the subject of the more fine-grained sensitivity and capacity studies. This exercise was based on previous experience of working for LPAs, local communities and developers in similar situations. Ideally, such an assessment should include all the land adjacent to and just beyond the current settlement boundary (subject to certain 'caveats' - see below). This is because developers are aware that in theory there is more chance of gaining planning permission on sites closest to the settlement, and less chance in the 'open countryside'.

2.2.35 Some of the Areas, or parts of them, had previously been identified as potential future housing development sites in South Worcestershire's 2015 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)[9], which was also a factor in the delineation of the LSCA Area boundaries. (If an Area was a 2015 SHLAA site, it is noted in the LSCA Area schedules in Appendix H.)

2.2.36 Once the capacity of these Areas had been evaluated, consideration could be given to establishing the most appropriate line (and treatment) of the future settlement boundary.

2.2.37 For further information about settlement boundaries, see Section 7; in summary, a settlement boundary is defined as the dividing line or boundary between areas of built / urban development (the settlement) and non-urban or rural development (the countryside). Thus, 'open countryside' (technically, land beyond a settlement / settlement boundary) is normally a constraint to new residential development in planning policy terms, and is likely to have very limited capacity.

[9] The South Worcestershire Councils (SWCs) - i.e. Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon - started a Review of the SWDP in late 2017. As part of the Review the SWCs undertook a 'Call for Sites', inviting landowners or their agents / developers to submit land for potential future housing and employment development (by 2nd July 2019). The SWCs will then carry out a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). This will provide the SWC with evidence which will inform the spatial development option which will then be set out in the Preferred Options that will be consulted upon in November 2019.

2.2.38 The LSCA considered other potential constraints to development such as flooding, access and topography (see Constraints in Section 3). For example, if there is no access to a parcel of land from a public highway, could access be gained via adjacent fields / housing areas which do? If the topography is steep, would extensive engineering works need to be carried out in order to construct new houses? Would roadside hedges have to be removed in order to create the access / achieve sightlines? Some areas may have the capacity to accept these types of works without causing unacceptable levels of effects, others may not.

2.2.39 Conversely, a site may be judged to have a high level of capacity for new development in landscape terms, but it may not be accessible without third party agreement, or could be liable to flooding. These are not necessarily – in themselves or in combination – absolute constraints to development, of course, and there may be acceptable solutions for overcoming them without giving rise to adverse effects. Where these could give rise to effects on landscape character and visual amenity, however, they are also taken into account in the assessment.

2.2.40 It was agreed that some areas of land should be excluded from the capacity studies, for example because they were covered by some form of designation or use that would almost certainly be an 'absolute' constraint to development. These areas included:

- Policy-protected / designated areas that either specifically preclude or are material / significant constraints to development such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserves
- Open Access / common land (and other Malvern Hills Trust (MHT) land).

2.2.41 Small sites which would only accommodate one or two houses were excluded, and would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

2.2.42 In most cases, residential properties and their gardens were excluded, unless the garden could accommodate more than a small number of properties, especially where associated with a larger adjacent potential LSCA site.

2.2.43 The TCS was already included within the wider baseline studies; however, it was agreed that it would be excluded from the capacity assessment, on the basis of it being considered highly unlikely that there would be any applications for residential development during the current plan period.

2.2.44 Also, the Three Counties Agricultural Society (TCAS) have now commissioned a TCS-specific LSCA, although this will consider the showground's capacity to accept forms of development related to TCAS use as opposed to dwellings. The reason for the separate study is because the TCS is the subject of site-specific policies in the current Management Plan for the Malvern Hills AONB (2019 - 2024), and the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP), both of which require a 'masterplan' to be drawn up for the TCS.

2.2.45 The AONB Management policy is BDP12; it states:

'*A Master Plan will be developed for the Three Counties Showground. This should ensure that the site and any future development and landscaping is effectively integrated into the nationally designated landscape of the AONB*.'

2.2.46 The SWDP policy is SWDP 55; it states:

'*A masterplan for the site will be developed with the landowners. In particular, account will be taken of the location of the showground within the important landscape setting of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.*'

2.2.47 The justification for Policy SWDP 55 explains that:

'*The Three Counties Showground is an important economic facility occupying a significant area of ground in a very visible part of the Malvern Hills AONB. Due to this high visibility and huge popularity – which further increases its visual prominence due to mass car parking and the demand for additional infrastructure – it is necessary to develop a master plan for the site. This plan should set out key principles for development, landscaping etc. with a view to effectively integrating the site into its special landscape setting and ensuring that the site's impacts on important views are minimal.*'

2.2.48 In principle, the LSCA assumes that existing properties / other buildings could be redeveloped without giving rise to unacceptable effects (on the basis of them being classified as previously developed or 'brownfield' land), so long as the siting, scale, density and so on were the same as that which exists and the character / quality of design were appropriate. Of course, any new development on such sites should still be the subject of detailed, project-specific effects assessments.

2.2.49 The boundaries of the individual LSCA Areas were discussed and agreed with the AONB Unit, members of the PC / NDP group and the NDP planning consultant. Figure 2 shows the LSCA Area locations, boundaries and numbers.

2.2.50 The Areas were numbered from 1 - 17. This numbering is consistent throughout the study, and is used on the plans and in the schedules which were produced for each of the LSCA Areas (Appendix H). Some of the Areas are individual fields or plots; others are 'zones' comprising several fields or parcels of land which share similar characteristics and / or land uses.

2.2.51 As the more detailed Stage 2 studies progressed, some of the Areas were sub-divided, making a total of 25 Areas / sub-Areas. This was mainly due to 'localised' differences in landcover / land uses / management practices; for example, Area 1 now comprises Areas 1a - 1d. (Further subdivisions were made during the final capacity study and analysis stage, and there is now a total of 29 Areas / sub-Areas.)

2.2.52 Where necessary, the extent of the preliminary visual envelopes was modified, the degree of visibility verified, and the nature of the views was recorded. The nature and extent of visual effects (both adverse and beneficial) that could arise from new residential development was considered. Where appropriate, it was noted whether the use of secondary mitigation measures - such as locally-appropriate screen planting - could increase an Area's capacity.

2.2.53 The LSCA factored in the results of various public consultation exercises carried out as part of the NDP process. In April 2019, MWPC delivered a questionnaire to each household within the parish, seeking local residents' opinions on a number of topics, including:

- Local Green Spaces
- Community Facilities
- Nature Conservation
- Heritage
- Landscape and Visual Value
- Design
- Infrastructure
- Transport and Travel
- Housing
- Local Economy.

2.2.54 Some of the questions, especially those about landscape and visual value (see Section 6), were based on suggestions from the LSCA team; the responses would be analysed, and the results included as an important factor throughout the assessment process.

2.2.55 A draft version of the 'Wells Points of View' Survey Questionnaire Analysis report was completed in June 2019. Where relevant, the community's responses are noted in the sections below, and in the Area schedules.

2.2.56 Once the Stage 2 studies were materially complete (midsummer 2019, although if new information came in later it was incorporated if relevant), the landscape and visual baseline information that was pertinent to each Area - not just within the Area itself, but within its landscape and visual area of influence - was summarised in a schedule. The findings were analysed, and used to make judgements about each one's level of quality, value, susceptibility to change, sensitivity and capacity.

2.2.57 The criteria which have been used in the landscape and visual assessments to determine levels of value, susceptibility, magnitude of effect and so on are explained further in Section 7, including those developed specifically for the Malvern Wells LSCA (the 'generic' criteria are set out in the tables in Appendix G).

2.2.58 Not all the criteria need to be met in order for an Area to be categorised at a certain level: they simply indicate the value factors which need to be taken into consideration, and professional judgement must be applied when deciding which ones are most relevant.

2.2.59 The levels are graded on a five-point scale from Very High to Very Low with the possibility of 'split' categories in between, which means that small variations in an area's sensitivity and capacity are taken into account and a clear hierarchy can be established.

2.2.60 It should be noted that the AONB designation confers a 'Very High' level of value. However, this does not automatically mean that the landscape is in good condition or of high quality (although it should be borne in mind that scenic beauty is the main reason for the designation being made in the first place), nor that it necessarily has a high degree of susceptibility to change. The landscape assessment needs to 'go beneath the blanket' of this designation and consider the value, sensitivity and capacity of each Area on its own merit, although the weight of the designation must be factored in.

2.2.61 Once the schedules were complete and preliminary sensitivity and capacity values determined, the information was transferred onto a draft overall capacity plan and summary tables.

2.2.62 At this point, each Area's level of overall sensitivity and capacity was looked at again in the context of the values ascribed to the other Areas, and the findings were tested and compared. The tables were set out in ascending / descending order of capacity, to ensure that they had been assessed on a like-for-like basis. Again, professional judgement was applied at this point: for example, if two Areas were of equally high capacity, they were compared, and the level of capacity adjusted if it was concluded that they did not actually have equal capacity for development.

2.2.63 It does not necessarily follow that Areas with low sensitivity have high capacity for development and vice versa: other factors must be considered and professional judgement applied. For example, Areas which are currently in poor condition, which could reduce their level of sensitivity, are also assessed for their potential for improvement. Where it was concluded that this could increase sensitivity, especially within the context of better quality landscapes in the area, it was taken into account in the judgements (the feasibility of such improvement taking place would ultimately have to be considered). Similarly, if an Area in poor condition was found to perform an important function in the landscape, such as forming part of a setting or a strategic gap / green corridor / gateway, its overall level of sensitivity was evaluated on that basis.

2.2.64 The final results of the LSCA are set out on the overall capacity plan (see Figure 13 in Appendix A), the summary tables (see Tables A1 and A2 at the end of Section 7), and the individual Area schedules (see Appendix H). Appendix K LSCA Areas Tables of Comparison (Levels) contains a series of tables which set out the Areas' levels of landscape and visual value, susceptibility to change, sensitivity and capacity, in order of a) Area numbering; b) landscape capacity; c) visual capacity; and d) overall capacity.

3 Wider Landscape Character Baseline

3.1 Introduction and Overview

Introduction

3.1.1 This section begins with a brief description of Malvern Wells parish and its wider landscape context. It then sets out the findings of the baseline studies which focussed on the landscapes within the study area. The AONB landscape designation is explained, descriptions of the national and regional character areas and types that cover the area are given, and summaries of the designated and other key features / factors identified are provided. The findings of the historic landscape character studies and settlement pattern analysis are also set out; these cover both the wider and local areas, since its history is such an important factor in understanding the Wells' area's present-day character. Key landscape functions and various constraints are noted.

3.1.2 The studies' findings are set out in a broad 'hierarchy', from international / national to local / neighbourhood and 'site-specific'.

3.1.3 The landscape baseline information is shown on Figures 4 - 10.

3.1.4 Some of the key landscape-related designations, features and receptors identified within the wider study area at the desktop stage were subsequently discounted if it was judged that they could not possibly be affected by new development of the type and scale which is under consideration here.

3.1.5 Those which were selected for further consideration 'on-the-ground' are described in more detail in the sections which follow, shown on the figures, and noted in the individual LSCA Area schedules where relevant.

Malvern Wells Parish and Wider Landscape Context

3.1.6 Malvern Wells is a civil parish and village lying on the east side of the Malvern Hills in south-western Worcestershire.

3.1.7 The Malvern Hills form a highly distinctive and iconic feature in the region, running north - south for some 13km between North Malvern and Chase End. The Hills' ridgeline forms the boundary between Herefordshire and Worcestershire, and at Chase End, c. 6.5km south of Malvern Wells, the county boundaries of Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire (collectively known as 'the Three Choirs'[10]) meet.

3.1.8 The Hills exert a strong and widespread influence on the landscape in all directions - from the highest of at least twenty summits strung along their length (the Worcestershire Beacon, at 425m AOD), it is said that the furthest point visible is Shining Tor in Cheshire, c. 130km away. 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 - and great differences - between the two.

3.1.9 The study area's geology, topography and hydrology are described in the sections below, but in summary they are complex, and the landscapes are characterised by locally-distinct patterns of contrasting elements and features shaped by nature and culture.

3.1.10 Beyond the hillslopes and the urban areas to the east, the landscapes are predominantly agricultural, although they also accommodate commercial / light-industrial development, the TCS, recreational facilities such as the golf course and campsites, and nature reserves.

3.1.11 Malvern Wells parish covers c. 7.5 sq km (c. 3 sq miles), and according to the UK census, in 2011, the population of the parishes of Malvern Wells and Little Malvern combined was 3,196.

3.1.12 The settlement itself lies at the southern end of the spa town of Great Malvern, approximately 14km from Worcester city centre (to the north east), 8km from Ledbury (to the south west), and 8km from Upton-on-Severn (to the south east).

[10] The 'Three Choirs' are believed to be remnants of a Druidic 'Circle of Perpetual Choirs'. It is suggested that at a number of geometrically / astronomically-aligned points across the country, choirs of Druids would chant perpetually in order to maintain a permanent spell of enchantment or peace across the land. The process involved one choir chanting for a certain period of time, then handing over the task to the neighbouring choir. The arrangement was circular, and the centre of the circle was at Whiteleaved Oak.

3.1.13 Figure 1 shows both parish and village / settlement in their wider context, and the areas covered by the LSCA's four geographical sectors.

3.1.14 On the whole the parish boundaries are well-defined, following distinct physical features which contribute to, and form part of, the Wells' local context and setting, and influence its character to varying degrees (the various landscape elements and features are described in more detail in the sections below).

3.1.15 The parish's northern boundary zig-zags from the Worcestershire Beacon eastwards along the southern edge of Great Malvern town centre (Malvern College / Barnards Green / Poolbrook). From the Beacon there are panoramic 360° views. At lower levels the parish's visual 'area of influence' to the north is often limited by built form and mature vegetation in and on the edges of Great Malvern, and by the Hills themselves from certain viewpoints.

3.1.16 The parish's eastern boundary follows the B4208 Blackmore Park Road on lower-lying land forming part of the Severn Plain. The area of influence to the east extends for many kilometres (the Cotswold escarpment forms the skyline c. 35km to the south east), although in certain lower-lying areas, many views are screened by localised topography and dense, mature vegetation.

3.1.17 The western boundary runs north - south along the ridgeline of the Malvern Hills, from the Beacon to Black Hill, north of British Camp. The Hills act as both a physical and a visual barrier, although the parish boundary runs along the ridgeline from which 360° panoramic views of the surrounding landscapes can be gained.

3.1.18 The southern boundary follows the line of Mere Brook and skirts the southern end of the settlement, which includes parts of Upper Welland. To the south, the area of influence varies, much depending on topography and the presence / absence of dense / mature vegetation. Views of the Wells are possible from Hangman's Hill and parts of Castlemorton Common, although they are oblique, and south of the Common the land drops away and / or the Hills themselves screen views.

Malvern Wells Settlement Character

3.1.19 The character and components of the settlement are summarised below; however, the LSCA focuses on the landscapes beyond the settlement, and does not include detailed descriptions of the built-up areas.

3.1.20 The settlement is described in more detail in the Residential Character Area (RCA) study which was carried out on behalf of MWPC by Cass Associates as part of the NDP's evidence base (the final version had not been published at the time the LSCA was finalised, so references throughout are to the May 2019 draft). The RCA study identifies the key characteristics of broad residential character areas within the settlement boundary, and also considers the relationships and associations between the different parts of the settlement and their contextual landscapes.

3.1.21 In addition, the RCA study sets out several recommendations relating to landscape character and views within the settlement boundary which could have direct or indirect relevance to several of the LSCA Areas. The LSCA and RCA study are 'sister' documents and should therefore be reviewed together / cross-referenced to ensure that both the settlement and its contextual landscapes are read holistically.

3.1.22 The May 2019 draft study established eight different RCAs:

i. Assarts
ii. Central Wells
iii. Fruitlands
iv. Peachfield Road
v. St Wulstan's
vi. Upper and Lower Wyche
vii. Upper Welland, and
viii. Wells Road.

3.1.23 The Malvern Wells Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA)[11] should also be referred to for descriptions of the parts of the settlement which lie within the Conservation Area (but note that at the time the LSCA was completed, the draft of the CAA was still out for consultation - see Section 3.6 - so the

[11] https://www.malvernhills.gov.uk/conservation-area-appraisals

proposed changes to the CA boundary have not been factored in to the LSCA); however, the draft report was available, and was used as a source of reference for the baseline and capacity studies.

3.1.24 The CAA identified five 'Malvern Character Areas' (ideally the CAA map legend should be updated to read 'Malvern Wells Character Areas'):

i. The Wyche
ii. Peachfield Road / Upper Wells Road
iii. Holywell Road / Wells Road / Hanley Road
iv. The village core / Lower Wells Road and
v. Upper Assart.

3.1.25 Where relevant, relationships between the LSCA Areas and both the RCAs and the CAA's 'Malvern [sic] Character Areas' are noted in the LSCA Area schedules.

3.1.26 In summary, the Malvern Wells settlement is distinctly linear, stretching c. 4km from Lower Wyche (north) to Upper Welland (south). The linear pattern is mainly due to topography, and how the road networks have responded to the angles of slope over time. Hydrology has also played a part, as explained below.

3.1.27 This considerable distance results in there being little physical association or cultural / social relationship between the Upper Wyche / Lower Wyche / Fruitlands areas, and Upper Welland, for example. Also, anecdotal evidence suggests that people living in those parts of the settlement tend to shop / socialise in the communities which lie closest (Upper Wyche residents often use Colwall village, and Fruitlands residents go to Barnards Green). Topographically at least, Upper Welland is more closely-associated with Welland village.

3.1.28 The draft CAA provides a summary overview of the Wells' settlement, as follows:

'*Despite a relatively short settlement history, Malvern Wells has considerable historic and architectural significance as a prosperous village spa from the late 18th century; a place of recreation and industry throughout the 19th century and an attractive residential area throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century*.

'*These principal phases of development have left a wealth of historic buildings of high architectural quality and locally distinctive features such as wells, gas lamps and Malvern stone boundary walls. Historic building uses remain apparent in building forms and settlement patterns and the area retains a strong sense of identity. There is an abundance of established trees, woodland, and important open spaces, which give the area a green and leafy character. These features make an important contribution to the special historic and architectural quality of the conservation area...*

'*Its intrinsic relationship with the Malvern Hills, and how the constraints and opportunities of the landscape have influenced the development of the area*.'

3.1.29 The draft CAA identifies several factors / features / attributes which are 'special features' of the Wells, and which contribute to the justification of the Conservation Area designation, including:

- *The demonstration of social hierarchy in the area through the contrasting scale, form, materials and density of buildings.*
- *Many good examples of late 18th, 19th and early 20th century public and domestic buildings and vernacular, classical, gothic and arts and crafts architecture.*
- *The high quality and variety of architectural details and survival of historic fabric.*
- *Locally distinctive features in the public realm such as gas lamps and Malvern stone boundary walls.*
- *The importance of springs and wells to the growth and prosperity of the village and their remaining visible presence in the conservation area.*
- *Evidence of the former Malvern stone quarrying industry in both buildings and landscape.*
- *The significant contribution made by the natural environment including trees, woodland, hedges, gardens and surviving areas of common land*.

3.1.30 At close-quarters there often appears to be little unity in the settlement's character, as it varies considerably from place to place, each character area reflecting different phases of its historic - sometimes ad-hoc - development. The draft CAA notes the '*surviving pockets of vernacular*

settlement, grand Georgian houses, worker's cottages and a high quantity and quality of Victorian and Edwardian public and domestic buildings and structures. This gives the impression of an affluent and enterprising heritage'. There are also ubiquitous / poor-quality design modern housing estates (and individual properties) scattered randomly throughout the area, disrupting settlement pattern and balance.

3.1.31 However, in many long- and middle-distance views - from the east in particular - the settlement appears to have a great deal of integrity, especially the white / cream-rendered properties along Wells Road and the closely-associated 'spring line' [12]. The cluster of buildings at Upper Wyche is also an eye-catching and distinctive feature in many views, especially when white facades are lit by the morning sun.

3.1.32 Mature vegetation on the hillslopes makes a significant contribution to the character and context of the settlement and how it is perceived, even in winter, creating an harmonious balance between built form and landscape. The draft CAA notes how this well-wooded character gives rise to the impression of '*trees with buildings in between*', and that '*Areas of open green spaces provide respite between the surrounding developed areas and recreational spaces at the foot of the hills*'. It goes on to emphasise that '*The natural environment is an essential component of the significance of the Malvern Wells conservation area*'.

3.2 Designated Landscapes

3.2.1 Malvern Wells parish lies within the eastern (central) sector of the Malvern Hills AONB. Both the parish and the AONB's eastern boundaries run along Blackmore Park Road.

3.2.2 According to the MHAONB's Management Plan (2019 - 2024):

'*The AONB covers 105 square kilometres and includes parts of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. The special quality of the Malvern Hills lies in the contrasts. The distinctive, narrow, north-south ridge, a mountain range in miniature, thrusts unexpectedly from the pastoral farmland patchwork of the Severn Vale. The highest point is Worcestershire Beacon (425m) and walkers along the ridge crest enjoy views as far as Wales and the Cotswolds. The geological variety, and centuries of traditional farming have given the AONB great ecological value. Herb-rich, unimproved pastures and native woodland support a wealth of habitats, species and wildlife. In addition, it is also a historical landscape, the ridge is crowned by three ancient hill forts, the most famous being the ditches and ramparts of British Camp.*

'*This is an area of pastoral farming, with dairying and stock-rearing, plus fruit growing, mixed crops and forestry. Large areas are grazed as ancient commons. The AONB has a population of approximately 12,000 and villages such as Malvern Wells have experienced considerable growth in their retired population and in workers commuting to Birmingham and Worcester. The towns of Great Malvern and Ledbury fringe the AONB and the rural economy includes light manufacturing and prestige office development together with the important conference and tourism sector. Tourists have flocked here to 'take the waters' since the early 1800s and Great Malvern's formal paths and rides give the nearby slopes the air of a Victorian pleasure garden. The ridge and hillside paths and the commons are traditional 'day trip' country. The Worcestershire Way footpath is an important recreation resource in the AONB.'*

3.2.3 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*'.

3.2.4 The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape, and AONB partnerships have a statutory duty to conserve and enhance that natural beauty.

[12] Malvern's springs are concentrated along the fault line where groundwater draining through the fissured crystalline rocks of the Hills meets the relatively impervious Triassic marls of the Severn Plain as it becomes forced to the surface. Many emerge along a 'spring line' that encircles the northern section of the Malvern Hills from British Camp to End Hill. Although its elevation varies, the line is fairly consistent. As a result, the routes along and across the Hills, and the associated settlements, have been aligned / situated to take maximum advantage of this natural bounty, and it is one of the main reasons why the majority of residential properties are on or below the spring line.

3.2.5 In terms of the designation, an area's 'natural beauty' is deemed to include 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.

3.2.6 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.

3.2.7 The natural beauty of these areas is recognised as contributing significantly to economic activities and well-being through tourism and inward investment. In Chapter 8, the MHAONB Management Plan 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*'.

3.2.8 Furthermore, the importance of access to 'healthy' landscapes is now recognised as being vital to human health and wellbeing, and the AONB's landscapes make highly important contributions to both local and wider natural capital and ecosystem services (see Landscape Value section below).

3.2.9 The Management Plan was a key source of reference for this commission. During the course of the study the 2019 - 2024 version was adopted, and the LSCA was updated accordingly.

3.2.10 The plan sets out the vision of what the AONB will be like in 20 years' time (i.e. in 2040). In terms of the AONB's landscapes, the Plan notes the vision that '*Change in the landscape is accepted and its impacts accommodated through positive management. However, the landscape largely comprises broadleaved woodland and grassland, interconnected with hedgerows and hedgerow trees, all in good condition*'. Another vision is that '*The distinctive character of villages, historic farmsteads and rural buildings is sustained by high standards of informed design and development*'.

3.2.11 The LSCA process provides an in-depth understanding of the character of the AONB landscapes within the study area, using MHAONBP's various guidance and publications as key sources of reference.

3.2.12 The 'Special Qualities' of the Malvern Hills AONB are set out on page 9 of the Management Plan. The majority are present in the study area, and are relevant to the LSCA (where relevant, this information is supplemented and illustrated in the sections below):

- *The Malvern Hills: a high, dramatic ridge of ancient rock that is visible from the Severn Vale and from the rolling hills and valleys to the west.*
- *Dramatic scenery and spectacular views arising from the juxtaposition of high and low ground.*
- *A distinctive and varied geology, with a variety of different rock types including granites, diorites, volcanic lavas, limestones, sandstones, mudstones and shales. This gives rise to a unique array of landscapes and natural habitats.*
- *A wide variety of landscape types in a relatively small area. Assessments of the area's landscape character identify ten distinct landscape types. Woodland and grassland in varying mixes are the most prevalent.*
- *A distinctive combination of landscape elements that include orchards, parklands, ridgelines, ponds, quarries, hedgerows and watercourses.*
- *An unspoiled 'natural' environment supporting a wide variety of wildlife habitats and species, many of which are nationally rare.*
- *An historic landscape of ancient unenclosed commons, varied field boundary patterns and designed parks and gardens, for example at Eastnor.*
- *A rich and distinctive historic environment including Bronze Age burial grounds, moated sites and Iron Age hill forts, for example British Camp.*
- *Distinctive villagescapes, including conservation areas, listed buildings and local features that define a 'spirit of place' in the settlements.*
- *Thriving and active communities with a low deprivation index that reflects the area's prosperity and the availability of employment.*
- *A history of recreation and tourism that continues today, with people coming to enjoy the hills, spas and the tranquillity of the rural landscapes.*

- *A sense of remoteness and tranquillity, underpinned by dark skies and limited noise and disturbance. People feel calm and spiritually refreshed.*
- *A strong 'spirit of place', landscapes that have inspired and continue to inspire and which have a deep cultural narrative.*
- *Open access in many places over the hills and commons, providing opportunities for bracing walks with fine views.*

Malvern Hills AONB Malvern Wells Hills (photo courtesy of Jan Sedlacek Digitlight Photography[13])

3.2.13 It should be noted that whilst AONB landscapes are designated because they are considered to be of high 'quality', within them there may be places where, on a site- or area-specific basis, the quality of the landscape is assessed as moderate or even low. However, such an area must be considered within the context of the nationally-important and valuable landscape, and seen as an integral part of the whole, regardless of the level of its contribution.

3.2.14 Also, some areas are only judged to be of low quality because they are currently in poor condition, for example through inappropriate management which results in the loss of traditional / characteristic landcover and features. In some cases, this level of condition is temporary, and such areas could be restored. It is thus not always reasonable to use a low condition baseline as the context for evaluating the capacity and potential effects of new development.

3.3 National Landscape Character

3.3.1 Nationally, the country is divided into National Character Areas (NCAs)[14].

3.3.2 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.*'

3.3.3 For each NCA, a 'profile' document is produced. NCA profiles are '… *guidance documents which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for.*

[13] www.digitlight.co.uk

[14] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making

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'.

3.3.4 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*'.

3.3.5 The landscapes in the majority of the study area are covered by NCA 106 Severn and Avon Vales[15]. The Malvern Hills, which lie at the western edge of the study area, are covered by NCA 103 Malvern Hills[16]. The boundary between them runs along the mid-slopes on the Hills' eastern side. NCA 100 Herefordshire Lowlands 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.

3.3.6 The location of the NCAs is shown on Figure 4.

3.3.7 **NCA 106 Severn and Avon Vales** covers a large area, running in a broad swathe between Bromsgrove and Stratford-on-Avon and down to the Bristol Channel.

3.3.8 The landscape is described in the profile as follows:

'*The lower valleys of the rivers Severn and Avon dominate this low-lying open agricultural vale landscape made up of distinct and contrasting vales, including Evesham, Berkeley, Gloucester, Leadon, and Avon, with Cotswold outliers like Bredon Hill punctuating the otherwise flat vale landscape. The M5 motorway runs through the centre and the eastern edge of the area. A small proportion of the National Character Area (NCA) is urban and includes towns such as Worcester, Cheltenham, Gloucester and Stratford-upon-Avon.*'

3.3.9 The character area displays a wide range of key characteristics, but those which are represented in the study area are summarised below:

- *Diverse range of flat and gently undulating landscapes strongly influenced and united by the Severn and Avon rivers.*
- *Woodland is sparsely distributed across this landscape but a well-wooded impression is provided by frequent hedgerow trees, parkland and surviving traditional orchards. Remnants of formerly extensive Chases and Royal Forests, centred around Malvern, Feckenham and Ombersley still survive.*
- *Small pasture fields and commons are prevalent in the west with a regular pattern of parliamentary enclosure in the east. Fields on the floodplains are divided by ditches… fringed by willow pollards and alders.*
- *Pasture and stock rearing predominate on the floodplain and on steeper slopes, with a mixture of livestock rearing, arable, market gardening and hop growing elsewhere.*
- *Unimproved neutral grassland (lowland meadow PHI site) survives around Feckenham Forest and Malvern Chase... Fragments of unimproved calcareous grassland and acidic grasslands are also found.*
- *A strong historic time line is visible in the landscape.*
- *Highly varied use of traditional buildings materials, with black and white timber frame intermixed with deep-red brick buildings...*
- *Many ancient market towns and large villages are located along the rivers, their cathedrals and churches standing as prominent features in the relatively flat landscape*.

[15] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/1831421?category=587130

[16] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3039205?category=587130

Typical NCA 106 Severn and Avon Vales landscapes east of NCA 103 Malvern Hills

3.3.10 The Statements of Environmental Opportunity for NCA 106 include:

- SEO 2: *Seek to safeguard and enhance this area's distinctive patterns of field boundaries, ancient hedgerows, settlements, orchards, parkland, small woodlands, chases, commons and floodplain*

management with their strong links to past land use and settlement history, and for the benefits this will bring to soil erosion, soil quality and biodiversity.

- SEO 3: *Reinforce the existing landscape structure as part of any identified growth of urban areas, hard infrastructure and other settlements ensuring quality green infrastructure is incorporated enhancing health, access, recreation, landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity*.
- SEO 4: *Protect geological exposures and maintain, restore and expand semi natural habitats throughout the agricultural landscape, linking them together to create a coherent and resilient habitat network enabling ecosystems to adapt to climate change*.

3.3.11 In this character area, Natural England identifies changes and trends which include the decline and loss of traditional orchards, and the loss / deterioration of traditional boundary hedges and trees. It notes that some new woodlands have been created in the form of scattered small blocks in keeping with the character of the area.

3.3.12 Future challenges include 'p*ressure from development around urban and industrial areas*', and '*pressure to increase food production*'.

3.3.13 **NCA 103 Malvern Hills** is described in the profile as follows:

'…*The area is one of great contrasts. These range from the majestic height of the hills themselves to the undulating swells and low wooded escarpments of Eastnor and the Suckley Hills, and to the jumble of rolling hills and woodlands marching away to the west. Most of the area lies within the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).*'

3.3.14 All of the key characteristics of NCA 103 are represented in the parts of the study area which are covered by it:

- *A prominent, narrow north–south ridge of high, unenclosed, rounded hills [which] … form a highly visible dominant landmark, visible from a long distance;*
- *A varied geology, which is reflected in the soils;*
- *Along the Malvern Hills ridge there are a number of dramatic historic sites, including the bronze-age barrows, iron-age hill forts at British Camp and Midsummer Hill, and the Shire Ditch;*
- *There is a high density of public rights of way and an extensive area of open access land;*
- *There are good rail and road links to urban populations;*
- *To the north and west of the hills there are wooded limestone ridges, separated by vales of mixed shale. The lower slopes and ridges – particularly the steeper ones – are densely wooded, with blocks of ancient woodland and occasional plantations. Many field boundaries are species-rich and also of medieval origin; and*
- *The ridges and vales form a mixed pastoral landscape of small irregular fields, orchards, hop yards and many ancient, species-rich hedgerows and meadows. Interspersed throughout this landscape (particularly to the south, where larger farms and estates developed) are larger fields bounded by thorn.*

NCA 103 Malvern Hills landscapes viewed from east across NCA 106 Severn and Avon Vales

3.3.15 The SEOs for NCA 103 are:

- *SEO 1: Conserve and appropriately manage the areas of semi-natural habitat in the wider character area of the Malvern Hills such as woodland and traditional orchard, providing economic opportunities, fostering community participation;*
- *SEO 2: Manage and improve access to the landscape, as well as the cultural and geological features of the Malvern Hills National Character Area and promote enhanced understanding and enjoyment to reinforce a strong sense of place;*
- *SEO 3: Protect and appropriately manage the historic environment and its setting, ensuring that historic features and landscapes are recognisable and valued; and*
- *SEO 4: Plan for an expansion of semi-natural habitats where appropriate, so that a significant ecological network is created and interconnected to adjoining areas. This will increase biodiversity, pollination, food and drink production, as well as regulate soil erosion, water and soil quality, reinforcing a strong sense of place.*

3.3.16 Further information about whether / how the local landscapes reflect the 'host' NCA is set out in Section 4. The LSCA Area schedules also note whether the individual Areas' landscapes are representative of the NCA.

3.4 Regional / Countywide Landscape Character

3.4.1 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 very large geographical areas, so it is necessary to look at character at a regional scale, where landscape character 'areas' and 'types' have been surveyed and categorised by both Worcestershire County Council (WCC)[17] and MHAONBP[18].

[17] Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance Technical Handbook August 2013 Worcestershire County Council. See also http://gis.worcestershire.gov.uk/website/LandscapeCharacter/

[18] Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Landscape Strategy and Guidelines 2011

3.4.2 WCC's Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) begins with classifying regional landscape areas.

3.4.3 The majority of the Malvern Wells study area lies within the extensive Mid-Worcestershire Forest, although the Malvern Hills are covered by the Malvern and Abberley Hills character area (the key characteristics which are represented in the study area are described in more detail in the sections below, but for further information see WCC's Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance Technical Handbook (August 2013)).

3.4.4 NCA 106 Severn and Avon Vales shares several of the Mid-Worcestershire Forest's characteristics. In the study area, Malvern Chase was one of many royal forests which once extended across the central part of the West Midlands (see also landscape history below). The LCA states:

'*Such a large and distinctive assemblage of Royal Forests was quite unique in the country and a very relevant element of the cultural heritage and landscape of Worcestershire. Despite the fact that some of these Forests did not survive beyond the medieval period they have nonetheless left an indelible mark on the character of the present day landscape. This is reflected in the dispersed pattern of farmsteads and the clusters of wayside dwellings associated with relic commons, together with the innumerable small copses and abundance of hedgerow trees. The latter give the region a well timbered appearance, despite the fact that the extensive woodlands of medieval times survive only in attenuated relics such as Chaddesley Wood… Royal Forests were not completely wooded but also included a varying proportion of enclosed farmland and unenclosed common pasture*.'

3.4.5 Similarly, NCA 103 Malvern Hills shares many of the Malvern and Abberley Hills' characteristics.

3.4.6 In terms of county / AONB-wide 'landscape character types' (LCTs)[19], the Malvern Hills are categorised as the 'High Hills and Slopes' LCT, the boundaries of which coincide almost exactly with the boundary of NCA 103. West of the Hills, the undulating lower slopes are categorised as 'Principal Wooded Hills' LCT, 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 land use and landcover, as explained in more detail below. They have little or no influence on Malvern Wells' landscapes.

3.4.7 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'. There are remnants of the 'Unenclosed Commons' type south of Great Malvern (on Malvern Common), although beyond the study area boundary there are more extensive areas of 'Unenclosed Commons' between Welland and Hollybush (especially Castlemorton Common).

3.4.8 East of the 'Unenclosed Commons' and south of the 'Principal Timbered Farmlands' types, the landscape is categorised as 'Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use' (Hanley Swan village lies at the junction of all three LCTs). This area is some distance away from the parish boundary and has limited interinfluence with the character of the Wells, although it also forms an important part of the AONB's wider context and setting.

3.4.9 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.

3.4.10 The key characteristics of High Hills and Slopes speak for themselves - 'dominant topography', 'exposed character', 'panoramic views' and so on, whereas those of the Enclosed Commons type are less obvious until the reasons for the forms and features which are visible in the landscape are understood. For example, the 'planned enclosure' characteristic of this type is reflected in 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 about this is provided in the historic landscape character section below, but in summary, it is the result of the Enclosure Act of 1795.

3.4.11 The locations of the LCTs are shown on Figure 4; those of most relevance to the study are summarised below (the information is taken from MHAONBP's document *Landscape Strategy and Guidelines* (2011), with more detailed descriptions, including WCC's, provided in Appendix B.

[19] For further information about character areas and types see Descriptions of Countywide Landscape Character and Landscape Description Units in Appendix B.

HIGH HILLS AND SLOPES

The High Hills and Slopes landscape is a steeply sloping, unenclosed landscape associated with a high ridge of ancient igneous and metamorphic rocks. These hard rocks have been pushed up by earth movements along a line of weakness in the Earth's crust, which has produced the spectacular scenery we see today. This landscape is characterised by prominent summits, shallow mineral soils and extensive tracts of rough grassland / heath graduating into a more heavily wooded land cover on the lower slopes.

The exposed character, with its distant panoramic views, is heightened by the dramatic form of the topography creating a wild, invigorating quality. The steeply sloping topography means that roads and settlements are sparse. There are occasional settlement clusters and Victorian villas / hotels constructed of light-coloured stucco, red brick or polychromatic local stone where highways cross the ridge, sometimes partially obscured within mixed ornamental woodlands. Path and trackways, mainly Victorian in creation, cross the slopes and reflect the cultural heritage of the area as a spa resort. The summit of the ridge, however, is marked by a series of prominent historic earthworks, including Iron Age Forts. The High Hills and Slopes is a simple, yet visually distinctive landscape, not least for the contrast that it provides with the surrounding settled and gentler, enclosed agricultural landscapes.

Typical High Hills and Slopes landscapes - Pinnacle Hill (© Copyright Philip Halling[20])

ENCLOSED COMMONS

The Enclosed Commons is a planned landscape characterised by an ordered pattern of medium to large geometric fields, straight roads and scattered red brick farmsteads. Fields are typically defined by straight thorn hedges, reflecting the late enclosure of this landscape from former woodland and waste on poor soils. Further structure is provided by scattered hedgerow trees, localised plantation woodlands and linear tree cover along watercourses which provide a framework to views rather than producing a sense of enclosure and blocking them.

The historic land use pattern is also reflected in the pattern of settlement, which includes isolated, red brick farmsteads and clusters of wayside dwellings. Most of the farmsteads have regular courtyard plans and date from the 19th century, while the presence of wayside dwellings reflects the

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origin of this landscape from areas of former common land. Scattered farmsteads are often located opposite, or close to areas which remain today as unenclosed common.

Typical Enclosed Commons landscapes at foot of High Hills and Slopes

3.4.12 The WCC LCA has also evaluated the inherent sensitivity of the landscape types, and it is therefore an important source of reference for this study. Indeed, it should be a reference for any landscape assessment carried out in the county. It includes a more localised assessment of the LCTs, sub-dividing them into Landscape Description Units (LDUs). LDUs are at a local scale and are further sub-divided into the smallest units known as Land Cover Parcels (LCPs).

3.4.13 LDUs are '… *discrete and relatively homogenous units of land within which the constituent physical and cultural elements occurred in repeated patterns and shared certain visual characteristics. These units of land are the Landscape Description Units (LDUs) and are the building blocks of landscape character. They form the basis on which all subsequent classification and evaluation takes place*'.

3.4.14 LCPs are '*totally homogeneous units within which there are no variations of attribute and within which the landscape is a visual entirety'*.

3.4.15 The LCPs are also shown on Figure 4.

3.4.16 The surveys for WCC's LCA were carried out in 2008 and 2009, and there have been several changes to the general baseline situation in the intervening years, including new built development, changes in and intensification of land use, and further erosion / loss of characteristic elements and features; however, the information in the LCA is still a good source of reference for understanding the landscapes of the wider study area.

3.4.17 The LSCA Area schedules note whether the individual Areas' landscapes are representative of the 'mother' LCT.

3.5 Designated / Key Landscape Features: Physical Landscape

3.5.1 The area's geology, topography and hydrology are complex. They give rise to abundant springs, fertile soils and wooded hills which were exploited by the communities which settled here. The landscapes of the study area are characterised by locally-distinct patterns of contrasting elements and features shaped by nature and culture. They provide a wide range of highly valuable and valued resources for visitors and residents, as well as flora and fauna.

Geology

3.5.2 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 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 land uses.

3.5.3 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.

3.5.4 The main north-south line of the Malvern Hills comprises rocks of pre-Cambrian age (between 600 - 800million years old). They are split into two distinct groups: the Malverns Complex and the Warren House Volcanics. The former group of plutonic rocks makes up 95% of the Hills' bedrock and consists predominantly of diorites, tonalites and hybrids, together with some granite and ultrabasic rocks. The corresponding metamorphic rocks are also present, including schist, gneiss, marble and amphibolite. Some of these rocks have been intruded by younger granite magmas and other lithologies.

3.5.5 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 sq km 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*'[21].

3.5.6 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 (LGeoSs) (see below).

3.5.7 In Victorian times, the Hills were seen as an infinite resource of building material and locally, many houses and walls - especially retaining walls - were built with the hard chunks of Malvern stone. Further afield, the chippings were used extensively for road building.

3.5.8 By the early 20th century, quarrying had become a major problem because it was disfiguring the landscape of the Hills (see Heritage below). In due course, the Malvern Hills Act 1924 was passed, which gave Malvern Hills Conservators (MHC)[22] powers to prevent further land use for quarrying by the compulsory purchase of land over the following five years, and to make byelaws to restrict and regulate existing quarrying operations.

3.5.9 However, owners of the land retained the mineral rights over any land within MHC (now MHT - see footnote below) jurisdiction; at the Gullet Quarry south of British Camp, quarrying only ended in 1997. The quarry at Hollybush was worked until 1977.

3.5.10 The proliferation of quarries does, of course, provide a rich resource for geologists. MHT lists 25 quarries and other features on and around the Hills which have been designated as LGeoSs.

3.5.11 The location of the LGeoSs within, or close to the boundaries of the parish is shown on Figure 7. They include:

- 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).

3.5.12 These features contribute greatly to an understanding of the landscape's character, as well as to landscape value[23].

3.5.13 The quarries are also important for biodiversity (see below).

3.5.14 The stone makes a significant contribution to the character and distinctiveness of Malvern's landscapes and settlements, but as the stone is no longer quarried, it is a finite and quite valuable

[21] http://geopark.org.uk/pub/

[22] Since April 2017, MHC has used the working name 'Malvern Hills Trust (MHT), which is used throughout the LSCA

[23] The Geological Conservation Review (GCR) is the register of known nationally and internationally important Earth science (geological and geomorphological) sites in Great Britain. The GCR underpins designation of Earth science features in Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The majority of GCR sites therefore now have statutory protection through designation as notified features in SSSIs… GCR sites, however, remain unnotified and are known as unnotified GCR sites. National Park Authorities and some Local Authorities treat these as candidate SSSIs and afford them the same protection as SSSIs. Some unnotified GCR sites are also Local Geodiversity Sites, and as such they are afforded levels of protection appropriate to locally important sites (though they are, themselves, considered to be of national or international importance). The remaining unnotified GCR sites have no statutory protection, although they are considered to be sites of national or international importance.

resource. Alternative stones with the same characteristics are very difficult to find, and the introduction of 'alien' rock and stone as a building material can give rise to locally-significant adverse effects (see example in photo of new build in Malvern Wells below).

Inappropriate choice of Cotswold stone as building material in local landscape

3.5.15 The colour of 'Malvern stone' is hard to define: the rocks from which the stone is quarried consist of assemblies of interlocking crystals with generally irregular shapes. The crystals are mainly of three types of mineral; quartz is grey in colour and is translucent; feldspar is either pink or white depending on chemical composition; dark crystals of many types occur and usually contain much iron or magnesium. The colour variation often gives a distinct mottled appearance to the rocks, and colonisation by various lichens and mosses adds to the colour mix.

Malvern Stone building Wells Road

3.5.16 Other rocks were formed during the Silurian Age, c. 400 million years ago. In parts of the Hills they are visible: now tilted at a very steep angle, they originated as horizontal layers of silt, mud and thin limestone beds which have been consolidated into hard rocks. In the area between the Malverns and Ledbury to the west, beds of clay / muds, hardened into shale, alternate with limestones. The limestones form the wooded ridges whilst the shales have been worn away to form lower ground. The limestones contain fossil corals and other shelled creatures, indicative of their origin in warm, shallow tropical seas.

3.5.17 In the Malvern Hills area just under 300 million years ago, great geological upheavals occurred which caused the rocks to be vigorously folded and broken by faults. Some of the faults affecting the pre-Cambrian rocks correspond with the gaps at the Wyche Cutting, British Camp, the Gullet and Hollybush; a long north-south fault system resulted in the eastern side of the Hills being an abrupt, very steep slope, and in a dislocation of the southern parts of the Hills from the northern parts - the Herefordshire Beacon is visibly offset to the west.

3.5.18 East of the Hills are the desert sediments of the later Triassic Mercia Mudstone Group, deposited over 200 million years ago. The effects of the Anglian glaciation, which occurred over 400,000 years ago, are more visible on the west side of the Hills, as the upstanding rocks acted as a barrier to the advancing ice and trapped large heaps of debris; the freeze / thaw of the glaciations resulted in some of the debris which collected around the base of the Hills mixing with the later river terrace deposits of the Severn to the east.

3.5.19 It is interesting to note that on the east sides of the Malvern Hills in particular, the transition from hard rock to clay is reflected in the use of building materials, with Malvern stone more characteristic of built form on the higher hillslopes, and clay brick on the plains (note for example ‘Brick Barns’ Farm).

3.5.20 Also, characteristically, Malvern stone retaining walls line the west ‘uphill’ sides of roads, whereas the east ‘downhill’ sides of roads are lined with free-standing walls (some stone but often red or purple brick), fences and hedges.

Soils

3.5.21 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*.

3.5.22 The hard, crystalline rocks give rise to acidic brown podsolic soils with limited fertility. Soils are thinnest on the Hills' ridges and upper slopes where there is no tree cover to bind them. They are generally shallow, very stony, and carry a dense covering of turf. They are also dry and very free-draining, due to their coarse mineral texture and the ready percolation of rainwater through the faults and fractures which are characteristic of the underlying rocks (see also Hydrology below).

3.5.23 Lower down the slopes where tree cover is denser, thicker pockets of fertile soil accumulate, enriched by worms digesting composting leaves.

3.5.24 The Hills' flanks tend to be Stanway, Yeld and Brockhurst soils over shale and mudstone, and the foothills are covered by head deposits that have acidic, stagnogley soils and acidic, skeletal argillic and silty brown earths. This results in seasonally-waterlogged land of low fertility which has traditionally been used for pasture rather than cultivation - this is an important characteristic of the Wells settlement's context and setting.

3.5.25 In a number of places, the underlying bedrock is masked by fluvio-glacial drift that has been washed down from higher land. These spreads of drift extend from the lower slopes of the Hills far out into the Severn plain, where they give rise to poor gravelly soils with a tendency towards impeded drainage. There appears to be a strong correlation between the distribution of these soils and the widespread occurrence of surviving and relic commons in this area - deposits on Castlemorton Common are up to 1m deep in places, and are known as 'Malvern gravels'.

3.5.26 Elsewhere, the mudstones and clays that underlie much of the wider region give rise to rather heavy, in places poorly draining, soils. The former tend to be deficient in nutrients; this, together with the heavy nature of the soil may explain why the region was originally heavily-wooded and not exploited for agriculture. 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 were evidently less favourable for settlement, being predominantly poorly-drained brackish marshland (the result of rising sea levels) in contrast to the more favourable conditions in the undulating foothills to the west.

3.5.27 Lowland commons and road verges east of the Hills also have clayey soils including argillic pelosols, stagnogley soils and silty brown earths. The majority of these soils have impeded drainage; however, they are more base-rich (alkaline) and of moderate fertility. These soils are seasonally-wet, and are vulnerable to compaction and poaching.

3.5.28 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'.

Topography

3.5.29 As noted above, the highest of the summits strung along the length of the Malvern Hills is the Worcestershire Beacon at 425m AOD.

3.5.30 West of the Hills' ridgeline, the land falls away steeply at first, but then descends in a series of undulations and folds before flattening out to merge with the Herefordshire lowlands.

3.5.31 East of the ridgeline, the steep slope continues - as a series of east / west ridges and valleys - all the way down to the toe of the Hills, before beginning to flatten out along / below the 60m contour line which runs east of Barnards Green, through the 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 c. 6km east of the parish's eastern boundary along Blackmore Park Road).

3.5.32 From the Hills' ridges and upper / mid-slopes, the perception is that the landscapes on the plain are very flat, but at closer-quarters, localised undulations are evident, especially when wooded, being the result of the underlying geology and erosion along watercourses. In fact, the watercourses can usually be traced back to their sources by following the lines of their valleys westwards, up to the springs emerging on the hillslopes.

3.5.33 The undulations and valleys on the Hills' mid-slopes have surprisingly noticeable influences on both landscape and settlement character, and views / visual amenity. The effects of these influences are explained further in the sections below and in the LSCA Area schedules, but in summary, in terms of character for example, they result in localised differences in microclimate and soils, which in turn affect landuse and land cover. In terms of views, when travelling along the Wells Road in particular,

and especially when combined with dense, mature vegetation, the ridges screen forward views, and the valleys give rise to a strong sense of visual containment / physical displacement.

3.5.34 Also, broadly, the hillslopes are east-facing, and the watercourses flow east; however, in places the hydrology is more complex (see section below), causing variations in the slopes' aspect. One example of this phenomenon is at the southern end of the parish in the Upper Welland area, where a broad 'snout' of land slopes down to the south / south east; this results in this part of the settlement having a closer physical association with the Welland / Castlemorton landscapes than with those around the central part of the Wells and Great Malvern.

Hydrology

3.5.35 Extracts from MHT's Land Management Plan 2016 - 2021[24] have been used to inform this section.

3.5.36 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 naturally-occurring points (springs, issues, streams, wet seepages), and man-made ones (boreholes, drains, spouts, wells, quarries and ponds).

3.5.37 The aquifer is classified as a 'fracture flow aquifer' with fast travel times which can vary from days to weeks (for comparison it can take water several years to pass through a chalk aquifer). Malvern Water is famous for 'containing nothing at all' as there has been little time for the rainwater to interact with the minerals of the rocks. Today many local residents and tourists still collect drinking water from several springs in the area. Commercially, Holywell Malvern Spring Water Ltd. bottle and sell water from the Holy Well spring in Malvern Wells parish.

3.5.38 The history of Malvern Water is set out in more detail in the historic landscape character section below, but of note is the fact that both the resource and its exploitation have had a significant influence on character of the area's land-, town- and villagescapes.

3.5.39 The Malvern springs are classified as private drinking water supplies and are sampled for their quality on behalf of Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) by Worcestershire Regulatory Services (Evendine Spring and others on the west side of the Hills are monitored by Herefordshire Council Environmental Health Department).

3.5.40 The Regulatory Services sample for select chemical and bacteriological parameters for drinking water quality reasons. To help protect groundwater, the Environment Agency have designated 5.68 sq km of the main Hills as a Type 2 Groundwater source protection zone, and the areas immediately surrounding the springs (within 100m radius) as a Type 1 (highest risk). MHT state that land management should acknowledge this information, and follow guidance to protect the water.

3.5.41 The Malvern Hills and the surrounding district are in a designated groundwater drinking water protected area under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) 2000[25]. Drinking Water Protected Areas (DrWPAs) are water bodies from which 'raw' water is abstracted for human consumption at a rate of at least 10m3/day or where over 50 people are served (apparently, 50 properties are currently supplied with water from the Hills).

3.5.42 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.

3.5.43 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 is said to rise in Barnards Green, although its source is more likely to be on the hillslopes above.

3.5.44 The lowlands are covered by drift deposits that are classified as superficial aquifers with shallow water tables. Significant rainfall here travels into the soils and into the fluvial network of ditches and

[24] http://www.malvernhills.org.uk/media/1137/mhc-lmp-part-1-finalcompressed.pdf

[25] The Water Framework Directive Programme is now the Water Environment Improvement Fund Programme and Natural Flood Management Programme

streams which ultimately feed into the Severn or Teme. There is a role played by lowland commons such as Castlemorton in storing water and helping to prevent flooding further downstream.

Landcover

3.5.45 More detailed descriptions of the landcover in the parish and surrounding areas are given in the biodiversity and local landscape character sections below. 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.

3.5.46 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-used and / or grazed, especially at equestrian establishments, but there are also remnant fragments of traditional hay meadows and historic parkland. St Wulstan's Nature Reserve was only established in the 1990s, but has developed into a rich mosaic of habitats ranging from semi-improved grassland to scrub, mature woodland and ornamental trees.

3.5.47 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 ancient woodland remnants at Little Malvern and one in the parish (Hornyold Wood). 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.

3.5.48 Landcover on the Hills is the same in the West to North sector, and the settlement is similarly characterised by mature native and ornamental tree cover. However, there is also unimproved grassland on verges and commons, an ancient woodland remnant, and at least one old orchard. The golf course and adjacent areas are a combination of amenity and rough grassland, scrub, woodland, ornamental trees 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 / The Firs and adjacent areas is well-wooded in places, with ornamental / parkland trees a key feature.

Land Use

3.5.49 More detailed information about land use in the area is set out in the local landscape character baseline section below. In summary, 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.

3.5.50 The data supplied by Worcestershire Biological Records Centre (WBRC) for this study also provides a useful overview of the parish's land uses in the form of 'broad' and 'specific' habitat maps (see Appendix E - WBRC Ecological Data).

Enclosure

3.5.51 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 land use (see Heritage below).

3.5.52 The Hills and commons are unenclosed.

3.5.53 The Enclosed Commons LCT 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 pattern is still visible, mainly due to the straight lines of roads, but also where there is different land use / landcover in adjoining fields.

3.5.54 Several of the hedges are exclusively / predominantly hawthorn (typical of the enclosure period), but in many cases there is a mixture of species. The latter indicates either a) a more ancient hedge having been retained during enclosure (especially if all species are native and stems / trunks are

large); b) natural colonisation (mostly native but sometimes ornamentals such as sycamore); or c) a more recently-planted / restocked hedge.

3.5.55 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.

3.5.56 Enclosure patterns within the Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use 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.

3.6 Designated / Key Landscape Features: Heritage

3.6.1 This assessment considers the landscape and visual value of both designated and undesignated heritage assets, and any contribution which the asset makes to landscape character and visual amenity. It also considers whether an asset's landscape context and setting could potentially be a factor in judgements about an LSCA Area's level of capacity and / or the decision-making process. Published guidance referred to includes Historic England (HE)'s *The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3* (Second Edition)[26].

3.6.2 The locations of many of the features listed below are shown on Figure 5B.

3.6.3 The sections on history and historic landscape character which follow explain and provide further background context for these features, but it is important to note that the distribution of listed and other historic buildings / structures / features is a good illustration of how the area's character has evolved and changed over time.

3.6.4 In fact, there are no SMs, and only two listed buildings / structures (a Victorian gas street lamp at Upper Welland and 1870s St Gabriel church west of Hanley Swan) in a broad swathe of land extending east of the A449 Wells Road (from Lower Wyche), north of the A4104, west of the B4208, and south of Malvern Common as far as the Guarlford Road, Hanley Swan, and Welland.

3.6.5 The paucity of historic remains / natural habitats is indicative of how 'modern' this landscape is, relatively-speaking, due to the widespread clearance of old buildings, trackways and natural features took place when 'planned enclosure' occurred in the 17th and 18th centuries (the landscape character type is predominantly Enclosed Commons).

3.6.6 Note that where distances are given, they are measured from the point at the centre of the four geographical sectors (i.e. at the south-western corner of the TCS on Hanley Road) unless stated otherwise, and are 'as the crow flies'. The geographical sectors within which the features lie are abbreviated as N, E, S and W.

Scheduled Monuments

3.6.7 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 Hillforts and viewpoints at British Camp and Midsummer Hill (S to W sector, both 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 Gardiner'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).

[26] https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/

Listed and Other Buildings of Historic Importance / HER

3.6.8 A total of 115 listed buildings and structures were identified within the parish. Their distribution is another good indication of how the landscape's character has evolved and changed over time.

3.6.9 There are no Grade I or II* listed buildings within the parish, but a few notable ones lie nearby in Great and Little Malvern. These comprise:

- Grade I listed Malvern Priory Church of St Mary and St Michael (Benedictine monastery c.1085, 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.

3.6.10 72 buildings / structures are Grade II listed, the majority of these being Victorian gas street lamps. With the exception of two on Watery Lane, and single ones at the Wyche Cutting and Holy Well, all lie along both sides of the A449 Wells Road. The lamps are iconic, making a significant contribution to the Wells' unique character and local distinctiveness.

3.6.11 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 19th century dwellings apart from the 'The Ruby' at 110 Wells Road which is dated to the 18th century.

3.6.12 Malvern Wells Conservation Area (see below) currently extends long both sides of Wells Road, and includes 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.

3.6.13 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 Stage 1 landscape assessment and the NDP (the full HER report and maps are contained in Appendix C).

3.6.14 The search focussed on land within the parish boundary, but also took into consideration areas within 500m of the parish boundary, and a 2km overview of large landscape features.

3.6.15 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.

3.6.16 The features recorded which are of particular relevance to landscape character and value include:

- Concentration of ridge and furrow records in the E to S sector. The HER report notes ridge and furrow earthworks occurring frequently in the landscape, with some probably being un-recorded, as well as clear evidence that much ridge and furrow has been destroyed[27].
- Historic trackway (Wood Street) in N to E sector (WSM11754). Runs along Ox Hill, an unusual and distinctive localised upstanding ridgeline, probably historic route of old 'salt way' - pack horse track used for transporting salt from Droitwich to Wyche Cutting (salt ways are Iron Age in origin). Labelled on early maps and referred to in a document from 1458, described as a major route to Hereford, via Wyche Cutting and leading to a settlement at the Rhydd in C12 & C13.
- Several parish wells and spouts noted in HER: The Holy Well (WSM36907), Jubilee Spout (WSM36908), Lower Wyche Spout (WSM36909), and Eye Well (WSM03749).
- Eight farmsteads or sites of farmsteads within parish – all widely distributed but four within E to S sector. Majority C19 in origin, although Firs Farm (now TCS) C18. HER describes Brickbarns

[27] Ridge and Furrow is a relic of an obsolete type of agriculture. The pattern of ridges and furrows is often all that remains of the narrow strips (called 'selions') used in the 'open field system' of agriculture – a communal method of strip farming in large village fields which has its origins in the Early Medieval period (c. AD 800 - 1200) and which continued in some areas into the early 19th century. Although ridge and furrow is not protected *per se*, its national importance is recognised by bodies such as Historic England https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/turning-the-plough-loss-of-a-landscape-legacy/turningplough.pdf.

Farm as partially extant C19, although seems to be present on a 1772 map and may date from mid-C17.

- Majority of historic buildings date from C19.
- Vast majority of historic buildings are residential dwellings.

3.6.17 43 unlisted building records were found within the parish. 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 the 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.

3.6.18 An Historic England-funded, Worcestershire Farmstead and Landscapes Project also identified eight traditional farmsteads within the Parish. This confirms that the farmsteads, which were mapped from early 20th century Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, vary in date from the 18th and 19th centuries.

3.6.19 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 (but see above), alongside Wood Farm, now demolished. The farmhouse / associated buildings are currently proposed as a candidate for local listing.

3.6.20 The Historic Buildings project also identified a total of 291 buildings present within the parish on the 1st edition OS Map that are still extant on modern mapping today. Although these buildings are not all recorded on the HER, a map of their location points has also been provided (see Appendix C). However, it should be noted that for many parishes these points have not yet been verified on the ground and it is highly possible that buildings have been demolished and replaced by a modern building with a similar footprint.

Registered Parks and Gardens

3.6.21 There are no Registered Parks and Gardens (RPGs) 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, near Ledbury.

Conservation Areas

3.6.22 Malvern Wells Conservation Area (CA) was originally designated in February 1973. The boundary was reviewed and substantially enlarged in January 1995 to incorporate the areas of the Wyche, Little Malvern and land towards Upper Welland. It currently extends along both sides of Wells Road, and includes the Malvern Commons to the north, the Wyche, and parts of Upper Welland Road.

3.6.23 MHDC subsequently carried out a reappraisal of the CA; this entailed a review of the boundary which was undertaken between August 2018 and March 2019. As noted above, at the time of finalising the LSCA, the CAA was still out for consultation; however, the draft report was used as a source of reference for the baseline and capacity studies.

3.6.24 The draft CAA notes that '*the existing conservation area is proposed to be divided into two separate conservation areas to reflect their unique characteristics and development. These areas are: Malvern Wells and Little Malvern*'.

3.7 Landscape History and Historic Landscape Character

Introduction and Overview

3.7.1 As noted in Section 2, heritage, landscape history and historic landscape character are integral elements of landscape character, and thus of landscape character assessment. This was emphasised in para. 170 of the 2012 version of the NPPF: '*Where appropriate, landscape character assessments should also be prepared, integrated with assessment of historic landscape character*', although in the later versions, for some reason this recommendation disappeared.

3.7.2 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*'.

3.7.3 Establishing and analysing an area's 'time-depth' is a very important part of the landscape character assessment process.

3.7.4 According to *Topic Paper 5 Understanding Historic Landscape Character*[28], '*HLC/HLA is most of all concerned to trace the imprint of the past on landscape. Known as 'time-depth' (see Box 1), this is one of the landscape's most important characteristics. It can be defined as "the long-term interaction between human activity and natural processes" [5]. It recognises that the long sequence of events and actions that have produced the present environment, and which is visible within the landscape, is the result of human activity as well as natural processes.*

'*A proper understanding of time-depth needs to recognise the various, and often complex, ways in which the landscape has been influenced by past human actions. HLC/HLA focuses on this human perspective and adds a fuller historical dimension to the basic Landscape Character Assessment process.*

'*Time-depth is reflected within HLC/HLA through readily identifiable components like field boundaries, and through less obvious remains of settlement or communications and transport networks. It is also reflected through human influence on vegetation patterns, and in the "hidden", buried evidence of past environments which survives across the landscape in the form of palaeoenvironmental deposits, for instance, or as cropmarks in ploughed land.*

An important aspect of understanding time-depth is recognising that human influence has occurred, and can be traced, even where the landscape appears natural. It enhances our appreciation of how landscape components have changed through time, or survived through continuity.

3.7.5 Understanding historic landscape character is important because otherwise, the value of certain features may be missed, and not factored into judgements about sensitivity / capacity / potential effects. This may lead to the levels of capacity and / or effects being reported as lower than they should be. As well as HE's Good Practice Advice on settings and Topic Paper 5 mentioned above, there are other useful sources of information about the subject to which reference is made during the studies.

3.7.6 Also, although detailed assessments of heritage assets, their significance and effects on their settings are 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 area's landscapes and settlements evolved over time, and establish factors such as intended / current interinfluence and intervisibility.

3.7.7 In this case, historic map regression exercises were carried out to establish how and why both the landscapes and the settlements have developed as they have, and what relevance this has to current and future landscape-related matters, especially character.

3.7.8 A range of maps and documents dating from the 16th century 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.

3.7.9 For example, analysis of the 1812 preliminary OS map (extract below) not only reveals a great deal about what the area's landscapes may have looked like and how they were being used at the beginning of the 19th century, it also provides a good indication of which features - especially trackways, hedges and trees - are likely to have been present at that time.

[28] *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland - Topic Paper 5: Understanding Historic Landscape Character* The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002)

Extract from preliminary Ordnance Survey map of 1812 (British Library)

3.7.10 A key source of reference for this part of the study was WCC's Worcestershire Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) (2012)[29]. It is an important and valuable source of reference, especially in terms of considering the effects of future development in the area.

3.7.11 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.

3.7.12 The document's introduction explains the purpose of the study in more detail:

'*The information from this project has many applications but its greatest potential will be as 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, such as County Council or District Council strategic planning or conservation staff.*

'*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. HLC seeks to identify the valued characteristics of the County's landscapes, whether it is field patterns, settlements or other elements, so that they can be effectively managed into the future, providing benefits for residents and visitors alike. Information 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 HLC information can also be applied to many other areas of interest and research avenues*.'

3.7.13 It goes on to say, '*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*.'

3.7.14 Figure 6 provides a broad illustration of the time-depth visible in the area's landscape today, although there are often other layers and features underlying the current historic character types. Also, new

[29] http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20230/archive_and_archaeology_projects/1062/historic_landscape_characterisation_hlc

and more detailed information about the area's history is coming to light all the time, and this is altering some of the previous conclusions.

3.7.15 The time periods illustrated on the map are:

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

3.7.16 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.

3.7.17 However, there are certain differences / anomalies - for example, the fields immediately north of Langdale and Blackmore Woods, which are orientated north west to south east, are classified as Enclosed Commons; however, it is unlikely that this part of Blackmore Park was common land at the time of enclosure, if ever, and recent studies have indicated that even though enclosed, its inherent LCT is 'historic parkland'.

3.7.18 Other sources of reference for this study included local history books and documents. Several local people helped with the research and contributed to the studies; Malvern History's Facebook[30] community was another invaluable source of information.

3.7.19 This section also incorporates the findings of the public consultation exercises carried out by MWPC during the course of the NDP process, which included asking local residents to 'identify areas within the parish but outside of the Conservation Area that are important in its historical development and / or local design' and 'identify any buildings that are not listed that they consider make a valuable contribution to the parish'.

3.7.20 Despite the lack of SMs, listed buildings, ancient woodlands and other 'obvious' pre-enclosure features, the LSCA found significant time-depth evident and visible within the study area, identifying a wide variety of historic characteristics, assets, elements, features and cultural associations.

3.7.21 Some of the areas are certainly ancient, with a high degree of integrity, containing many unique / nationally-rare / notable features. There are also several highly valuable features / habitats supporting a diverse range of species of flora and fauna, some nationally scarce, and many Green Infrastructure assets which are performing a multitude of important functions, such as ecosystem services and access to nature.

3.7.22 Many of the features described above and below, and shown on Figure 5B, make highly important contributions to both landscape character and visual / social amenity, some at a national level, others at a regional and / or local / neighbourhood level. They must also be factored in to judgements made about landscape value and susceptibility to change.

3.7.23 These landscapes make a highly important contribution to our understanding of, and engender respect for, the area's (indeed, the nation's) natural and cultural history. In this case, they are also highly visible, forming an integral part of the panorama that gives views from the Malvern Hills their iconic status and national importance.

Landscape History and Evolution of Malvern Wells

ANCIENT HISTORY

3.7.24 The Malvern Hills and surrounding areas have been a focus for human activity and settlement since prehistoric times. The earliest HER record (WSM56936) is for an area of Head deposits that hold potential for Palaeolithic (Stone Age) archaeology dating back to 476,050 BCE[31]. Palaeolithic finds have also been found at Hanley Castle and Colwall Stone[32].

3.7.25 Large scatters of debris from flint tool-making dating from the Neolithic period (4000-1500 BCE) have been found on the Malvern Hills including at Midsummer Hill, Hangman's Hill, the Worcestershire

[30] https://www.facebook.com/groups/232340776877232/?epa=SEARCH_BOX

[31] Malvern Wells HER p.4

[32] Bowden, *The Malvern Hills: An ancient landscape* (2005) p. 11

Beacon and North Hill. The distribution of finds suggests that the landscape was widely used in the Neolithic period, albeit not intensively[33].

3.7.26 There is evidence of Bronze Age (c. 2500 - c. 800 BCE) 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 near what is now the Chase School. Fragments of a Bronze Age sword and razor have been found (although now lost) in a quarry north of the Wyche Cutting[34].

3.7.27 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 are fertile and sheltered. As noted above, between the last post-glacial period 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 due to the poorly-drained brackish marshland. 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.

3.7.28 The Hills are also believed to have been an early sacred site, of significance for religious and cultural practices, especially due to the presence of spring water (and for that reason, not permanently settled). As a result of this, as well as the increase in trade of valuable raw materials such as salt, many trackways and pilgrims' trails criss-crossed throughout the 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 Camp[35], possibly via what is now Malvern Wells (further information on this is provided in the relevant LSCA Area schedules).

3.7.29 Although it is not known when the first man-made cutting through the Hills was created, Old Wyche Road is discernible on a 1772 map, and the Wyche Cutting may have been along the route of a salt way from very early pre-historic times[36], via Ox Hill (qv), people taking advantage of a natural fault line which developed half-way along the Hills 300 million years ago.

3.7.30 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 summits are visible from distant viewpoints, and also command exceptional views; they also have historic / cultural / visual associations and relationships with other prominent hillforts in the region.

3.7.31 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 Hills[37].

ROMAN PERIOD - 6th CENTURY

3.7.32 During the Roman period, as demand increased, the potteries on the east side of the Hills became of increasing importance. Kilns were situated on the Mercia Mudstone, probably within a short distance of coppice woods (for fuel) and streams. It is therefore likely that woodlands were a significant part of the local landscapes from at least 400 BCE[38].

3.7.33 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

3.7.34 After the Roman period, it appears that the pottery industry declined. 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. The main centres of administration eventually became established; boundaries were drawn which either followed features such as watercourses, ridgelines and established trackways, or were marked by ditches, stones, planted trees, or trees

[33] Ibid. pp.12-13

[34] Ibid p.16

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

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

[37] Bowden, Mark. *The Malvern Hills: An ancient landscape* (2005)

[38] ibid

retained during early clearance for agriculture (in fact, many of the UK's hedgerows originate from the latter[39]).

3.7.35 With the conversion of Mercia to Christianity in the late 7th century, the seats of the Bishops of Hereford and Worcester were created. 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[40].

3.7.36 At that time, the Malvern Hills and surrounding areas formed part of a system of linked 'estates' which may have evolved from a form of transhumance. Although lower-lying parts of the wider area were still brackish marsh in medieval times (Longdon Marsh is an important remnant), the intervening woodlands, glades and watermeadows would have served as a valuable resource for people living in the small settlements springing up around places like Guarlford.

3.7.37 Very few landscape elements from this period, such as hedgeline boundaries, are known to survive in the area, but there is evidence of pottery production, possibly a mill in what is now Arles Wood (see below), and early medieval ridge and furrow (see previous section); the latter is scattered throughout the area, including within the parish. There are also a few ancient semi-natural woodlands which are almost certainly remnants of post-glacial wildwoods and the later medieval chases[41]. Hornyold Wood, in the North to West sector of the parish, is a rare pocket of remaining ancient woodland (see significant vegetation section below).

3.7.38 The Blackmore Park area, just east of the parish boundary, contains features which almost certainly date from this time. Although not formally identified as Ancient Semi-natural Woodland, map regression exercises and field surveys indicate that some the trees along the watercourse are ancient. Also, part of the woodland is alder carr, which is likely to be of Saxon origin (there are other Anglo-Saxon (and earlier) features in the vicinity[42]). The whole of Upper and Lower Arles Woods is now covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

11th & 12th CENTURIES

3.7.39 The Manor of Hanley belonged to the influential nobles of the Midland region, which had once been the separate kingdom of Mercia. In the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042 to 1066), Brictric Snow, Lord of Tewkesbury, held it[43].

3.7.40 Following the Norman conquest of England in 1066, William the Conqueror established a Royal Forest (an area of land used by a monarch for hunting deer) in the region. Forest law was established at the same time, with the intention of protecting the deer and the woodland itself.

3.7.41 In 1086 the Blackmore Park area was known as the 'Wood of Hanley', which was part of Malvern Chase (under the jurisdiction of the lords of Hanley Castle). Blackmore Wood is mentioned in 1262 so it was probably well-established by then (and parts of the woodland area still survive).

3.7.42 Towards the end of the 12th century, Richard I allowed the Bishop of Worcester to extend his forest clearings by 300 acres. This clearing, or 'assarting', gave its name to Assarts Road and Lane (and the 'Assarts character areas) in Upper Welland[44]; the settlement character and landscape patterns which define that area are derived from, and reflect, assarted land.

3.7.43 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.

[39] The country's oldest hedgerows are pre-Bronze Age, created when early farmers cleared woodland to settle, grow crops and keep animals. Often, strips of woodland were left - trees perhaps cut down to a manageable height - to mark boundaries, and for protection. Today, some of these strips are thriving hedgerows, often delineating parish (and 'hundred') boundaries. The Romans began the practice of planting new hedges to impose 'order' on the land and its uses, and this was embraced and continued by the Saxons - many hedges in the wider landscape are of medieval origin. Enclosure resulted in the removal of old, often organically-shaped hedgelines (although hedges alongside straight trackways were usually retained if the trackway was kept) and new hedge-planting, usually using a single species (hawthorn is typical).

[40] ibid

[41] Welland Neighbourhood Plan LA June 2015 4.4.12

[42] See HER. Blackmore Park is currently the subject of an in-depth historic landscape research project, and information from sources such as 10th century Anglo-Saxon charters is helping to reveal the origin of many of the ancient landscape features still visible today, including within the parish. A future initiative to restore Malvern Chase landscapes is being discussed.

[43] Hurle, Pamela. *Hanley Castle* (1978) p.14

[44] Ibid. 4.4.13

The Hills had been widely renowned for the quality (and qualities) of their natural spring water for millennia, hence it made sense to develop communities there. The area's 'wilderness' was also said to have appealed to the hermit-like existence which the monks practiced[45].

3.7.44 Little Malvern Court and Priory lie c. 900m south west of the southern parish boundary. Little Malvern Priory was a small and intentionally quite remote Benedictine monastery associated with the Worcester Church, formed in c. 1125.

3.7.45 The Holy Well is highly likely to have played an important part in the way that Malvern, and the Wells in particular, developed over time. Many ancient wells were called 'holy wells' because of their reputed healing properties and association with Christian (often previously pagan / Druidic) use, the wells often being on pilgrim routes to holy / sacred places. Since the 12th century at least, the Holy Well has been linked with cures of leprosy, eye disorders, ulcers, cancers and skin diseases. In medieval times, people who had been healed returned to make an offering, leaving gifts and prayers in the 'sanctuary' room next to the well.

13th & 14th CENTURIES

3.7.46 In the mid-13th century, hunting rights in the Royal Forest were transferred from the monarch, and the Royal Forest became Malvern Chase.

3.7.47 The Chase is described as being 'densely wooded' and containing wolves and wild boar, though it was also characterised by open 'lawns' and commons (used for a variety of purposes), as well as patches of open field around scattered settlements. The Chase remained in use for 400 years until disafforestation in the 17th century. Although the exact area of the forest is unknown it was very extensive, and apparently covered thousands of acres across three counties[46]. Hanley Castle, east of Malvern Wells, was the administrative point for the forest[47].

3.7.48 Blackmore Park was evidently also an important 'seat' - a house is known to have existed there since at least 1280 (probably owned by Adam de Blackmore), and it was imparked shortly before 1349. The circular deer park boundaries were clearly a distinct and notable feature in the landscape for centuries: they are shown on a 1590 tapestry of Herefordshire and Worcestershire (extract below), and also appear on a 1722 map.

[45] Ibid. 4.4.14

[46] Hurle, Pamela. *The Forest and Chase of Malvern* (2007)

[47] Ibid.

Extract from c. 1590 tapestry of Hereford and Worcester

3.7.49 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. These fields were divided into strips and managed in common[48]. Evidence of the medieval ridge and furrow farming method is scattered around the parish, including within fields adjacent to the settlement, north and south of the TCS, and on Malvern Common south of Peachfield Road[49].

3.7.50 Whilst not protected *per se,* the national importance of ridge and furrow is recognised by bodies such as Historic England[50]. Where present in / adjacent to any of the LSCA Areas, it is noted in the Area's schedule and factored in to judgements about landscape value.

3.7.51 The 'Red Earl's Dyke' was constructed in the late 13th century, along sections of the ancient Shire Ditch. Gilbert de Clare (Earl of Gloucester) had extensive ownership and hunting rights on the eastern side of the Hills. In trying to extend these to the west he was thwarted by Thomas de Cantiloupe, Bishop of Hereford and in that capacity, owner of much of the western side.

3.7.52 In 1287, Gilbert de Clare finally acknowledged defeat, having the dyke constructed to prevent his loss of deer becoming the bishop's gain. It is interesting that the dyke runs below the ridgeline on the Hills' steep, eastern slopes - in theory, this would have made it easier for animals to jump when travelling downhill from the west, and much harder to jump when coming uphill from the east, so it may have been purposefully contrived by the 'beneficiary' in that way.

3.7.53 A further ditch, to the North of the Wyche Cutting, almost certainly dates from the same period, following a dispute between Gilbert de Clare and William Ie Poer, Lord of the Manor of Farley.

[48] Ibid.

[49] HER WSM34130-38, 34140-43, 34147-52, 34165-69

[50] http://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/turning-the-plough-loss-of-a-landscape-legacy/

15th & 16th CENTURIES

3.7.54 The 12th century church at Little Malvern Priory was rebuilt in 1480 - 1482 (the SM there is the site of the remains of a medieval preaching cross).

3.7.55 According to the Priory's website[51], the Priory '… *was dissolved on August 31st 1534, when the Prior John Bristowe and six monks subscribed to the King's supremacy. The Priory and its lands were subsequently leased to John Russell of Strensham, near Pershore and later sold to his son, Henry Russell, the stipulations being made that the Choir of the Church should remain for the use of the parishioners, and that ~5 should be paid annually to the Curate. The only part of the Monastic buildings to survive the Dissolution was the eastern portion of the medieval house including The Prior's Hall, which forms part of Little Malvern Court*'.

3.7.56 The Holy Well may have formed part of a monastic hospital in the medieval period, linked to the Priory[52]. 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.

3.7.57 In 1548, John Hornyold had bought Blackmore Park, which was c. 290 acres in extent. At that time, "*the grete oakes were so thick together that a wayne [wagon] cold not passe but in certain places*". He went on to rebuild the 13th century (or earlier) house, and in the years that followed, the Hornyolds' landholding in the area expanded significantly).

3.7.58 Some of the trees which are such distinctive and highly valuable features in the local landscapes today, including some within the parish, would have started growing natural or been planted around the time that John Hornyold arrived.

3.7.59 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 settlement 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 (and it could be earlier), having been created from a diverted watercourse - perhaps as a 'watering hole' along the old Wood Street / Ox Hill salt way route for travellers and their stock), and Hornyold Wood (W to N - ancient woodland remnant). New Pool presumably gave its name to Pool Brook, into which it discharges.
- Nucleated row settlement - Wells Road and into Upper Welland HER HLC 1540-1799.
- There are several records for 'Brick Barns Farm', but mainly relating to C19 buildings. However, the HLC places it as a 1540 - 1799 feature in the parish (HWR1717); in reality, it is probably 17th century - see below.

17th - 19th CENTURIES

3.7.60 After disafforestation in 1632, enclosure of parts of the Chase proceeded rapidly. In about 1633 one third of Malvern Chase in the parish of Hanley Castle was enclosed by Charles I in three large separate plots known as 'King's Thirds'. Up to this time much of present-day Malvern Wells was open common. A 'King's Third' was laid out on the upper eastern slopes of the Hills, immediately north of Holywell and stretching down to the present Wells Road. It was on this 'King's Third' that Wells House was established in the mid-18th century. Other 'King's Third' boundaries are still visible on the Malvern Hills[53].

3.7.61 Those who had bought newly-enclosed areas from the king gradually leased and sold off parcels of land. Farms were established on 'King's Thirds' land, including Brick Barns and Wood Farms. Clearance and cultivation took place, and squatter settlements developed along the foot of the Hills and along the roads / trackways which led towards them. The disafforestation decree stated that rights of common would remain in perpetuity over the two-thirds of the Chase not sold by the king,

[51] http://www.littlemalvernpriory.co.uk/history.htm

[52] Osborne, B. and Weaver, C. *Rediscovering 17th Century Springs and Spa* (1996)

[53] https://www.malvernhills.org.uk/media/1463/enclosures-leaflet-final-mhaonb.pdf

so the other 'two thirds' remained in the ownership of the neighbouring manorial lords, and was left open for the commoners to graze their stock as from time immemorial.

3.7.62 For many centuries, Malvern Wells was famous for its springs, and by the 17th century it had become a small but popular centre which catered for visitors - it is likely that by c. 1622, water was being bottled at Holy Well.

3.7.63 Historic maps from 1772 show the settlement labelled as 'Malvern Wells', due to it being the location of two of the most popular springs in the area (Holy Well and nearby 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. Even in 1763, Dr. John Wall (a physician involved in developing Malvern as a spa town) wrote about Great Malvern being a 'village', describing it as '… *an insignificant rural spa – still only a village of two streets with several stately homes and a few lodging houses*[54]'. The name 'Malvern' as a town doesn't appear on most maps until the early 1840s, although 'Malvern Magna' appears on the 1590s tapestry illustrated above due to the presence of the priory (Little Malvern is noted as 'Malvern'). The Malvern Hills are marked on several early maps.

3.7.64 Wells Road is an important feature in the local landscape: apparently, it originated as part of a toll road from Worcester to Little Malvern in the 18th century. However, the route also runs between Great Malvern and Little Malvern Priory, so it is probably of earlier origin (HER, p.4).

3.7.65 Great Malvern itself came to prominence in the mid-18th century partly due to Dr Wall's scientific publication of an analysis of the local spring water; however, Malvern Wells remained the focus of Malvern Water for some time, especially as Wall decided to develop Holy Well as one of the first water cure centres (see Malvern Water history section below). Sited on the old coach road from Malvern, the original Well House at Holy Well was built in 1741. A map published in 1797 shows the Holy Well as the only source of Malvern spring water, suggesting it was the most important local well at the time.

3.7.66 Before the town and outlying settlements began to grow as a result of the 'water trade', the main strategic focal points in the area would have been Little Malvern, Upton and Hanley Castle. This is evident on the 1772 map, with the main tracks linking these points to the periphery of the parish and beyond. Much of the area covered by today's parish is likely to have been a large swathe of common land in between these key places at that time, also suggested by the lack of a direct track towards Hanley (today's Hanley Road).

3.7.67 The 1772 map labels the area covered by the parish as 'Malvern Wood Common', suggesting that parts of the forested Malvern Chase had been retained. Hornyold Wood is almost certainly a Chase remnant, as are some of the older trees in the area (see Blackmore Park below).

3.7.68 Although there would have been squatter settlements on the commons, several buildings are shown on the 1772 map which still exist today. One of these is 'Brick Barn' (qv) - probably one of the oldest farmsteads in the parish (see above). Many of the footpaths that criss-cross near the farm are likely to date from the time of the farm's establishment (possibly mid-1600s), being along routes taken by people working or trading there.

3.7.69 Another building, simply labelled 'Farm', is approximately where 'Wood Farm' is shown on later maps.

3.7.70 Hanley Castle (inclusive of Malvern Wells) was the first parish in Malvern Chase to be enclosed under the Enclosure Act of 1795[55]. 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 over many centuries - including the mosaic of open commons, marshes, mature trees and woods - were replaced with the more planned, intensively-farmed / managed and less diverse landscapes with which we are familiar today.

3.7.71 Enclosure completely altered the landscape patterns in the area, especially in and around the parish. New roads such as Hanley Road and Blackmore Park Road were quickly constructed in straight lines, cutting through the organic grain of the landscape, clearing most of the remaining woodlands and old dwellings, and obliterating many of the historic, winding trackways (HER p. 5).

3.7.72 However, certain areas, such as the heart of Blackmore Park, remained unenclosed. This was clearly a design intention: the Park is noted on the HER as a 'Park and Garden', and was probably created as such during the 18th century, when the Chase had ceased to function as such. Following the

[54] *British Spas from 1815 to the present: a social history* (Phyllis May Hembry)

[55] Fare, M *The Hanleys: A history of Hanley Castle and Hanley Swan* (2010), p4

Enclosure Act, in the late 1700s / early 1800s, a new access to Blackmore House seems to have been created along an old trackway south of Park Farm. A preliminary OS map from 1812 shows avenues of trees lining the approach to the house from the west and north.

3.7.73 Throughout the Park, what was once dense oak woodland had become more open parkland, characterised by the fine, mature remnant Chase trees which had been left standing. West of a hedgeline in the vicinity of what is now the ESP complex, although the parkland was enclosed to create new fields, areas of woodland and individual parkland trees were left standing within the fields. Many of these trees are still visible on and around the ESP site, one identified as having started growing in the late 1600s.

3.7.74 In 1867, a descendant of John Hornyold demolished the ancestral home and replaced it with a Jacobean-style mansion. A new entrance and approach to the mansion was created off Blackmore Park Road, some 300m south of the old one. The first section of the road is now the access to the ESP complex: it cut straight through existing hedges, effectively severing the recently-enclosed fields, or leaving small 'corners'. It continued along this line as far as the hedgeline which formed the boundary between the enclosed fields and the unenclosed ornamental parkland. From there, it meandered through the 'wooded' parkland to the house. Lime trees were planted either side of the western section of the road to form an avenue, and the majority still survive (although less so along the northern side). Fortunately, the majority are now the subject of a TPO. In the 1830s, many of the older trees had been felled for timber, but large numbers of new native and ornamental trees were planted throughout the park when the new mansion was built. In 1880, the new house was gutted by fire, but by 1883 it had been restored.

3.7.75 The 1812 map shows just three clusters of built form in the parish - 'Brick Barns Farm', 'The Wells', and 'Wood Farm'. (The 1812 map also shows the area's name changed from 'Malvern Wells' to 'The Wells' - perhaps to emphasise the growing prominence of Great Malvern.)

3.7.76 It is interesting to compare the modern road layout in the parish with the routes shown on the 1772 and 1812 maps; whist the accuracy of the former cannot be fully relied on, it does show the main tracks below the Hills - now Wells Road and Holywell Road.

3.7.77 Mapping the roads, public footpaths and bridleways within the study area not only shows how accessible places are and how they are linked today (see Recreation and Access below); the exercise also helps to build up an understanding of how the changes affected people, especially those who lived and worked in the area.

3.7.78 Within the study area, east of the Hills, the main roads leading to the town and the Hills from the west (Guarlford Road, Hanley Road and the A4104) are broadly aligned east - west; so are the two main bridleways that lead to the Hills.

3.7.79 One of these is along the line of the ancient trackway / Iron Age salt way running along the localised and distinctive ridge of Ox Hill, south east of Poolbrook. It would have joined the now-bridleways which cross east and west Malvern Commons / the golf course, and continued on to the Wyche Cutting. The other runs from just south of Hanley Swan, crossing Blackmore Park Road near where the dismantled railway also crosses it, and continues south-westwards past Summer Hill Farm, as it would have done since at least the medieval period, south of the Abbey College, and via the main road, up to the Hills.

3.7.80 This east - west alignment of the key routes illustrates the main directions and foci of movement for many centuries, and all the routes apart from Hanley Road / Green Lane lead the traveller to the points where the Hills are easiest to cross (the Wyche Cutting and British Camp). It is possible that many of these old routes were respected and retained when enclosure took place. The routes of some of today's public footpaths clearly relate to tracks and lanes from this time - for example, those below New Pool, and near Brickbarns Farm.

3.7.81 As mentioned above, the Holy Well had been a key destination for travellers since at least the 17th century. Before Hanley Road was built, the main access to it was probably via a well-trodden path running from Hanley Swan to the Hills, with a steep track up the slopes leading directly to the Well. On the preliminary OS 1812 map, a short (and presumably steep) track is shown leading straight up to where there is a now a public footpath off Wells Road.

3.7.82 Given the importance of and interest in the Well, it is probable that Hanley Road was designed to point straight towards it, with the Green Lane section at the western end being on the line of the old access track.

3.7.83 In between the key east - west routes through the study area, almost all of the footpaths, and the lane between Guarlford Road, Hanley Swan and Welland, run broadly north - south, although they zig-zag east - west in the process. This indicates how people in the outlying areas would have made their way through the countryside, from village to village, eventually connecting with or crossing the main east - west routes that were more well-frequented.

3.7.84 Many of the key routes are described in more detail in the relevant LSCA Area schedules. Of particular interest here is the track / bridleway which crosses the southern sectors of the parish, leading east / north east from the north-eastern end of Kings Road. It is one of the most significant routeways in the local area, probably an ancient 'pilgrim' route used by people travelling from the east to British Camp (and later, to Little Malvern Priory). The route avoided crossing Mere Brook, which runs south of the trackway. It is an extension of the trackway (also bridleway) which runs between Hanley Swan and the central part of the Hills (its focus is Black Hill summit), via Summer Hill Farm and the north-eastern section of Kings Road. This is in turn an extension of the lane which runs between Hanley Swan and Hanley Castle via Gilbert's End. Although the River Severn lies east of Hanley Castle there are several historic river crossing points between Kempsey and Upton-upon-Severn. The trackway's character reflects its age and regular use for what may be millennia, and it has become a fine holloway at the western end (south of Area 11).

3.7.85 Another interesting point resulting from the analysis of the routeways marked on the 1812 map is how several were altered / closed between the early and later years of the 19th century. The footpath network around Brickbarns Farm is a good example. Today, numerous public footpaths criss-cross the fields north of the old track / bridleway described above and west of Brickbarns Farm, forming star-shaped patterns on the ground. Maps indicate that these were created after 1812 and before the early 1880s.

3.7.86 The 1812 map shows that the above trackway / bridleway had two other tracks leading northwards from it to Brickbarns (Brick Barns) Farm, which had been in existence since at least the late 17th century. The westernmost of these tracks ran through what appears to be parkland lying south west of, but clearly associated with the farm, The trees are shown as mature and probably ornamental, but it is not clear whether the parkland was designed, or whether the trees were planted when (or soon after) the farm was built. Alternatively, the trees could have been retained chase woodland. It is quite possible that some of the existing mature free-standing trees in the fields west of the farm are parkland / woodland remnants.

3.7.87 By the late 19th century, however, the maps show a different arrangement. The 'parkland' area had been subdivided into fields, although several trees were left standing. The westernmost track which ran through the parkland was diverted along the park's western boundary, and to a new line west of the farm's access track off Hanley Road (this route is now a public footpath). The easternmost track, which ran along the eastern boundary of the park, remained in place, but new footpath links were also established, including one which now links the trackway / bridleway to the central part of the Wells settlement.

3.7.88 It is not out of the question that the latter path was in fact a re-establishment of the track which was closed when the private parkland was established / enclosed - perhaps people used the route regardless. It would have been logical for travellers coming from the east along the trackway / bridleway to head directly north-westwards towards 'The Wells'. The 'new' footpath aligns with the northern section of Hanley Road, so there may once have been a route between them; also, the route may have continued to the south east via Hook Bank.

3.7.89 Christopher Greenwood's 1822 map of Worcestershire shows linear settlement along Wells Road, and a cluster of buildings near to today's Woodfarm Road. Knoll Lodge is indicated on the map and still exists on Holywell Road.

3.7.90 Even before the arrival of the railways, increasing industrialisation was changing and shaping Malvern's character, including quarrying. According to a guide about the Geopark Way, '*The Malvern Hills have been quarried for centuries. Initially extraction was on a small scale and purely for local purposes. Extraction increased in 1836 when the Wyche Cutting (between Summer Hill and Perseverance Hill, north Malverns) was altered to make a more accessible road through the Hills*'. 1836 was the date that quarrying at Earnslaw began.

3.7.91 Many of the 'industrial' 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 now highly-distinctive and iconic symbols of Malvern, and Malvern Wells in particular - almost half of the

remaining working lamps are within the parish. They are not just of local, but of national heritage importance (see HER report p. 4), and most are Grade II listed.

3.7.92 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. According to a BBC website[56]:

'*The glorious hills almost caused Malvern to miss out on the railway building boom of the Victorian age. As the great railway lines fanned out across the country there was an obvious need for a line linking Birmingham, the workshop of the world at the time, with the coal fields of South Wales. The logical route for the line from Worcester to Hereford would have followed the present day A4103 which skirts the northern end of the hills. This though would have left Malvern off the main line, and the great and the good of the town weren't prepared to let that happen. They lobbied for the main line to go through Malvern, and that meant a tunnel under the hills.*

'This was a huge engineering undertaking for the mid 1800's, and the technology of the day meant that the tunnel had to be dug using picks and shovels by a small army of Welsh miners...

'The work was finally completed in 1861 by a local engineer Stephen Ballard, who's family still live around Colwall, at the Herefordshire end of the tunnel… The original tunnel is 1,323 yards long and has a gradient of 1 in 23, which is quite steep for a railway line.

'Malvern's famous water also proved to be both a blessing and a curse. Water constantly ran into the tunnel as it was being built, but when the tunnel was complete the water was collected and used to refill the steam trains that used the line, and also to pipe water to Great Malvern station.'

3.7.93 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).

3.7.94 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.

Malvern Wells Midland Station

[56] http://www.bbc.co.uk/herefordandworcester/features/malverns/new_malverns_railways.shtml

3.7.95 As well as fundamentally changing the character of the landscapes through which they passed, the new railways had a major effect on the town and its people, and resulted in Great Malvern becoming a bustling town centre and the focus of attention for the 'water trade'.

3.7.96 By the 1860s, the Holy Well and Eye Well had become overshadowed by the popularity of St. Ann's Well. The '… *commercial effects of Dr. Wilson and Dr. Gully urging patients to take the supposedly health-giving Malvern waters*' converted the small village of Malvern to the spa town of Great Malvern. This growth was hastened by the arrival of the railways[57], 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 influence*.'[58]

3.7.97 The railway effectively formed the dividing line between Malvern Link and Great Malvern. The division had long-term consequences, as it became what has often - perhaps correctly - been perceived as the physical boundary between the town's wealthy and its poor. Malvern Link was where those who wanted to take the waters but couldn't afford the prices in the town centre would stay; there were several hotels and boarding houses there. (In fact, Malvern became such a popular tourist destination for workers in the cities, that the 'undesirable effects' of them on the wealthier residents and visitors was deemed unacceptable, and 'excursion trains' were eventually dropped.)

3.7.98 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 houses[59].

3.7.99 In the late 19th and early 20th centuries the Foley family still owned large areas of land in and around Malvern. Lady Emily Foley (1805 - 1900) was a locally well-known and influential figure. At this time, largely as a result of the popularity of the 'water cure' and demand for more accommodation, the town was rapidly expanding into the countryside and public commons on its edges. This growth was largely uncontrolled. The 1860s began what is described as the '*golden age of Malvern's developers, builders and estate agents…*', and local people's access to '*pure air and rural scenes*' was made more difficult. To '… *make the town attractive and limit its size*...' was considered to be an important objective (although this was in part to '*increase the value of their property*'). [Ibid]

3.7.100 Characteristically, Lady Emily Foley set her own rules to govern which land could be built on, which had to be protected, and how the areas should be laid out: '*By her refusal to disenfranchise manorial copyhold land she retained control of the development of much of the town, and she used this control to ensure that building accorded to her tastes and standards[60]'.* This has been a major influence in Malvern's townscape character.

3.7.101 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 (now MHT) were set up[61]) was passed, allowing the Conservators powers to protect, control and manage the land. They were to be responsible for preserving the natural aspects of land and its use as open space for public enjoyment. They could also acquire other land within a nine-mile radius of Malvern Priory ('*Great Malvern manor and manorial wastelands*') if they felt that it should be preserved in connection with the Malvern Hills.

3.7.102 According to MHT's Land Management Plan 2016 - 2021, '*This was a time when the nation was taking action to protect its landscapes, wildlife and heritage in the face of change. New legislation, the creation of clubs and societies, such as the Commons Preservation Society in 1865, and the establishment of national bodies such as the National Trust in 1895 and several Boards of Conservators across England and Wales, all played a part.*

'*The Malvern Hills Act was a major achievement. Chiefly it established a right of access across the Hills and Commons for the public. Secondly, it created protective measures to prevent enclosure and encroachment upon common land, to protect the rights of commoners, and to manage the increase*

[57] Hurle, P. *Hanley Castle: Heart of Malvern Chase* (1978) p.140

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] *The History of Malvern* Brian Smith (1964), Leicester University Press

[61] Stephen Ballard, the engineer responsible for the tunnels through the Hills, was a local man who was also instrumental in the founding of the Conservators.

in tourism. The Act provided a Board of Conservators to manage and supervise the Malvern Hills in accordance with the provisions of the original and subsequent Acts'.

3.7.103 This Act (and subsequent ones) now protects most of Malvern's commons and the Hills themselves, and MHT have about 200 hectares (500 acres) of land under their jurisdiction. MHT manage the Hills in order to:

- Preserve the natural aspect
- Protect and manage trees, shrubs, turf and other vegetation
- Prevent unlawful digging and quarrying
- Keep the Hills open, unenclosed and unbuilt on as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public
- Conserve and enhance biodiversity / heritage especially SSSIs and SMs on its land.

3.7.104 MHT's website includes the note that '*these objectives sometimes conflict, although we aim to find the most appropriate balance*'.

3.7.105 In terms of the landscapes beyond the edges of the town, Hanley Castle Estate Exchange map from 1873 shows some land use information - the TCS was common land, and the existing woodland (Langdale and associated woods) east of Blackmore Road was arable land. However, as noted above, old maps and field work indicate that some of the existing woodland along the watercourse is pre-clearance, the trees are possibly ancient, and other ancient / early medieval features still survive.

3.7.106 On the 1880s OS map, 'Upper Common Farm' (on the eastern side of the TCS, and shown on the 1812 map) is renamed 'Firs Farm'. The footpath network around Brickbarns Farm is shown to be almost as it exists today.

3.7.107 Broadly, in parts of the parish, 19th century (and sometimes earlier) field patterns have retained much of their integrity - even where hedges have been lost, the patterns are still visible due to changes in land use between adjacent fields. Elsewhere they have been disrupted, especially on land associated with the golf course and the TCS; however, large isolated trees - usually oak - indicate where the hedgelines once were, and the layout of the TCS itself actually follows the original hedgeline structure - some of the hedges are still there.

3.7.108 The 1880s map also shows several orchards - some intact, others less so, indicating relatively early establishment. Within the parish, the larger orchards were associated with farmsteads - mainly Wood, Coton Cottage, Firs and Brickbarns Farms - and one is shown in a field on the east side of the settlement (see LSCA Area 11d). In the assarted parts of Upper Welland there was extensive orchard coverage, albeit mainly within small individual plots.

3.7.109 The majority of these orchards have since been cleared, although a few probably late 19th century perry pear trees are still standing in a field associated with Coton Cottage Farm, south west of the TCS. It is also quite possible that old orchard trees still exist as isolated specimens / groups in farm fields, paddocks and gardens, the latter especially in Upper Welland and along the east side of Wells Road.

3.7.110 Malvern Wells was populated enough in the mid- to late-19th century to gain a church, post office, school and the railway stations[62]. Settlement along 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, replacing the more direct but very steep trackways to the top - but it also provided a more direct route to Great Malvern and the various attractions which were newly-available there.

3.7.111 However, overall, Malvern Wells grew little in the 19th century, with the spa town shift and focus still on Great Malvern[63].

3.7.112 In 1894, the parish of Malvern Wells was officially established, having originally formed parts of the civil parishes of Hanley Castle, Welland and the former parish of Great Malvern[64]. In fact, the

[62] http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/place/1188

[63] http://www.malvernremembers.org.uk/memorials/st-peters-church-malvern-wells

[64] **http://www.malvernwells-pc.gov.uk/home/about-malvern-wells**

boundaries between Malvern Wells and Little Malvern / Welland, and Hanley Castle / Upton-upon-Severn parishes were probably delineated by Mere Brook when they were first established, before the Norman Conquest: however, for some reason, the 1894 boundary revision moved the boundary south of the brook to incorporate the settlement at Upper Welland.

3.7.113 More detailed information about the parish boundary changes is given in the individual LSCA Area schedules where relevant.

20th CENTURY

3.7.114 The original village core, which is located in the central part of the settlement along the western side of Wells Road, expanded significantly in the early 20th century. However, old maps suggest that there was little change in the wider landscapes between the 1880s and the early 1900s, although by 1904 the plantation woodlands at Langdale Wood / neighbouring woods had been established (Blackmore and Upper and Lower Arles Woods are older - see above).

3.7.115 A golf course is shown on Malvern Common (east), or Poolbrook Common, above Peachfield Road, either side of the railway. This was the original location of the Worcestershire Golf Club (Elgar played there) and the old Malvern stone club house is still standing at the top of the Common near the junction of Peachfield Road and Longridge Road. The Golf Club, which was constructed in 1879, was home to one of the first ten golf courses in the UK.

3.7.116 The 1920s OS map shows that a few new orchards had been established in and around the parish - a few fragments of these remain around Warren Farm, which was probably established around the time of the construction of the railway.

3.7.117 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.

3.7.118 Although there had been small-scale quarrying throughout the Malverns for centuries, the stone was usually hand-dug and only used locally. However, in 1907 a commercial quarrying company called Pyx Granite obtained a licence to quarry on the Hills. From this point, demand for Malvern stone increased significantly, particularly for the construction of roads, with several companies and Malvern Hills Urban District Council quarrying by 1909.

3.7.119 Soon, quarrying became a major problem because it was disfiguring the landscape of the Hills, and apparently threatening the ridgeline in several places. According to a BBC website[65], George Bernard Shaw wrote to the Times complaining about the effect the work was having on the Malvern skyline, saying:

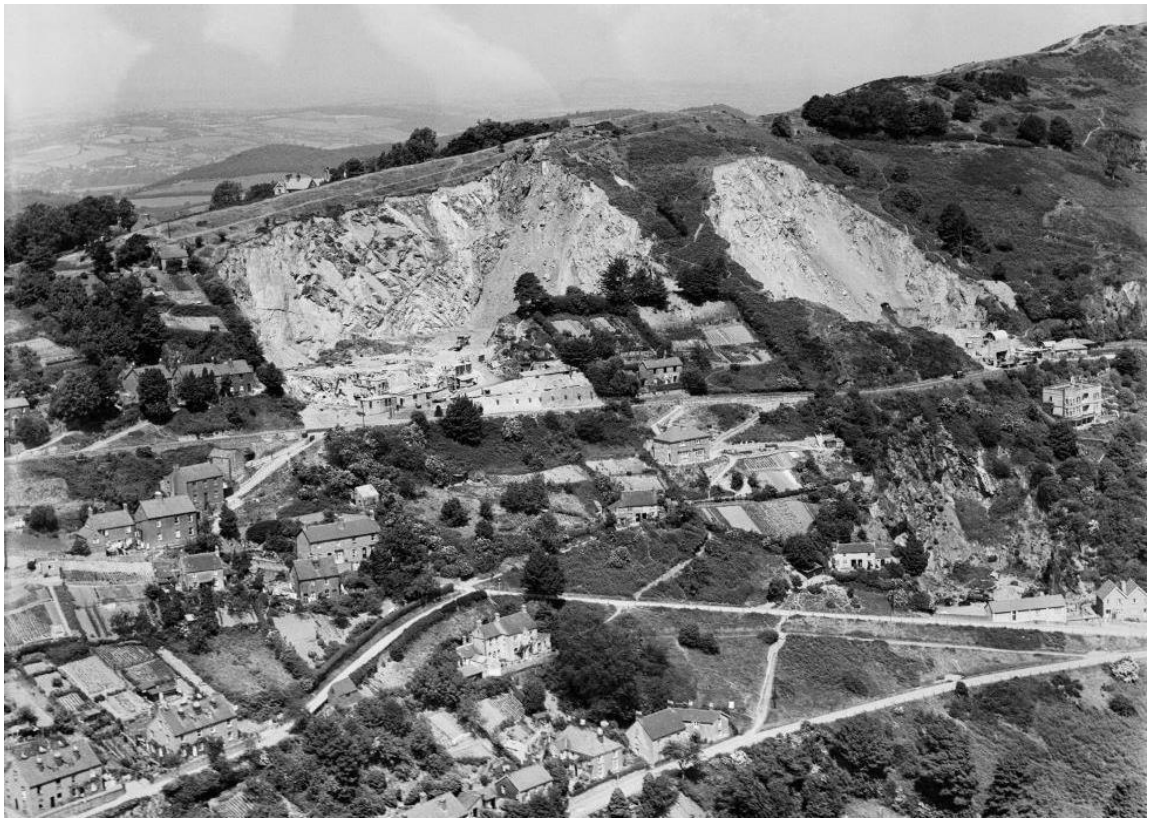
'*The approach to Malvern from the great plain of the Severn with the hills displayed on the western horizon has always had a peculiar charm. It now has a peculiar horror.*

'*Visitors from Worcester used to see the unspoiled North Hill with an indescribable pleasure. They now see it hideously disfigured by three gigantic scoops reaching so nearly to the top of the ridge that they bring home with a shock the appalling conviction that before very long the scoop will go right through leaving a couple of enormous jagged teeth of hill, which will presently be blasted away in their turn changing the Malvern Hills into the Malvern Flats*.'

3.7.120 However, there may possibly have been some agreement that the ridgeline should not be breached - many quarries extend to points just below it, and from most angles the Hills' distinctive profile is not affected, for example as shown in the photograph below.

[65] http://www.bbc.co.uk/herefordandworcester/features/malverns/new_malverns_quarrying.shtml

Upper Wyche in 1933[66]



3.7.121 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 quarrying through the compulsory purchase of land over the following five years, and to make byelaws to restrict and regulate existing quarrying operations.

3.7.122 However, owners of the land retained the mineral rights over any land within the Conservators' jurisdiction. At the Gullet Quarry south of British Camp, quarrying only ended in 1997. The quarry at Hollybush was worked until 1977; significant amounts of the Iron Age hillfort (with Bronze Age features) above it (Midsummer Hill) were cut away during the process.

3.7.123 By the start of the 20th century, the roof of the 19th century railway tunnel through the Hills had partially collapsed, and in 1907 it was decided to build a new, wider tunnel. This work was again overseen by engineer Stephen Ballard. The old tunnel was closed in 1926, and the new one opened on 2nd August of that year. (According to a BBC website, the old tunnel '… *still served a useful purpose in the second world war. Bizarrely for land-locked Herefordshire and Worcestershire the navy took over the old tunnel and used it to store torpedoes*'.) Shelving was installed, and a narrow-gauge railway line was constructed to carry the armaments into and out of the tunnel store. The tunnel is now an important bat roost.

3.7.124 The Golf Club moved to its current location at Wood Farm in 1926 and opened in 1927. The course was designed by renowned British golf course architect Alister MacKenzie. He designed more than fifty golf courses in four continents: three of the courses were amongst the top ten golf courses in the world in 2016 (including Augusta). During wartime service, MacKenzie had worked on the development of camouflage, and apparently the experience was useful when he began designing golf courses; in his book *Golf Architecture* he said that there '*are many other attributes in common between the successful golf architect and the camoufleur. Both, if not actually artists, must have an artistic temperament, and have had an education in science*'.

3.7.125 In the same book he also wrote that '*the chief object of every golf course architect worth his salt is to imitate the beauties of nature* [and presumably also the hazards] *so closely as to make his work indistinguishable from nature itself*'.

[66] © Historic England. May not be reproduced except with any permission under licence.

3.7.126 The course was in use until WWII[67], when much of the golf course and land at Wood Farm was taken over by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to build a hospital for anticipated D-Day casualties. In fact, between 1943 and 1945, tens of thousands of Americans stayed in Malvern, either as members of the medical staff or as patients at the five hospitals in the area[68], several of which were built within a short distance of Wood Farm[69] due to its proximity to the branch line railway between Malvern and Upton. Blackmore Park was also the site of a WWII American army hospital.

3.7.127 At 'Wood Farm Camp', buildings and roads extended over some 26ha of golf course and farmland. Many footpaths were closed, and hedges and trees were removed. However, it must be noted here that whilst it is often assumed that construction of the camps entailed complete clearance of the land, that is not the case. In fact, under the circumstances, a surprising amount of care was taken to retain watercourses and mature hedges and trees in the camps' layout.

3.7.128 The northern boundary of Wood Farm Camp was on a line between Wood Farm (by then some of the farm buildings had been turned into the golf clubhouse) and the dismantled railway, which also formed much of the Camp's eastern boundary (the tree-lined watercourse and trackway west of the railway were retained). The Camp's southern boundary was the small watercourse which flows eastwards from Hornyold Wood. The Wood was excluded, but the Camp's western boundary was drawn as a straight line through a field running from the Wood to a point west of the farm / clubhouse; camp buildings built on terraced concrete footings covered most of this area.

3.7.129 The other hospital in Malvern Wells was Brickbarns (96th General Hospital, dealing with neural cases) on requisitioned land (c. 30ha), much of which is now St Wulstan's LNR. The majority of the boundary vegetation (along with one of Mere Brook's tributaries) was retained, and still exists. Many of the old field boundaries are visible within the LNR, and what are probably remnants can be found within the newer part of the settlement, between Merebrook Close and Black Hill Road.

3.7.130 It is also interesting to note that well-used footpaths used to run through the field to the west of the LNR area, which became part of the hospital. It appears certain that the footpaths were diverted at this time: Assarts Lane remained a public road / right of way as far as the hospital camp's entrance at what was then the northern edge of the Upper Welland settlement. A new path (now a bridleway) was created off the west side of Assarts Lane, running along the south-western boundary of the camp then turning north east along an old field boundary forming the camps' western boundary (with Mere Brook tributary alongside). The new bridleway joined an old bridleway to the north, not far from the point where the old footpaths joined. Also, a new public footpath was created east of Assarts Lane, to link with the old trackway at the northern end of Chase Road.

3.7.131 After WWII, housebuilding recommenced in earnest. The original village core expanded significantly once again, and beyond the settlement edge, several new houses were built on former MoD land.

3.7.132 Brickbarns Hospital became a TB hospital and in 1949, prior to opening, it was renamed St Wulstan's (Wulstan was Bishop of Worcester in the 11th century, canonised in 1203)[70]. Attractive bungalows were built around 'The Crescent', and playing fields, gardens and other facilities were created for patients and staff. In 1960 it became a psychiatric hospital.

3.7.133 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).

3.7.134 In 1958, the TCS gained its permanent home at its current location on the former Firs Farm site. Prior to this, the show was staged at many different locations across Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire[71]. The showground site now covers 70 acres, although the TCAS owns 300 acres of land in the vicinity of the showground, including the now 100-year-old Langdale Wood opposite[72] (within which - rather surprisingly, given its sensitivity - permission to build 40 holiday lodges has recently been granted[73]).

[67] http://www.theworcestershiregolfclub.co.uk/page.aspx?pid=5606

[68] WCC *Nurture to Nature: A History of the St. Wulstan's Hospital Site* (2009)

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] http://www.bbc.co.uk/herefordandworcester/content/articles/2008/06/12/three_counties_history_feature.shtml

[72] Ibid.

[73] MHDC application ref. 18/00318/FUL

3.7.135 Malvern Wells Great Western Station was closed on 5th April 1965[74], along with the rest of the minor stations on this line (only the stationmaster's house still stands, a prominent feature on the west side of the Peachfield Road railway bridge) - this was because Great Western's new 'King Class' locomotives were unable to travel between Worcester and Hereford due to the small bore of the Victorian railway tunnels through the Hills.

3.7.136 Wood Farm Camp was recovered by the Worcestershire Golf Club from the MoD in the early 1970s[75]. Apparently, after the war it was used to house displaced Eastern Europeans, and in the 1950s it was used by the SAS. Eventually, the camp buildings were demolished (although one remains, and is used as the greenkeeper's shed), and the land was subdivided into zones for the golf course and new housing. The remainder was 'landscaped' (several ornamental trees were planted at this time) and / or left to become grassland - some of the older / boundary trees were left standing.

3.7.137 A few of the old hardstanding areas and concrete building platforms are still visible, for example in the semi-mature woodland block south west of the clubhouse, and it is likely that grass / scrub has covered others. Also, some of the Camp's internal roads were retained, for example Woodfarm Road's north-eastern spur and roundabout; the private access between the road and the clubhouse; and the access track to the golf club maintenance area / Warren Farm. Work began on restoring the golf course to its 'former glory' and significance, following Alister MacKenzie's original vision as closely as possible.

3.7.138 The post-WWII years also saw changes in the local landscapes occur due to several pieces of land beyond the settlement being turned into playing fields / recreational areas for the many public schools which had sprung up in the Wells (and Great Malvern) during the mid- to late-1800s (Abbey College became a school in c. 1874).

3.7.139 The change of use mainly occurred between the 1950s and 1970s, although in some cases the area had previously been in public / private recreational use - a bowling green and associated pavilion had been built in one of the fields (Area 10's north-eastern corner) by 1904, and sports use continued until relatively recently.

3.7.140 Because most of the land was sloping it had to be terraced in order to accommodate the various greens, pitches, tennis courts and / or swimming pools - examples of these still exist (some are described in the LSCA Area schedules - see for example Areas 6, 10 and 11e).

LATE 20th / 21st CENTURY

3.7.141 In the later years of the 20th century, several new houses were built in Malvern Wells (some of the most recently-built developments were not shown on the OS maps used for this study - see Figure 10 for their locations, and also locations of new developments approved but not constructed when the LSCA studies were being carried out). There was infill development around Green Lane and the Moorlands, between Upper and Lower Wyche, and around Assarts Lane / Road. 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.

3.7.142 In fact, for some reason, during the 1970s and throughout the UK, the construction of new residential and other forms of development increased significantly. Unfortunately, the majority were planned, designed and built without any apparent consideration for the environments and communities in which they were placed, being ubiquitous and usually ugly. In the 1980s, better and more enlightened forms of control began to be introduced.

3.7.143 Following the closure of St Wulstan's psychiatric hospital in 1986, planning permission was granted for housing on 40 acres of the land, including new homes north of St Wulstan's Drive, St Peter's Close and The Crescent[76]. In 1994, the derelict buildings on the rest of the site were demolished, and some 55 - 60 acres of land were dedicated to MHDC, with the agreement that the land would be retained as 'semi-wooded common for use by the local community'.

3.7.144 Over time, due to the lack of human intervention, this land had become a haven for wildlife. A large block of possibly ancient woodland along the Mere Brook along the southern boundary still remained,

[74] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malvern_Wells

[75] http://www.theworcestershiregolfclub.co.uk/page.aspx?pid=5606

[76] Ibid.

and in what had been the hospital grounds, there was a wide variety of mature and semi-mature trees, both native and ornamental. It was therefore decided to designate the area as a Local Nature Reserve. St Wulstan's LNR officially opened on April 25th 1997 (the author of this report was involved in its designation and creation whilst working for MHDC in the mid-1990s); it has since matured very well, and become a highly-valuable resource for both wildlife and the local community (described further in the sections below, and in the LSCA Area schedules).

3.7.145 Lack of management in recent years has changed other parts of the Wells, and its character. As with the LNR, the most visible change has been an increase in tree cover, albeit some of this is 'planned'. Whilst the species are not always characteristic or locally-appropriate, the trees now make an important contribution to the NCA's 'well-wooded impression', and are highly valuable ecological resources.

3.7.146 On the same theme, whilst many of Malvern's quarries have left permanent and unsightly scars on the hillslopes (see photograph above), they have also been recolonised by a variety of plants which offer a variety of habitats and increase biodiversity. A good example is Earnslaw Quarry, which is now within an AONB, part of a SSSI, and a Local Geological Site. It is very popular with locals and visitors alike - there is a car park, and the quarry is accessible from the Geopark Way (see Recreation and Access below).

3.7.147 The following is a summary of personal observations about changes which have occurred in the local area since the early 1980s and the effects, provided by a local resident who has lived in Malvern Wells for over 35 years:

Initially Upper Welland was a separate village and the postal address was always 'Upper Welland - near Malvern'. There was a thriving village shop which had a post office within: a pub - The Hawthorn - and a regular bus service.

The site at the old St Wulstan's Hospital was developed (into pseudo Georgian houses) some years ago. Due to the size and location of this housing development, there was a significant increase in traffic through the village. It was however good for the shop!

Around this time the local authority decided to take out the hedge leading up to the A449 and put in a footpath. Unfortunately this also changed peoples' addresses, and the village now came under Malvern Wells.

There has been subtle and insidious development within the village, with several properties having their large gardens divided and referred to as 'land adjacent to'.

There has been further development at the bottom of the village, with three new houses being built on what was an orchard, along with the recent very modern build of old farm property.

Along the way - the village pub closed and has never reopened! The village shop tried to expand by opening another store on the Wells Road, but this sadly led to the demise of the Upper Welland shop which has now been shut for several years. The 'new' shop is not within walking distance and involves driving. This brings me to the issues of the road that runs through the village.

The junction where Upper Welland Road meets the A449 is extremely steep and very dangerous in wet or icy weather. There is the additional hazard of traffic travelling at more than the permitted 30 miles an hour along the A449, and there is also a primary school within 50 yards of the junction. This, in real terms, means that one also has to combat the badly parked cars twice a day as parents deliver their children to the school door.

There is no bus! At least I have not seen one in 18 months! I believe there was a bus once a day which would take you to Great Malvern but would only return you to the top of the road. Not good for the ageing population of the village!

I moved here over 30 years ago as I wanted to live in a quiet village - ideally one that had necessary facilities - a corner shop, a bus service and (for some) a pub. We now have none of these, and the village is in serious danger of becoming absorbed into an urban sprawl - but one still without these 'necessary' facilities.

3.7.148 Anecdotal evidence also suggests that some parishioners feel a sense of separation from the centre of the Wells, and that there is little evidence of an overall 'village community' (in part probably due to the long, linear configuration of the settlement, with c. 4km between its northern and southern ends). Where people shop / socialise tends to be dictated by geography and the proximity of facilities / services. For example, Upper Wyche residents often go down to Colwall village, Fruitlands residents

use Barnards Green. Topographically at least, Upper Welland is more closely-associated with Welland village.

Malvern Water History

3.7.149 Malvern's innumerable springs, wells and spouts (to date over a hundred have been identified on and around the Hills) are not just important for their contribution to character and visual amenity, they also constitute highly valuable heritage and cultural / social assets (both locally and nationally). The location of those identified within the parish is shown on Figure 5B.

3.7.150 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.

3.7.151 As set out in the sections above, 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 foothills to the west in particular were fertile and sheltered.

3.7.152 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 Priory.

3.7.153 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 then 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'.

3.7.154 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. However, 1622 is the first recording of spring water being bottled in 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 1852[77].

3.7.155 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, along with new roads.

3.7.156 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.

3.7.157 Over time, interest in Malvern Water dwindled again, although it was bottled by Coca-Cola Schweppes at Colwall until relatively recently.

3.7.158 In the mid-1990s, as part of a district-wide 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.

3.7.159 These resulted in the restoration of many springs and spouts, the creation of new ones, 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.

3.7.160 The majority of the currently-identified springs, spouts and wells within the parish lie in the West to North sector; the exceptions are Tyrol House Fountain, Pixies' Well and Goat Spring, which are in the South to West sector, and the Schweppes Stone Bottle Fountain, which is in the North to East

[77] **http://www.malvernwells-pc.gov.uk/home/about-malvern-wells**

sector. The latter is not a Malvern spring water feature, it is a sculpture, but it is of Malvern Water heritage / cultural interest.

3.7.161 The water features comprise (In order travelling from north to south):

1) Ellerslie Fountain
2) Weaver's Well
3) Jasmine Spring
4) Lower Wyche Spout and Trough
5) Railway Tunnel Spring
6) Golf Club Spout
7) Gothick Well
8) Cottage in the Wood Spout
9) Schweppes Stone Bottle Fountain
10) Brockhill Spring
11) Eye Well
12) The Holy Well
13) Jubilee Fountain
14) Pixies' (previously Devil's) Well
15) Goat Spring
16) Tyrol House Fountain.

3.7.162 In addition to the above, 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.

3.7.163 There are also built-in spring outlets at 6 and 12 Hanley Road, and adjacent to 262 Wells Road.

3.7.164 Descriptions and illustrations of the springs, spouts and wells is provided in Appendix D.

3.7.165 Every year - usually during the May Day festivals - many of Malvern's water features are 'dressed' by volunteers from the MSA. '*The MSA Well Dressing not only celebrates Malvern`s many spring water sites, but the MSA also aims to focus public attention on our unique heritage of springs and wells, increasing community support for their restoration & maintenance*'[78].

3.8 Cultural Associations

3.8.1 The Malvern area, and especially the Hills, have many important cultural associations with a wide variety of notable individuals and events.

3.8.2 The Malvern Hills have been described as '*a constituent part of the collective self-image of England through the cultural inspiration that they have provided in both literature and music*[79]' (in fact, in the arts generally).

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

- William Langland (Langland's Middle English allegorical narrative poem *Piers Plowman (c. 1370)* opens on the Malvern Hills. Langland was educated at Little Malvern Priory, and scholars say he incorporated the imagery around him in his work[80]. Langland was a contemporary of Chaucer, and *Piers Plowman* has an important place in the English canon, akin to *The Canterbury Tales*)
- Dr. John Wall (see Malvern water history above)
- Peter Mark Roget (author of *Thesaurus*. During his later years he spent many months at Ashfield House (West Malvern) where he died in 1869 at the age of 90)
- Dr. James Wilson (see Malvern water history above)

[78] http://www.malvernspa.co.uk/well-dressing/welldressing.html

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

[80] malvernmuseum.co.uk/Langland

- Dr. James Manby Gully (see Malvern water history above)
- Charles Dickens (stayed in what is now part of the Abbey Hotel in Great Malvern when he visited the town several times in 1851. He came to visit his wife Catherine, who had come to take the Malvern Water cure to treat her depression since the birth of their ninth child Dora, the previous year. Dickens described Malvern as a '*Most beautiful plac*e' and felt '*Mrs. Dickens has derived great advantage, I am glad to say, from this place*')
- Charles Darwin (came for the 'water cure' with daughter, Annie, who had tuberculosis; she died in Malvern in 1851)
- Alfred Lord Tennyson (took the 'water cure')
- Florence Nightingale (stayed in Malvern in c. 1857)
- Jenny Lind (lived out her final years at Wynd's Point. Her last public appearance was at a charity concert at Royal Malvern Spa in 1883. She died at Wynd's Point on 2 November 1887 aged 67, and was buried in Great Malvern cemetery)
- Edward Elgar (lived in Malvern Wells between 1899 and 1904 at Craeg Lea (86, Wells Road). He chose a room on the upper floor for his study at Craeg Lea, giving him tremendous views across the Severn Valley and the Worcestershire countryside[81]. His piece *Caractacus* was influenced by British Camp (according to legend, Caractacus fought against Roman invasion from the hillfort at the Camp). He frequently cycled to Castlemorton, Hanley, Upton-on-Severn and Longdon Marsh[82]. In her diary, Elgar's wife Alice commented, '*There cannot have been a lane within 20 miles of Malvern that we did not ultimately find*.' The Malvern and Worcestershire landscape influenced his music, with melodies often arising while he was cycling. Elgar taught music at Wells House when it became a boarding school around 1899[83]. In the 1920s he performed in the Coach House at The Cottage in the Wood before it became a hotel. He was a member of the Worcestershire Golf Club, and is understood to have played at the original Poolbrook Common site during his time at Craeg Lea. Elgar and Alice are buried at St Wulstan's Church on Wells Road, just over 300m south of Malvern Wells' parish boundary)
- (Arthur) Troyte Griffith (student of Elgar who gave his name to an Enigma Variation. Well-known architect: All Saint's Church; 'Greyroofs' Peachfield Road - reputedly built in 1909 for a German Count; war memorial; and toposcope on summit of Worcester Beacon. He lived in Fair View Cottage (stone built Georgian cottage on Old Wyche Road) between 1896 and 1942)
- W H Auden (at school in Malvern in 1920s)
- Barry Jackson (founder of Malvern Festival in 1929 (initially dedicated to the works of George Bernard Shaw); also impresario and founder of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, in conjunction with George Bernard Shaw and Edward Elgar)
- George Bernard Shaw
- J R Tolkien (walked the Hills with C S Lewis during visits to the area, and their writing was influenced by the area's landscape. *The Hobbit* published in 1937: apparently, Tolkien created the White Mountains between Rohan and Gondor based on his observations of the Malvern Hills)
- C S Lewis (pupil at Malvern College with Lascelles Abercrombie - Malvern's gas street lamps featured in his *Chronicles of Narnia* books)
- Lascelles Abercrombie (pupil at Malvern College; later, lived at Ryton. Became founder of the Dymock poets group)
- George Sayer (C S Lewis's student and biographer, Head of English at Malvern College for many years. Lewis introduced Tolkien to Sayer and they would walk together on the Hills. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* was first recorded on tape in Sayer's Malvern home and then published by Stanley Unwin, of Allen and Unwin, whose son Rayner was a pupil at the College)
- Dame Laura Knight (artist; after WWII, divided her time between London and Malvern)
- Evelyn Waugh
- Margaret Thatcher (stayed at The Cottage in the Wood)
- Anne Diamond
- Nigel Kennedy (musician)

[81] elgar.org/2houses.htm#craegleap

[82] *Elgar the cyclist: A creative odyssey*, Kevin Allen, 1997

[83] http://holywellsuite.co.uk/holywell-history/

- David Prentice (artist; lived in Malvern from 1990, and latterly in Malvern Wells until his death in 2014[84])
- Michael Gooch (royal and celebrity portrait painter)
- Rose Garrard (artist who designed several new art and water features in and around the Malvern area in the 1990s / early 2000s)
- David Mitchell (author)
- Caroline Lucas (Green Party)
- Various members of the Royal Family including Prince Andrew, who named Jubilee Hill in 2003.

3.8.4 Certain buildings within, or close to, the parish, are associated with some of the notable people identified above, and / or are notable in themselves. 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
- The Cottage in the Wood (hotel since 1950s) - Elgar, C S Lewis, Margaret Thatcher
- 'Greenways' (200 Wells Road) - birthplace of the Ecology (Green) Party in 1973.

3.9 Settlement Pattern Analysis

3.9.1 The historic evolution of the settlement, and how and why its various patterns and characteristics have developed, is set out in the landscape character and history sections above, with further information provided in the LSCA Area schedules, the RCA study, the draft CAA, and the HER report. This section summarises the settlement's present day character.

3.9.2 '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 Upper and Lower Wyche.

3.9.3 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.

3.9.4 More recently, development on the Hills and commons has been constrained by various protective measures including an Act of Parliament under which MHC (now MHT) were set up in 1884.

3.9.5 The history of 'Malvern Water' is set out in more detail above, but it is important to note what a significant influence the resource and its exploitation have had on the character and distinctiveness of the area's land-, town- and villagescapes.

3.9.6 For example, many of the springs emerge along the spring line which encircles the northern section of the Hills from British Camp to End Hill (see Section 3.1 above). Although its elevation varies, in places the spring 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 just below the spring line.

3.9.7 Great Malvern's settlement has now spread down the east side of the Hills and all but merged with lower-lying areas such as Newland, Poolbrook and Barnard's Green (in fact, it is still expanding north-eastwards and eastwards); 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 lying along the south side of Peachfield Road.

[84] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Prentice

3.9.8 Malvern Wells' settlement pattern is linear for the most part (c. 4km long from north to south east), forming a narrow - in places '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. This linear pattern is clearly visible in long-distance views, not just during the day but at night, when it is articulated by lights from street lamps and houses. It is a highly distinctive characteristic of the Malvern area.

3.9.9 The Wells 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. Upper Wyche is a highly distinctive feature of 'The Malverns' in views from the east, as it is the only point where built form tops / breaches the ridgeline. Lower Wyche is also clearly visible in many views from the east, although built form and dense mature tree cover screen views from certain directions and at lower elevations.

3.9.10 The overall effect is a swathe of tightly-packed built form running 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.

3.9.11 Interestingly, although the Fruitlands estate is very densely-clustered, the layout was almost certainly based on the existing field patterns and trackways. Map regressions show that the southern spur of Peachfield Road - a narrow, tree-lined lane and part-bridleway leading from the common through the estate to join Fruitlands (road) further south - is along the line of a footpath shown on late 19th century maps; the track still leads south-eastwards across the railway and through what is now the golf course, also as bridleway (and probably an ancient trackway). The arrangement of the houses east of King Edward's Road and north of Fruitlands (road) reflect the garden boundaries (and carriage drive to / from the Common) of South Lawn. The houses in between, either side of Jasmine Road, are oriented to reflect the trackway to the east and the old gardens to the west.

3.9.12 Although not always obvious, on closer inspection it becomes clear that other developments have also retained / respected the early enclosure (and occasionally pre-enclosure) field patterns.

3.9.13 The 'heart' of the Wells settlement is its historic core, and 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 road 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. Here, the land falls quite steeply down to the edge of the Severn plain, with a scattering of houses and farmsteads characterising the area between Upper Welland and Welland village.

3.9.14 Beyond the eastern edges of the settlement, built form is scattered (mainly residential properties and farmsteads with a few villages - Guarlford, 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, intensively-used and on a locally-large scale, with several buildings, roads and associated structures / features - permanent and temporary - which urbanise / ornamentalise the area. The TCS is also closely-associated with the modern equestrian establishment and commercial / light-industrial area south east of the crossroads.

3.9.15 Similarly, Blackmore Park is a large-scale commercial / light-industrial area known as Merebrook Business Park; a very large building ('ESP') has recently been erected, industrial in character and scale and highly visible even in longer-distance views. Although Langdale and associated woodlands currently separate the TCS and the commercial / light-industrial areas, together they form a cluster of uncharacteristic, modern development in the landscape.

3.9.16 In fact, Blackmore Park is 'previously-developed land', having once been a WWII army hospital. It is now the subject of SWDP Policy 54: Blackmore Park:

A. 5.1ha of land at Blackmore Park, as identified on the Policies Map, is allocated for B1, B2 and B8 employment uses.

B. Development should take full account of landscape issues and recognise the value of the existing woodland to the south.

3.9.17 Notwithstanding this (and other) policy requirements, the ESP building is a good example of how an uninformed approach to siting, layout and design can give rise to significant adverse effects on both landscape character - especially the unique historic character of Blackmore Park, and its pattern / form - and visual amenity, as shown in the photo below.

ESP building at Blackmore Park

3.9.18 There are several other examples of lack of attention paid to these matters in this area, for example the white roofs on the equestrian buildings south east of the TCS crossroads, and clusters of white caravans in designated campsites (see Recommendations in Section 8).

White-roofed buildings near TCS crossroads

3.9.19 One point of note here is the fact that parts of the settlement which 'jut out' into open countryside - mainly along Woodfarm Road and west of St Wulstan's LNR - were built on former MoD camp / hospital land in the years following WWII. Clearly the camps had to be located beyond the settlement yet relatively near to it; however, had the camps not been built it is extremely unlikely that permission for new houses or commercial / industrial use in these 'open countryside' locations would have been granted.

3.9.20 WCC's Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance Technical Handbook (August 2013) describes the settlement pattern of the Enclosed Commons landscape type which covers the majority of Malvern Wells parish, and provides guidance on how future residential development could be accommodated in order to avoid adverse effects.

3.9.21 It states, '*The low density wayside settlement pattern of small cottages and occasional farmsteads is gradually being altered as cottages are enlarged and new dwellings built. In principal, these landscapes can accept additional wayside dwellings if the proposals are in accordance with policy, but the density should remain low and any new building must respect the style, materials and the small scale of the traditional cottages.*'

3.9.22 Although not specifically about settlement pattern, MHAONBP's *Guidance on how development can respect landscape in views* provides very useful information that will help to ensure that characteristic local patterns are respected and reflected when new development is proposed (see Section 8).

3.10 Designated / Key Landscape Features: Natural Assets and Functions

Biodiversity

3.10.1 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. A key purpose of this duty is to embed consideration of biodiversity as an integral part of policy and decision-making throughout the public sector, which should be seeking to make a significant contribution to the achievement of the commitments made by government in its 25 Year Environment Plan[85].

3.10.2 'Biodiversity' issues are an important factor in landscape and visual assessments, especially 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 these habitats and the species of flora and fauna they support.

3.10.3 GLVIA3 notes that '*... the presence of features of wildlife… can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right*.'

3.10.4 In its guidance document *A Handbook on Environmental Impact Assessment* (4th edition 2013), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) explains that '…*all landscapes, everywhere, are important as* [inter alia] …*an environment for plants and animals, the condition of which directly affects biodiversity conservation*.'

3.10.5 The baseline information which needs to be gathered and considered in landscape assessments is set out in LCA guidance; the list includes 'literature on wildlife' such as relevant Natural Character Area Profiles, Biodiversity Action Plans, local Phase 1 habitat and other surveys.

3.10.6 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). However, this LSCA has taken into account publicly-available data, using sources such as Defra's Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) maps[86], various MHAONB documents, including the Management Plan and the LCA, and studies produced by organisations such as MHT.

3.10.7 This was supplemented by data supplied by WBRC in March 2017 - see Appendix E. The information includes both Broad and Specific Habitat maps which provide a very useful overview of the habitats (and land uses) in and adjacent to the parish. These maps have also been used to inform the more detailed sector descriptions in Section 4, and in the LSCA Area schedules.

[85] Natural Environment PPG para. 009. For further useful information see also paras. 10 - 35

[86] https://magic.defra.gov.uk/

3.10.8 Also, if obvious biodiversity potential is observed during the surveys, for example habitats likely to support protected species, it is noted; where relevant to landscape character and / or visual amenity, the information is recorded and incorporated into judgements about value and susceptibility to change.

3.10.9 In addition, this section also incorporates the findings of the public consultation exercises carried out by MWPC during the course of the NDP process, which included asking local residents to 'list areas of land not already designated which they considered were important for nature conservation, and why'.

3.10.10 The wider area, and the AONB, contain many sites of ecological significance. According to MHAONB's Management Plan, '*The geological variety, and thousands of years of traditional farming have given the AONB great ecological value*'.

3.10.11 It notes that there are sixteen SSSIs lying wholly or partly within the AONB, but there is only one Local Nature Reserve - St Wulstan's. In the Worcestershire part of the AONB there are twenty-three Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), five of which are wholly or partly within Malvern Wells parish.

3.10.12 Interestingly, the Plan goes on to note that in the Herefordshire part of the AONB '*there are 40* [LWS] *sites covering 1,773 ha*' and that there, '*much has been done to help increase the proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented*'.

3.10.13 As noted in the sections above, one of the main reasons for the relatively low levels of ecological interest in the parish landscapes east of the Hills is due to the widespread clearance of landscape features which occurred as a result of enclosure; however, the increase in tree cover in recent years is probably helping to increase biodiversity.

3.10.14 The biodiversity-related designations and key features identified in the assessment are shown on Figure 7. They are summarised in the list below, and where relevant are described in more detail in the following sections.

3.10.15 Apart from the statutorily-designated sites, only those within and / or immediately adjacent to the parish are included unless otherwise stated:

- The Malvern Hills are a designated SSSI (S to W and W to N sectors).
- Malvern Common east of the railway is a SSSI (N to E 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[87]. 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 LNR (E to S sector).
- Several LWSs were identified:
  - Malvern Common (east)[88] and grass verges along Poolbrook Road (N to E and W to N sectors).
  - 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[89] (E to S and S to W sectors - brook forms parish's southern boundary).

[87] See http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx

[88] The LWS description is as follows: ***Malvern Common (East) – Poolbrook:*** *This sub-site is important for its rush pasture flushes (MG10/M23 type), meadowsweet/angelica mire (NVC M27), and for some small areas of unimproved neutral grassland (MG5b). The area around the flushes is of particular interest for its mosaic of vegetation types – where neutral/acidic grades into wet rush pasture with fen and ditch flora. Here, at least 90 species have been recorded – of special note are the "lawns" of small sedges and rushes with mosses and lesser spearwort. Rare sedges are recorded, and colonies of orchids appear around the flushes in some years. The neutral grassland east of Poolbrook road is a species-rich crested dogstail/common knapweed/lady's bedstraw type sward, and is the only area of this type of species-rich neutral grassland occurring on the whole of these twin commons. The remainder of Malvern Common (East) is mostly dry acidic grassland or improved swards. There are two small ephemeral ponds.*

[89] The LWS description notes: '***Pool and Mere Brooks****: Two brooks combining to form a tributary of the River Severn. Both are small, mostly slow-flowing and tend to have a silty bed although there are short stretches were the flow is quicker and gravel beds are apparent. The Pool Brook tends to have a rather more wooded corridor than the Mere Brook but both are well vegetated and tree lined*

- Section of dismantled railway line (E to S sector, outside parish boundary).
- Malvern Common (west) and grassland on hillslopes[90] (W to N sector).

- There are several Habitats of Principal Biological Importance (HPBIs) (Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006), Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI) and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) sites scattered throughout the study area. Many are located on Malvern's hills and commons, which escaped clearance during enclosure, whereas the number of sites in the enclosed areas is relatively small.

  However, there is a notable concentration of PHI / BAP sites covering a large area between the south-eastern corner of the TCS (Blackmore Park Road and Blackmore End - a distance of c. 3.3km, and c. 1km wide in places, plus links to adjacent habitats - see Figure 7).

  The habitats in that area comprise PHI Deciduous Woodland, and Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat. The latter is associated with historic parklands, is highly valuable, and is uncommon in the local area - the only other Woodpasture and Parkland site in the study area east of the Hills is a small patch at The Firs, on the southern edge of Great Malvern. The species-rich hedgerows are also HPBIs.

  The other main HPBI / PHI / BAP sites in the study area are:

  - Belts of PHI Deciduous Woodland along the length of the Hills' mid-slopes (and a feature of the Malvern Hills' SSSI notification), small belts and blocks on the lower slopes, a scattering of blocks on the plain (including Langdale and associated woodlands), and linear riparian belts. Almost all of the PHI Deciduous Woodlands in the area are also included in the National Forest Inventory (NFI) (GB).
  - PHI Traditional Orchards (five within the parish): In the 19th century, orchards were widespread in the area, being highly characteristic of the middle and lower hillslopes and plains. Now, they are becoming increasingly rare - only a few old orchard remnants remain east of the Hills, and they are very thinly scattered throughout the study area.

    The orchards at Warren Farm, and at the south-eastern corner of the TCS, are Traditional Orchards. The old perry pear orchard adjacent to the TCS's south-western corner is not, but probably should be.

    Old orchards are highly valuable landscape features, providing a living link with the landscapes of the past as well as being nationally-important habitats for wildlife. They support a variety of species including noble chafer, lesser spotted woodpecker, various saproxylic beetles and many species of fungus. Active management of these habitats is crucial for their long-term survival.

    The MHAONBU is currently managing the Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project (TCTOP), the purpose of which is to help address the rapid decline of traditional orchards by training local people to manage traditional orchards in their area on behalf of orchard owners. As part of this, a demonstration orchard at the Three Counties Showground is being established, to compliment other orchard-based activities there.
  - Species-rich hedgerows (HPBIs).
  - PHI Lowland Dry Acid Grassland - predominates on the Malvern Hills' upper slopes.
  - PHI Lowland Meadows on Malvern Common (east).
  - 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).

for much of their length. Typically the bankside trees are pollarded willows but some sections of the Pool Brook are dominated by damp alder carr and both have associated marshy nettle/willowherb beds that help to augment the already important wildlife corridor. Both watercourses appear 'natural' and do not show much sign of past modification. Information on associated species of interest is limited but otters are likely to use both brooks.'

[90] The LWS description notes: '***Malvern Common (West) – Wyche:*** *The main nature conservation value of this sub-site are the semi-improved acidic grassland swards of National Vegetation Classification (NVC) U4 type; the bracken-invaded grassland NVC U20 with occasional bramble and rosebay willowherb vegetation. There are also some small areas of springs with scrubby woodland of willow and birch, and a small stream crosses the centre of the common, mostly encroached by bracken, but with areas of rush and water mint. The northern and western sections of the common by the A449 Ledbury road are remnant secondary woodland. The canopy is mostly sycamore dominated, with an understorey of coppiced hazel, holly and yew and a bramble/bracken and bluebell ground flora.*'

- Some areas are categorised as PHI 'No main habitat but additional habitat exists', but these are few and far between.
- Several nationally-rare, nationally-scarce and / or notable species of plants, mammals, birds, insects and amphibians (see below).
- Other small watercourses run through the study area (mainly Pool and Mere Brook tributaries, although a tributary of Marlbank Brook rises in Little Malvern). Although not designated, they may provide good 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.

3.10.16 The various habitats in and adjacent to the parish make an important contribution to landscape character and visual amenity as well as biodiversity; as explained above, loss or erosion of habitats can lead to adverse effects on both. It is therefore necessary to understand the nature of the habitat, the reasons for its designation, and the range of species it may support, so that potential effects arising from new development can be identified.

3.10.17 The Malvern Hills SSSI's Description and Reasons for Notification states:

'*The site has been selected as it is one of the largest areas of semi-natural vegetation in the West Midlands supporting a mosaic of habitat types. Unimproved acidic grassland covers the top of the ridge which grades into tall herb communities at lower altitudes. Woodland occurs as narrow fringes at the northern end of the site and in more extensive blocks further south and there are smaller areas of other habitats such as heathland, flushes, open water and bare rock faces. The site is also important for a number of uncommon plants, including a nationally rare clubmoss, as well as butterflies and moths, including a nationally rare butterfly, breeding birds and mammals.*

The Malvern Hills are also of considerable geological interest with important exposures in several quarries.'

3.10.18 Malvern's Hills and commons contain habitats and species highly unusual for the English Midlands[91], and are particularly notable for their grasslands and a number of coastal plants present, left over from a time when the Severn estuary reached as far north as the Malvern Hills. The vegetation is predominantly a mosaic of woods, grasslands, scrub, heath, ponds and meadows.

3.10.19 Many of the higher parts of the Malvern Hills are covered with thin acid soils which support a typical flora containing, for example, wavy hair grass, sheep's sorrel, harebells and heath bedstraw. There are a few patches which are more heathy, with heather, bilberry and cladonia lichens. The grasslands contain a number of uncommon plants. The nationally restricted upright chickweed *Moenchia erecta* is widespread in short turf along the summit ridge south of the Herefordshire Beacon. Spring cinquefoil *Potentilla tabernaemontani*, another nationally restricted species, is more localised, occurring only where the soil conditions are less acidic. Other locally-uncommon species include bird's-foot *Ornithopus perpusillus*, knotted clover *Trifolium striatum* and little mouse-ear *Cerastium semidecandrum*. The only known English lowland site for a clubmoss is on the Malvern Hills.

3.10.20 Lower down the slopes are patches of scrub, woodland and extensive areas of bracken. The Hills provide good habitats for butterflies, with uncommon fritillaries, grayling and wood white. There are many species of breeding birds, and regular migratory species in autumn and winter, including ring ouzels and snow buntings. The dismantled railway tunnel under the Hills is an important bat refuge.

3.10.21 Parts of the Hills' mid-slopes and large areas of the lowlands including the roadside verges, urban commons and Old Hills are predominantly vegetated by mesotrophic grasslands (meaning of moderate fertility). These grassland communities are more luscious and nutrient-rich compared to the upland acid grasslands, and are far more prevalent across the UK.

3.10.22 A section of the dismantled railway line and two small nearby meadows at Brotheridge Green in the East to South sector of the study area are SSSIs. Although just outside the study area boundary, Castlemorton Common (south of Welland) is a SSSI, and there is a small SSSI in Welland village (Mutlow's Orchard).

3.10.23 St. Wulstan's is a statutorily-designated LNR (see landscape history section), its interest being a diverse range of habitats, woodland birds, butterflies, glow-worms (*Lampyris noctiluca*) and beetles.

[91] Source: Malvern Hills Conservators Land Management Plan 2016 - 2021

Several of the habitats are designated HPBI / PHI / BAP sites. More information about the LNR can be found in the leaflet Discovery Walk 7: 'Back to Nature' walk in Malvern Wells[92].

3.10.24 Within the parish, along the Malvern Hills SSSI's eastern boundary, parts of the Hills' mid-slopes and commons are designated LWSs. The designation (Malvern and Lower Wyche Commons) covers 69ha. It comprises linked areas of unenclosed common land, and includes the mosaic of grassland, scrub and mature trees on land lying in between Lower Wyche Road and Wells Road, and on west and east Malvern Commons. The LWS habitat is grassland and marsh.

3.10.25 UK BAP habitats within it comprise Unimproved Lowland Neutral Grassland (NVC: MG5 type); Unimproved Acidic Grassland (NVC: U4); and Rush Pasture (NVC: M23 + MG10 + M27).

3.10.26 Other habitats of importance include scrub; tall herb; semi-improved grassland; amenity grassland; open water (flowing); bracken; and broadleaved woodland.

3.10.27 Grassland species of importance are birdsfoot trefoil, lady's bedstraw, pignut, yellow rattle, tormentil and quaking grass. Marshland species of importance are jointed rush, ragged robin, marsh marigold, common spike-rush and yellow iris.

3.10.28 Records for uncommon and rare Worcestershire notable plant species include: distant sedge *Carex distans*, oval sedge *C. ovalis*, yellow sedge *C. viridula ssp. oedocarpa*, green ribbed sedge *C. binervis*, southern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, common spotted orchid *D. fuchsii*, and common spotted / heath spotted orchid hybrid *D. x transiens*.

3.10.29 On many of the commons in the area, regular hay cutting has created a grassland community akin to traditional hay meadows (MG5 *Cynasurus cristatus - Centaurea nigra*). As well as the orchids they include uncommon species such as downy oat grass *Helictotrichon pubescens*. In areas that are regularly trampled and mown, hardy species dominate in leys that comprises perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne* and plantains.

3.10.30 Langdale Wood, The Lills, Blackmore Wood, Common Wood and Upper Arles Wood, all of which lie east of the TCS, combine to form a single LWS (Langdale and Blackmore Woods). The LWS habitat is broadleaved woodland.

3.10.31 It must be borne in mind that in June 2018, planning permission was granted for the erection of forty 'holiday lodges' in Langdale Wood. The baseline descriptions below are pre-construction of the lodges, and it is inevitable that due to the activity and disturbance that will be introduced, the baseline situation will change. For further information about the proposed management of the woodlands, and the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures, see the 2018 Ecological Assessment submitted with the 2018 application.

3.10.32 National BAP habitats within the LWS comprise Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew Woodland. Other habitats of importance include standing water, flowing water and swamp. Species of importance include nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* (but see below), nationally-scarce narrow-leaved bitter-cress, hornbeam, locally-notable long-stalked crane's-bill, meadowsweet, soft rush and pendulous sedge. Lesser sea-spurrey *Spergularia marina* has been recorded along Blackmore Park Road.

3.10.33 The LWS description states:

'*The west side of the site was managed for production of pole-stage timber for the brush-making industry until the latter part of the last century, so mature trees are rare – current management is partly for recreation and partly for forestry. The east side of the wood is predominantly managed for forestry but also includes a large pond and an area of low-lying swamp adjacent to this. The whole site is criss-crossed by a network of paths.*'

3.10.34 As noted in the landscape history section, old maps and field work indicate that some of the existing woodland along the watercourse is pre-clearance, the trees are possibly ancient, and other ancient / early medieval features still survive.

3.10.35 The trees are predominantly pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* with occasional ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. According to the above-mentioned ecological survey report, the woodland / parkland and surrounding areas provide suitable foraging and navigational opportunities for bats[93]. During the surveys in the

[92] www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/discovery_walks.html

[93] All bats are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and included on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) ('the Habitats Regulations').

wood, many species of bat were identified, including common and soprano pipistrelle, myotis, lesser horseshoe, brown long-eared, noctule and serotine. Some of these are priority species[94].

3.10.36 The surveys also identified 35 different species of breeding (or possibly breeding) birds, including dunnock, song thrush, mistle thrush, spotted flycatcher, bullfinch, stock dove and green woodpecker - all are included on the RSPB Red or Amber Lists, having undergone major or moderate declines in their UK populations over 25 years (see also species list summaries below).

3.10.37 The nightingale is an amber-listed bird of nature conservation concern in the Worcestershire Red Data Book. However, recent (2015 / 16) ecological surveys submitted with the planning application for holiday lodges in Langdale Wood did not find any evidence of them being there, and it is therefore possible, if not likely, that these birds are no longer present in the LWS. They may not return either, due to the holiday lodge development.

3.10.38 The parkland, woodland and scrub offer suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians - great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* were found in ponds in the woods.

3.10.39 Several of the LWSs in the study area are linear features. There are grassed verges and avenues along Poolbrook Road, east of Barnards Green and along the Guarlford Road, sections of the dismantled railway line, and several watercourses including Mere Brook, which forms the parish's southern boundary. The source of the brook drains from the Hills via the southern end of Malvern Wells, running through and around St Wulstan's Nature Reserve (see below). The watercourse which crosses the golf course and runs along the northern edge of Langdale Wood is designated as a LWS east of the wood. All the watercourses drain eastwards towards the Severn.

3.10.40 Mere Brook is part of the Pool and Mere Brooks LWS - the two brooks combine to form a tributary of the River Severn. Both are small and mostly slow-flowing; they also appear 'natural' and do not show much sign of past modification. Information on associated species of interest is limited but otters are likely to use both brooks.

3.10.41 Other LWSs include woodland (Dripshill Wood - North to East sector) and meadows adjacent to the SSSI at Brotheridge Green.

3.10.42 In the North to East sector there is a belt of DW which forms a continuation of the eastern end of Langdale Wood, on the north side of the watercourse. A second linear block of DW lies to the north of Blackmore Park. Also at Blackmore Park, on land which was formerly a WWII American army hospital, as well as in Langdale Wood, there is Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat, which, as noted above, is uncommon east of the Hills. A small block of woodland at the western end of a large pond associated with residential properties south of Peachfield Road is also DW.

3.10.43 In the East to South sector, DW is thinly-scattered. It is mainly limited to belts of trees along the dismantled railway and sections of Mere Brook, although there is now an organically-shaped DW maturing in the centre of St Wulstan's Nature Reserve.

3.10.44 In the South to West Sector, the triangular stand of woodland lying just south of the parish boundary is significant as it is not only DW but is also one of only three designated ASNWs on the east side of the Hills for several miles. The second ASNW, Hornyold Wood (also DW), lies in the West to North sector, between Wells Road and Woodfarm Road.

3.10.45 There are other scattered DWs in this sector, more closely-associated with the edges of the settlement and on the Hills' slopes.

3.10.46 There are several areas of DW in the West to North sector. As well as the DW / ASNW mentioned above, there are some small belts and blocks above the Wyche Road, and several scattered throughout the golf course. The latter has developed into an interesting, diverse and scenically-attractive mosaic of woodland habitats, scrub, rough and amenity grassland, although it was originally open fields, orchards and a few mature trees - possibly woodland remnants - associated with Wood Farm (not to be confused with the other Wood Farm further north).

3.10.47 In the 19th century, orchards were widespread in the area, being highly characteristic of the middle and lower hillslopes and plains. Today, few remain - there is a scatter of PHI Traditional Orchards remaining in the study area, and only five within the parish. Two of these are at Warren Farm, one

[94] Seven species of bat are Priority Species, these are Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, Noctule *Nyctalus*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Brown Long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, Greater Horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum,* and Lesser Horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*.

within the TCS, one in gardens at the junction of Blackmore Park and Peachfield Roads, and one associated with a residential property on the east side of Wells Road, west of Hornyold Wood.

3.10.48 As noted above, old orchards are highly valuable landscape features, and active management of these habitats is crucial for their long-term survival.

3.10.49 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).

3.10.50 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 / paddock).

3.10.51 Almost all of the PHI Deciduous Woodlands are also included in the National Forest Inventory (NFI) (GB).

3.10.52 There are four Worcestershire Grassland Inventory sites within the parish:

- St Wulstan's LNR (E to S)
- St Wulstan's Village Green (S to W)
- Harmans Farm Orchard (S to W)
- Lower Wyche / Malvern Common (W to N).

3.10.53 There are currently many parts of the study area where vegetation has been identified as 'significant' (see following section). It is not just significant in terms of its contribution to landscape character and visual amenity, but also for the fact that it provides a good network of wildlife corridors, foraging areas and other habitats throughout the study area. Some of these have high potential for the presence of a wide variety of flora and fauna, including nationally-rare species.

3.10.54 Where relevant, significant vegetation and other landscape features / habitats with potentially high ecological value are noted in the individual LSCA Area schedules.

3.10.55 The data search by WBRC included a list of protected / notable species (as at 07/03/17) for Malvern Wells Parish. The list is attached in Appendix E. Of interest and importance are the nationally-rare and nationally-scarce species which are as follows:

Nationally-rare

Mealy pixie cup *Cladonia chlorophaea* (Cladonia (cup lichen) is a genus of moss-like lichens)

Fringed hoar-moss *Hedwigia ciliata* and *H. ciliata var. ciliata*

Nationally-scarce

Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris*

Narrow-leaved bitter-cress *Cardamine impatiens*

Stinking hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*

Small-leaved sweet-briar *Rosa agrestis*

Large-leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos*

3.10.56 There are also many locally-notable plant species on the list.

3.10.57 The data from WBRC included a list of ancient trees recorded within the parish. These trees are highly valuable in terms of their contribution to landscape character, visual amenity, heritage and biodiversity - as noted in the landscape history section, trees were identified which date from the late 1600s, and some of the woodlands could be earlier. Along with ancient woodlands, ancient / veteran trees are protected by national planning policy. NPPF para. 175 c) states that:

'*development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons* [footnote 58] *and a suitable compensation strategy exists*'.

3.10.58 However, the trees were all recorded between 2007 and 2008. It would be a worthwhile exercise to check whether the trees still exist and record them, although landowners' permission may be required to visit the areas in question.

3.10.59 According to the records, one of the trees - a pedunculate (English) oak - is in St Wulstan's LNR. There are three in Upper Welland: a pedunculate oak and a black poplar, both with 6m girths, and a large grey poplar. Six of the trees - all pedunculate oak - are on or close to the golf course, and there

is another recorded in Hornyold Wood. A sessile oak *Quercus petraea* was recorded near The Firs, but may be just outside the parish boundary.

3.10.60 In terms of the protected / notable species of fauna in the parish, the list includes:

Nationally-notable A Insects

Anisoxya fuscula (beetle)

UK Red List for Birds[95]

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*
Tree pipit *Anthus trivialis*
Lesser-spotted woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*
Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*
Common linnet *Linaria cannabina*
Spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*
Wood warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*
Marsh tit *Poecile palustris*
Turtle dove *Streptopelia turtur*
Song thrush *Turdus philomelos*

3.10.61 The list includes many UK BAP species of flora and fauna. Fauna include a wide range of butterflies and moths, including the nationally-scarce high brown fritillary butterfly (also a NERC s.41[96] specie, as are most of the others) - its preferred habitat is the mosaic of grass, herbs and managed bracken on the Hills' lower slopes and commons, but both habitats and numbers have been declining in recent years. In the mid- to late 2000s, the 'Malvern Heritage Project' (managed by MHAONBP and in partnership with several other stakeholders) included funding for scrub removal and bracken management and the construction of cattle grids to the south of British Camp to allow the re-introduction of grazing by animals: grazing is expected to re-create the ecological conditions required by the high brown and other fritillaries.

3.10.62 UK BAP species of mammals include many of the species of bat identified in the Langdale Wood ecological survey noted above. Others include:

Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*
Brown hare *Lepus europaeus*
Otter *Lutra*
Hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*
Polecat *Mustela putorius*

3.10.63 Other UK BAP species include:

Slow worm *Anguis fragilis*
Common adder *Vipera berus*
Common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*

3.10.64 Badgers *Meles meles* are also relatively common throughout the area.

3.10.65 In 2003, MHDC commissioned a study of Malvern's 'urban greenspaces'[97] (MUGS). Although some of the information is now out-of-date, it is still a useful source of reference for assessments such as this, as it provides a good overview of the network of green spaces and key wildlife corridors. 'Existing key wildlife corridors to be protected and enhanced' within the parish are shown on MUGS Figure 6. St Wulstan's LNR is identified as one of the urban greenspaces. Where key wildlife corridors are present in / adjacent to an LSCA Area, it is noted on the LSCA schedules.

[95] Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds was published in December 2015. Commonly referred to as the UK Red List for birds, this is the fourth review of the status of birds in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man, and updates the last assessment in 2009. Using standardised criteria, 244 species with breeding, passage or wintering populations in the UK were assessed by experts from a range of bird NGOs and assigned to the Red, Amber or Green lists of conservation concern.

[96] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4958719460769792

[97] *Malvern Urban Greenspace Study* (MUGS) (May 2013) Chris Blandford Associates

3.10.66 The various watercourses in the area, many of which are LWSs, offer diverse aquatic and terrestrial habitats which make an important contribution to both local and wider biodiversity value. They provide vital connections to the wider ecosystem, and their protection and appropriate management is essential.

3.10.67 The WFD introduced a holistic approach to the management of water quality, and established a system for the protection and improvement of all aspects of the water environment, including water quality and ecological quality. The default objective under the WFD was for 100% of water bodies to achieve 'Good' status, and the original Directive required all inland and coastal waters to reach at least 'Good' status by 2015 - at the time of writing it was not known whether this target had been met. (The WFD is now known as the Water Environment Improvement Fund Programme and Natural Flood Management Programme.)

3.10.68 Broadly-speaking, the LSCA studies concluded that there is a noticeable difference in levels of ecological interest / value between the landscapes in and around Upper Welland, which are locally-high, and those in the rest of the parish, which overall are generally moderate and occasionally low. This is perhaps because the more complex, sloping topography and hydrology did not lend themselves to enclosure's 'straight lines' approach, and thus woodlands, watercourses and meadows were left undisturbed.

3.10.69 Also, there are several designated sites in the local area: the Malvern Hills SSSI boundary runs adjacent to Wells Road in this part of the settlement. St Wulstan's LNR lies c. 180m to the north east, and the adjacent Village Green is a Worcestershire Grassland Inventory site (according to MWPC's website[98], '*The Village Green supports an outstanding area of flower-rich grassland... There is a good and increasing population of green-winged orchids, and common spotted orchids have also been found.*'). Small watercourses rising in the area are tributaries of Mere Brook (LWS). Wooded areas / gardens north of Assarts Road are PHI Deciduous Woodland and on the NFI, as is the unnamed ASNW beyond the parish boundary.

3.10.70 In addition, there is other significant mature vegetation in the local area, especially escaped hedgerow, riparian and garden / parkland trees. These features are especially important because they form a green link / provide ecological connectivity between key wildlife sites, for example between the Malvern Hills SSSI and St Wulstan's LNR / Mere Brook LWS.

3.10.71 Within the parish, the rural landscapes which appear to be of least ecological value are those associated with Brickbarns Farm in the East to South sector. There is widespread erosion and loss of landcover, elements and features, and overall, landscape health / condition is poor. Whilst this area reflects characteristic parliamentary enclosure field and road patterns, and old woodlands were probably cleared, several pre-enclosure features exist, including the farmstead itself, and possibly some of the trees.

3.10.72 Inevitably, erosion and loss of habitats such as woodlands, hedgerows, orchards, ponds and unimproved grasslands have resulted in the essential connectivity between them being broken in places. These are also highly valuable elements and features in the landscape; their erosion and loss lead to adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity. However, many of these features and habitats could be restored.

3.10.73 There are differences in levels of management from area to area which affect the potential for biodiversity. Intensive farming methods, horsiculture and other such activities can reduce opportunities for flora and fauna; conversely, unmanaged habitats, or ones which are managed for biodiversity, are likely to be highly valuable.

3.10.74 Residential development can have direct and indirect negative effects on the landscape: the effects of loss of habitat may be quantifiable, but indirect effects arising from increased human activity (noise, lighting, disturbance, pressure on sensitive habitats and species, pollution, domestic pets preying on birds and small mammals etc.) can also arise, especially on the fringes of settlements.

3.10.75 It is also important to note that gardens can provide very good opportunities for wildlife, and may offer more diverse habitats than improved arable fields, for example, so long as wider connectivity is maintained.

[98] http://www.malvernwells-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/parish-assets/st-wulstans-village-green

3.11 Significant Vegetation

3.11.1 The term 'significant vegetation' is used here to describe predominantly mature trees and hedgerows which form noticeable / distinctive features and patterns in the landscape. Google Earth is used for the analysis in the first instance, as this makes it much easier to identify the vegetation and draw it onto the baseline maps (see Figure 8, and also Figure 3 - Aerial Photograph); the information is then verified and augmented during the on-the-ground surveys.

3.11.2 Significant vegetation includes designated / other high value features such as:

- ASNWs
- PHI and BAP Priority Habitat sites
- NFI areas
- Trees covered by TPOs
- Ancient / veteran trees
- Traditional / old orchards.

3.11.3 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 character elements and features, and GI assets and functions.

3.11.4 Where relevant, significant vegetation is described in more detail in the LSCA Area schedules. In summary, within the study area, on the whole it makes a highly important and valuable contribution to landscape character, setting / context, function and local distinctiveness, It also often makes a highly important and valuable contribution to visual amenity and biodiversity; however in some areas, the vegetation is uncharacteristic, is a visual detractor, and has little ecological value. In places where the vegetation is in poor health and condition, the quality of the landscape deteriorates, especially in combination with other detractors.

3.11.5 The wide variety of species and types of planting arrangements throughout the Wells engenders a unique sense of place. Each of the different types reflects different aspects of the area's natural, cultural and social influences.

3.11.6 Much of the tree cover in the area is considered to be 'locally-characteristic', especially when it comprises fully mature native species, but it is always changing. Often the change is so gradual that it is hardly noticed, as explained further in the examples below.

3.11.7 Today, 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. In many places, the woodland is also colonising the upper slopes and breaching the ridgeline, reflecting changing management practices.

3.11.8 West of Jubilee Drive and West Malvern Road, 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 ASNW. Several of the woodlands are included in the NFI, and are also an integral part of the local landscape's history.

3.11.9 The significant vegetation on the east side of the Hills 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 the rural areas comprises narrow belts along the meandering watercourses and ditches which drain eastwards off the Hills and discharge into the River Severn.

3.11.10 The lack of ancient woodland in the area confirms that this is now a relatively 'modern' landscape which has been exploited extensively for agriculture. In between Guarlford and the Old Hills to the north there are several ASNWs, but in the broad swathe of land between Guarlford, 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 Wells Road and the TCS - of high local value and importance as it is the only ASNW left in the parish.

3.11.11 ASNWs have protection under NPPF Policy 175 c), as do ancient / veteran trees - see Section 3.10 above.

Hornyold Wood viewed from east

Hornyold Wood viewed from west

3.11.12 The data from WBRC included a list of ancient trees recorded within the parish. These trees are highly valuable in terms of their contribution to landscape character, visual amenity, heritage and biodiversity. However, as mentioned above, the trees were recorded between 2007 and 2008, so it would be a worthwhile exercise to check whether they still exist and record them, if feasible.

3.11.13 According to the records, one of the trees - a pedunculate (English) oak - is in St Wulstan's LNR. There are three in Upper Welland: a pedunculate oak and a rare black poplar (according to the Forestry Authority, the latter is 'the most endangered native timber tree in Britain'), both with 6m girths, and a large grey poplar. Six of the trees - all pedunculate oak - are on or close to the golf

course, and there is another recorded in Hornyold Wood. A sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) was recorded near The Firs, and may be just outside the parish boundary.

3.11.14 The LSCA surveys suggest that there are other valuable ancient / veteran / notable trees within the parish (including within the settlement itself). Some would have lined old trackways, others may be woodland / Chase remnants, and a few were probably once in historic parkland (see historic landscape above). These trees should also be recorded, and could be protected by TPOs if considered appropriate by the LPA.

Old oak trees in and around Malvern Wells

3.11.15 The large and geometric shape of Langdale Wood (and associated woodlands) reflects the patterns of the planned landscapes in this area, being predominantly late 19th and early 20th century plantations, whilst the woodlands at St Wulstan's Nature Reserve, and the tree belts and coppices on the golf course and at Woodfarm Camp are organically-shaped, and reflect more recent human intervention. In fact, the lower eastern slopes of the Hills, between the Wells Road and the dismantled railway / Upper Welland, are more well-wooded now than they were in the 19th century - the 1887 map shows that the only tree cover of note there was Hornyold Wood (then called 'Admiral's Covert' - for some reason the name was changed at the turn of the 20th century) and a few orchards.

3.11.16 The vegetation along the line of the dismantled railway is also a significant but artificially-shaped feature in the landscape. Most of the trees are relatively recent, having been allowed to grow on after the railway was dismantled, but more mature specimens suggest that they were retained when the railway was constructed, perhaps along a field boundary / watercourse / trackway.

Mature trees along line of dismantled railway west and south / south east of TCS

3.11.17 Maturing woodland is currently establishing along the main line railway corridor east of the tunnel through the Hills, although this is likely to be subject to rotational clearance.

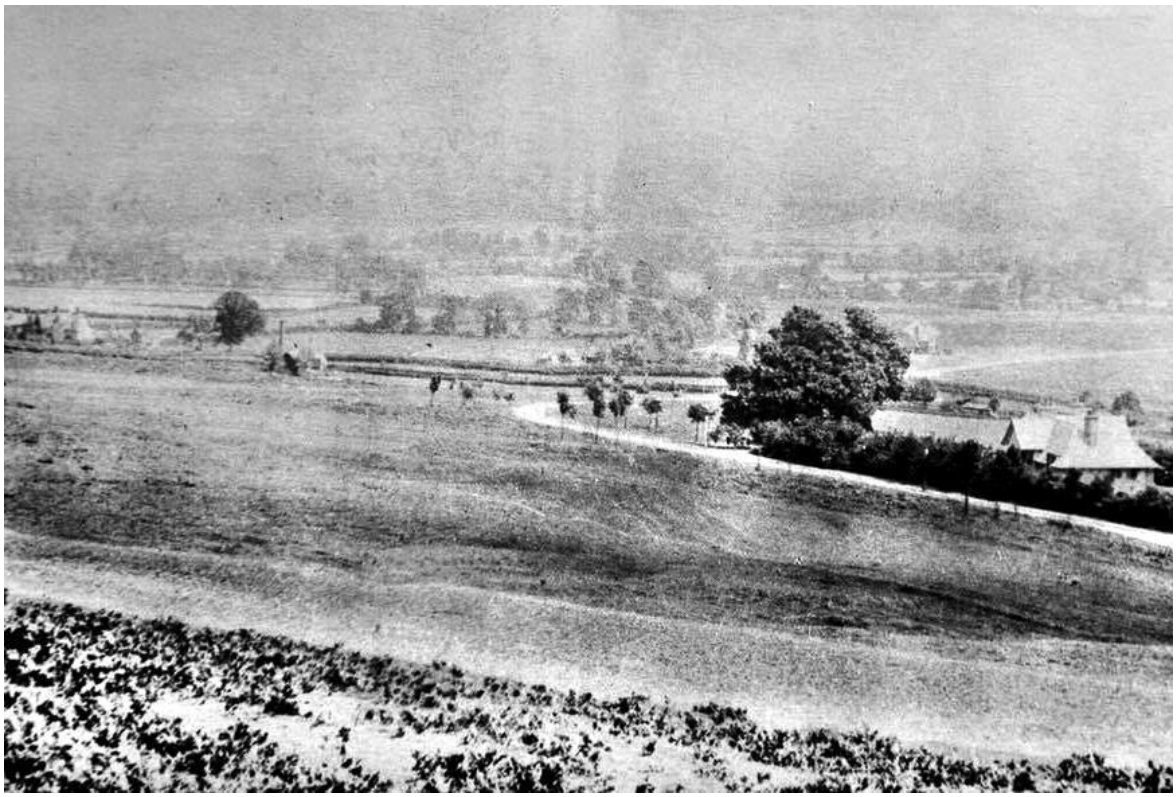
Maturing woodland along main line railway

3.11.18 There is significant vegetation in the form of mature hedges and scattered, escaped mature trees (predominantly oak and ash) which form distinctive and characteristic geometric patterns in the landscape which are also characteristic of the Enclosed Commons landscape type. Through map regression exercises it is also possible to identify where traditional field patterns have been eroded and / or lost, hedges grubbed out to create enlarged fields, and hedgerow oak left standing in sometimes splendid isolation.

3.11.19 Other significant trees are found in and around the settlement and along the main roads into Great Malvern town centre, especially the locally-distinctive avenues of mature lime which are unique to Malvern and make a highly important contribution to its character: many of the avenues were planted in Victorian times, although on the whole, dead and dying trees are replaced with new ones when necessary, and where appropriate, new avenues are created.

3.11.20 The avenue of alternative lime and horse chestnut trees along Peachfield Road on the south side of Malvern Common is of exceptionally high local value and interest, and is certainly unique to the Malvern area. The trees were planted in groups of four in c. 1880, and were apparently designed to act as sheltered parking areas for horse-drawn carriages.

Trees along Peachfield Road c. 1880



Trees along Peachfield Road 2019

3.11.21 As noted in the historic landscape section above, the LSCA identified several significant mature trees which could well be 'minor' historic parkland remnants (and / or possibly parts of the wooded chase retained by design). Examples include the trees associated with Brickbarns Farm described in the landscape history section above, and the clumps of trees (including conifers) in fields east of the

central part of the settlement; the positions of the latter appear to align with trees shown on late 19th century maps which may have been planted as 'eye-catchers' / to frame views from Sherborne.

Old oak field boundary trees at Brickbarns Farm

Remnant historic parkland trees near Sherborne

3.11.22 Also, in one of the fields used for sports by Wells House School (Area 6), there are some fine, free-standing ornamental trees: they may be the same as those shown on late 19th century maps, retained when the field was terraced in the mid-20th century. The 1812 map also shows built form in the corner

of the field, or possibly a swimming bath, which is shown in approximately the same location on late 19th century maps, along with a pavilion - the latter is still visible. The pool - fed by the streams rising west of and flowing around Hornyold Wood - was used by the school's pupils until the 1970s, and may still be there. These and other features in the locality suggest that this area was once a 'minor' historic parkland, perhaps associated with Coton Cottage Farm, or a property in the central part of the Wells.

Mature trees around old swimming bath

3.11.23 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.

3.11.24 A striking characteristic of the Wells' tree cover is the way in which it articulates the Hills' topography, especially where erosion has created a series of ridges and valleys along the hillslopes This phenomenon is clearly visible when travelling north or south along Wells Road, between Great Malvern and Upper Welland, as mature trees on the ridges (often conifers) are thrown into prominence, and further define the separation between the areas which are in the valleys. Even in the winter months, the dense tree cover often screens views of the Hills altogether.

Wooded ridges screen onward views along hillslopes

3.11.25 The trees in and around the settlement also articulate the transition from ornamental species in gardens and churchyards to native species on the slopes above. In most places the transition is relatively gradual, as ornamental and native trees grow side by side and from a distance, the differences between them may not be obvious. The exception to this is when purple-leaved species of trees such as beech form 'dark patches' in an otherwise natural, green-leaved palette, as shown in the photos below.

Purple-leaved trees contrasting with mosaic of greens

3.11.26 Several trees within the parish are covered by TPOs. Where relevant they are noted in the LSCA Area schedules. In summary, most TPOs are located in the South to West sector, either within or adjacent to the settlement. They comprise tree blocks west of the A449 and both sides of Upper Welland Road, and a large, blanket TPO on the eastern edge of the settlement, south of Hanley Road (Area 10). There are a few TPOs scattered throughout the settlement in the North to West sector, protecting noteworthy trees that make important contributions to villagescape character (see for example LSCA Area 2). Many are ornamental species. There are no TPOs in the North to East or East to South sectors.

3.11.27 Where there are hedges, intactness, quality and condition vary. Whilst there is erosion, loss and ornamentalisation in some parts of the parish, in others the hedges are very well-managed and in good health.

3.11.28 Many of the hedges date from enclosure and are characteristically hawthorn, although other species have colonised over time, including ornamentals. Some hedges display a wide diversity of native species which are indicators of antiquity, and thus are likely to pre-date enclosure (for example the medieval fields north of Langdale Wood). They may also therefore be classified as 'Important' under the Hedgerow Regulations[99].

3.11.29 The predominant and most characteristic native hedgerow species found in the area are:

Blackthorn
Dogwood
Elder
Field maple
Guelder rose
Hawthorn
Hazel
Holly
Hornbeam
Rose (dog / field)

[99] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-hedgerows-regulation-and-management

Wild plum.

3.11.30 Often, native and locally-occurring trees have 'escaped' from the hedgerows, either through lack of management or by design (e.g. to provide shelter / shade for stock and workers). They are now fine specimens, and are highly valuable and defining landscape features. Escaped native trees are a key characteristic of the area's Enclosed Commons LCT: '*There is a scatter of mature and veteran trees, mainly hedgerow oaks, in places within this landscape. These trees are vulnerable to a lack of management, disease or loss due to the impact of modern development and changes to the management of field boundaries. They are important ecological and heritage features and their conservation should be a priority*'.

Mature, escaped hedgerow oak (Brickbarns Farm)

3.11.31 Occasionally, the hedgerow itself has become a line or even wide belt of mature trees, although hedgerow restoration is usually feasible if required, especially to improve health and condition.

3.11.32 In the local hedgerows, oak is the predominant species, although ash is widespread (perhaps not for long, due to the presence of ash dieback disease). Nearer the settlement there are also escaped mature ornamental trees including uncharacteristic Lombardy poplar, beech and sycamore.

3.11.33 Sycamore is 'problematic': it is not a native tree, having been introduced to Britain in the Middle Ages from Europe, but it is now a naturalised species. It is considered to have lower ecological value than most UK natives, but it spreads and colonises very rapidly, to the point where it can successfully invade and dominate ancient woodlands. However, due to climate change and tree pests and diseases in native species, it may be necessary to tolerate sycamore up to a point. In Malvern Wells, sycamore is growing freely on the wooded hillslopes; MHT was consulted about their opinion on sycamore and its management and the response was that for now it would be allowed to remain, although the situation would be monitored.

3.11.34 Most importantly, as mentioned above, there is no certainty that any of the existing vegetation will remain in place in the short-term, let along the long-term future. Old age, deliberate (authorised / unauthorised) removal, pests, diseases, pollution and accidents can result in its decline and loss - the native trees and hedges in particular are highly vulnerable to change. There are currently concerns about the potentially devastating effects of 'acute oak decline' and oak processionary moth, ash dieback, horse chestnut canker, the Asian longhorn beetle and Phytophthora amongst others.

3.11.35 A striking example of how changes to the presence / absence of trees can affect character and views is the loss of British native elm trees to Dutch elm disease, which began its devastating spread in the 1970s. In Worcestershire, elm was widely planted throughout the medieval period and through to the 20th century, mainly in hedgerows but allowed to escape. The tree's distinctive scalloped outline was a highly important local landscape characteristic, but few remember that now. (Interestingly, there is a fine mature elm tree growing outside the Bluebell pub in Barnard's green, but it is an ornamental variety.)

3.11.36 Old photographs and postcards illustrate how the character of the Hills and settlement in particular has changed in the last couple of centuries, depending on the presence / absence of tree cover.

3.11.37 The example below shows that during the height of the 'water cure' in the mid-19th century, the upper slopes and ridges of the Hills were unwooded[100]. Lower down, Holywell and Wells House are shown set in a context of mature trees on the slopes to the rear, but both would have enjoyed open, panoramic views over the Severn Plain. Many of the trees shown within and around the settlement are probably ornamental species introduced by Victorian plant collectors, and some are almost certainly still growing.

Malvern Wells, Great Malvern, Worcestershire. Line engraving. Wellcome Collection. CC BY

3.11.38 Another example of the effects of changes in tree cover is the highly distinctive mature larch plantation on the Hills' west-facing slopes below Jubilee Hill summit, planted when Jubilee Drive was constructed in 1887. The plantation currently screens what would otherwise be exceptional westward views over Colwall village and parish; however, as the trees have reached the end of their useful lives, they are now gradually being removed (see *MHC Land Management Plan 2016 - 2021*). Although it is understood that new woodland would be planted to replace the larch, given the angle of slope it will take many years for the trees to grow to the same height as the larch, which are almost 130 years old.

[100] Although debated, many people believe that the name 'Malvern' derives from the old Welsh word 'moel-bryn' which means 'bald hill'. Some take this to mean that trees did or do not naturally grow on the Hills' upper slopes and ridgelines, but that is evidently not the case. It is possible that the 'bald hill' could be Midsummer Hill and / or British Camp, where trees may have been cleared in ancient times for various reasons e.g. ceremonial.

3.11.39 In future, tree cover in the study area will inevitably wax and wane over time. What is essential is that trees and other vegetation continue to perform their various highly important landscape, visual, ecological and other beneficial functions. Both loss and gain in significant vegetation could fundamentally alter intervisibility and visual associations / relationships between places and features, and have far-reaching effects on character, views and visual amenity.

3.11.40 For example, currently there is very little intervisibility between the lower-lying parts of Malvern Wells parish and Great Malvern town centre mainly due to densely-scattered mature trees growing in The Firs and Malvern College areas in particular. However, without them (and where not screened by topography and built form), parts of the town, including Malvern Priory, would be highly visible from many places.

3.11.41 The photo below shows the extent of mature vegetation between Malvern Commons and the town centre - the tops of buildings along the A449 / Belle Vue Terrace (including the distinctive spire of Holly Mount church) are just visible above trees on the right hand side of the image.

Mature trees between Malvern Wells and Great Malvern town centre

3.11.42 These matters must be factored in to landscape / visual assessments, and the decision-making process.

3.12 Designated / Key Landscape Features: Public and Social Amenity

3.12.1 This section summarises the various factors which contribute to the public and social amenity of people living in and around Malvern Wells, and those who visit it. It describes the opportunities that exist for access along various paths, trails and routes, and for both formal and informal recreation, summarising the various key destinations, features, attractions and facilities.

3.12.2 These and the various publicly-accessible open spaces are highly valuable community assets, providing access to most if not all of the Green Infrastructure assets listed in the following section, and contributing to the health and wellbeing and quality of life of local people. (The Landscape Institute's publication *Public Health and Landscape Creating healthy places*[101] is a useful source of reference on the subject of the contribution that landscape makes to health and wellbeing.)

[101] https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2013/11/Public-Health-and-Landscape_FINAL_single-page.pdf

3.12.3 Many of the features and spaces are also used / visited / appreciated by people from outside the area, and they can make an important contribution to the local economy.

3.12.4 Recently, the MHAONBP commissioned a 'Health Economic Assessment' of Malvern's Hills and Commons (published April 2019)[102]. The study identified the physical and mental health benefits derived by people from the use / experience of these areas, and estimated the associated economic value of the benefits. It concluded that '*the annual physical and mental health value is in the magnitude of £4.2 million and £1.6 million, respectively. It is estimated that the health benefits add 87 Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALYs) to users each year. The total health economic value of the Malvern Hills and Commons is estimated to be in the region of £5.8 million annually*'.

3.12.5 However, it must be borne in mind that the nature of some of the activities which take place can also give rise to both temporary and permanent adverse effects on landscape character and visual / social amenity.

3.12.6 The various published walking, cycling and driving route maps, and guides to various attractions in the area, have informed this section. MHAONBP's *Visitor Map and Guide*[103] identifies several features of interest in and around Malvern Wells.

3.12.7 This section has also been informed by anecdotal evidence gathered during the field surveys, and by the findings of the public consultation exercises carried out by MWPC during the course of the NDP process. The latter included questions about matters such as Local Green Spaces, recreation, and community facilities (see also landscape value in Section 6 below).

3.12.8 The key features and destinations are shown on Figure 9. Where relevant to local landscape character and visual amenity, further information about recreation and access in and around Malvern Wells is provided in Section 4, and in the LSCA Area schedules (for example if an Area has an important recreational function, and where public and social amenity could be affected as a result of certain changes such as new residential or other development).

Key Destinations and Local Facilities

3.12.9 The Malvern Hills are a key destination, and attract visitors from all over the world.

3.12.10 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.

3.12.11 As noted above, the beauty of the Hills, commons and associated areas within the AONB (or 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 MHAONB Management Plan 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*'.

3.12.12 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 / benefits arising from both formal and informal recreation.

3.12.13 There are extensive areas of Open Access / Registered Common Land throughout the Malvern areas (see below) which are managed by MHT, as well as other public / publicly-accessible green, open spaces, both semi-urban and semi-natural, large and small, all of which provide an excellent recreational resource (see below).

3.12.14 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)

[102] Hölzinger, O. 2019: *Malvern Hills & Commons Health Economic Assessment*. Malvern Hills AONB Partnership

[103] http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Final-MHDCMapGuide_001.pdf

- Several camping and caravanning sites
- Several hotels, B & Bs, pubs and restaurants.

3.12.15 Within Malvern Wells parish, the key destinations and facilities which are well-used by local people and visitors include (in no particular order):

- Malvern Water heritage and several springs and spouts (mostly S to W and W to N sectors - see Malvern Water History section above)
- 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)
- The 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 businesses / commercial facilities including petrol station / garage on Wells Road
- Recreational facilities / sports pitches e.g. Assarts playing field
- Schools
- The Wyche Institute
- War memorial
- The Methodist Chapel acting as village hall in Upper Welland
- Scout hut
- All Saints church.

Recreation and Access

3.12.16 As set out above, one of Malvern's key attributes is the large number of green open spaces which provide access to Green Infrastructure assets (see following section). Individually and combined, these spaces are of high value, and many are protected by designations and / or legislation.

3.12.17 Also as mentioned above, in 2003, MHDC commissioned a study of Malvern's 'urban greenspaces' (MUGS). Although some of the baseline information is now out-of-date, it is still a very useful source of information and reference for this part of the assessment, as it not only provides a good overview of the distribution of green spaces in the Malvern and Wells areas (public and private), it also identifies the key public 'recreational access linkages' between them, which were also to be 'protected and enhanced'.

3.12.18 'Existing key recreational access linkages to be protected and enhanced' within the parish are shown on MUGS Figure 6. They include the dismantled railway corridor, the footpath / bridleway through the golf course (leading to a recreational access link on the Hills), and parts of the footpath / bridleway network between Hanley Road and Upper Welland.

3.12.19 Where key recreational access linkages are present within / adjacent to an LSCA Area, it is noted on the LSCA schedules.

3.12.20 In fact, the SWDP now protects the majority of the urban greenspaces identified in the MUGS, albeit with some adjustments to the boundaries to take into account changes to the baseline situation since 2003: some of the spaces are slightly larger, some slightly smaller. The relevant policy is SWDP Policy 38, which is as follows (footnotes omitted):

A. Green Space, as identified on the Policies Map, includes a range of private and public open spaces and associated community facilities.

B. Development of Green Space will not be permitted unless the following exceptional circumstances are demonstrated:

i. The proposal is for a community / recreational use that does not compromise the essential quality and character of the Green Space; or

ii. An assessment of community and technical need (using recognised national methodology where appropriate) clearly demonstrates that the Green Space is surplus to requirements; or

iii. Alternative / replacement Green Space of at least equivalent value to the community has been secured in a suitable location.

3.12.21 In summary, within Malvern Wells parish, the policy-protected Green Spaces comprise (from north to south):

- Malvern Commons (east and west)
- a section of the wooded slopes between Holywell Road and Wells Road (LSCA Area 9)
- the main line railway corridor as far as the tunnel mouth
- Malvern Wells cemetery
- blocks and belts of trees north of Assarts Road and St. Wulstan's Drive, and
- St Wulstan's Nature Reserve.

3.12.22 'Open Access' is one of the Special Qualities of the AONB: '*Open access in many places over the hills and commons, providing opportunities for bracing walks with fine views*'. The location and extent of Open Access Land is shown on Figure 9. It is mainly on the Malvern Hills and commons / verges, but there is a narrow strip along Ox Hill, where the old Wood Street trackway / bridleway runs between Guarlford and Poolbrook. On Open Access Land, walking, horse-riding, running, watching wildlife and climbing are permitted, but activities such as camping are not allowed.

3.12.23 The study area is criss-crossed by a well-used network of footpaths, bridleways, routes and trails which connect to the wider area, and as mentioned above, several of these are ancient trackways and pilgrims' paths to and from the Malvern Hills and other sites of cultural / religious / economic significance.

3.12.24 Many of the key routes are still in use today, either as roads or public / private footpaths and tracks. The routes tended to be direct, aligned with widely visible landscape features such as hilltops for ease of wayfinding, with only minor detours where physical obstacles barred the way. (This gave rise to the concept of 'ley lines'; whilst some people are sceptical about the validity of the notion, it is interesting to understand the nature of real straight line markings in ancient landscapes, and what part they have played in what is sometimes called 'the hidden history of human consciousness'.)

3.12.25 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 of the trail where walkers can join footpaths which lead to the Malverns and the landscapes to the east.

3.12.26 The Worcestershire Way starts in Great Malvern town centre and heads north to Bewdley.

3.12.27 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 public rights of way (PRsoW), with the Herefordshire Trail.

3.12.28 The Malvern and Abberley Hills Geopark Way is another popular long-distance walking trail in the area[104]. 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 and up the western slopes of the Hills to British Camp (this section of the Geopark Way is also along the line of an Early Middle Age pilgrim trail between the city of Hereford and Malvern / the Hills); it then turns northwards along the Hills' ridgeline, part of which forms the parish's western boundary.

3.12.29 Another trail providing access to the parish's geology is the Earnslaw Quarry Easier Access Trail[105]: MHT have created a 400m route that runs from the car park to a spectacular flooded quarry, known locally as the 'hidden lake'.

[104] http://geopark.org.uk/pub/category/explore/the-geopark-way/

[105] www.malvernhills.org.uk/content/documents/easier_access_leaflet.pdf

3.12.30 Part of the route shown in MHAONBP's publication *A Literary Trail Around the Malverns* almost encircles the parish, running from Great Malvern southwards along Peachfield and Blackmore Park Roads to Welland, back up to Little Malvern, and northwards along the Hills ridgeline.

3.12.31 The Elgar Route[106] runs along the A449 through Malvern Wells, between Great Malvern and British Camp.

3.12.32 Springs and Spouts of the Northern Hills Walk[107]: a circular walk of around eight miles, and Springs and Spouts of the Middle Hills Walk[108]: a 4.5 mile circular walk which visits most of the publicly accessible springs and spouts in the Wells.

3.12.33 Discovery Walk 7: 'Back to Nature' walk in Malvern Wells: Beginning at St Wulstan's Nature Reserve, this is a four-mile route around Malvern Wells along tracks, footpaths and roads. Points of interest include Black Hill Quarry, and Abbey College.

3.12.34 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. Route 46 will eventually connect Bromsgrove to Neath when complete, although there is currently no link between Hereford and Malvern, or Malvern and Worcester. It is also possible to access NCN Route 45 (east of the River Severn) from Malvern via Upton-upon-Severn.

3.12.35 The section of the dismantled railway north of Hanley Road has been identified in the Local Travel Plan as a future cycleway, and in the NDP as an 'active travel corridor' (see recommendations in Section 8).

3.12.36 Where relevant, the various footpath and other access / recreational routes are described in more detail in Section 4 Local Landscape Character Baseline. Where footpaths, trails etc. are present within / near to an LSCA Area, it is noted in the LSCA schedules.

Local Green Spaces

3.12.37 As mentioned in Section 1, certain areas can be designated as 'Local Green Spaces' through the NDP process. The designation is '*a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities*'.

3.12.38 Before explaining more about LGSs it should be noted that they are included under the Public and Social Amenity section heading in this report, but land can be considered for designation even if there is no public access to it (e.g. green areas which are valued because of their wildlife, historic significance and / or 'beauty').

3.12.39 Designation does not in itself confer any rights of public access over what exists at present. Any additional access would be a matter for separate negotiation with land owners, whose legal rights must be respected.

3.12.40 LGSs enjoy similar policy protection to that of Green Belt land. Paragraph 100 of the NPPF states that '*Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts*.' However, it must be borne in mind that as with AONBs, neither Green Belt nor LGS designations can entirely preclude development: but it is another layer of protection.

3.12.41 Also, the Government makes it clear that LGSs cannot perform the same functions as Green Belts, i.e. they cannot be a '*blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements*'; nor can they undermine the aim of plan-making, which is to '*identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs*'.

3.12.42 NPPF para. 100 states that '*The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:*

(a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;

(b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and

(c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.'

[106] https://elgarroute.org.uk/

[107] www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/themed_guides.html

[108] www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/themed_guides.html

3.12.43 It is up to the community (and / or their appointed representatives) to explain and justify - through evidence-based studies and public consultation - which areas / features are '*demonstrably special*', and of '*particular local significance*', and also to define and explain what the '*local character*' of the area is.

3.12.44 Whilst local people often know more about their neighbourhood than anyone else, sometimes they need 'professional help' with translating 'the language of landscape', and with identifying, recording, analysing, justifying, and reaching a consensus about, what it is that they consider to be most important and valuable. In circumstances such as these, collaborative working almost always yields the best results.

3.12.45 In Malvern Wells' emerging NDP, four candidate LGSs were considered and proposed (their locations are shown on Figure 9):

- Assarts Lane playing field
- St Wulstan's Village Green
- Holywell Park (LSCA Area 9)
- Malvern Wells Cemetery.

3.12.46 Also, during public consultation, several other areas were suggested as LGS candidates. A few of these are also LSCA Areas; some are unlikely to meet the LGS criteria. They include:

- paddocks at Upper Welland (including LSCA Areas 15 and 16)
- former Abbey College playing fields, Hanley Road (LSCA Area 10)
- former railway line (dismantled railway)
- Hornyold Wood (within LSCA Area 2)
- the golf course and the TCS.

3.12.47 Where policy-protected green spaces, candidate LGSs and / or key public recreational access links are present in / adjacent to an LSCA Area, it is noted in the LSCA schedules.

3.13 Green Infrastructure

3.13.1 '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*[109].'

3.13.2 The Government's recently-revised (July 2019) version of the Natural Environment PPG para. 006 explains that GI 'assets' and 'functions' can help achieve the following planning goals:

- Building a strong, competitive economy
- Achieving well-designed places
- Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

3.13.3 GI 'assets' are physical / natural / historic / recreational features and elements (those of relevance to the LSCA are listed towards the end of the section); GI 'functions' include the various roles that the assets play.

3.13.4 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

[109] Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013 – 2018 (WCC)

- Cooling effects.

3.13.5 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. '*Proximity to greenspace is generally associated with increased levels of physical activity. This effect is particularly marked in the under 25's, who are more likely to be obese if they do not have access to greenspace. Regular participation in physical activities has been shown to improve physical and mental health. Increasing physical activity through access to high quality greenspace has the potential to save the NHS £2.1 billion a year… The green infrastructure approach therefore integrates consideration of economic, health and social benefits to ensure that delivery against both environmental and socio-economic objectives is central to the planning, management and delivery of these spaces*.' [Ibid]

3.13.6 The Landscape Institute's publication *Green Infrastructure An integrated approach to land use*[110] is also a very useful source of reference on the subject. 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.

3.13.7 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.

3.13.8 GI is factored in to judgements about landscape value, and should form an integral part of planning for the future (it is an important aspect of both national and local planning policy). It should be the subject of focussed studies if and when required, especially as part of planning applications. GLVIA3 explains that landscape assessments '*will often need to address the effects of proposed development on green infrastructure as well as the potential the development may offer to enhance it*'.

3.13.9 Examples of GI assets, many of which are present in both the local and wider study areas, include:

- Natural and semi-natural rural and urban green spaces – includes woodland and scrub, grassland, meadow, marsh / wetlands, open and running water, brownfield sites, bare rock / geological habitats (for example quarries).
- Parks and gardens – urban, country and historic 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), railways, road verges, old trackways.
- Sites of nature conservation value / importance (designated / undesignated); also LGeoSs.
- Green spaces (designated / undesignated) selected for historic significance, scenic beauty, recreation, wildlife, tranquillity etc.
- Archaeological, historic and cultural sites / features (designated / undesignated).
- 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.

3.13.10 Where relevant, specific GI assets and functions are noted in the individual LSCA Area schedules.

[110] https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2016/03/Green-Infrastructure_an-integrated-approach-to-land-use.pdf

3.14 Aesthetic and Perceptual Landscape Qualities

3.14.1 The aesthetic and perceptual qualities of a landscape's character (see *Figure 1 - What is Landscape?* in Section 2) play an integral part in understanding its value and susceptibility to change.

3.14.2 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 say they 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'.

3.14.3 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. However, whilst factors such as light, noise, smell and movement can be measured; qualities which are 'sensual' and 'emotional' cannot easily be quantified, and there is always a degree of subjectivity due to people's personal preferences, and how certain places 'make them feel'.

3.14.4 MHAONB's Management Plan sets out the AONB landscapes' Special Qualities and key characteristics, which include important aesthetic and perceptual qualities such as:

- *Dramatic scenery and spectacular views*
- *An unspoiled 'natural' environment*
- *A rich and distinctive historic environment*
- *Distinctive 'villagescapes'*
- *Thriving and active communities*
- *People coming to enjoy the hills, spas and the tranquillity of the rural landscapes*
- *A sense of remoteness and tranquillity, underpinned by dark night skies and limited noise and disturbance. People feel calm and spiritually refreshed*
- *A strong 'spirit of place', landscapes that have inspired and continue to inspire and which have a deep cultural narrative*
- *Opportunities for bracing walks with fine views.*

3.14.5 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 its scale. On the whole, the patterns, colours and textures are harmonious, but because of this, a single feature such as a glinting or white roof in the distance can stand out for miles.

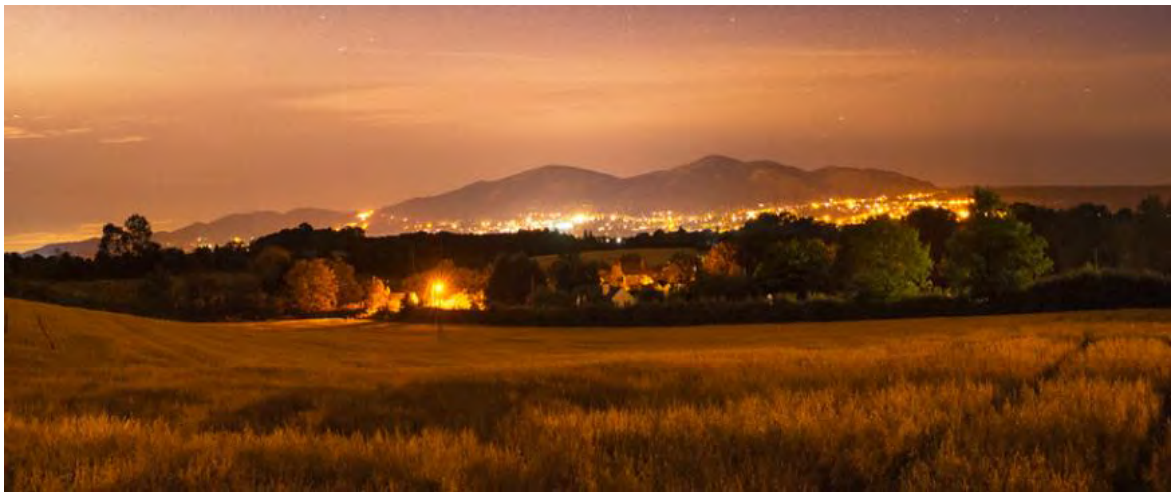
Panoramic view from Malvern Hills looking north east over Malvern Wells

3.14.6 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 weather (including direction of the wind), the position of the sun and the light conditions, ensure that every day, the views and / or experiences are different.

Looking east from the Malvern Hills (photo courtesy of Jan Sedlacek Digitlight Photography)

3.14.7 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.

The Malvern Hills at night, looking from the east (photo courtesy of Jan Sedlacek Digitlight Photography)



3.14.8 The commons are also strikingly beautiful - throughout the year but especially so in late summer, when the long grass turns gold and waves gently in the breeze, and the majestic trees are in full leaf.

Looking towards Malvern Wells from Castlemorton Common in late summer

3.14.9 Although the scenic beauty of the Hills and commons is widely recognised, there are other parts of the parish where the landscapes' aesthetic and perceptual qualities are high - occasionally very high - albeit for very different reasons.

3.14.10 Interestingly, the golf course is highly scenically-attractive. It is criss-crossed by footpaths and bridleways, so much of the course is highly visible from lower levels at close-quarters, as well as from the Hills.

Golf course (in midground) from Summer Hill

3.14.11 When visited during the surveys it was found to be very well-managed and cared-for, and the management principles are underlain by a good understanding of, and respect for, the local area's natural and cultural history. There is apparently a strategy for the long-term improvement / enhancement of tree cover, semi-natural grassland, watercourses / waterbodies and other elements / features throughout the golf course zone.

Golf course landscapes

3.14.12 Another area of high scenic quality is St Wulstan's LNR, within which one can experience fine views outwards towards the Hills which are not interrupted by any built form or spoiled by detractors due to the intervening dense, mature vegetation, and then walk into dark, wooded areas where all sense of time and place disappears.

St Wulstan's nature reserve

3.14.13 Apart from the above, taken as a whole, the landscapes south of the main line railway, and in between Wells Road and the dismantled railway, do not display very high levels of scenic quality, although within them there are a few 'special' areas with high aesthetic and perceptual qualities as noted below.

3.14.14 There are several reasons for the overall levels of scenic quality in this sector being lower than they might otherwise be. For example:

i. The Enclosed Commons LCT characterises an area within which most of the features which would now be of historic / ecological interest were cleared in the 18th / 19th centuries, to make way for more intensive agricultural practices (one of the exceptions to this is Hornyold Wood ASNW).

ii. Levels of landscape quality and condition vary from place to place, usually depending on levels of management. As noted above, health and condition are very poor in certain areas, for example on land associated with Brickbarns Farm - the widespread erosion and sprawl of clutter and paraphernalia in otherwise attractive open countryside is clearly visible from the Hills.

iii. Although there are places where the historic pattern and use of small pasture fields at the edge of the settlement is still a defining characteristic with high visual value, over time many fields have been enlarged, and the land adjacent to the edges - and the edges themselves - have become eroded / urbanised / ornamentalised.

iv. A wide variety of ornamental and native species is another defining characteristic of the Wells, and significant vegetation plays a highly important role in people's visual amenity - see below; however, some species are highly uncharacteristic and are visual detractors - for example, straight rows of leylandii / Lombardy poplar, and purple-leaved trees.

3.14.15 Although lack of management can adversely affect an area's aesthetic and perceptual qualities, it can also result in beneficial effects. As previously mentioned, some of the areas adjacent / near to the edge of the settlement were formerly used for recreational or wartime camp purposes but in recent years have been left untended. As a result, the land is 'reverting to type', becoming scrubby then wooded as trees self-seed (see photo below). These areas are often of high ecological interest as they are relatively undisturbed. Some of the areas are publicly-accessible, and / or visible from adjacent paths, and they make a highly important contribution to people's visual amenity, and quality of life.

3.14.16 Indeed, one of the most special of the Wells' qualities is the fact that it is possible to walk away from the settlement and quickly 'lose one's self' in what feel like deeply rural / semi-wild, unspoiled and unsettled landscapes, walking through mysterious ancient woodlands along old trackways lined with huge oak trees, and gaining glimpses of 'secret' wildflower meadows.

3.14.17 The settlement itself has mixed aesthetic and perceptual qualities (see Section 3.9 above), albeit predominantly positive. In most long- and middle-distance views from the east in particular it appears to have a great deal of integrity, especially along Wells Road and the closely-associated spring line. The cluster of buildings at Upper Wyche is also an eye-catching and distinctive feature in many views. Mature vegetation on the hillslopes makes a significant contribution to the character and context of the settlement and how it is perceived, even in winter, creating an harmonious balance between built form and landscape.

Malvern Wells from Malvern Common (east)

3.14.18 Victorian gas street lamps are a highly-distinctive 'aesthetic' feature of many of the Wells' streetscapes. Those along the A449 are a fine example (many have recently been restored, and there are plans to replace '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.

3.14.19 According to local lore, they are believed to have inspired elements of the 'Chronicles of Narnia' novels by C S Lewis. Legend states that, after drinking in a Malvern pub one winter evening, Lewis and a group of friends were walking home when they saw one of the gas lamps shining out through the snow. Lewis turned to his friends and said, '*That would make a very nice opening line to a book*'. The novel *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* later used that image as the characters enter the realm of Narnia.

Gas street lamp at Upper Wyche

3.14.20 In contrast, there are still several old orange (low pressure sodium discharge) street lamps in existence, for example along Upper Welland Road, which are significant detractors at night - not just along the road, but in the wider landscape. Their replacement with 'low light-spill' lamps (or new gas lamps) would be a great improvement.

3.15 Key Landscape Functions

3.15.1 The baseline assessment identified certain areas of land which perform highly important functions within the landscape, and / or make valuable contributions to landscape character and visual amenity. These are factored in to judgements about landscape and visual value.

3.15.2 The most relevant are in relation to an area's contribution to / function as, and / or forming an integral and important part of:

- National and / or local landscape character
- Rural open countryside (location and character / use)
- Historic (pastoral / ornamental) context and setting of settlement
- Historic landscape character (pastoral / ornamental - current landuse)
- Characteristic / historic landscape patterns

- Heritage asset / context and setting
- Aesthetic / perceptual qualities
- Biodiversity
- Significant vegetation
- Key approach / gateway (see below)
- Green gap (especially where preventing coalescence), and / or buffer / transition zone (desirable between densely and sparsely-settled area, and areas of tranquillity and activity, for example, and to protect wildlife and other 'sensitive' sites)
- Green corridor / link (these often perform a wide variety of functions including ecological and recreational)
- Social amenity
- Green Infrastructure asset / function
- Ecosystems / natural capital / catchment
- Views and visual amenity.

3.15.3 Where individual LSCA Areas perform, and / or contribute to any of these functions, it is noted in the Area schedules and factored in to judgements about value, sensitivity and capacity.

3.16 Approaches and Gateways

3.16.1 Malvern Wells has several 'approaches' and 'gateways'. Some were previously identified during studies carried out for Malvern Town's NDP, and where relevant, were included in this assessment.

3.16.2 Each approach and gateway is different, reflecting its locality's natural, historic / cultural and social influences. The gateways in particular are important because their character reflects key aspects of the Wells' character; the treatment and levels of quality of the gateway areas vary from place to place, and often there is scope for improvement.

3.16.3 Many of the approaches are along historic / prehistoric routes; however, because parts of the settlement have extended outwards over time, the gateways are not necessarily 'historic'; today, they lie at points where the rural landscape transitions into a suburban one, and where there is clearly a 'first experience' of built form which is closely associated with the settlement, often at the settlement boundary.

3.16.4 The extent of each gateway's 'area of influence' varies depending on a number of factors such as 'sense of arrival' / 'what is being announced'; views at / towards / from the gateway; whether there are characteristic / key features at or near / within sight of the gateway; and so on. (The circles shown on Figure 11 are indicative only.)

3.16.5 The locations of the gateways are shown on Figure 12, and they are as follows:

Gateway A (also Malvern Town NDP Key Gateway 3)

Gateway A is situated at the Peachfield and Blackmore Park Roads junction, at the point where the parish's eastern boundary along Blackmore Park Road turns west along Peachfield Road.

There is a distinct sense of arrival / departure at this point, especially due to the highly visible change in character that occurs here.

The dense, busy urban edge gives way to a wide tract of high quality open common land, with fine avenue trees / woodland sweeping up to the Hills' ridges. At the parish boundary, the land dips away; here the character is enclosed, and apart from the modern residential properties in the vicinity, very rural - this section of Blackmore Park Road is lined with native hedgerows and good, mature oak.

At the road junction there are exceptional views in an arc from west to north to east which are very good illustrations of this part of Malvern Wells' distinctive and characteristic context, setting and sense of place. Also, views to the north and east / south-east are long-distance panoramas, with Worcester visible, and the Clent and Lickey / Bredon Hills punctuating the skyline.

Gateway A

Gateway B

Gateway B is at the junction of Blackmore Park and Hanley Roads, at the south-eastern corner of the TCS.

This is a 'major' gateway mainly due to the fact that a) it is along a key and historic approach to Malvern Wells from the east, and b) the roads here are always busy, but more so during events at the TCS, when visitors from the UK and abroad congregate at the showground.

At this point there is a great sense of arrival at the foot of the Malvern Hills, which look majestic from here despite the surrounding / intervening clutter (of traffic lights, signs and fences at / around the crossroads - albeit the latter two much improved in recent years - the TCS itself, and the nearby equestrian establishment). Once the new orchard at the edge of the TCS matures, it will help to screen / filter views of the less visually-attractive elements in that part of the view, hopefully without screening the view of the Hills at the same time.

From the gateway, looking west there are fine views of the Wells settlement on the hillslopes / along the spring line from its northern to its southern end. Dense, mature vegetation on lower-lying land tends to screen less characteristic built form on the lower slopes, and gives rise to the impression of a well-wooded, unsettled rural landscape forming the settlement's context and setting.

Gateway B (image © Google)

Gateway C

Gateway C is at the parish's south-eastern tip, along Upper Welland Road in Upper Welland. This is an important gateway to the settlement - and the Hills beyond - along an historic approach from the south.

The parish boundary runs along Mere Brook, and just to the north of the point where the road crosses it, there is a sign identifying arrival in Upper Welland (asking drivers to 'Please Drive Carefully', and with a small 30mph road sign attached). There are also 30mph road markings, and a modern metal street lamp.

Although there are detractors (especially the pylons and overhead cables south of the parish boundary, but also modern residential development and associated urbanisation / domestication), there are fine views of the old village lying in its unique setting at the foot of the Hills.

Gateway C

Gateway D

Gateway D is at the parish's south-western end, along the A449 / Wells Road, east of Blackhill summit and at a point mid-way between the junctions of Wells Road, and Kings and Upper Welland Roads.

The boundary between Malvern Wells and Little Malvern parishes is marked by a sign announcing each one's name - Malvern Wells' sign has a 'Malvern Wells' logo on it.

The road corridor is tight and narrow at this point, with steep, well-wooded hillslopes to the west, and built form (including locally-distinctive Malvern stone-built properties) / mature roadside vegetation to the east. Without leaves on the latter and in gaps, however, fine views open up across the Severn Plain.

Gateway D (image © Google)

Gateway E

Gateway E is an 'inner' gateway, along Hanley Road at the central eastern edge of the settlement.

This is not an historic gateway, as this part of the settlement is relatively recent, and the village 'core' is further west; nonetheless, it is along an important historic approach to the Hills (see for example LSCA Area 7). Also, despite various detractors in views looking west from the gateway, including modern residential properties, this is a good example of the Wells' characteristic transitional nature: from agricultural lowland plain, through settled but well-wooded lower- and mid-slopes, up to the Hills' open ridgelines and summits.

There are also a few historic landscape features within sight of the gateway, for example veteran oak along the small watercourse, historic parkland remnants, and historic buildings along Holywell Road.

Gateway E

Gateway F

Gateway F is at the Wyche Cutting, on the parish's western boundary and the Herefordshire / Worcestershire border.

The Wyche Cutting is an obvious gateway, and is a dramatic and iconic feature. In the middle of the Cutting, the almost-vertical, high rock-faces either side of the road frame the view when looking east or west, allowing tantalising glimpses of the superb panoramic views across the Severn Plain or Herefordshire lowlands which open up beyond.

The gateway 'tells its own story', but there are also several features / attributes of considerable historic, cultural and natural importance in the vicinity (see baseline sections).

Gateway F

Gateway G (also Malvern Town NDP Key Gateway 4)

Gateway G is along the A449 at the parish's northern end. Confusingly, when travelling north along Wells Road it may be assumed that the green 'Welcome to Malvern' sign and the 30mph signs / road markings mark the end of Malvern Wells parish and the start Malvern Town, but that is not the case. The boundary is in fact some 400m further north, almost due east of the Beacon, at the Wells Road / Wyche Road junction. (There is also a bespoke 'Great Malvern' sign along Wells Road c. 200m north of the parish / town boundaries, which was placed there during MHDC's 1990s 'Malvern Town Centre Regeneration Project'.)

However, firstly, the welcome sign and road markings already announce that this is a key 'gateway'; secondly, when travelling south from the welcome sign, the views are of exceptional quality (see KVP 36). Most are very good illustrations of the Wells' distinctive character and sense of place, with highly-important features visible including fine mature native woodland, avenue and other ornamental trees, well-managed commons and grassland, Malvern stone houses, walls, Malvern spring water features, gas street lamps and so on.

The views vary throughout the year - in full leaf the avenue of trees creates a tunnel-like effect - an extension of the very tight, narrow, and often dark road corridor to the north: where it opens up at the common there is a sense of visual relief. In the gaps between the avenue trees, and in winter, much longer-distance views are available towards / across the Wells' settlement and surrounding landscapes.

Gateway G

3.17 Key Constraints

3.17.1 Landscape assessments can identify some, but not all of the constraints which may have to be considered in determining the feasibility / viability of 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 (such as SSSIs and the AONB designation), although they do not necessarily preclude development *per se*[111].

3.17.2 During the 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 adversely affected or unacceptably changed - directly or indirectly - by new development in some way. Where they are relevant to individual LSCA Areas, they are described in more detail in the schedules.

3.17.3 The brief for this study also required physical constraints to be taken into account where they are likely to affect the approach to, and design of, new development and thus affect landscape character and visual amenity. The 2015 South Worcestershire SHLAA was a source of reference for this exercise, as known constraints to development are noted in the SHLAA schedules (including the AONB designation).

3.17.4 Where relevant to individual Areas the constraints noted in the schedules; in summary those which are considered include:

Land on steep or very steep slopes: Although it may not be uncharacteristic in a steeply-sloping area such as this, building on steep slopes usually requires extensive / intrusive engineering works which

[111] In the case of AONBs, recent revisions to the Natural Environment PPG have clarified the NPPF's intentions and requirements for how development within them (and other designated landscapes) should be approached. The PPG states that '*The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that the scale and extent of development in these areas should be limited, in view of the importance of conserving and enhancing their landscapes and scenic beauty. Its policies for protecting these areas may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs for development in full through the plan-making process, and they are unlikely to be suitable areas for accommodating unmet needs from adjoining (non-designated) areas. Effective joint working between planning authorities covering designated and adjoining areas, through the preparation and maintenance of statements of common ground, is particularly important in helping to identify how housing and other needs can best be accommodated. All development in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Beauty will need to be located and designed in a way that reflects their status as landscapes of the highest quality. Where applications for major development come forward, paragraph 172 of the Framework sets out a number of particular considerations that should apply when deciding whether permission should be granted*'. (Paragraph: 041 Reference ID: 8-041-20190721 Revision date: 21 07 2019)

could give rise to significant adverse effects on landscape character, visual and social amenity in order to achieve modern-day standards. Even if building can be achieved, it may not be possible to get access to the land without cutting into the slope, removing roadside vegetation to achieve sightlines and so on.

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

Land in Flood Zones 2 and / or 3: As well as being a constraint to development, building in the flood plain may be uncharacteristic in terms of local landscape character; however, in Malvern Wells' case, the whole of the parish lies within Flood Zone 1, within which there is a very minimal risk of flooding (less than 0.1% chance of flooding in any year, sometimes known as 'having a 1:1000-year chance').

There are very few restrictions in terms of flood risk to development on Flood Zone 1 areas, although applications for proposed development on land over 1ha in area must be accompanied by a flood risk assessment, which should consider areas deemed to be at high risk of flooding from rainfall (known as Critical Drainage Areas).

The 2015 SHLAA did note that part of LSCA Area 7 was subject to flooding, presumably during high-intensity rainfall events (a small pond may be located in this area).

Land covered by specific planning policy, including Local Green Spaces: One of the most relevant policies to the LSCA is SWDP Policy 38 Green Spaces - for further information see Section 3.12.

In summary, the emerging NDP proposed four areas which it considered appropriate for designation as LGS (see Figure 9), and other candidates were suggested during public consultation. As explained above, LGSs enjoy similar policy protection to that of Green Belt land; however, as with AONBs, neither Green Belt nor LGS designations can entirely preclude development.

Land with covenants: Occasionally, certain parcels of land are the subject of covenants which specifically preclude development of the land. If known, this would be factored into the selection of areas which are to be the subject of the detailed LSCA Area studies. In this case, none were identified.

3.17.5 It should be noted that there are other matters beyond the scope of landscape and visual assessments 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.

3.17.6 For example, land-ownership and / or the protection and / or management of land may have to be considered where relevant to landscape and visual value / sensitivity to change in terms of how a landscape 'looks and / or functions'; however, land-ownership / management *per se* is not of relevance to capacity, especially as the situation can change over time. From a neighbourhood planning perspective, any sites which are considered for future development would have to be feasible, viable and deliverable.

3.17.7 Having said that, in and around Malvern Wells, large areas of land are statutorily protected from development and other forms of change by Acts of Parliament.

3.17.8 As explained above, the Malvern Hills Act 1884 was passed following the concern of a number of local people at the loss of common land caused by major landowners fencing in large areas and gradual encroachment by smaller landowners. The Act also established MHC (now MHT), charging them with several duties which included preventing building on the land, enclosure and encroachment. This means that land under the jurisdiction of MHT is a major constraint to new development and / or access.

4 Local Landscape Character Baseline

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 Although an important factor in the baseline assessment, the national / regional / countywide landscape character areas and types described in the previous section cover broad geographical areas which share similar characteristics; thus, the level of detail provided is often not sufficient for the purpose of more granular assessments such as this. Clearly, within each area / type there are likely to be considerable local variations which must be understood and factored into the baseline studies.

4.1.2 The landscapes within a more 'localised' area were therefore subject to more detailed survey and analysis. In this case, the term 'local' refers to the parts of the landscapes in the study area which have greatest interinfluence with the landscapes in and around the settlement, which are the focus of the more detailed LSCA capacity studies. A landscape's 'area of influence' is partly determined by its 'visual envelope', i.e. the places from which the given area is visible, but it also takes into account the characteristics of a particular landscape area or type, the extent of which is not necessarily determined by visibility (more often by geology and / or culture).

4.1.3 Also, the previous section lists and describes the baseline characteristics, features and factors which occur throughout the parish and beyond: this section is based on analysis and synthesis of all of these. It describes the landscapes 'holistically', explaining how the individual features and factors identified 'come together' on-the-ground and combine to give rise to unique identity, distinctiveness and sense of place, which varies from area to area (the term 'zone' is often used to describe this, and has been below). This exercise is important, as the different landscapes form the context and setting of, and help to define the character of, the different parts of the settlement.

4.1.4 Here, a relatively brief summary of the information contained in both Section 3 and the LSCA Area schedules is provided; it should be cross-referenced with both, as the baseline information in them is not repeated unless necessary to highlight a particular point.

4.1.5 The studies concluded that there is a marked difference in character between the landscapes in and around Upper Welland - and those in the rest of the parish. This is due to a variety of factors, not least of which is topography.

4.1.6 The effects of Mere Brook's various tributaries on topography is evident throughout Upper Welland and beyond the parish's southern boundary, and the resultant localised topographical variations give rise to noticeable differences in character throughout this part of the settlement, which are reflected in differences in land use, landcover and built form.

4.1.7 Whilst the wider area's 'drier' slopes tend to have a relatively even fall, the 'wet' slopes have localised undulations - effectively small, rounded ridges and shallow valleys. The central and southern sections of Upper Welland Road are on a locally-pronounced ridgeline or 'snout' of land which falls south-eastwards to another Mere Brook tributary which runs along the parish boundary. This south-eastwards fall results in the southern parts of Upper Welland / 'Assarts' character area having a closer association with lower-lying Marlbank, and Welland village on the Severn Plain to the south east (c. 1.2km between the edges of the settlements), than with the rest of Upper Welland and other parts of the Wells settlement.

4.1.8 Another factor in the differences in character is that in the Upper Welland area, the landscapes have retained many characteristics, buildings, features and qualities from pre-enclosure times. This may be due in part to its proximity to / closer association with Castlemorton, where there was strong (and successful) resistance to enclosure and associated removal of old buildings, woods, tracks and other features, in contrast to the Welland and Malvern parishes. There is also a higher degree of interinfluence between this part of the parish and the Iron Age hillfort at British Camp.

4.1.9 These differences are reflected in the area's LCPs: north of Mere Brook the LCP is MW26.2; this is described as an '*ordered pattern of large fields of regular outline, straight roads and estate plantations. It is an open, formal landscape with a visual clarity primarily defined by the straightness of the field boundaries, patterns that have arisen as a result of late enclosure from former waste and woodland*'.

4.1.10 LCP MW25 lies south of Mere Brook; this is '*An area of rolling lowland topography with poorly draining soils derived from fluvio-glacial drift. The settlement pattern is one of isolated red brick farms, associated with a geometric pattern of fields and roads. It is an area of pastoral land use with tree*

cover represented by thinly scattered hedgerow and stream side trees, together with groups of trees associated with settlement'.

4.1.11 The LCP immediately south west of Upper Welland is MW23, which extends southwards to a point opposite Swinyard Hill; whilst this is broadly '*a surveyor enclosed pattern of fields and roads*', there are also '*two areas of ancient semi-natural woodland in reasonable condition, of considerable importance as located at base of hill on Keuper marl plain where woodland remnants scarce. Small remnant parkland. Veteran tree interest*'.

4.1.12 Where relevant, more detailed information about the various landscape features and factors is provided in the LSCA Area schedules.

4.1.13 The baseline information is also shown on the LSCA figures. In particular, the aerial photograph in Figure 3 is a useful reference for this exercise, although the 'local' area of influence often extends beyond the areas shown (noted below where relevant).

4.1.14 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). The central point is at the south-western corner of the TCS on the B4209 Hanley Road; the sectors radiate outwards following roads and physical features in and around the outskirts of the settlement.

4.1.15 Broadly, the descriptions below follow the same structure and headings as those of the wider baseline studies.

4.2 Local Landscape Character: North to East Sector

CONTEXTUAL LANDSCAPE & ASSOCIATIONS

4.2.1 None of the LSCA Areas lies within this sector.

4.2.2 It comprises land lying north of the B4209 Hanley / Upton Road, and east of the dismantled railway. It includes the TCS and farmland / residential properties to the north, most of Malvern Common (east) / Poolbrook Common, and the built-up areas of Barnard's Green and Pound Bank.

North to east sector (from Pinnacle Hill)

4.2.3 The B4209 Guarlford Road runs east - west through the sector. Known locally as 'the Guarlford Straight', this road forms the historic approach to Great Malvern from the east, and - as with many of Malvern's approaches - it is characterised by wide natural grass verges (common land) and avenues

of maturing native and ornamental trees (predominantly lime). The town's eastern gateway is between Guarlford and Hall Green.

4.2.4 The main line railway runs through Great Malvern - the station lies c. 1.5km beyond the parish's northern boundary.

4.2.5 In this sector the northern boundary runs along Peachfield Road, from the point where the road crosses the railway via a bridge, to its junction with the B4208 (Blackmore Park Road to the south, and Peachfield Road to the north). The road bisects Malvern Common (east), and the south-western part of the common lies within the parish.

4.2.6 The eastern boundary runs along Blackmore Park Road, which is also the eastern boundary of the AONB (and the TCS).

4.2.7 Although there are localised undulations (often small stream valleys / ridges) and a gentle fall eastwards, the land is relatively flat, being part of the Severn plain (the River Severn lies just under 4km east of Malvern town boundary); the majority of the area lies between 60m AOD at the TCS and c. 20m AOD east of Guarlford.

4.2.8 Pool Brook, which rises in the Hills as a number of small streams, is one of the main watercourses flowing eastwards across the plain and discharging into the River Severn. One of the streams crosses the golf course runs along the northern edge of Langdale Wood and merges with 'main' Pool Brook further east.

4.2.9 Within the study area, the whole of this sector lies within NCA 106 Severn and Avon Vales, and the key characteristics which are present are set out in Section 3. In this sector, those which are present / well-represented comprise:

- Diverse range of flat and gently-undulating landscapes influenced by the Severn River.
- Woodland sparsely-distributed but a well-wooded impression is provided by frequent hedgerow trees, parkland and surviving traditional orchards.
- Remnants of formerly extensive Chases and Royal Forests, centred around Malvern… still survive. Blackmore Park is a highly valuable example.
- Small pasture fields as well as regular pattern of parliamentary enclosure.
- Pasture and stock rearing predominate, also some arable.
- A strong historic time line is visible in the landscape (New Pool, and old trackways east of Blackmore Park Road, are good examples of this).
- Highly varied use of traditional buildings materials, with black-and-white timber frame intermixed with deep-red brick buildings (although as noted above, many of the original timber-framed buildings would have been demolished during enclosure).

4.2.10 In this sector, the LCT is almost entirely Enclosed Commons, apart from a small area of Unenclosed Commons south of the eastern end of Peachfield Road. However, as noted in Section 3, east of Blackmore Park Road the LCT is 'historic parkland', and not Enclosed Commons (or Principal Timbered Farmlands).

4.2.11 The key characteristics of Enclosed Commons which are present in the study area are set out in Section 3. In this sector, those which are present / well-represented comprise:

- Planned landscape characterised by an ordered pattern of medium to large geometric fields, straight roads and scattered red brick farmsteads.
- Fields are typically defined by straight thorn hedges.
- Further structure is provided by scattered hedgerow trees, localised plantation woodlands and linear tree cover along watercourses.
- Pattern of settlement includes isolated, red brick farmsteads and clusters of wayside dwellings.

4.2.12 The Principal Timbered Farmlands LCT lies beyond Langdale Wood to the north east, and a small area of Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use lies just east of Hanley Swan.

4.2.13 Malvern Common (east) is a significant green and natural open space (Open Access Land) at the southern edge of Malvern town, and forms the parish's immediate landscape context and setting to the north. It lies within the AONB, the boundary of which is broadly contiguous with Malvern town's settlement boundary along Longridge Road. Both of these boundaries are contiguous with the parish boundary along a short section of Peachfield Road.

4.2.14 North of the common there is residential development and beyond, a relatively large area of land comprising a mixture of open spaces / playing fields, the Chase School, Malvern Hills Science Park, Malvern Technology Centre (QinetiQ), and spaces / buildings historically associated with the Royal Radar Establishment and now allocated for residential / commercial redevelopment in the SWDP[112].

South-eastern outskirts of Malvern

4.2.15 Beyond the town and the parish boundary, to the east the wider landscapes are characteristically rural. Land use is predominantly agricultural, with several farmsteads scattered throughout.

4.2.16 However, despite being quite sparsely-settled, it is a 'busy' landscape, accommodating the small village of Guarlford which lies c. 1.5km from the town boundary; the northern side of the larger village of Hanley Swan; a sewage works and new residential development under construction east of Poolbrook; several camping / caravanning sites; the large-scale and highly visible commercial / light-industrial development / ESP building and the remains of the WWII American army hospital at Blackmore Park; and geometric blocks of plantation woodland including Langdale Wood. The TCS is part of this area.

4.2.17 Furthermore, despite many objections, in June 2018, planning permission was granted for the erection of forty 'holiday lodges' in Langdale Wood. This will further alter the baseline situation and add to the area's 'busyness'.

4.2.18 Within the parish, the landscapes in between Blackmore Park Road and the dismantled railway, there are several distinct character areas / zones of varying scales.

4.2.19 The TCS itself is a 'zone' occupying just under half of the area, although during events the grassed fields to the north (and in other sectors) are used for parking. As noted previously, it is a significant and highly visible (and often audible) feature in both the local and wider landscapes.

4.2.20 The majority of the rest of the area is a rural and 'traditional' character zone with historic parkland 'roots', comprising pasture fields bounded by predominantly intact native hedgerows with some good, mature escaped trees (many oak, some veteran). The watercourse crossing the area is also well-wooded. North of the TCS, south of Warren Farm (the only built form in this zone), a traditional

[112] See planning application refs. 18/01087/OUT and 18/01088/FUL (both approved June 2019)

orchard is being restored, and new woodland planted. Despite localised erosion associated with the TCS parking areas, the landscapes appear to be well-managed and in good condition.

4.2.21 The character of the landscape zone north of the fields and south of Malvern Common is predominantly traditional / rural / agricultural, comprising several small fields (mainly pasture), paddocks and orchards. However, there is a degree of 'domestication', due to the presence of, and the smaller fields' association with, a number of predominantly 20th / 21st century residential properties which form a highly visible feature on the localised ridgeline along which Peachfield Road runs.

4.2.22 The central feature here is medieval - now enlarged - New Pool, which today is associated with one of the houses to the north. To the west, agricultural fields extend northwards as far as the common, with the well-wooded dismantled railway line forming a strong boundary and key linear feature in the landscape. There is a residential property and small farm complex on the field's eastern side.

4.2.23 To the east of New Pool, the agricultural fields run to garden boundaries of residential properties at the junction of Peachfield Road and Blackmore Park Road. To the north there are four small fields, all similar in shape and size, which slope down to the lake. These comprise i) house, gardens and orchards associated with New Pool; ii) two fields currently grassed / planted with vines and trees; and iii) one field currently grazed pasture.

HERITAGE

4.2.24 There are no SMs within the parish in this sector, presumably due to the late 18th / early 19th century enclosure clearance described in the landscape history section above; however, there is a high degree of interinfluence and intervisibility between the sector and the Shire Ditch, which runs along the Hills' ridgeline c. 1.2km to the west of the dismantled railway. There is a lesser degree of interinfluence / intervisibility between the sector and British Camp, which lies c. 3.5km south west of the TCS.

4.2.25 There are no listed buildings within the parish in this sector, the nearest being three Grade II listed buildings along Poolbrook Road north east of Malvern Common (east), and a Grade II listed, locally-distinctive Victorian fluted column pillar box at the junction of St Andrew's Road and Peachfield Road, adjacent to the parish's northern boundary.

4.2.26 Figure 5A shows the historic character categorisations of the local landscapes, derived from WCC's Worcestershire Historic Landscape Characterisation (see above). In this sector the landscapes display a mixture of characteristics from the 'Medieval 1066 - 1539' (Malvern Common) through to 'Post-1945' (TCS and land west of New Pool). New Pool and the area between Langdale Wood and Blackmore Park are '1540 - 1799', but are probably much earlier. Although Langdale Wood is classified as '1914 - 1945' on the HLC maps, the majority of the plantation was certainly established by 1904.

4.2.27 An historic trackway (Wood Street) runs through this sector along Ox Hill, an unusual and distinctive localised upstanding ridgeline. The trackway is almost certainly pre-12th century, along the route of an Iron Age salt way which crossed the Hills at the Wyche Cutting.

4.2.28 Ridge and furrow is present in three fields between the TCS and New Pool.

4.2.29 Blackmore Park is noted on the HER as a 'Park and Garden' (the ornamental parkland was established in the 18th century - it was originally a medieval deer park and part of Malvern Chase, and many features still exist).

BIODIVERSITY / SIGNIFICANT VEGETATION

4.2.30 Malvern Common (east) is a SSSI; it also forms part of the Malvern and Lower Wyche Commons LWS (two small areas east of the railway lie in the West to North sector).

4.2.31 Langdale Wood is also a LWS.

4.2.32 There are several designated SWDP Policy 38 Green Spaces in this sector, which are of both ecological and amenity value: apart from part of Malvern Common (east) south of Peachfield Road, all lie outside the parish.

4.2.33 The significant vegetation which defines the character of the landscapes of the parish in this sector mainly comprises the trees along the dismantled railway, trees along the watercourse which runs north-eastwards north of the TCS, and Langdale Wood and associated woodlands east of Blackmore

Park Road, which, although not within the parish, form a strong, defining feature along its eastern boundary. Some of the trees in this sector are ancient / veterans.

4.2.34 Other significant vegetation includes the small blocks of woodland and orchard in and around the TCS, and on the west side of New Pool which is now associated with residential properties south of Peachfield Road. There are also a few intact hedgerows with good, mature escaped oak and other trees which define the enclosed field pattern, including those along Blackmore Park Road.

4.2.35 There are no TPOs within the parish in this sector, the closest being the avenue of trees along the long, straight access road leading to Blackmore Park, off Blackmore Park Road. When viewed from the Hills to the west, this forms a highly distinctive linear feature in the landscape, although unfortunately it also leads the eye directly towards the ESP building.

RECREATION & ACCESS

4.2.36 Although there are no public footpaths across Malvern Common (east), it is Open Access Land, and is an important link between town and countryside via PRsoW.

4.2.37 The 2003 MUGS identified several 'Existing key recreational access linkages to be protected and enhanced' within this sector; all lie beyond the parish boundary.

4.2.38 The closest to the parish are the roads / bridleways on the north and east sides of Malvern Common (east), leading to the south east along the public footpath running between Langdale / Blackmore Woods and the Blackmore Park industrial estate. The dismantled railway line is also a key recreational access linkage (see West to North sector).

4.2.39 There are no long-distance footpaths within the study area in this sector, but several public footpaths and a few bridleways criss-cross the landscapes, interconnecting, and linking the main settlements to the outlying villages.

4.2.40 As well as the common itself there are extensive linear tracts of Open Access Land throughout the sector, mostly comprising the characteristic wide grassland verges which line many of the approach roads to Malvern; however there is also Open Access Land along the eastern half of the ancient Wood Street trackway along Ox Hill.

4.2.41 Within the parish in this sector, a public footpath crosses east - west along the northern side of the TCS. Between the TCS and New Pool, two bridleways cross east - west, although there are no onward bridlepaths east of Blackmore Park Road. It is likely that the bridlepaths follow ancient trackways that led to the Hills from the east, and that connections were severed as a result of enclosure.

4.2.42 Part of the route shown in MHAONBP's publication *A Literary Trail Around the Malverns* runs from Great Malvern southwards along Peachfield and Blackmore Park Roads to Welland.

4.2.43 Within the parish, the key visitor attraction in this sector is the TCS.

4.3 Local Landscape Character: East to South Sector

CONTEXTUAL LANDSCAPE & ASSOCIATIONS

4.3.1 LSCA Areas 13 and 17 lie within this sector.

4.3.2 It comprises land lying south of the B4209 Hanley / Upton Road, and east of Brickbarns Farm and the south-eastern edge of Malvern Wells settlement. The majority of Hanley Swan village lies in this sector, and Welland village, which lies c. 1km south east of the Wells' parish boundary.

East to south sector (1 - looking south east from Perseverance Hill)

East to south sector (2 - landscapes east of settlement, from Pinnacle Hill)

4.3.3 The A4104 runs through the sector south of the parish, linking Upton-upon-Severn and Little Malvern via Welland, and the B4208 runs between Hanley Swan and Welland.

4.3.4 The parish's eastern boundary runs in a south-easterly direction along Blackmore Park Road in this sector, south of the crossroads with Hanley Road. The crossroads are signalled with traffic lights, and are a local 'focal point', being at the south-eastern corner of the TCS, views over which open up

at this point. In views travelling north, the dense screening effect of Langdale Wood focusses attention on the showground and its setting at the foot of the Malvern Hills.

4.3.5 The parish's southern boundary turns westwards from Blackmore Park Road where Mere Brook crosses underneath it, and continues along most of its meandering, well-wooded length.

4.3.6 Near the western end of Mere Brook, and east of the settlement at Upper Welland, the parish boundary turns south east along a field boundary, and then south west along the line of a footpath which joins Upper Welland Road at the south-eastern tip of the old village.

4.3.7 The land in this sector is at the eastern toe of the Hills' east-facing slopes, where the Severn Plain begins. It has a relatively gentle fall to the south east, from c. 80m AOD at Brickbarns Farm to c. 48m AOD at the point where Mere Brook crosses under Blackmore Park Road. The brook's valley is shallow and quite broad.

4.3.8 Further south, Marlbank Brook flows eastwards, skirting the northern side of Welland village.

4.3.9 Within the study area, the whole of this sector lies within NCA 106 Severn and Avon Vales, and the key characteristics which are present are set out in Section 3. In this sector, those which are present / well-represented comprise:

- Diverse range of flat and gently-undulating landscapes influenced by the Severn River.
- Woodland sparsely-distributed but a well-wooded impression is provided by frequent hedgerow trees (also here, by trees along the dismantled railway, Mere Brook, and in St Wulstan's LNR).
- Small pasture fields as well as regular pattern of parliamentary enclosure.
- Pasture and stock rearing predominate, also some arable.
- A strong historic time line is visible in the landscape (albeit mostly more recent / post-enclosure history, for example some of the farmsteads, the dismantled railway and St Wulstan's. There are, however, several old trackways).

4.3.10 In this sector, the LCT of the parish is Enclosed Commons, which extends eastwards as far as Hanley Swan and Hook Common, with Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use beyond to the east and south east.

4.3.11 The key characteristics of Enclosed Commons which are present in the study area are set out in Section 3. In this sector, those which are present / well-represented comprise:

- Planned landscape characterised by an ordered pattern of medium to large geometric fields, straight roads and scattered red brick farmsteads.
- Fields are typically defined by straight thorn hedges.
- Further structure is provided by scattered hedgerow trees, localised plantation woodlands and linear tree cover along watercourses.
- Pattern of settlement includes isolated, red brick farmsteads and clusters of wayside dwellings.

4.3.12 Beyond the parish boundary, to the east and south, the wider landscapes are characteristically rural. Land use is predominantly agricultural, with several farmsteads scattered throughout, sometimes sparsely.

4.3.13 East of the parish there are also some commercial / light industrial land uses at the western end of the triangle formed by Blackmore Park Road and the B4209, including a fairly large equestrian centre. The quality and condition of these landscapes is lower than in other parts of the sectors, and the built form is highly visible from several viewpoints, both adjacent and the Hills, especially due to lack of consideration given to choice of colours and materials (see photo of white-roofed buildings in Section 3.9 above). The whole area would benefit from better management and restoration of eroded / lost landscape elements and features.

4.3.14 The dismantled railway line crosses this sector. The Malvern Wells Midland (Hanley Road) railway station used to lie opposite the south-west corner of the TCS on the south side of Hanley Road; from this point, the railway line runs in a south-easterly direction to Upton. For most of its length the railway corridor is well-wooded, and forms a distinctive feature in the landscape.

4.3.15 The landscapes in between the parish's southern boundary and Welland are gently-undulating, rising towards the Hills. There is scattered built form on the hillslopes in this area, comprising Wood Farm agricultural complex (possibly 18th century stone farmhouse and several large modern farm buildings), smaller Days Farm, the Marlbank Pub, a few residential properties accessed off a looped

track leading to Wood Farm, and residential properties / a modern farmstead along the east side of Upper Welland Road. There is also a campsite by the pub.

Landscapes between Upper Welland and Welland

4.3.16 Some of the properties off the looped track are of 20th century construction, others are shown on the 1885 maps, associated with orchards around the farm. The 1772 map shows a mill in this location, and a windmill just north of the old road, so it is likely that this small settlement cluster has existed for some time in one form or another.

4.3.17 There is little or no woodland cover in the area beyond the parish boundary in this sector apart from a long remnant belt at Danemoor Coppice. Small remnants of traditional orchards (three of them are PHI sites) exist on the slopes east of Marlbank, including one which comprises a few trees uncharacteristically marooned in a large field (a PHI site, but there is no orchard shown in this location on the 1886 map).

4.3.18 A line of pylons crosses the area, detracting from exceptional mainly unspoilt views towards the Hills and footslopes, with Little Malvern Priory featuring. The Marlbank Pub is at one of the key gateways to this part of the Hills when travelling from the east.

Looking north along A4104

4.3.19 The areas associated with built form are only in fair to moderate condition, with localised loss and erosion of features especially hedges, but the open rural landscapes are generally well-managed, with elements and features in good condition (but see below). They also perform several key landscape functions, which include acting as an integral and highly important part of the rural setting and context of the Malvern Hills along one of the main approaches from the east along the A4104. This makes them highly sensitive to change.

4.3.20 Within the parish, in this sector the landscapes are rural / agricultural and very sparsely-settled - the only buildings are associated with farmsteads: Summer Hill Farm in the centre of the sector, Brickbarns Farm on the north-western edge, and Woodend Farm at the southern end.

4.3.21 The area comprises two distinct character zones.

4.3.22 The first zone is a series of arable and pasture fields, crossed by the line of the dismantled railway. Lack of management is evident around Brickbarns Farm (which extends into the South to West sector), where the landscape elements are in poor health and condition, with a great deal of visible clutter and associated paraphernalia. There is fairly widespread erosion / loss of native hedgerows and trees along field boundaries, but in most places the field patterns are still evident due to changes in land use. Quality and condition are better along the dismantled railway corridor and sections of Shuttlefast Lane.

Brickbarns Farm (1)

Brickbarns Farm (2)

Brickbarns Farm (3)

4.3.23 The fields north of the dismantled railway are used as overflow parking for the TCS - with hard surfaced access tracks throughout which are visible from the Hills - and only one internal field boundary remains.

4.3.24 The second zone is St. Wulstan's Nature Reserve (LNR), which lies in the south-western part of this sector, its western boundary being the eastern edge of the settlement. For more information about its history and key / designated ecological features, see Section 3 and the schedule for LSCA Area 13. Within the local area the majority of the land is open, hedgebound fields, so the mosaic of mature woodland and grassland forms a contrasting and distinctive feature in the landscape.

Maturing woodland in St Wulstan's nature reserve

4.3.25 The land lying in between the southern side of the nature reserve and the parish's southern boundary comprises one large arable and three small pasture fields bounded by mature hedges and trees. The shapes of the fields are almost as they were in the 19th century, when the area was part of Assarts Common[113]. In WWII, an army camp was sited there.

4.3.26 The Woodend Farm complex is probably of 19th century origin. The farm buildings have recently been demolished / rebuilt / restored as a modern residential property, now lying in ornamental landscaped grounds.

HERITAGE

4.3.27 There are no SMs within the parish in this sector. However, there is a great deal of interinfluence, and often intervisibility, between the sector and the Shire Ditch, which runs along the Hills' ridgeline c. 1km to the west at its closest point, and between the sector and British Camp, which lies c. 2.3km to the south west.

4.3.28 There are no listed buildings within the parish in this sector, the nearest being in the South to West sector. Although beyond the parish boundary, of note is Little Malvern Priory (SAM and Grade I listed Church of St. Giles), and adjacent Grade II* Little Malvern Court, which lie c. 1km from the edge of the settlement.

4.3.29 In this sector the HLC of the agricultural landscapes is predominantly '1800 - 1913', although the Summer Hill (previously Shuttlefast) Farm complex is '1540 - 1799' and the TCS overspill car park fields north of the dismantled railway are 'Post-1945'. St Wulstan's LNR is also 'Post-1945', although it contains older features. Brickbarns Farm was in existence by the late 1600s.

4.3.30 The HER notes the incidence of ridge and furrow in several of the fields within the parish in this sector, including in the TCS overspill car park area. Almost all of the ridge and furrow identified lies east of Shuttlefast Lane, apart from two of the pasture fields south west of St Wulstan's LNR (it appears likely that the third pasture field was also ridge and furrow but the features were probably lost when the WWII camp was sited there - see landscape history in Section 3).

[113] Upper Welland was formerly known as 'Assarts Common'. The origin of the name stems from the time when a licence was required to clear the land for farming; this licence was known as permission to assart.

BIODIVERSITY / SIGNIFICANT VEGETATION

4.3.31 The ecological interest of St Wulstan's LNR is set out in the previous section, but in summary it comprises a diverse range of habitats which support a wide variety of species of woodland birds, butterflies, glow-worms and beetles amongst others. Several of the habitats are designated PHI and UK BAP sites.

4.3.32 In this sector, Mere Brook - which forms the parish's southern boundary - is part of the Pool and Mere Brooks LWS. The LWS habitat is open water - flowing. National BAP habitats within it comprise Rivers and Streams. One other habitat of importance is wet woodland, and one National BAP species noted is Eurasian otter.

4.3.33 A section of the dismantled railway line is also a LWS.

4.3.34 In the 2003 MUGS, Mere Brook and the northern end of the field to the south (LSCA Area 17) are identified as 'Existing key wildlife corridors to be protected and enhanced'.

4.3.35 The significant vegetation which defines the character of the landscapes of the parish in this sector mainly comprises the trees along the dismantled railway, the trees along the Mere Brook, and the woodland in St. Wulstan's LNR. However, although some have been lost, several remaining intact hedges and mature escaped trees also make an important contribution to local landscape character, especially along the main roads, and are a good representation of the Enclosed Commons LCT.

4.3.36 There are no TPOs but several noteworthy specimen trees within the parish in this sector, including in and around St Wulstan's LNR (some are ancient / veterans); these make important contributions to local biodiversity value and interest.

RECREATION & ACCESS

4.3.37 The only Open Access Land in this sector is in Hanley Swan (village green and The Walnuts).

4.3.38 St. Wulstan's LNR is of exceptionally high recreational value. It is publicly-accessible, although it is not known whether any restrictions to access (permanent / seasonal) exist. The Government's advice is that '*LNRs should be publicly accessible where visitors would not damage or disturb wildlife. You can restrict access to some areas if visitors could cause damage to the natural environment, unless the public have statutory access rights*'.

4.3.39 The LNR is also designated as an SWDP Policy 38 Green Space (the only one in this sector, and of both ecological and amenity value).

4.3.40 The bridleway north of the LNR is identified in the 2003 MUGS as an 'Existing key recreational access linkage to be protected and enhanced'.

4.3.41 There are no long-distance footpaths within the study area in this sector, but several public footpaths and a few bridleways criss-cross the landscapes.

4.3.42 One of the most significant routeways in the local area is the bridleway which runs westwards along an ancient trackway between Hanley Swan and the Hills (its focus is Black Hill summit) via Summer Hill Farm, as an extension of the lane which runs from Hanley Castle to Hanley Swan via Gilbert's End. It is a highly important 'green corridor' (albeit currently not well-wooded due to gradual loss of hedgerows and trees which once lined the trackway) and recreational resource (well-used by locals and visitors alike).

4.3.43 The bridleway crosses another important routeway and public footpath / bridleway, Shuttlefast Lane, which is the access to Summer Hill Farm. South of the farm the route continues as a public footpath which skirts the eastern side of St Wulstan's LNR. Just south of the parish boundary it joins the trackway / public footpath running along the parish's southern boundary.

4.3.44 Part of the route shown in MHAONBP's publication *A Literary Trail Around the Malverns* runs from Great Malvern southwards along Peachfield and Blackmore Park Roads to Welland.

4.3.45 Within the parish, the key visitor attraction in this sector is St. Wulstan's LNR.

4.4 Local Landscape Character: South to West Sector

CONTEXTUAL LANDSCAPE & ASSOCIATIONS

4.4.1 LSCA Areas 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16 lie within this sector.

4.4.2 It lies south of Hanley Road and Green Lane, and a line drawn westwards from Green Lane's junction with the A449. It lies west of Brickbarns Farm and St Wulstan's Nature Reserve, and a line drawn southwards from Upper Welland.

4.4.3 It includes the Malvern Hills from Holywell southwards, with the ridgeline and summits - including Pinnacle Hill and Black Hill - forming the western parish boundary. The southern part of the Wells and the majority of Upper Welland settlements lie within this sector, as do the east-facing slopes of the Hills in the vicinity of Little Malvern Priory.

4.4.4 Settlement along the Hills' mid-slopes is often concealed in views from the Hills above by topography, as shown in the photos below

South to west sector (1: settlement along Wells Road below hidden from view)

South to west sector (2: from Pinnacle Hill)

South to west sector (3: from north east)

4.4.5 The A449 runs through this sector, running through Malvern Wells as the Wells Road then climbing around the southern end of Black Hill to emerge at Wynd's Point just below British Camp before descending towards Ledbury via Chance's Pitch. Jubilee Drive runs north - south on the west side of the Hills.

4.4.6 The A4104 continues through this sector from east to west, climbing the steepening slopes past Little Malvern Priory to join the A449 c. 600m south of the parish's southern boundary.

4.4.7 The main line railway is on the west side of the Hills in this sector, at Colwall Stone.

4.4.8 East of the A449, the southern boundary mostly follows the line of Upper Welland Road, but dips south of the road in places to include a small cluster of roadside houses and a larger area of houses lying on the triangle of land between Upper Welland Road and Watery Lane. West of the A449 the boundary ends at the summit of Black Hill. The western parish boundary follows the ridgeline northwards.

4.4.9 From the ridgeline to the Wells Road, the slopes' fall is dramatic (from c. 345m AOD at Pinnacle Hill summit to c. 145m on Wells Road, a gradient of c. 1:2), and the Hills are highly dominant and visually ever-present in this part of the parish in particular. East of Wells Road the slope gradients ease off to c. 1:5 over a distance of some 200 metres, and from there the lower slopes begin their broad undulations as they transition into the Severn Plain (in this area, around Welland village).

4.4.10 There are myriad springs and small watercourses in this sector, most of which are tributaries of Mere and Marlbank Brooks.

4.4.11 There are three NCAs in close proximity within the study area in this sector: NCA 106 Severn and Avon Vales to the east, NCA 100 Herefordshire Lowlands to the west, and NCA 103 Malvern Hills running north - south in between them. As noted in the baseline studies, beyond the Hills' ridgeline there is no interinfluence between the landscapes either side of them so NCA 100 Herefordshire Lowlands landscapes are not relevant to this study.

4.4.12 The areas covered by NCA 103 Malvern Hills are highly typical of this NCA, and are very good representations of it. Those covered by NCA 106 Severn and Avon Vales are slightly less representative of their 'host' NCA, partly due to the fact that the Wells' settlement occupies a relatively large part of the sector. Beyond the settlement, the well-represented characteristics comprise:

- Woodland sparsely-distributed but a well-wooded impression is provided by frequent hedgerow trees, parkland and surviving traditional orchards.
- Remnants of formerly extensive Chases and Royal Forests, centred around Malvern… still survive - the unnamed triangular block of ASNW at Upper Welland (just beyond the parish boundary) is a good example of this.
- Small pasture fields as well as regular pattern of parliamentary enclosure.
- Pasture and stock rearing predominate, also some arable.
- A strong historic time line is visible in the landscape (several good examples of this, including British Camp / Shire Ditch, Little Malvern Priory / Court, the ASNW, old trackways, St Wulstan's church etc.).
- Highly varied use of traditional buildings materials, with black-and-white timber frame intermixed with deep-red brick buildings (although as noted above, many of the original timber-framed buildings would have been demolished during enclosure).

4.4.13 In this sector, apart from the areas classified as Urban, the LCTs of the parish coincide almost exactly with the NCA boundaries, with Enclosed Commons relating to NCA 106, High Hills and Slopes to NCA 103, and Principal Wooded Hills to NCA 100.

4.4.14 Beyond the Hills' ridgeline there is no interinfluence between the landscapes either side of them so Principal Wooded Hills landscapes are not relevant to this study.

4.4.15 The areas covered by High Hills and Slopes are highly typical of this LCT, and are very good representations of it. Those covered by Enclosed Commons are slightly less representative of their 'host' LCT, partly due to the fact that the Wells' settlement occupies and therefore influences a relatively large part of the sector, but also because the landscapes have more ancient influences and associations.

4.4.16 Beyond the parish boundary, on the west side of the Hills, the land falls to Colwall Green, where it flattens out into an agricultural plane interspersed with distinctive wooded hills such as Frith Wood and Oyster Hill north east of the market town of Ledbury, famed for its black and white buildings. As noted previously, there is no interinfluence or intervisibility between the west and east sides of the Hills; however from the Hills' ridgeline (also the parish boundary), the landscapes on either side can be viewed as a whole, and the geological influences and differences better appreciated.

4.4.17 The shallow, impoverished soils that have developed on the ancient rocks of the Malvern Hills are of little agricultural value and consequently most of the ridge remains as unenclosed rough grazing land. Much of this open land is covered by 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.

4.4.18 British Camp (Iron Age hillfort and Scheduled Monument), also called the Herefordshire Beacon, lies c. 1.5km south west of the parish boundary. Its artificially-terraced profile is an iconic and highly-distinctive feature in the landscape for miles around, and it is a key visitor destination.

British Camp looking north east

4.4.19 The southern end of Malvern Wells settlement is just below Black Hill, south of the junction of the A449 and Upper Welland Road. This point is important as it forms the southern gateway to Malvern Wells. It is also where Malvern's urban character is first encountered when travelling north / north west, in contrast to the rugged open / heavily-wooded hills and slopes, and the rural agricultural landscapes of the plains. The A449 and associated built form along both sides effectively form a long, linear approach to Great Malvern, the gateway to which is just north of Malvern Common (west) / The Firs (see West to North sector below, and gateways in Section 3).

4.4.20 To the south, between the parish boundary and the A4104, the landscapes on the hillslopes are predominantly rural / agricultural, comprising a series of arable / pasture fields most of which are bounded by good native hedges and mature escaped oak. The unnamed triangular block of woodland at Upper Welland is a rare pocket of surviving ancient woodland in the local landscapes, and a highly valuable landscape feature (in terms of character, heritage, culture, ecology and visual amenity).

4.4.21 Built form is very sparsely-scattered, and comprises i) a short row of houses along the south side of Upper Welland Road; ii) St Wulstan's Church; and iii) two farmsteads / farm complexes (North and Mayalls / Harmans Farms). Little Malvern Court and Priory lie on the south side of the A4104, opposite North Farm.

4.4.22 St Wulstan's church, churchyard, and the terraced / stepped grounds / fields to the east form a small but highly distinctive character zone, especially due to the mature ornamental trees, several of which are conifers.

4.4.23 The landscaped gardens and grounds of Little Malvern Court are also a distinct character zone: the ornamental gardens scattered with fine, mature trees are part of the former monastic grounds, and extend over c. 4ha.

4.4.24 The various landscape elements and features in this part of the sector - natural and ornamental - are generally in very good condition, although the landscape patterns around Mayalls / Harmans Farms

have been eroded / lost over time. On late 19th century maps, the two small and separate farmsteads are annotated as 'North Farm' - Harman's Farm appears on 1904 maps, Mayalls Farm on a 1927 version. Today they appear to have been amalgamated into a single modern complex (post-1970s) which has filled the gaps between them, breaking through old hedgelines. Several orchards have been removed. The fields to the south of the farm have also been enlarged.

4.4.25 Within the parish and beyond both the Hills and the settlement's edges, the landscapes are predominantly rural / agricultural in character - a mixture of arable and pasture fields - and they form a distinct character zone.

4.4.26 This zone performs a highly important function in both the local and wider landscapes, as it provides the rural context and setting of this part of the settlement. The rural character extends to garden boundaries of properties along the east side of Wells Road. All the gardens are characteristically generous (some have additional paddocks / landscaped / hard court areas), and are exceptionally and distinctively well-wooded. They also perform an important landscape function by acting as a transition zone between the urbanised A449 corridor to the west, and the relatively tranquil / traditional open countryside to the east.

4.4.27 The field boundaries are in mixed condition - good, native hedges and mature escaped oak in some places, erosion / loss of hedgerow in others - but the landscape patterns can still be clearly read. Brickbarns Farm lies on the boundary of the East to South and South to West sectors, and is an important local landmark and focal point, albeit enlargement of the farm complex over time and lack of management have resulted in it becoming a detractor, especially where there is erosion, and clutter (see East to South sector above).

4.4.28 The majority of the fields / land parcels in this area, and also those in the area south of Upper Welland Road, are the subject of the LSCA capacity studies (LSCA Areas 10 - 14 and 15 & 16 respectively), so where relevant, more detailed information about the Areas and the associated local landscape and villagescape history, character, features, factors and facilities is provided in the individual LSCA Area schedules.

HERITAGE

4.4.29 The Shire Ditch, which runs along the Hills' ridgeline and forms the western parish boundary, is a Scheduled Monument. There are also two SMs - possible Bronze Age round barrows - located east of Gardiner's Common, on or just adjacent to the parish boundary. There are no other SMs within the parish in this sector, but British Camp lies c. 1.5km to the south west.

4.4.30 Also beyond the parish boundary and of note is Little Malvern Priory (SM - site of the remains of a medieval preaching cross situated within the monastic precinct to the south of the Priory, and Grade I listed Church of St. Giles), with Grade II* Little Malvern Court adjacent. This cluster lies c. 900m south west of the parish boundary.

4.4.31 There are several Grade II listed buildings and structures within the parish in this sector. With the exception of a single gas street lamp on Upper Welland Road, all are within the Malvern Wells Conservation Area, and lie along the A449 Wells Road. They comprise residential properties, gas lamps, and a milestone.

4.4.32 St Wulstan's Church, which is where Sir Edward Elgar is buried, is Grade II listed and lies c. 320m south of the parish boundary.

4.4.33 The Conservation Area in this sector currently covers the settlement on both sides of Wells Road, and along the north side of Upper Welland Road as far as Watery Lane.

4.4.34 Three of the springs, wells and spouts identified so far in the parish lie in this sector: Tyrol House Fountain, Pixies' (previously Devil's) Well and Goat Spring.

4.4.35 In this sector the HLC of the core of the settlement is categorised as '1540 - 1799', although some earlier features exist. The Hills are a combination of 'Medieval 1066 - 1539', '1914 - 1945', and a small area of '1800 - 1913'. The parcel of land south of Hanley Road and east of Rothwell Road (LSCA Area 10) is '1914 - 1945'. West of that Area, the settlement is categorised as 'Post-1945', as are fields north and east of St Wulstan's Church. The remainder of the settlement and the landscapes beyond are '1800 - 1913'.

4.4.36 The HER notes the presence of ridge and furrow in two fields, including LSCA Area 11. Levelled ridge and furrow is noted in parcels of land either side of Rothwell Road (in part of LSCA Area 10), but no farmsteads or sites of farmsteads are identified.

BIODIVERSITY / SIGNIFICANT VEGETATION

4.4.37 The Malvern Hills are a SSSI.

4.4.38 St Wulstan's LNR lies in the East to South sector, but the LNR's western boundary is contiguous with the sector boundary. Just beyond the LNR's north-western boundary, east of The Crescent, is St Wulstan's Village Green. The Crescent and Village Green form a locally-distinctive and characteristic area, with a high degree of scenic quality and charm.

4.4.39 In this sector, there are three small watercourses which rise, drain into, and form part of, Mere Brook, which is a LWS (Pool and Mere Brooks). One skirts the edge of the settlement and zig-zags around St Wulstan's LNR before discharging into the main watercourse at the LNR's south-eastern corner. The second runs through the housing estate and the LNR before joining the third, which rises south of Merebrook Close; both flow eastwards and form the parish's southern boundary along the south-eastern sector of the LNR's southern boundary.

4.4.40 The LWS habitat is open water - flowing. National BAP habitats within it comprise Rivers and Streams. One other habitat of importance is wet woodland. One National BAP species noted is Eurasian otter.

4.4.41 The ancient trees in Upper Welland are all of locally-high biodiversity value.

4.4.42 There are no LGeoSs in this sector, but Little Malvern Quarry LGeoS lies just south of the parish's southern boundary.

4.4.43 In the 2003 MUGS, belts of mature trees along boundaries of the field lying north of Assarts Road and west of St Wulstan's Drive / The Crescent (LSCA Area 14) are identified as 'Existing key wildlife corridors to be protected and enhanced'. Another such corridor runs along the northern side of Holywell Road.

4.4.44 The significant vegetation which defines the character of the landscapes of the parish in this sector mainly comprises the woodlands on the Malvern Hills' slopes west of Wells Road, and small blocks of woodland within, or on the edges of, the settlement. Although outside the parish boundary, of note is the unnamed ASNW at Upper Welland.

4.4.45 There are also several intact hedges and mature escaped trees which make an important contribution to local landscape character and are a good representation of the Enclosed Commons LCT, in particular in the area west of Brickbarns Farm and east of the settlement.

4.4.46 Other significant vegetation which characterises this sector includes mature native and ornamental trees which are characteristically very densely clustered / scattered throughout the settlement.

4.4.47 There are several TPOs within the parish in this sector. They are all either within or adjacent to the settlement, and comprise tree blocks west of the A449 and both sides of Upper Welland Road, and a large, blanket TPO on a field on the eastern edge of the settlement, south of Hanley Road (Area 10).

4.4.48 Three veteran trees were recorded in Upper Welland: a pedunculate oak and a rare black poplar, both with 6m girths[114], and a large grey poplar.

RECREATION & ACCESS

4.4.49 There are four SWDP Policy 38 Green Spaces in this sector, which are of value for both ecology and amenity:

- Malvern Wells cemetery;
- St Wulstan's Village Green, and
- two blocks and belts of trees north of Assarts Road and St Wulstan's Drive.

4.4.50 The Malvern Hills are Open Access Land. Interestingly, on the Hills in this sector there are no public footpaths or bridleways on the Herefordshire side (in fact, there are no bridleways at all in Colwall parish). Also, within Malvern Wells parish, apart from short links from Wells Road to the Hills, all the public rights of way are bridleways.

[114] A free-standing oak with a 6m girth would be approximately 450 years old (and comparatively youthful, given that oak can live for 1000 years).

4.4.51 The 2003 MUGS identified four 'Existing key recreational access linkages to be protected and enhanced' within this sector:

- bridleways along the northern and eastern boundaries of the LSCA Area 14 field;
- bridleways / public footpaths from Jubilee Hill, leading south then east across Wells Road, along footpath towards Brickbarns Farm, turning south east to join bridleway north of LNR; and
- bridleway along the Hills' ridgeline.

4.4.52 The public footpath which runs between Wells Road and the Brickbarns area is an important recreational resource, as it provides direct access to good quality countryside.

4.4.53 Within the parish and close to its boundaries, the key visitor attractions in this sector are:

- Elgar's grave at St. Wulstan's Church (S to W)
- Little Malvern Priory and Court (S to W)
- Malvern Water heritage and several springs and spouts
- The Village Hall and the Wells Club on Wells Road (S to W)
- Malvern Wells Cemetery (S to W).

4.5 Local Landscape Character: West to North Sector

CONTEXTUAL LANDSCAPE & ASSOCIATIONS

4.5.1 LSCA Areas 1 to 9 lie within this sector.

4.5.2 It lies north of Hanley Road and Green Lane, and a line drawn westwards from Green Lane's junction with the A449. It lies west of the TCS and dismantled railway, and a line drawn north through Great Malvern.

4.5.3 The sector includes the Malvern Hills and associated commons from Holywell to End Hill to the north. It also includes Malvern Common (west), the Worcestershire Golf Club, and settlements in the northern part of Malvern Wells, Fruitlands, and Lower and Upper Wyche.

4.5.4 Settlement along the Hills' mid-slopes is often concealed in views from the Hills above by topography, as shown in the photos below

West to north sector (1: from Worcestershire Beacon - settlement along Wells Road below hidden from view)

West to north sector (2: from Summer Hill looking south east / south)

4.5.5 The A449 traverses this sector, running through Malvern Wells as the Wells Road. The B4218 Wyche Road leads from Great Malvern to Upper Wyche, and in between, several roads (including Lower Wyche and Old Wyche Roads) zig-zag down the hillslopes. The Wyche Road crosses the Hills at the Wyche Cutting and descends into Colwall as Walwyn Road. Jubilee Drive and the B4232 (West Malvern Road) run north - south on the west side of the Hills.

4.5.6 The main line railway runs through this sector, entering the tunnel through the Hills c. 160m east of Wells Road at the south-western end of Fruitlands, and emerging from it on the west side near Colwall Stone.

4.5.7 The Hills' ridgeline and summits form the parish's western boundary. The western and northern boundaries meet at the Worcestershire Beacon, which at 425m AOD is the highest point on the Hills. From the Beacon, the northern boundary zig-zags along the southern edges of Great Malvern and Barnards Green.

4.5.8 From the Hills' ridgeline and summits to the A449, the slopes' fall is dramatic, some of the gradients being 1:1 and occasionally vertical, and the Hills are highly dominant and visually ever-present. East of the A449 the slope gradients ease off: in fact, the main line railway effectively marks the 'toe' of the hillslopes, and the point where the Severn Plan begins.

4.5.9 Most of the currently-identified springs, spouts and wells within the parish lie in this sector. There are myriad springs and small watercourses, which are tributaries of the various streams - especially Pool Brook - which flow eastwards across the plain and discharge into the River Severn.

4.5.10 There are three NCAs in close proximity within the study area in this sector: NCA 106 Severn and Avon Vales to the east, NCA 100 Herefordshire Lowlands to the west (discounted due to lack of interinfluence), and NCA 103 Malvern Hills running north - south in between them.

4.5.11 The areas covered by NCA 103 Malvern Hills are highly typical of this NCA, and are very good representations of it. Those covered by NCA 106 Severn and Avon Vales are slightly less representative of their 'host' NCA, partly due to the fact that the Wells' settlement occupies a relatively large part of the sector. Beyond the settlement, the well-represented characteristics comprise:

- Woodland sparsely-distributed but a well-wooded impression is provided by frequent hedgerow trees, parkland and surviving traditional orchards.
- Remnants of formerly extensive Chases and Royal Forests, centred around Malvern… still survive - Hornyold Wood is a good example of this.

- Small pasture fields as well as regular pattern of parliamentary enclosure.
- Pasture and stock rearing predominate, also some arable.
- A strong historic time line is visible in the landscape.
- Highly varied use of traditional building materials.

4.5.12 In this sector, apart from the areas classified as Urban, the LCTs of the parish coincide almost exactly with the NCA boundaries, with Enclosed Commons relating to NCA 106, High Hills and Slopes to NCA 103, and Principal Wooded Hills to NCA 100. There is also an area of Unenclosed Commons on Malvern Common (west), north of Peachfield Road, which continues east of the railway.

4.5.13 As noted in the baseline studies, beyond the Hills' ridgeline there is no interinfluence between the landscapes either side of them so Principal Wooded Hills landscapes are not relevant to this study.

4.5.14 The areas covered by High Hills and Slopes and Unenclosed Commons are highly typical of their host LCTs, and are very good representations of them. Some of those covered by Enclosed Commons are slightly less representative of their 'host' LCT, partly due to the fact that the Wells' settlement occupies and therefore influences a relatively large part of the sector, partly because of changes in land use such as the golf course zone, and partly because some areas display older, pre-enclosure characteristics.

4.5.15 Beyond the parish boundary, on the west side of the Hills, the land slopes down towards Colwall village and extends across an undulating, well-wooded, rural and sparsely-settled rural / agricultural landscape. Between the A4103 Worcester to Hereford road to the north of the Hills and the A449 Ledbury road there are only narrow winding lanes and a few small villages / hamlets.

4.5.16 The shallow, impoverished soils that have developed on the ancient rocks of the Malvern Hills are of little agricultural value and consequently most of the ridge remains as unenclosed rough grazing land. Much of this open land is covered by 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.

4.5.17 Great Malvern town centre lies c. 650m north of the parish boundary. From the A449, the boundary runs in a south-easterly direction along the 'old' Wells Road - now a cul-de-sac which continues as a track around the western boundary of The Firs (characterised by dense, mature predominantly ornamental vegetation).

4.5.18 The precipitous Old Wyche Road (apparently the second-steepest road in England) climbs up the eastern slopes of the Malvern Hills to the Wyche Cutting, which was along the route of an Iron Age salt way.

Wyche Cutting

Old Wyche Road

4.5.19 Within the parish, and beyond the Hills, commons and the settlements' edges, the landscapes fall into a number of different character zones.

4.5.20 Locally, the largest zone is occupied by the Worcestershire Golf Club. It comprises the clubhouse and associated buildings / facilities / parking areas; various maintenance buildings and areas; fairways / greens / practice areas; mature trees; and waterbodies / watercourses. Public footpaths /

bridleways and other access tracks / paths cross the course. One of the tracks goes through a tunnel under the dismantled railway, and is used as private vehicular access to Warren Farm, which lies on the east side of the railway.

4.5.21 The 'golf course zone' does not include the following parcels of land: a) sloping grassed / partially-wooded fields west of Woodfarm Road, south of the existing residential properties; b) area of grassland and ornamental trees lying between the western and eastern branches of Woodfarm Road; c) area of grassland / scrub / trees around the eastern (roundabout) end of Woodfarm Road; or d) long grassed field (former playing fields) east of Woodfarm Road and south of the small watercourse.

4.5.22 These four parcels are the subject of the LSCA capacity studies (LSCA Areas 3, 4, 5 and 6 respectively), so where relevant, more detailed information about the Areas and the associated local landscape and villagescape character, features, factors and facilities is provided in the individual LSCA Area schedules.

4.5.23 However, in terms of character zones, LSCA Areas 4 and 5 are more closely-associated with the golf course zone. LSCA Areas 3 and 6 are part of the second zone.

4.5.24 The second character zone covers the majority of the 'non-golf course' landscapes in this sector.

4.5.25 It comprises rural / agricultural landscapes, and almost all of the fields are grassed pasture (there appears to be only one arable field, which is also LSCA Area 7). Some of the pastures are in very good condition, and make a highly important contribution to landscape character and the rural setting of the settlement.

Traditional pasture at central edge of settlement

4.5.26 The fields are bound by native hedges, some with escaped mature trees (predominantly oak). The hedges are in mixed condition: broadly, condition is better further away from the settlement edges and around the scattered residential properties / farms in the area, where there is erosion / loss of hedgerows and trees.

4.5.27 There are several significant blocks and belts of mature woodland in this zone. The most notable feature is Hornyold Wood, which is the only ASNW left in the parish - its relative rarity makes it a highly valuable feature in both the local and wider landscapes (see Significant Vegetation section above).

4.5.28 Two small watercourses run around both sides of the wood then merge and flow eastwards (along the northern edge of LSCA Area 6). The stream corridor is very well-wooded along its length, and

forms a highly important link (of landscape, visual and ecological value) between Hornyold Wood and other mature tree belts associated with the dismantled railway and the golf course.

4.5.29 The other woodland / wooded areas in the second character zone include those associated with a) residential properties east of Wells Road and south of the railway; b) a plant nursery (there is a plantation south of the railway where it enters the tunnel); and c) the railway corridor (trees adjacent to the railway are usually cut down before they grow very tall for health and safety reasons).

4.5.30 Most of the second zone is the subject of the more fine-grained capacity studies, as it includes LSCA Areas 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 (Hornyold Wood is within LSCA Area 2); thus, where relevant, more detailed information about the Areas and the associated local landscape and villagescape character, features, factors and facilities is provided in the individual LSCA Area schedules.

4.5.31 Within this sector, beyond the settlement, built form is scattered, some of it 'randomly'.

4.5.32 There is a scatter of houses along the north side of Hanley Road, along with Sherborne. Coton Cottage Farm - which appears on 18th century maps - is relatively isolated, west of the TCS.

4.5.33 The centrally-located golf club house is modern and relatively large in scale, especially when combined with the adjacent associated ancillary buildings. There is also a long maintenance / storage shed within the golf course zone (a WWII camp remnant). There are residential properties along the north-western and south-eastern spurs of Woodfarm Road, built after WWII. These are described in more detail in the LSCA Area schedules.

4.5.34 The northern end of the golf course is overlooked by a row of predominantly 20th century residential properties. They are accessed off Peachfield Road via a surfaced track (also a public footpath) over the common.

4.5.35 The houses are relatively well-concealed: they lie in a localised 'dip', and benefit from screening by mature trees for much of the year - this part of Malvern Common (east) is very well-wooded (with both native and ornamental trees, as is the dismantled railway line which is adjacent to the easternmost house in the row. Due to the southern boundary of the common being a straight line (which it has been for hundreds of years, since at least the 10th century), these houses line up with the houses / buildings further east along Peachfield Road.

4.5.36 The site of Malvern Wells railway Station lies immediately west of these houses, on both sides of the main railway line south of the Peachfield Road railway bridge.

HERITAGE

4.5.37 The Shire Ditch, which runs along the Hills' ridgeline and forms the western parish boundary, is a Scheduled Monument, as are the possible Bronze Age round barrows. There are no other SMs within the parish in this sector, but British Camp lies c. 2.5km to the south west.

4.5.38 There are several Grade II listed buildings and structures within the parish in this sector. With the exception of one gas street lamp at the Wyche Cutting and a few lamps on the east side of Wells Road, all are within the Malvern Wells Conservation Area. The majority lie along both sides of the A449 Wells Road and comprise residential properties, gas lamps, a war memorial and - further north, at the edge of the town centre - a milestone. There are also three listed buildings / structures on Holywell Road (Holy Well Cottage, Rock House and the Holy Well itself).

4.5.39 Malvern Priory Church of St Mary and St. Michael (Benedictine monastery c.1085, now an Anglican parish church) is the nearest Grade I listed building (the cross in the churchyard and the Priory Gateway are also SMs); it lies in the town centre c. 600m north of the parish boundary. The listing describes the Priory as '*One of the more important greater parish churches*'. There is currently more interinfluence than intervisibility between the northern parts of Malvern Wells and the Priory, but the degree of both increases with elevation at the northern end of the parish.

4.5.40 The Conservation Area in this sector covers most of the settlement on both sides of Wells Road, and includes Holy Well, Upper Wyche, and Malvern Common (west).

4.5.41 The only remnant of ASNW in the parish (Hornyold Wood) lies in this sector.

4.5.42 The landscapes in this sector display all of the HLC categorisations, and this is the only sector in which some areas are 'Neolithic 4000BC - 2351BC' (parts of the Malvern Hills northern ridgelines and slopes). Elsewhere, the Hills are a combination of 'Medieval 1066 - 1539' and '1914 - 1945'. The commons are 'Medieval'. The core of the settlement is '1540 - 1799'. The rest of the settlement and surrounding landscapes are a combination of '1800 - 1913', '1914 - 1945', and 'Post-1945'.

4.5.43 The HER identifies only one area of ridge and furrow in this sector, within the golf course zone, but it is levelled. It also identifies two 'Parks and Gardens' associated with the Essington Hotel and Wells House.

4.5.44 There are several locally-important historic buildings / features in the local area, including Kinley Cottage (the original 19th century schoolhouse, its main function being to serve nearby St Wulstan church), and Watery Lane.

4.5.45 The latter is an old, unimproved trackway (featuring two Victorian street lamps - originally gas, now electric). It was probably the original main thoroughfare at the time, providing access a) from the village to nearby common land, farms, places of worship etc., and b) to the village with its blacksmith's forge (on Watery Lane), two shops, a bakery, a wayside chapel, the Methodist church, and an inn (the Hawthorn).

BIODIVERSITY / SIGNIFICANT VEGETATION

4.5.46 The Malvern Hills are a SSSI, and a small part of the Malvern Common (east) SSSI lies within this sector.

4.5.47 In this sector, the small part of Malvern Common (east), Malvern Common (west), and the hillslopes in between Lower Wyche Road and Wells Road, are part of the Malvern and Lower Wyche Commons LWS.

4.5.48 The ancient / veteran trees on the golf course and in Hornyold Wood ASNW are all likely to be of high biodiversity value.

4.5.49 There are three LGeoSs within this sector: i) Wide Valley; ii) Earnslaw Quarry; and iii) Upper Wyche Quarry.

4.5.50 In this sector the 2003 MUGS identified three 'Existing key wildlife corridors to be protected and enhanced':

- west of Holywell Road / Wells Road / B4218 (Upper Wyche);
- the main line railway corridor; and
- from Peachfield Road railway crossing, across Malvern Common (west) and up the slopes towards the Worcestershire Beacon (continuation of corridor crossing north side of Malvern Common (east), north of parish boundary).

4.5.51 The significant vegetation which defines the character of the landscapes of the parish in this sector includes the woodland on the Malvern Hills' slopes west of Wells Road, and the scattered but dense belts and blocks of mature and immature woodland associated with Malvern Common (west) - especially lining the watercourses - and with the golf course / Woodfarm Camp area, including Hornyold Wood. The trees along both the main line and dismantled railways are also highly distinctive features in the landscape.

4.5.52 Other significant vegetation in this sector includes:

- the avenue of alternative lime and horse chestnut trees along Peachfield Road on the south side of Malvern Common;
- mature native and ornamental trees which are characteristically very densely clustered / scattered throughout the settlement; and
- several intact hedges and mature escaped trees on the slopes west of the TCS which make an important contribution to local landscape character and are a good representation of the Enclosed Commons LCT.

4.5.53 There are a few TPOs scattered throughout the settlement in the parish in this sector, protecting noteworthy trees that make important contributions to villagescape character.

4.5.54 Six veteran trees - all pedunculate oak - are growing on or close to the golf course, and there is another recorded in Hornyold Wood. The studies suggest that there are more which have not yet been recorded on the Ancient Tree Inventory[115] (this applies to all sectors). An ancient sessile oak *Quercus petraea* was recorded near The Firs, and may be just outside the parish boundary.

[115] See https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/tree-search/. Members of the public can add the locations of other ancient / veteran / notable trees so long as the identification is evidence-based.

RECREATION & ACCESS

4.5.55 There are several designated SWDP Policy 38 Green Spaces in this sector, which are of value for both ecology and amenity. Those within the parish comprise:

- Malvern Common (west);
- a section of the wooded slopes between Holywell Road and Wells Road (LSCA Area 9); and
- the main line railway corridor as far as the tunnel mouth.

4.5.56 The Malvern Hills and commons are Open Access Land.

4.5.57 The 2003 MUGS identified several 'Existing key recreational access linkages to be protected and enhanced' within this sector:

- north - south route along the Hills' ridgelines and upper slopes, leading to North Malvern. Other routes encircle North Hill, and lead to West Malvern / Great Malvern Town centre;
- routes along the main line railway corridor (east of The Firs), across Malvern Common (west) and up to the Hills' ridgeline north of the Wyche Cutting;
- continuation of the route along the main line railway corridor, southwards via the public footpath which runs through the golf course, then westwards along the northern edge of the central part of the Wells settlement and on up to the Hills' ridge; and
- the dismantled railway corridor.

4.5.58 As noted in the South to West sector, within Malvern Wells parish, apart from short links from Wells Road, all the public rights of way on the Malvern Hills are bridleways, as are those (at least seven) which criss-cross Malvern Common (west). One of these bridleways runs south into Fruitlands, along the southern spur of Peachfield Road; via a trackway through the housing estate there is also an onward bridleway link from here which crosses the railway and joins the bridleways and public footpaths which cross the golf course.

4.5.59 The latter are a very important recreational resource for locals and visitors, especially as most have good onward connections (to both the wider footpath / bridleway network and local facilities) throughout the study area and beyond. They are clearly well-used (and some have been since ancient times) and appear to be much enjoyed since as mentioned above, the golf course, and its context and setting, have high levels of landscape and scenic quality. Although there is bound to be conflict between golfers and walkers / riders at times, the overall impression is that there is mutual respect and consideration on both sides.

4.5.60 A public footpath runs along the east side of the dismantled railway, linking to the two bridlepaths which cross the fields north of the TCS (but which end at Blackmore Park Road, the old links to / from Ox Hill probably having been severed during enclosure). The footpath crosses the railway (and briefly becomes bridleway), running along the west side along a track which leads southwards to Hanley Road via Coton Cottage Farm (there is also an eastwards footpath link which re-crosses the railway and runs along the northern boundary of the TCS). Just north of the farm, a public footpath runs west to join Hanley Road at its junction with the A449.

4.5.61 Within the parish, the key visitor attractions in this sector are:

- Malvern Water heritage and several springs and spouts
- The Wyche Inn
- The Railway Inn
- The Cottage in the Wood hotel and restaurant
- Several B & Bs
- Worcestershire Golf Club.

5 Visual Baseline

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 As explained above, the assessment of views and visual amenity entails separate processes, distinct from, but related to, those used in the assessment of landscape character.

5.1.2 The Landscape Institute's guidance (GLVIA3) explains that the two distinct components of the assessment of landscape and visual effects are:

i. Landscape effects: assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right [i.e. regardless of how visible it is, or who can see it]

ii. Visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

5.1.3 As explained in Section 2, LVIA is normally used to assess the effects which could arise from a specific development with a defined location and parameters, although the principles can also be applied to less well-defined and more wide-ranging studies such as this.

5.1.4 Both LVIA and LSCA processes help determine a certain landscape's 'Visual Sensitivity', identifying places where it is likely that change in the landscape would be visible, and to what degree.

5.1.5 The visual baseline assessment relies heavily on the findings of the baseline landscape character assessments set out and illustrated above, which include the mapping and analysis of physical features, designated sites, heritage / cultural assets, settings / areas of influence, important wildlife habitats, public and social amenity, access and so on. The LCA also identifies the landscape's aesthetic and perceptual qualities.

5.1.6 These inform the 'nature' of the view, and make a major contribution to visual value and susceptibility to change (explained in the following section). However, often the value / importance of what one is looking at is not obvious on the ground - a good example is a nationally-protected wildlife site, a Registered Battlefield, or a view painted by a famous artist / described by a well-known poet.

5.1.7 The 'nature' of a view is also 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.

5.1.8 The visual assessment takes into account any 'functions' assigned to various parts of the study area / LSCA Areas during the LCA process, for example gap / buffer / setting / green corridor / gateway (gateways are shown on Figure 12), identifies others, and assesses potential effects on them from the visual receptor's perspective.

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

5.1.10 In assessing views and visual amenity, it is important to understand the landscape context of the view. For example, many views looking outwards from high ground on the Malvern Hills are characterised by extensive panoramas which extend to the far-distant horizon. Looking down, 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 rural landscapes, or discordant and chaotic urban townscapes.

5.1.11 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 / townscape context (e.g. red brick housing estates, fields of 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 'calm' landscape).

5.1.12 Areas of built form which are physically separated on the ground may appear to coalesce from certain viewpoints, whereas from others, the contribution made by an open, rural gap to landscape and villagescape character may be very clear and visually highly important.

5.1.13 The assessment takes into account the assumptions made about the embedded 'primary' mitigation measures described in Section 2, and may take into account whether there is scope for 'secondary' mitigation measures to avoid / reduce levels of adverse visual effects - for example by planting trees to screen views - and whether such mitigation would be appropriate or not, in terms of landscape character (uncharacteristic mitigation measures can in themselves give rise to adverse effects, for example planting Leylandii as screens).

5.1.14 It must be noted that where a relatively low level of visual sensitivity is ascribed to an LSCA Area, this may be due to the presence of significant vegetation; however, the nature, density and likely permanence / longevity of the vegetation needs to be considered, especially if without it, visual sensitivity would be higher, and thus capacity lower (where relevant, this is noted in the LSCA Area schedules). As explained above, existing vegetation may not remain in place in the short-term, let alone the long-term future for a wide variety of reasons. For example, a dense, coniferous plantation woodland may provide full year-round screening, but the species are relatively short-lived so the screening function is temporary (see larch plantation example in Section 3.11).

5.1.15 Thus, much of Malvern Wells' significant vegetation is vulnerable to change, and cannot be relied on to continue to perform its highly important visual (and other) functions.

5.1.16 Note that 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.

5.1.17 On a general note, the majority of the photographs in this report were taken using a Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) camera with the equivalent of a 50mm focal length manual lens, typically with five frames per view. This represents the normal breadth of vision as advocated by the Landscape Institute[116]. Photographs are mostly taken at 'eye level' (approximately 1.5m above ground level). However, in some cases - for example to highlight a particular feature or point - other lens lengths were used / photos were cropped, and where too dangerous to stop and take photographs, or if the quality of the photograph taken was not good enough, Google Streetview images had to be used (if that is the case, it is stated). Also, a few photographs were supplied by local residents / professional photographers, and some may pre-date the construction of new buildings in the area.

5.2 Wider Views and Visual Amenity

Study Area Visual Overview

5.2.1 The assessment considered intervisibility between the parish and the wider landscapes, noting the edges of the 'visual envelope' as far as possible.

5.2.2 On the whole, the areas on the west sides of the Hills, and the majority of the areas due north and south of the Hills, have no or very limited intervisibility with Malvern Wells apart from on its western boundary along the ridgeline, and so the capacity assessment has focussed on the areas which do - theoretically or otherwise.

5.2.3 The Malvern Hills form a highly distinctive and iconic feature in the region, and exert a strong and widespread influence on the landscape in all directions. From the Worcestershire Beacon (425m AOD), it is believed that there is intervisibility between them and up to nineteen 'historic' counties, the furthest point visible apparently being Shining Tor in Cheshire, c. 130km away.

5.2.4 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 - and great differences - between the two.

5.2.5 The viewpoints and views associated with the AONB, both from and towards it, are of international importance. Many world-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.

5.2.6 The Hills' 13km long, distinctive hump-backed 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 (and is also a very useful aid to orientation on the approach).

5.2.7 In long- and middle-distance views, approaching from the north, End and North Hills completely conceal the rest of the Hills to the south, appearing as a strange, isolated, round-shouldered hump rising out of a flat landscape.

[116] Advice Note 01/11 Photography and Photomontage in LVIA

5.2.8 Similarly, from the south, from many viewpoints the southernmost summits and slopes act as screens to the Hills to the north, although the profile is more complex and better-integrated into the wider landscape context within which it lies.

5.2.9 From certain locations east and west of the Hills it is possible to see the entire length of the range from north to south. Probably the most widely-recognised and iconic profile of the Hills is when viewed from the east, which is seen rising abruptly out of the plain and forming the skyline. The silhouette describes the character of each of the summits, each one distinctive in its own way.

5.2.10 Viewed from the west, the wooded, undulating Herefordshire hills and valleys create a more gradual transition to the Hills, with less of a contrast between the plains and the summits. Although the profile is similar to that seen from the east, albeit a mirror image, there are subtle differences.

5.2.11 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, and the elevation, angle and extent of the viewpoint.

5.2.12 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 a route.

5.2.13 Even at lower levels within the parish, there are magnificent long-distance views available in arcs from north to south. For example, where Peachfield Road runs through Malvern Common (east) along the parish's northern boundary, the horizon is formed by the Abberley Hills c. 24km to the north / north west, the Clent and Lickey Hills c. 32km to the north east, and Bredon Hill c. 18km to the north east / east. Worcester City is clearly visible c. 12km to the north east.

5.2.14 Seasonal variations can significantly affect views and visual amenity. For example, unless the vegetation is evergreen or very dense (often the case in and on the edges of the settlement), lack of leaf cover for several months (here, often from mid-November to mid-April) can open up views which are closed in summer. Changing weather conditions affect the extent, nature, quality and experience of the view.

Nationally-important Views and Viewpoints

5.2.15 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 a highly important consideration. The most highly sensitive visual receptors are people visiting the AONB for the purpose of enjoying its outstanding natural beauty, and many walk along the ridgeline.

5.2.16 Located within the central eastern sector of the Malvern Hills AONB, Malvern Wells makes a relatively small (in terms of geographical extent / scale) but important (in terms of character) contribution to the AONB's landscapes and special qualities, and the visual / other experiences of visitors to the area.

5.2.17 In 2009, the Malvern Hills AONB Unit commissioned a study of views to and from the Malvern Hills (which informed its publication '*Guidance on Identifying and Grading Views and Viewpoints*'[117]).

5.2.18 The guidance emphasises that key views and corridors are a material consideration in planning and decision-making, 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. within its setting) as well as within the designated area: '*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*'.

[117] http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/KEYVIEWSFinalreport-lowreswebsite_000.pdf

5.2.19 A recent revision to National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) for the Natural Environment also clarifies how development within the setting of AONBs and other nationally-designated landscapes should be dealt with; it states:

'*Land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account*.' Paragraph: 042 Reference ID: 8-042-20190721 Revision date: 21/07/2019

5.2.20 The key viewpoints and associated view corridors were marked / noted on the base plans (see Figure 11), and the information was factored in to judgements about visual value and susceptibility to change. Where relevant to the study, views to and from the AONB's key viewpoints are described in more detail in the relevant sections / schedules.

5.2.21 The key views study for the AONB categorises the VPs and view corridors as i) 'Exceptional' (i.e. 'most important'), ii) 'Special', and iii) 'Representative'.

5.2.22 Several of the 'Exceptional' and 'Special' VPs are on the main summits along the Malvern Hills ridgeline, from North Hill in the north to Chase End Hill in the south. Views from these points are breath-taking. Many of the view corridors are 360° panoramas which often stretch to far-distant, hazy horizons, the view only curtailed by the curvature of the Earth.

5.2.23 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 becomes two-dimensional, or 'plan-form': this has the disadvantage of exposing unsightly roofscapes and other detracting elements, features, patterns and activities which may not be visible at lower levels.

5.2.24 In fact, views from the Hills are rarely if ever completely plan-form, something which is often forgotten when designing roofscapes - nowadays roofs are often 'camouflaged', but the elevations end up being pale or brightly-coloured. However, from most higher-level locations the elevations are just as visible as the roofs, and the contrast can be a major visual detractor (see photos in landscape baseline sections above).

5.2.25 The AONB Unit's guidance on views, and the LSCA's 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 bare terrain mapping only, and does not take into account built form, vegetation, or small topographical variations. Actual visibility must be determined as far as possible through on-the-ground assessment, driving and walking around the study area.

5.2.26 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.

5.2.27 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, on parish boundary)
- VP49 (Herefordshire Beacon / British Camp) (outside parish)
- VP50 (Chase End Hill) (outside parish).

5.2.28 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).

5.2.29 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 steadier rise over the mid-slopes, and features Little Malvern Priory.

5.2.30 In the AONB key views study, the key components of the view are described as follows:

'*Midground: Bold profile of peaks D* [Worcestershire Beacon] *to O* [Swinyard Hill] *rise towards the sky space across the view and dominate the composition. Contrast between the well wooded and bare slopes of the hills are noticed. Lack of groups of houses and urban elements in the view contribute to the attractive tranquil rural character. Woodland cover heightens the sense of mystery and magic quality of the hills, the anticipation and urge to explore what lies beyond them. Little Malvern Priory is seen nestled at the foot of hills at the centre of view.*

'Views of the well wooded and enclosed character of the south-east site of the hill slopes is distinctive, and the composition of Little Malvern Priory seen nestled against the hills is unique to views from this distance and direction.

'The juxtaposition of Herefordshire Beacon to the other peaks is also unique to this view.

'*Foreground: The tranquil rural setting enhances the enjoyment of the view.*'

5.2.31 The 'psychological experience' of the view is described as:

'*Very much attracted and intrigued by view. There is something magical about the lower hills (I* [Black Hill] *to O) in the centre of view which are not overpowering or daunting and appear more accessible (compared to A* [End Hill] *to K* [Herefordshire Beacon / British Camp]*), but still retain a sense of secrecy which fuels the viewer's desire to explore.*'

5.2.32 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.

5.2.33 The key components of the view are described as follows:

'*Midground: Bold profile of peaks B to I rise into the sky space across the view and dominate the composition. Herefordshire Beacon is seen behind this on the skyline to the right of view. Detail of bare hill tops can be distinguished. Urban areas of Great Malvern are visible, and houses at Malvern Well* [sic]*, Upper and Lower Wyche are prominent on the hill slopes.*

'*Foreground: Large open fields add to the sense of urbanisation.*

'*Night time: Lit development area on slopes of hills is not noticeable*.'

5.2.34 The psychological experience of the view is described as:

'*Sense of arrival, from the visual combination of the urban areas at the foot of the hills which give a sense of destination and prosperity, and the profile and character of the hills in the mid-ground which are seen as a backdrop and ending rather than having a passage through*.'

5.2.35 More detailed information about intervisibility between Areas and the places where the AONB's key viewpoints are located is set out in the following section, and in the LSCA Area schedules where relevant.

Local Views and Key Viewpoints

5.2.36 As well as considering views of the parish from the nationally-important VPs, this study assessed 'local' views, especially those to and from the individual LSCA Areas, in order to determine the nature of the views, their value and susceptibility to change, and the Area's degree of visibility from different locations.

5.2.37 It is not always possible to fully assess views on the ground, as usually only places which are publicly-accessible are visited during the surveys. However, a few 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.

5.2.38 As part of the preliminary LSCA desktop studies, a ZTV was ascertained for each of the Areas. The purpose of this was to give a preliminary indication of the likely visibility of new built form located on the highest part of each Area, thus representing the 'worst-case' scenario.

5.2.39 The ZTVs were based on an analysis of OS map contours, and utilised geographic information system **(**GIS) software (QGIS)[118]. As noted above, they do not factor in small topographical variations, built form or vegetation; however they are extremely useful when assessing the likely visibility of an area in the absence of existing tree cover, if there are concerns that the vegetation is 'weak' and / or may be short-lived. They are also used to determine physical interinfluence during the baseline character studies.

5.2.40 For this commission, 7.5m was added to the ground level at each ZTV location point and used in the ZTV calculations - this represents a typical two-storey dwelling (and assumes a viewing height of 2m).

5.2.41 Another important and relevant source of reference for this part of the LSCA was the Visual Study carried out in 2018 as part of the evidence-base required for Malvern Town's Neighbourhood Plan. The findings have guided and informed the Plan's policies[119], and are now a material factor in assessment, planning and decision-making processes.

5.2.42 The Visual Study identified several 'Key Views', which included Key Viewpoints (KVPs), Key Focal Points (KFPs), Key View Routes (KVRs), Key View Zones (KVZs) and Key Gateways in and around Malvern's Neighbourhood Plan Area (NPA).

5.2.43 For consistency, the same terms used for grading views and their associated view corridors in the Malvern Hills AONB Unit's guidance on views (see above) were applied in the Malvern Town Visual Study (i.e. 'Exceptional', 'Special' and 'Representative'); however, whilst the principles of the criteria were the same as the AONB's, they were adapted to reflect the 'local' (as opposed to 'national') context and value of the views, and without the focus of the view necessarily being the Malvern Hills.

5.2.44 For various reasons, it was agreed that the Malvern Wells LSCA visual study would adopt the same terminology; however, it would only identify 'Exceptional' KVPs, and not potential KFPs or KVZs, although KVRs were considered (see below).

5.2.45 Some of the views from Malvern Town's KVPs are over parts of, or from the edges of, Malvern Wells parish, and some of the key gateways are on the boundaries between Malvern Town and Malvern Wells, for example at the junction of Blackmore Park Road and Peachfield Road. Where relevant they were factored in to the Malvern Wells LSCA visual studies (see Figure 11).

5.2.46 Another source of reference in the process of identifying key views was the draft CAA. The appraisal documents contain three maps which show the key features / attributes within the proposed (modified) Conservation Area boundary; a number of 'significant views' are also identified. These are also shown on Figure 11. In some cases, the CAA 'significant' views and / or viewpoints coincide with those identified in the LSCA.

5.2.47 Other viewpoints were identified with the help of the local community. During the public consultation exercises carried out as part of the NDP process, in April 2019, MWPC delivered a questionnaire to each household within the parish, seeking local residents' opinions on a number of topics including views. The results were factored in to both the baseline visual studies, and judgements about visual value (see Section 6).

5.2.48 Once all the information had been gathered, potential key viewpoints and view routes within the ZTV were marked on the base maps. Then, the viewpoints and view routes were visited and assessed on the ground. Those which were not accessible were assessed through analysis of OS map contours, photographs taken from viewpoints looking towards them, and Google Earth.

5.2.49 Views from the viewpoints and along the view routes were analysed to determine which of the high value landscape features were visible / potentially visible, and what contribution they made to the view. The degree of visibility from / towards the viewpoints was noted. Each was 'tested' against the visual value criteria in Table 7 Appendix G, and the LSCA visual value criteria which include locally-specific features and attributes. (More information about visual value is set out in the following section.)

5.2.50 A total of 36 viewpoints met the 'Exceptional view' criteria, and these were selected as KVPs. Their locations are shown on Figure 12.

[118] GIS is a system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyse, manage, and present all types of geographical data.

[119] https://www.malvernhills.gov.uk/documents/10558/9337183/11.+The+Malvern+Neighbourhood+Plan+-+Visual+Study+October+2018+-+Carly+Tinkler.pdf/3026ceae-a380-8628-3c09-3119da144c06

5.2.51 As well as the KVPs, several KVRs were identified (also shown on Figure 12). The criteria for their selection was based on those used for the selection of the KVPs; however, whilst there are 'Exceptional' views along the routes, inevitably levels of visual interest / quality vary from place to place along them, and depend on direction of travel and angle / elevation of view.

5.2.52 The KVRs, and the key features / factors / attributes visible along them are as follows:

Wells Road

Wells settlement

Heritage assets (gas lamps, listed buildings)

Well-used / significant transport corridor

Both directions

Bridleways and fps on Malvern Common

Very high visual value; panoramic views

Exceptional views of Hills to west, contextual landscapes to east

Natural and heritage assets

Wells settlement

Popular recreational routes

Both directions

Bridleways and fps on golf course; fp adjacent New Pool; and fp south of Warren Farm

Very high visual value

Exceptional views of Hills travelling / looking west

Natural assets

Well-used / popular routes

Blackmore Park Road

Exceptional views of Hills looking west travelling in both directions

Natural assets

Well-used / significant transport corridor

Hanley Road

Travelling east

Exceptional views of Hills

Natural assets

Gateway / approach to Hills

Fps around Brickbarns; bridleway along Shuttlefast Land; and between the Abbey and Blackmore Park Road

Panoramic views

Exceptional views of Hills to west, contextual landscapes to east

Natural assets

Popular routes

Historic routes / approaches to Hills

Locally-popular footpaths / bridleways / other routes and trails.

5.2.53 The majority of KVPs and KVRs are within the parish / on its boundaries. However, some of the KVRs are along key approaches to the parish with views towards it and so extend beyond the boundary, and three KVPs with views towards the parish were identified beyond the boundary.

5.2.54 Two further potential KVPs were visited which lie outside the LSCA study area - North Hill and Hangman's Hill. Parts of the settlement are visible from both summits, but the degree of interinfluence and intervisibility with the LSCA Areas is relatively low due to distance, screening topography, and dense, mature vegetation, so they were discounted as 'Exceptional' KVPs.

5.2.55 In most cases, the settlement is the focus of views from the KVPs, although occasionally - for example on the parish boundary along the eastern end of Peachfield Road - there are superb long-distance panoramic views away from the parish.

5.2.56 The views from KVPs and along KVRs are excellent illustrations of Malvern Wells' local and wider landscape character, and help with understanding the importance and value of the settlement's context and setting. All the views feature several of the Wells' numerous and varied special landscape qualities and assets, some are individually 'special' / unique.

5.2.57 The next step in the process was to determine which of the LSCA Areas were visible from each of the KVPs and vice versa. The degree of visibility was noted (clear / partial / none), and whether new development (assuming two-storey residential properties) on the Area could potentially be visible.

5.2.58 Finally, conclusions were drawn about how the most sensitive visual receptors at the key viewpoints (and / or along associated KVRs) could potentially be affected by new residential development on each of the LSCA Areas.

5.2.59 The information gathered was analysed, and was used to establish the Areas' visual area of influence. The results were factored in to judgements about their visual value and likely visual susceptibility to change, and their associated level of visual sensitivity / capacity.

5.2.60 The results are summarised in the LSCA Area schedules in Appendix H (which include photographs of the Areas) and the LSCA Areas Tables of Comparison (Levels) in Appendix K. A more detailed breakdown is provided in the LSCA Area Visibility schedules in Appendix J. Diagrams showing the degree of / potential for visibility of each LSCA Area from the KVPs are contained in Appendix I.

5.2.61 In future, the community may decide that some or all of the KVPs / KVRs are worthy of protection through NDP policy - see Recommendations in Section 8.

6 Landscape and Visual Sensitivity

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 The main aim of this LSCA is to establish the landscape and visual capacity of certain parts of the parish (i.e. the selected 'LSCA Areas') to accommodate new residential development. From this, it will be possible to make informed decisions about where the line of the future settlement boundary should be drawn.

6.1.2 The conclusions about levels of landscape and visual capacity, and more information about the settlement boundary line, are set out in the next section. This section explains how the conclusions were reached. It sets out and describes the processes that were followed, the key terms and phrases used, and the information that was factored in to judgements about levels of sensitivity, which help to determine capacity.

6.1.3 In order to determine whether any of the LSCA Areas could potentially accept new houses 'without undue consequences for the baseline situation' (see below), it was necessary to respond to the questions raised in Section 2.

6.1.4 The first question is '*What is there and who sees it?*'. The response is the subject of the landscape character and visual baseline sections above.

6.1.5 The second question is '*How important is what is there, to whom, and why?*'. The response requires all the information gathered during the baseline studies to be synthesised and analysed, and judgements made about levels of 'Landscape and Visual Value', as explained below.

6.1.6 The third question is '*What is the nature of the change*?' In this case, the change would be in the form of new residential development where none existed before. As mentioned above, to achieve the fine-grained results which are needed here, certain assumptions have been made about matters such as a) the level of quality of new schemes being commensurate with requirements conferred by the AONB designation (see Section 2), and b) the type of effects likely to arise (see below).

6.1.7 The fourth question is '*Is what is there, and / or the people who see it, tolerant of, or sensitive to, this type of change?*', and the fifth is '*How and to what degree would the changes affect what is there and those who see it*?'. Responses to both questions are given in this section.

6.1.8 In summary, once the baseline studies and analyses are complete, the next stage in the process of drawing conclusions about an LSCA Area's level of Capacity requires the following to be established:

i. Levels of Landscape and Visual Value.

ii. Levels of Landscape and Visual Susceptibility to Change.

6.1.9 Once these judgements have been made, the levels of Value and Susceptibility to Change are combined (as shown in the matrices in Appendix G) to arrive at theoretical levels of both Landscape and Visual Sensitivity.

6.1.10 At that point, consideration is given to the nature and degree (or 'magnitude') of effects that could arise from the construction of new residential development on each of the LSCA Areas. The potential for secondary mitigation (i.e. over and above the assumptions made about primary mitigation / scheme quality) is factored in where relevant.

6.1.11 The levels of Landscape and Visual Sensitivity are combined with the likely levels of Magnitudes of Landscape and Visual Effect (see matrices).

6.1.12 The results indicate the theoretical overall levels of effects on i) landscape character and ii) visual amenity that could be expected to arise if new houses were built in a specific location. Professional judgement is always applied, and the results are tested and compared before final conclusions are drawn. This information informs judgements about Overall Capacity, as explained further in Section 7.

6.1.13 For ease of comparison, Appendix K contains a series of tables which set out each LSCA Area's levels of Landscape and Visual Value, Susceptibility to Change, Sensitivity and Capacity, in order of a) Area numbering; b) Landscape Capacity; c) Visual Capacity; and d) Overall Capacity.

6.2 Landscape Value

6.2.1 This section provides an introduction to the concept of 'landscape value'.

6.2.2 At the outset it is important to note that judgements about 'landscape value' include consideration of 'visual value'. The terms are explained in more detail below, but in summary, landscape and visual value are separate entities which are assessed and reported separately, albeit they are closely interrelated.

6.2.3 A landscape can have high value regardless of whether anyone can see (or experience) it or not, even if a contributary factor to its high value is 'scenic beauty' (or 'tranquillity').

6.2.4 Visual value considers recognition of the value attached to particular views by people, and indicators of the value which is attached to certain views.

6.2.5 Section 2 sets out an overview of the methods used and processes followed in making judgements about levels of both landscape and visual value. Where necessary, these, and the criteria which have been used in the study, are explained further below.

6.2.6 Understanding 'Landscape Value' is essential, especially as it plays a major role in many of the UK's environmental, landscape and social planning policies, for example in the context of NPPF paragraph 170 a)'s 'valued landscapes', and the Natural Environment PPG (revised July 2019). The latter states: '*Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures…where necessary*'.

6.2.7 Landscape Value is also an integral component of 'Quality of Life' (see Landscape Quality section below).

6.2.8 In addition, Landscape Value is an integral part of the process of making judgements about levels of landscape and visual sensitivity, capacity, and effects arising from various forms of change / new development.

6.2.9 Landscape value has been defined in 'GLVIA3'[120] as '*The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons*'.

6.2.10 The Council of Europe has published a useful document[121] which explains the concept of landscape value, and why it is so important. It describes the different types of landscape value, including economic, social and heritage.

6.2.11 The function or role that a particular area or site performs in the landscape may also add to its value. As well as the provision of Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services[122], GI and so on, a piece of land may be an important open space / gap / buffer / corridor / approach / gateway; it may also make an important contribution to its wider landscape context and setting (including that of valuable features), especially our understanding of them. (Landscape functions / contributions are explained in more detail in Section 3.15, and where relevant to an LSCA Area, are noted in the LSCA Area schedules.)

6.2.12 In 2002, the European Landscape Convention (ELC) was published; it places great emphasis on the 'value of landscapes'. The ELC was informed by the landscape character and value assessment work carried out in the UK during the 1980s and 90s, much of which was also published as LCA guidance in 2002.

6.2.13 The 2002 LCA guidance explains that:

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[120] *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition* (2013) Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (usually referred to as 'GLVIA3') - see Section 3

[121] *Naturopa No. 98* (2002) http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Landscape/naturopa_en.asp

[122] Natural Capital can be defined as follows: '*Natural Capital is the sum of our ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, soils, minerals, our air and our seas. These are all elements of nature that either directly or indirectly bring value to people and the country at large. They do this in many ways but chiefly by providing us with food, clean air and water, wildlife, energy, wood, recreation and protection from hazards.*' (HM Government, 2018, p. 19). The flow of goods and services supplied by Natural Capital is called ecosystem services which are *"the benefits people obtain from ecosystems"* (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005, p. V) such as space for recreation including associated health benefits and flood risk mitigation services. In 2011, the UK Government published its Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) making a commitment to *"put natural capital at the heart of government accounting"* (HM Government, 2011, p. 36). See for example recent Natural Capital-based Health Economic Assessment in the Malvern Hills AONB (Hölzinger, O. 2019: *Malvern Hills & Commons Health Economic Assessment*. Malvern Hills AONB Partnership, Worcester)

'People value landscape for many different reasons, not all of them related to traditional concepts of aesthetics and beauty. It can provide habitats for wildlife and a cultural record of how people have lived on the land and harnessed its resources. Landscape can have social and community value, as an important part of people's day-to-day lives. It can contribute to a sense of identity, well-being, enjoyment and inspiration. It has economic value, providing the context for economic activity and often being a central factor in attracting business and tourism. Landscape Character Assessment has emerged as an appropriate way to look at landscape because it provides a structured approach to identifying character and distinctiveness as well as value.'

6.2.14 As GLVIA3 points out, '*a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons*'. The problem is that inevitably, judgements have to be made about what is of greatest importance / value, to whom, and why.

6.2.15 The most highly valuable landscapes are usually protected through very high-level designations. They are landscapes which have features / functions / qualities / attributes which are known and agreed to be of international significance / rarity, and / or of benefit to the planet, and to the largest numbers of people.

6.2.16 World Heritage Sites (WHSs) are recognised as being of 'Outstanding Universal Value'. In the UK, AONBs are examples of landscapes which are widely agreed to be highly valuable for their *outstanding* natural beauty, and which thus require protection through national designation and planning policy.

6.2.17 Some LPAs have (or had[123]) 'local' (i.e. county- / district-wide) landscape designations and policies which specifically protect them, such as 'Special Landscape Areas' and 'Areas of Great Landscape Value'. However, '*The fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value*'. [GLVIA3]

6.2.18 Evidently, a 'small patch of urban wasteland' may be as valuable to some as a National Park is to others, if it is all they have to call and use as a 'landscape'.

[123] 'Local' landscape designations started being 'phased out' during the late 20th / early 21st century. This was partly because the criteria for their selection were based on out-of-date and subjective concepts about 'scenic beauty', and partly due to the fact that the character of many areas' landscapes was changing more rapidly than ever before, making the original assessments redundant. Another reason may have been the constraint that such designations posed to new development. However, it is not out of the question that local designations could be retained / re-introduced: much depends on whether agreement can be reached about the interpretation of NPPF para. 170 a) (the wording of the paragraph is confusing and the meaning is very unclear - it is currently the subject of much professional / legal debate).

6.2.19 The 2002 LCA guidance says that:

'*A landscape may be valued by different communities of interest for many different reasons without any formal designation, recognising, for example, perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness; special cultural associations; the influence and presence of other conservation interests… Landscape can have social and community value, as an important part of people's day-to-day lives. It can contribute to a sense of identity, well-being, enjoyment and inspiration. It has economic value, providing the context for economic activity and often being a central factor in attracting business and tourism*.'

6.2.20 Importantly, the NPPF emphasises that a landscape does not have to be designated in order for it to be 'valued', and for the planning system to protect it from inappropriate development. Para. 036 of the Natural Environment PPG (revised July 2019) emphasises that the NPPF *'is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside*'.

6.2.21 In fact, the community and social value of the landscape matters greatly in land use planning, especially as this value is tied to the important role that landscapes - and views / experiences of them - play in peoples' 'Quality of Life' (see below).

6.2.22 The ELC states:

'*It is because people have a perception of their territory (definition of landscape) that they are capable of evaluating it, namely, of applying to this area "as perceived by people" value systems which underlie landscape assessment. This evaluation by the population enables people to voice their aspirations, the expression of which in the form of landscape quality objectives is the basic principle of landscape policies and of specific measures with a view to landscape protection, management and planning.*

'*The landscape also bears within it a system of* ***social values****, which sometimes have to be highlighted through awareness-raising activities.* ***The landscape's social values are tied to its importance for quality of life, health, and to its contribution to the creation of local cultures.*** [my emphases]

'*Landscape identification, characterisation and assessment underlie landscape quality objectives. This is why such assessment should be done with the interested parties and population concerned, and not just with specialists in landscape appraisal and operations*'*.*

6.2.23 Unfortunately, whilst neighbourhood / community value is a highly important consideration in value studies, and in judgements / conclusions / decisions, it is one which is often overlooked - perhaps because it can be difficult (and time-consuming) to quantify.

6.2.24 'High-level' / rapidly-undertaken studies and assessments may conclude that if there are no designations or 'obvious' features of local importance / interest in the area in question, and / or if the landscape is not in good condition, then it is of limited landscape / visual value, and likely to be tolerant of the changes being proposed. Yet the value of these places to people / their environment on a local level may be significant: '***A service that matters at national level is not necessarily more important than one that matters only locally***.' [Source: Quality of Life Capital methodology - see below]

6.2.25 Furthermore, 'high-level' studies often miss features which are not only of significant local value, but of national value due to their rarity - a good example is the historic landscapes of Blackmore Park, of which much of what is now Malvern Wells parish was part.

6.2.26 Notwithstanding this, if 'local' value studies are carried out, the methods, judgements and conclusions must be objective, transparent and evidence-based. As with Landscape Quality (and the two are related - see below), there will always be a degree of subjectivity in Landscape Value judgements, but methods have been developed to quantify Landscape Value objectively, including the 'Quality of Life Capital' approach (also explained below).

6.2.27 Public consultation is one of the best ways of objectively establishing what is important to the local community and why, and can result in judgements - especially those about what is valuable enough to be protected - ratified by 'common consensus' as far as possible.

6.2.28 In Malvern Wells NDP's case, consultation exercises were carried out by MWPC during the course of the NDP process, including meetings, events and questionnaires.

6.2.29 Some of the questions, especially those about landscape and visual value, were based on suggestions from the LSCA team. The responses were analysed, and the results were included as they were an important aspect of the assessment process.

6.2.30 For example, local residents were asked for their opinions about matters such as whether protecting / enhancing landscape character / visual amenity / heritage assets / biodiversity is important to them; which areas could be proposed as LGSs; which areas are of recreational value; whether there is a need for more community facilities; whether the protection of ancient / veteran trees is important; what type of new built form might be acceptable; and so on. Residents were also asked to describe a location in the parish which is important to them, and crucially, to explain why.

6.2.31 In addition, anecdotal evidence gathered during the study was considered and included where relevant.

6.2.32 Guidance for landscape and other assessments sets out in some detail methods for establishing Landscape Value; however, it must be noted that in LVIA, Landscape Value is a factor in determining levels of Landscape Sensitivity, whereas in LSCA, it is used to determine levels of Landscape Capacity. For a variety of reasons, this LSCA adopts the LVIA approach (see Section 2).

6.2.33 Other methods which have been developed to objectively quantify value include the Quality of Life Capital (QoLC) approach[124]. LCA can inform a QoLC exercise by indicating the benefits that individual features or areas provide in creating sense of place; conversely, QoLC can be used to assess character areas and their 'services' / functions, as well as their capacity to accept change / various forms of development.

6.2.34 The most important part of the process is setting and applying objective criteria for determining value (and other) levels; those used in the LSCA are derived from GLVIA3 and professional experience, and have been peer-reviewed (see Appendix G).

6.2.35 Box 5.1 in GLVIA3 Section 5 '*Establishing the value of the landscape*' is a useful starting point for setting criteria and making value judgements. It lists a '*Range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes*'[125] (the footnote is important).

6.2.36 The factors are as follows:

- Landscape quality / condition (see below)
- Scenic quality (AONBs are highly valued for their 'outstanding natural beauty' and scenic qualities; importantly. the term 'natural beauty' used in that context includes an area's geology, climate, soils, animals, communities, archaeology, buildings, the people who live in it (past and present) and the perceptions of those who visit it)
- Rarity
- Representativeness
- Conservation interests ('... *the presence of features of wildlife… or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right*.')
- Recreation value
- Perceptual (and 'aesthetic') aspects
- Associations (with people, events, art etc.).

6.2.37 Normally, value and other criteria are based on a 'hierarchy', i.e. a scale that ranges from international / national level to regional / countywide / local and neighbourhood level.

[124] QoLC approach guidance was developed jointly by the Countryside Agency, English Nature, English Heritage and the Environment Agency to 'provide a consistent and integrated way of managing for Quality of Life' (https://www.google.co.uk/#q=Quality+of+life+capital+overview+report+2001). Although this guidance concentrates on the benefits for human Quality of Life that come from the environment, the approach is as valid for social and economic as for environmental benefits. The relationship between QoLC and landscape issues is set out in Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland *Topic Paper 2: Links to other sustainability tools*. Essentially characterisation describes, whereas QoLC evaluates and derives aims. The two are complementary.

[125] The term 'valued landscapes' in the title of Box 5.1 is not intended to specifically refer to the 'valued landscapes' of NPPF para. 170. The former derives from the 2002 LCA guidance, the list having been produced to help with the future designation of high value landscapes such as AONBs and Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLVs). The NPPF adopted the term in its policies in 2012, via the 2002 ELC; the ELC was informed by the landscape character and value assessment work carried out in the UK during the 1980s and 90s, much of which was published as guidance in 2002.

6.2.38 It should be noted that not all the criteria need to be met in order for an Area to be categorised at a certain value level: they simply indicate the value factors which need to be taken into consideration, and professional judgement must be applied when deciding which ones are most relevant.

6.2.39 As well as those of high national / 'local' value, features / factors / qualities / attributes / assets considered to be of high 'neighbourhood' value are noted in the baseline landscape character sections above, with more detail provided in the LSCA Area schedules as appropriate. Examples include 'parish assets' featured on MWPC's website[126], which include the war memorial on Wells Road; the chapel and cemetery on Green Lane; St Wulstan's Village Green; gas lamps; and Assarts Road playing field / play area.

6.2.40 The 'Jubilee Map' in the Village Hall shows the locations of many of the parish's 'valued' assets.

LANDSCAPE QUALITY

6.2.41 Landscape (and views of them) may be judged to be of a certain level of 'quality'. Landscapes may also possess certain 'qualities'. In addition, landscapes (and associated views) can make highly important contributions to peoples' 'Quality of Life'.

6.2.42 In landscape and visual assessments, a landscape's 'quality' is factored in to judgements about its landscape and visual value; however, it is important to note that 'quality' is only one of many 'value factors' which must be considered (see reference to GLVIA3 Box 5.1 above).

6.2.43 Landscape Quality can be quantified (see for example the criteria in Table 1 Appendix B, and those used in the Green Flag Award Scheme[127]). However, peoples' opinions about 'quality' vary, and are often 'subjective'.

6.2.44 Of course, landscape practitioners routinely have to deal with the issue of subjectivity, especially in relation to quality and consequent value. The 2002 LCA guidance promoted the use of objective, evidence-based character study to determine levels of quality and value, as opposed to the more subjective aspects of value such as 'scenic beauty' which had previously been used as the basis for many landscape designations including AONBs (see footnote 123 above).

6.2.45 There are different aspects of 'landscape quality' which need to be considered in landscape assessment. From an LCA perspective, '*Landscape quality (or condition) is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place*.'

6.2.46 'Landscape quality (condition)' is defined in GLVIA3 Box 5.1 as '*A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements*.' A landscape's quality is very much related to its 'health'.

6.2.47 The term 'quality' in the 'landscape' context also reflects '… *the value that is placed on landscapes which appeal primarily to the visual senses, but this value is not absolute and tends to reflect prevailing ideas about which landscapes are of special value. Although quality is a separate issue from evaluation it is often linked because landscapes of higher quality may be more valued and more likely to be designated.*' [Source: Scottish Natural Heritage]

6.2.48 Quality in landscape terms may reflect a place which is considered beautiful because it is unspoilt, or because it is well-managed and cared-for, and the features which make it special are in good condition and intact. It may also be a judgement, varying from person to person, about the aesthetic and / or perceptual quality, or qualities, of the landscape, and how it 'makes them feel'.

6.2.49 LCA *Topic Paper 6* reminds us that changes to factors such as landscape quality can change the way in which the landscape is perceived. This also affects its value.

6.2.50 Levels of landscape quality can be reduced through loss of condition resulting from certain management practices or lack of them, for example: this needs to be factored in to judgements about the landscape's overall sensitivity and capacity, albeit with consideration given to whether there is scope for improvement / restoration. However, it is important to note that a landscape may be categorised as high quality because it is a wild but very healthy natural SSSI habitat, or contains

[126] http://www.malvernwells-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/parish-assets

[127] http://greenflagaward.org/judges/judging-criteria/

piles of stones which are an ancient scheduled monument, which may not appear conventionally 'beautiful' to the casual observer.

6.2.51 In Malvern Wells' case, the LSCA concluded that broadly, levels of landscape quality vary considerably throughout the parish, and much depends on how the land is used and managed.

6.2.52 Broadly, the landscapes of the wider area are of higher quality where settlement is scattered or absent and the land is well-managed. Levels of quality drop as a result of the effects of intensive agriculture and horsiculture where good management is not practised, with subsequent erosion / loss of many natural features and traditional landcover. Quality also tends to deteriorate along the main roads, around some of the farmsteads, and on the modern residential fringes, but, with a few exceptions, the effects do not extend far from them. The greatest loss of quality occurs where eroded areas 'coalesce', physically and / or visually, forming a larger area which gives rise to a greater level of adverse effects.

6.2.53 The levels of quality and condition of the Hills and commons are Very High. Other areas where levels of quality are High / Very high include St Wulstan's LNR; the Village Green; the cemetery; parts of the golf course; certain pasture fields; and certain wooded areas (both native and ornamental, in gardens / other private spaces and public areas, along watercourses and trackways, and in the open countryside).

6.2.54 The LSCA 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, and its layout is based on the 19th century hedgerow structure that evolved following enclosure.

6.2.55 The TCS is also currently the subject of site-specific studies including an LSCA which will inform long-terms plans for strategies and improvements which in turn should help to better integrate it (and any future change / expansion) 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 was judged to be Low to Moderate. However, this is a preliminary and relatively high-level judgement: the TCS-specific studies may result in the level being moved up or down.

6.2.56 The condition of the landscape in / adjacent to the Areas is noted in the schedules. However, as set out above, even if current condition is moderate or poor, eroded / lost elements and features could potentially be improved / restored. It is therefore necessary to take into account the level of quality of the landscape within which the Area lies: whilst the same issue also applies to larger areas, they tend to reflect more general trends in land use and land management, and thus the overall quality which forms the context for each Area.

6.2.57 As well as landscape 'quality', landscape 'qualities' must also be considered in judgements about value (and susceptibility to change - see following section).

6.2.58 These are described in the baseline sections, but in summary, the studies found that in certain parts of the parish, the levels of the landscapes' aesthetic and perceptual qualities are high, and occasionally very high.

6.2.59 The other aspect of 'Quality' that needs to be considered in landscape and visual assessments is 'Quality of Life' (QoL).

6.2.60 QoL can be defined as '*the standard of health, comfort, and happiness experienced by an individual or group*'; the World Health Organisation (WHO) defines it as '*the individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals*'.

6.2.61 QoL is a term widely used in legislation and policy (for example NPPF paras. 91, 127, 180, 184, and in the definition of GI). Pursuing sustainable development, which is at the heart of national planning policy, involves seeking positive improvements in people's Quality of Life as well as in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment - of course, these are interrelated.

6.2.62 QoL integrates both objective and subjective value indicators; it covers a very broad range of life domains and individual values. It is multidimensional, with the five key dimensions usually being described as: a) physical wellbeing; b) material wellbeing; c) social wellbeing; d) emotional wellbeing; and e) development and activity.

6.2.63 For further information about the subject of QoL and 'wellbeing' in relation to landscape, see Section 3.12.

LANDSCAPE VALUE: SUMMARY OF LSCA FINDINGS

6.2.64 As explained in Section 2 above, once the baseline studies were complete, the information gathered was synthesised and analysed. Using the criteria and professional judgement, levels of value were ascribed - broadly, as well as to the individual features / factors found throughout the study area. The features' 'areas of influence', and levels of quality / value, were also considered.

6.2.65 Then, the relative landscape value of each of the LSCA Areas was established, taking into account whether there were high-value factors / indicators both within the Area and beyond it, and noting where there was interinfluence between them (and if so, to what degree).

6.2.66 As mentioned above, and in accordance with the value criteria in Appendix G, the AONB designation confers a 'Very High' level of landscape (and visual) value. This does not necessarily mean that the landscape is in good condition or of high quality, nor that it has a high degree of susceptibility to change (although it should be borne in mind that scenic beauty and levels of quality / special qualities are the main reasons for the designation being made in the first place). The LSCA needs to 'go beneath the blanket' of this designation and consider the value, sensitivity and capacity of each Area on its own merit, although the weight of the designation is still factored in to any decisions about the acceptability or otherwise of any proposed changes to the baseline situation.

6.2.67 Levels of Landscape Value within the LSCA Areas / Sub-Areas range from Low / Medium to Very High (results reported without the AONB designation factored in). The majority of the Areas (18 out of 29) were categorised as 'High'.

6.3 Landscape Susceptibility to Change

6.3.1 LVIA guidance (GLVIA3 para. 5.40) defines 'Susceptibility to Change' as:

'*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 polices and strategies*'.

6.3.2 In other words, can new development / other form of change be accommodated without giving rise to unacceptable levels of adverse effects on a landscape's character, or the way that it is perceived / experienced, and without compromising the values attached to it? And, as per the question raised in Section 2, is the change likely to be acceptable or not in relation to current planning policy, guidance and strategy?

6.3.3 The criteria in Table 3 Appendix G are based on GLVIA3's concepts.

6.3.4 In making judgements about how susceptible the landscape's character is to change, the nature of the change must first be specified. In this case, it would be in the form of new, two-storey residential development (and associated infrastructure etc.) with certain quality / mitigation / enhancement measures embedded.

6.3.5 The LSCA concluded that within the parish, overall levels of Susceptibility to Change are generally Very High or High, but that there are considerable local variations in the landscape.

6.3.6 It found that levels of landscape Susceptibility to Change within the LSCA Areas / Sub-Areas vary considerably, ranging from Very Low / Low to Very High. However, only two of the Areas were categorised as Very Low / Low; the majority (16 no.) were categorised as Very High.

6.4 Landscape Sensitivity

6.4.1 A landscape's sensitivity is not a baseline quality or attribute: it is the *outcome* of the process of identifying and analysing the landscape's natural, cultural and aesthetic factors and features which may be sensitive to certain types of change.

6.4.2 According to LCA Guidance Topic Paper 6, '*Landscape sensitivity... relates to the stability of character, the degree to which that character is robust enough to continue and to be able to recuperate from loss or damage. A landscape with a character of high sensitivity is one that, once lost, would be difficult to restore; a character that, if valued, must be afforded particular care and consideration in order for it to survive*'.

6.4.3 LCA Guidance also emphasises that '*A landscape is sensitive if it is likely to be adversely affected by the type of change proposed*'.

6.4.4 Small changes in a landscape of high sensitivity could be very damaging, whereas large changes in a landscape of low sensitivity could potentially be more acceptable.

6.4.5 The model for analysing landscape sensitivity is based on the following assumptions:

i) Within each landscape character type, certain attributes may play a more significant role than others in defining the character of that landscape;

ii) Within each type, certain attributes may be more vulnerable or resilient to change than others;

iii) Within each type, the degree to which different attributes are replaceable, or may be restored, may vary; and

iv) The condition of the landscape - the degree to which the described character of a particular landscape type is actually present 'on the ground' - will vary within a given area of that landscape type, and it is likely to change over time.

6.4.6 As explained above, 'theoretical' levels of Landscape Sensitivity are derived by combining levels of Landscape Value with those of Landscape Susceptibility to Change. For example, the combination of a High level of Landscape Value combined with a Moderate level of Susceptibility to Change would theoretically result in a 'Moderate to High' level of Sensitivity (see matrix in Table 4, Appendix G). Once all the results have been set out, the results are analysed, tested and compared, and professional judgement is applied.

6.4.7 Broadly speaking, the results show that the sensitivity levels of the landscapes within the parish are High to Very High; there are very few areas of Low sensitivity.

6.4.8 In terms of the LSCA Areas / Sub-Areas, just over half (15 no.) are of Very High / High and Very High sensitivity, and just under a quarter (7 no.) are High. The remainder (9 no.) range from Low (2 no.) to Medium / High.

6.5 Visual Value

6.5.1 Judgements about levels of Visual Value take into account a) recognition of the value attached to particular views by people including residents, and b) specific indicators of the value attached to views by visitors especially, which may include featuring on maps / in guide books, the provision of parking spaces / facilities, and references in literature / art (see GLVIA3 para. 6.37).

6.5.2 However, before considering visual value it is essential firstly to identify and analyse the baseline landscape character factors which contribute to visual value. It is true that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder', which means that in respect of factors such as 'landscape quality' and 'scenic beauty' opinions may differ - as mentioned above, an unmanaged area of scrubland may look untidy, but it may be the site of an ancient monument, or a very healthy habitat supporting protected species.

6.5.3 Conversely, as noted above, designations and other features / factors of high value are not always visible on the ground, or visually-obvious - a certain landscape may be the subject of a painting or a musical score, or the site of a famous battle.

6.5.4 Analysis of the baseline 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 its local distinctiveness.

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

6.5.6 The numbers of people experiencing a 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.

6.5.7 In landscape and visual assessments generally, the factors which contribute to the very highest levels of visual value - as noted in published guidance from which the LSCA visual value criteria are derived - include:

- Views from, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of international and national importance e.g. World Heritage Sites (these are of 'outstanding universal value'), AONBs, Scheduled Monuments, Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens etc., especially where these contribute to the significance of an asset / feature.
- View is of outstanding scenic beauty (common consensus e.g. AONB).

- View makes a highly important contribution to the understanding of landscape function / contribution (landscape 'functions' and 'contributions' can include setting / context (of natural and historic areas / features, settlements, built form etc.), strategic gaps, buffer zones, corridors / links, patterns e.g. of open green spaces, approaches and gateways).
- Likely to be the subject of planning policy and / or guidance / protected views.
- Views from landscapes / viewpoints within highly popular visitor attractions / tourist destinations, and / or from national trails, used by very large numbers of people.
- Views with social / cultural / historic associations (e.g. in art and literature, or an historically-important vista over a battlefield) of international / national importance.

6.5.8 As mentioned above, in Malvern Wells' case, the study had to 'go beneath the blanket' of the AONB designation (although this will always be a consideration when planning change in the area) - and identify the features and factors which have high 'local' visual significance and value, i.e. within the visual study area.

6.5.9 The criteria which were used to determine levels of visual value for this study included many of the above factors but at a local / neighbourhood level. The criteria for high local visual value can be summarised as:

'*High-quality view which reflects the best of the area's characteristic elements, features and qualities. View is a very good representation of the area's strong sense of place and / or local distinctiveness. Few or no visual detractors present in the view. View very accessible / widely enjoyed by local people'*.

6.5.10 More specifically, the criteria for high local visual value include:

- Views from well-used and popular local community / visitor attractions, including long-distance / themed trails, public footpaths, public open spaces / Local Green Spaces, parks, commons etc., used by relatively large numbers of people.
- Views with important local social / cultural / historic associations / memories (including views which inspired the work of artists of all kinds, past and present, of national or local repute).
- Views that are indicative of Malvern Wells' unique history, special 'sense of place' and 'local distinctiveness', and which reflect its intrinsic character and key characteristics.
- Views and viewpoints that contribute to peoples' 'experience' and quality of life, health and wellbeing (physical / mental), education, recreation etc.

6.5.11 Not all of the listed criteria need to be met in order for a view to be categorised as being of high value, and professional judgement must be applied. For example, a view may be valuable due solely to its scenic beauty (albeit there may be several factors that contribute to its 'beauty'); another view may not be considered 'beautiful', but is of high value because the various features within / qualities of the view are very good illustrations of the area's natural and / or cultural evolution. Sometimes a view's level of value meets criteria in two categories, in which its level may be 'split', and reported as 'Medium / High', for example.

6.5.12 The following were factored in to judgements:

- Levels of scenic beauty / quality
- Degree of visibility of a particular area in views towards it
- Degree and nature of any screening (within area or intervening).

6.5.13 During the public consultation exercises carried out as part of the NDP process, in April 2019, MWPC delivered a questionnaire to each household within the parish, seeking local residents' opinions on a number of topics including views and visual value. One of the questions (Q 7.4) asked them to 'describe a location which is important to them and explain why'. The results were factored in to both the baseline visual studies, and judgements about visual value.

6.5.14 In order to do this, the individual responses to Q 7.4 were set out on a spreadsheet, and categorised according to where a view was from, and what the key focus of the view was. Comments made about why the view was important were also included.

6.5.15 Analysis of the results showed that perhaps unsurprisingly, views to and from the Hills came out top. However, respondents seem to value the Wells' 'overall' visual amenity, in that in many views, a wide variety of the parish's distinctive and sometimes unique features / attributes can be seen at the same time.

6.5.16 The local footpath network is considered to be highly important in terms of visual amenity. Views to and from the Commons (especially Peachfield Common) are also very popular. St Wulstan's LNR and the disused railway are popular too, as are views from Wells Road across the Severn plain. The gas lamps were mentioned a few times as adding to the character of the parish. A couple of respondents even said they liked the view of the TCS.

6.5.17 Overall, in accordance with the criteria, the level of visual value of Malvern Hills AONB's landscapes 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 levels 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.

6.5.18 The LSCA concluded that within the individual Areas / Sub-Areas, level of visual value range from Low / Medium to Very High, with the large majority (25 no.) being categorised as between High and Very High (these judgements do, however, factor in levels of receptor sensitivity, and many receptors are people visiting the AONB).

6.6 Visual Susceptibility to Change

6.6.1 The levels of the Visual Susceptibility to Change of the landscapes in the study area were factored in to judgements about overall Visual Sensitivity.

6.6.2 The criteria are set out in Table 8, but in summary, the areas most susceptible to change are those which are the most highly visible over a wide area, form part of highly-valued views and / or perform highly important functions, and within which development would create an unacceptable visual intrusion into the wider landscape that almost certainly could not be mitigated.

6.6.3 Broadly-speaking, taking into account the baseline assessment findings and in accordance with the criteria, levels of visual susceptibility to change throughout the parish were judged to be High, and occasionally Very High. However, there are some areas where levels are lower, especially where localised topography, built form and vegetation result in a relatively high degree of containment.

6.6.4 The LSCA concluded that levels of visual Susceptibility to Change within the Areas / Sub-Areas range from Medium through to Very High. The majority (22 no.) are categorised as being between High and Very High.

6.7 Visual Sensitivity

6.7.1 As with Landscape Sensitivity, 'theoretical' levels of Visual Sensitivity are derived by combining levels of Visual Value with those of Visual Susceptibility to Change (see matrix in Table 10 Appendix G).

6.7.2 Once all the results have been set out, the results are analysed, tested and compared to arrive at 'theoretical' visual sensitivity levels; then, professional judgement is applied.

6.7.3 As explained above, levels of Visual Sensitivity are established after the baseline assessments have been carried out and all the issues previously identified taken into account. The visual issues flagged as potentially significant at the desktop stage are revisited in the light of the on-the-ground work.

6.7.4 Another aspect of this part of the study entails identifying the levels of sensitivity of the various 'visual receptors' who could potentially be affected by changes to the baseline situation, also using the criteria in Appendix G. It is likely that many of the visual receptors will be tourists visiting the AONB for the sole purpose of enjoying its 'outstanding natural beauty', thus they are very highly sensitive to change.

6.7.5 The highest sensitivity receptors comprised:

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, other 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 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.

6.7.6 As noted above, all of the LSCA Areas lie within the Malvern Hills AONB which automatically confers a Very High level of visual value. However, in order to make comparisons between the individual Areas, localised levels of visual value were ascertained.

6.7.7 Overall, the level of visual sensitivity of the landscapes within the study area is judged to be between High and Very High, factoring in the AONB designation.

6.7.8 The levels of visual sensitivity of the LSCA Areas / Sub-Areas range from Low / Medium to Very High. Judgements factor in the degree of containment / screening, and whether this is permanent, or seasonal in the case of much of the significant vegetation in and around the area.

6.7.9 Many of the Areas are visible from residential properties (such receptors have a proprietary interest). Many are visible from well-used PRsoW, including long-distance footpaths and themed trails, conferring a High level of visual value. Many also make important contributions to a variety of landscape functions, and the functions are clearly visible: for example, acting as an important gap, or forming an integral part of the settlement's context / setting.

6.7.10 It must be noted that if screening relies on vegetation, existing or proposed, the possibility of the vegetation being lost in the longer term will need to be considered more fully at some point in future. If the levels of effects without such screening would be higher, that would affect decisions about an Area's levels of capacity, and thus any potential suitability for development.

6.7.11 In summary, the level of visual sensitivity of the majority (23 out of 29) of the LSCA Areas / Sub-Areas is between High and Very High.

6.8 Summary of Landscape and Visual Sensitivity

6.8.1 The LSCA concluded that overall, the parish's landscapes are of High to Very High Landscape and Visual Sensitivity.

6.8.2 As noted above, '*A landscape with a character of high sensitivity is one that, once lost, would be difficult to restore; a character that, if valued, must be afforded particular care and consideration in order for it to survive*'.

3.2.15 With regard to visual sensitivity, '*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*'. The majority of the parish is visible from the Malvern Hills, and from these elevated locations, what 'happens' in the parish is spread out below for all to see.

6.8.3 In terms of 'scenic beauty / quality', whilst there is localised loss and erosion of several landscape elements and features within the parish - in some cases, severe and disfiguring - others are in good or very good condition (occasionally excellent), and are very good representations of the host landscape areas and types.

6.8.4 Individually and combined, these elements and features make highly important contributions to the Malvern Hills AONB's Special Qualities, as well as to the traditional rural context and setting of the settlement. Some of these features are part of the area's ancient historic heritage, as well as reflecting its more recent land uses and practices described above, and they clearly illustrate the considerable time depth which is both evident and buried in and around Malvern Wells village / settlement and parish.

6.8.5 Many of the elements and features are extremely vulnerable to change. Pests and diseases, modern farming methods and intensification of use can result in widespread erosion / loss of character.

6.8.6 Increasing the amount of residential development in an area means more human activity and disturbance which can give rise to adverse effects, especially on urban fringes, disrupting the landscape's traditional and complex patterns and textures and reducing levels of tranquillity. Natural ecosystems can suffer.

6.8.7 New developments require safe access built to exacting standards, and some of the Areas have no direct access from a public highway. Whilst it is possible that in certain cases access could be achieved via adjacent developed land which does have direct access, some Areas are accessed via narrow lanes and / or tracks. These 'informal' roadways contribute significantly to the rural historic character of parts of the area. Surfacing, breaks in hedges for new entrances and / or to achieve sightlines, engineering works to achieve maximum gradients, lighting, signage and other paraphernalia / urbanising influences can give rise to significant adverse landscape and visual effects.

6.8.8 The term 'Biodiversity Offsetting' is used to describe measures intended to compensate for the loss of features. For example, it can be argued that the loss of a small area of ancient woodland or even a veteran tree can be compensated for by planting several hundred trees elsewhere. However most of the features are irreplaceable simply because of the conditions which existed at the time they began to evolve, and how they were used / managed. It may be possible to plant native bluebell bulbs in a new woodland, for example, but the complex biological and other processes and relationships which give ancient woodland habitats such high value would be almost impossible to replicate in modern times, and the historic / cultural value would be lost.

6.8.9 There is, however, high potential for the successful restoration of elements and features such as hedges, orchards, streams, ponds, woodlands, traditional grassland habitats and so on.

6.8.10 In terms of the LSCA Areas / Sub-Areas, the results of the more granular perspective of the sensitivity and capacity studies indicate that the levels of Landscape and Visual Sensitivity of the majority (around three-quarters) are between High and Very High.

6.9 Potential Effects

6.9.1 Part of the process of judging a landscape's sensitivity and capacity to accept change (in this case, in the form of new residential development, which it is assumed would be of a certain type and level of quality due to the AONB designation - see sections above), is to consider potential effects, both positive and negative.

6.9.2 NPPF para. 180 states that '*Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment,* ***as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development***'.

6.9.3 Although an in-depth assessment of specific effects is beyond the scope of studies such as this (as explained in Section 2, it is normally done when more information about a proposed development is available), it is possible to identify the key receptors and other factors / 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 from house-building on the LSCA Areas.

Receptors

6.9.4 The key receptors, factors and attributes identified during the LSCA are summarised below:

- Malvern Hills AONB
- Landscape character, elements and features
- Villagescape character
- Heritage assets / cultural heritage (including settings)
- Historic landscape character and features
- Function / value (context / setting / green corridor / gap / gateway / approach etc.)
- Landscape quality
- Aesthetic and perceptual qualities
- Biodiversity
- Significant vegetation
- Soil, water and air quality
- Public / social amenity
- Green Infrastructure assets and functions / ecosystem services
- Key views / visual amenity.

Nature of Effects

6.9.5 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, and the landscape's capacity to tolerate / absorb such effects. Effects can be positive, negative, direct, indirect, permanent, temporary and cumulative.

6.9.6 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.

6.9.7 Some effects are direct and obvious, for example the extension of modern built form into open countryside, the change in character from rural to urban / domesticated, the loss of green open spaces, GI assets and functions, landscape characteristics, elements and features such as field patterns, ancient trees and hedgerows, narrow lanes and old trackways. Engineering may be required to accommodate access and built form on steep slopes.

6.9.8 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.

6.9.9 Other effects are indirect, such as those arising from human activity, disturbance, pressure and pollution (including light pollution) which may also adversely affect landscape character, the quality of a view, wildlife, heritage assets, recreation, water quality and so on. It must be borne in mind that pollution of a watercourse, for example, could result in damage to / loss of vegetation, which in turn can affect character and visual amenity.

6.9.10 Effects of development can arise not just during the operational phase but during construction, for example when large vehicles may be highly visible in the landscape, and may not be able to travel along narrow lanes without damage to / removal of roadside and overhanging vegetation. In most places, road widening would result in significant adverse effects, especially if hedges have to be removed.

6.9.11 With regard to visual effects, LVIA assesses effects arising from new development where details of its location, and the type of development proposed, are known. Effects can therefore be considered from specific viewpoints, and specific 'visual receptors' can be identified. However, because LSCAs are carried out without the exact 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, as set out above.

6.9.12 Ideally, all new development should not only protect / conserve, but also enhance its receiving environment. In the case of landscapes lying within AONBs, 'enhancement' is not only an aspiration, it is a policy requirement, and new development must demonstrate how it would enhance both character and views. This is a tall order; however, not all the effects arising from new development need be negative, and benefits can be delivered, so long as the correct processes are followed.

6.9.13 The MHAONBP publishes guidance which should be referred to when project / site-specific mitigating (and enhancement / compensation) measures are being considered / proposed - see Recommendations in Section 8.

7 Overall Capacity

7.1 Capacity

7.1.1 This section responds to the question raised in Section 2, '*Does the area have 'room', or 'capacity', for the types of changes proposed*?'

7.1.2 The term 'Capacity' can be defined as 'the maximum amount that something can contain'. If something has reached 'capacity' it is full, and cannot take any more.

7.1.3 'Capacity' in the context of this LSCA refers to the amount of change a particular landscape (or town / village, area, zone, individual site etc.) can tolerate without resulting in *undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and / or the achievement of landscape planning polices and strategies*, as explained in the previous section.

7.1.4 Sometimes, a landscape may be judged to have enough capacity to accept a certain amount of new development, for example polytunnels. It is then categorised as 'a landscape with polytunnels'. However, there may come a time when a 'tipping point' is reached, meaning that if more polytunnels are added, it will become a 'polytunnel landscape'.

7.1.5 One point to note here is that in LSCA, as outlined in Topic Paper 6, judgements about an area's *overall* 'landscape' capacity are arrived at by combining predicted levels of i) Landscape and ii) Visual Capacity.

7.1.6 The problem with this approach is that if done simplistically, it conflates landscape and visual effects. As explained previously, consideration of views and visual amenity / sensitivity / capacity / effects entails separate processes, different from, but related to, those used in the consideration of landscape character. This is because changes to the landscape may happen, but there may not be anyone who can see or experience them. Even if there is, the changes will affect different people in different ways.

7.1.7 Thus, an area may be judged as having a Low level of *landscape* capacity to accept new development for various reasons, but it may not be visible from any public or private viewpoints, and therefore would have a High level of *visual* capacity. If combined, the result is a theoretical overall capacity level of Moderate. However, if decision-makers concluded that a combined Moderate level of overall capacity was the acceptable threshold for a site that could potentially be developed, then a High value / sensitivity landscape could be lost.

7.1.8 Also, an area's High *visual* capacity may be due to the presence of significant vegetation; however, the nature and likely permanence / longevity of the vegetation needs to be considered, especially if without it, visual capacity would be lower (where relevant, this is noted in the LSCA Area schedules). As mentioned above, there is no certainty that existing vegetation will remain in place in the short-term, let along the long-term future - much of Malvern Wells' and the surrounding areas' significant vegetation is vulnerable to change, and cannot be relied on to continue to perform its various highly important visual and other beneficial functions (see also Recommendations in Section 8).

7.1.9 Most importantly, screening views of a development with planting - existing or proposed - does not alter effects on its character: just because one can't see something doesn't mean it's not there.

7.1.10 This LSCA sets out the levels of both landscape and visual capacity, but they are not automatically combined: professional judgement is applied, and reasons for judgements about an Area's overall level of capacity are given.

7.1.11 Decision-makers may conclude that if there was a choice between two Areas that have the same level of overall capacity e.g. High, development on the least visually-sensitive site may be preferable; or, they may conclude that effects on character would be unacceptable, regardless of lack of visibility. This would have to be looked at on a case-by-case basis, once the key principles and other matters were established and agreed.

7.1.12 As explained previously, the LSCA makes the assumption that within the AONB, new residential development would be required to be of high quality, in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance, and that the approach to its siting, layout and design would be landscape-led.

7.1.13 Low-quality development would be very likely to reduce an Area's level of capacity.

7.1.14 Another important matter to consider is the potential for cumulative effects to arise in future. If one Area was developed, and subsequently one or more new developments were proposed on other Areas, then depending on their location, the combination of these could give rise to cumulative effects, which could potentially be 'significant' (i.e. levels of effects high / extensive enough to trigger the requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)) in the context of both the AONB and the local area.

7.1.15 Para. 036 of the Natural Environment PPG (revised July 2019) notes that '*The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully*'. Indeed, recent cases such as *Wealden DC v SSCLG* [2017] EWHC 351 (Admin) have demonstrated that cumulative (or 'in-combination') effects should be considered at a very early stage in the planning process (including effects on air, water and soil quality, transport and so on).

7.1.16 The problem is that each development is normally considered in isolation and 'on its own merits'. It may be that the development of the first Area is not considered to be 'significant', whereas more than one site combined could be. In Malvern Wells' case, associated with both cumulative effects and 'significance' is the matter of 'major development'. Within AONBs, the issue of whether a development's effects are likely to be 'significant' is relevant in terms of whether a development is considered to be 'major' or not.

7.1.17 Para. 172 of the NPPF states that within designated areas such as AONBs, '*The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development [55] other than in exceptional circumstances*.'

7.1.18 Footnote 55 of the paragraph explains that '*For the purposes of paragraphs 172 and 173, whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined*.'

7.1.19 Built form on the first Area may not be categorised as 'major development', but the construction of buildings on additional Areas, especially if adjacent, could tip this balance.

7.1.20 Another relevant point is that NPPF para. 69 recommends that NDPs focus on the development of 'small to medium sites' (i.e. of c. 1ha); however, whilst in some towns and villages a 1ha site may be easily accommodated '*without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation*', in small settlements / within distinct, smaller parts of larger settlements, 1ha may be excessive in relation to the existing context, and could thus be categorised as 'major'.

7.1.21 In theory, the LPA should either request a cumulative effects assessment from the second / following developer/s; or, they should commission / carry out their own, especially where there is the potential for significant effects and thus the requirement for EIA. In reality this very seldom happens, although recently the cumulative effects of development on air quality (the 'Wealden' case above) is requiring a re-think.

7.1.22 These issues are beyond the scope of the LSCA, as there are too many 'unknowns' at this stage, not least whether the community decides to 'allocate' any sites for residential / other development and for LGS / other use.

7.1.23 As noted in Section 2 above, the LSCA Areas were originally numbered from 1 - 17. Some of the Areas are individual fields or plots; others are 'zones' comprising several fields or parcels of land which share similar characteristics and / or uses. During the survey stage, some of the Areas were sub-divided on the basis of differences in landuse / character: the sub-Areas are denoted by letters (e.g. Areas 1a - 1d).

7.1.24 During the final capacity study and analysis stage, further Area / sub-Area subdivisions were made. This was on the basis that for various reasons (which are noted in the individual Area schedules), one part of the Area was found to have a higher level of capacity to accept residential development than another. These are denoted by numbers (e.g. Areas 3 (i) and 3 (ii)).

7.1.25 In total there are 29 Areas / sub-Areas.

7.1.26 The level of Landscape Capacity of each LSCA Area is shown on Figure 13 - Overall Capacity Plan.

7.1.27 Professional judgement was applied throughout the process, and the results were tested and compared. In certain cases, 'theoretical' levels of capacity were adjusted upwards / downwards to reflect the 'prevailing' / 'determining' capacity factors in the area (for example, distance from edge of settlement).

7.1.28 The reasoning for the judgements about the Areas' levels of landscape and visual value, susceptibility to change, sensitivity and capacity is explained further in the individual Area Schedules in Appendix H. Appendix K contains a series of tables setting out these levels in order of a) Area numbering; b) landscape capacity; c) visual capacity; and d) overall capacity.

7.1.29 Overall capacity levels are also set out in the tables below. Table 1A sets out the capacity of the individual Areas in the order in which they were assessed and reported in the text. Table 1B provides the same information, but in order of each Area / Sub-Area's overall capacity, from high to low.

7.1.30 In summary, on a scale ranging from Very High to Very Low, none of the Areas / Sub-Areas was found to have a Very High level of capacity to accommodate new residential development. Two have a High level of capacity, three are categorised as Very Low. The level of the majority (18 no.) is either Low, or Low / Very Low. The remainder are Low / Medium (4 no.), Medium (1 no.), and Medium / High (1 no.).

Summary Tables of Overall Capacity

LANDSCAPE CAPACITY COLOUR CODING

Very Low	Very Low / Low	Low	Low / Medium	Medium	Medium / High	High	High / Very High

TABLE 1A: Summary of LSCA Area capacity in order of assessment

LSCA Area	Overall Capacity
1a	Low
1b	Low
1c	Very Low / Low
1d	Very Low / Low
2	Very Low
3 (i)	Low
3 (ii)	Medium
4	Low
5	Medium / High
6	Very Low / Low
7	Very Low / Low
8	Very Low / Low
9	Very Low
10	Very Low / Low
11a	High
11b	High
11c (i)	Very Low / Low
11c (ii)	Low / Medium
11d	Low / Medium
11e (i)	Very Low / Low
11e (ii)	Low / Medium
12	Very Low
13	Very Low / Low
14	Very Low / Low
15	Very Low / Low
16	Low / Medium
17 (i)	Very Low / Low
17 (ii)	Low
LSCA Area	Overall Capacity

TABLE 1B: Summary of LSCA Area capacity in order of capacity (from Low to High)

LSCA Area	Overall Capacity
2	Very Low
9	Very Low
12	Very Low
1c	Very Low / Low
1d	Very Low / Low
6	Very Low / Low
7	Very Low / Low
8	Very Low / Low
10	Very Low / Low
11c (i)	Very Low / Low
11e (i)	Very Low / Low
13	Very Low / Low
14	Very Low / Low
15	Very Low / Low
17 (i)	Very Low / Low
1a	Low
1b	Low
3 (i)	Low
4	Low
17 (ii)	Low
11c (ii)	Low / Medium
11d	Low / Medium
11e (ii)	Low / Medium
16	Low / Medium
3 (ii)	Medium
5	Medium / High
11a	High
11b	High
LSCA Area	Overall Capacity

7.2 Settlement Boundary

7.2.1 As explained in Section 2, the main aim of this LSCA was to establish Malvern Wells' landscape and visual capacity to accept new residential development; this information would be used to make informed decisions about where the line of the future settlement boundary should be drawn.

7.2.2 A settlement boundary is defined as the dividing line or boundary between areas of built / urban development (the settlement) and non-urban or rural development (the countryside).

7.2.3 Boundaries are usually drawn around whatever is determined to be the integral 'core' of a settlement. Typically included within them are built form and land associated with existing employment areas, community facilities and services, and the bulk of a settlement's 'housing stock', including any sites identified as potentially suitable for housing.

7.2.4 Land outside them is defined as 'open countryside' and is usually oriented towards agriculture, tourism and / or outdoor recreational uses, although it may include parts of gardens, orchards, paddocks and other land not normally perceived as 'countryside'.

7.2.5 In planning terms there is a presumption in favour of built development within the settlement boundary whereas, beyond the boundary in open countryside, development is much more tightly controlled. The purpose of the settlement boundary is to act as a distinct, robust and defensible line between these areas, determining where certain types of development may be acceptable or, where protection of land is required, for a wide variety of reasons.

7.2.6 Theoretically, therefore, in principle it should be acceptable to build anywhere within the settlement boundary, although of course subject to the nature and scale of what is proposed, constraints, likely effects, compliance with policy / strategy / guidance, and other matters.

7.2.7 When considering the future settlement boundary line, the above must be taken into account, along with the line's relationship to local landscape and villagescape character (especially historic), patterns, forms, qualities and so on. Where possible, the line should follow existing physical features / boundaries such as roads, watercourses and historic field boundaries (the latter may ultimately need restoring / reinforcing). If this is not possible, new, locally-appropriate and robust settlement boundary line features should be created where necessary.

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Conclusions

8.1.1 The LSCA concluded that Malvern Wells has limited capacity to accept new residential development without there being potentially significant adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity, and conflict with planning policy and material guidance.

8.1.2 The reasons for the lack of capacity are complex, but the fact that the Wells lies within the Malvern Hills AONB is evidently at the top of the list. Whilst the designation does not preclude development *per se*, it does confer a very high level of landscape and visual value, and the associated planning policies require that any new development should not only protect, but also enhance its receiving environment.

8.1.3 In Malvern Wells' case, its landscape and villagescape character make a highly important and valuable contribution to the Special Qualities of the AONB, and form an integral part of it. The 'quality' and 'qualities' of the area are also important to the Wells in terms of what it contributes to social and public amenity, the health and well-being of both people and the environment, and the economy (enjoyment of the area's 'outstanding natural beauty' being one of the main reasons why each year, over a million people come specifically to see and enjoy it).

8.1.4 However, whilst the AONB designation will always be a consideration when planning change, in order to make judgements about the sensitivity and capacity of individual and often small parcels of land - on their own merit and in comparison with others for consistency - the LSCA had to 'go beneath the blanket' of the designation.

8.1.5 The study identified many landscape elements, features, qualities, attributes and views of high 'local' value (some unique to the Wells), most of which are very vulnerable to change. These were factored in to judgements about the sensitivity and capacity of each LSCA Area.

8.1.6 The conclusion that overall, landscape and visual capacity levels are relatively low is mainly due to the fact that whilst the settlement has expanded over time, and the landscapes have responded to certain changes, the Wells' intrinsic historic, rural characteristics and qualities are still clearly visible in the landscape. Individually and combined, the landscape elements and features make highly important contributions to the settlement's traditional context and setting. Most if not all of the LSCA Areas play a role in this regard, albeit quality and condition vary from place to place.

8.1.7 The majority of the parish is highly visible from highly sensitive viewpoints on the Malvern Hills, thus in most cases, the Areas' levels of visual capacity are relatively - sometimes very - low.

8.1.8 The Wells' local distinctiveness and sense of place is precious, and also at risk of diminishment through unsympathetic changes of many forms. In recent years, new housing and other developments have been built in and around the settlement which are ubiquitous: in certain views the buildings engender the sense that one could be anywhere in the country, and not anywhere special.

8.1.9 The LSCA also concluded that as well as context and setting (including that of various heritage assets such as scheduled monuments and the Conservation Area), many of the LSCA Areas perform other highly important functions in the landscape, for example as green gaps, ecological habitats, ecosystem services, and / or recreational resources. These make significant contributions to the wider area's Green Infrastructure.

8.1.10 Of course, the above does not mean that the settlement cannot ever grow; what it means is that if new development is planned, those proposing it must demonstrate how it would enhance not just Malvern Wells but the AONB. Development should make a positive contribution to the area and its communities, respecting and reflecting local character, distinctiveness and sense of place.

8.1.11 It is recognised that it is not easy for development to enhance an area of outstanding natural beauty; however, reference to area-specific guidance and studies such as these at an early stage in the planning process can help to ensure that the required levels of quality (of both planning applications and the development itself) are achieved and delivered.

8.1.12 The section below sets out a number of recommendations which are also likely to help achieve this and other objectives.

8.2 Recommendations

8.2.1 During the LSCA process, several issues were identified which have formed the basis of specific recommendations, the purpose of which is to help ensure that where new development of any type is planned, it both protects and enhances landscape character and visual / social amenity.

8.2.2 The recommendations could also form the basis of future NDP policies; for example, where key views are identified, a policy with the objective of their protection / enhancement would have to be taken into account in any future development proposals.

Landscape Character

8.2.3 As set out at the start of this report, it is important to understand landscape character, and how development might affect the qualities and attributes of the landscapes within which new development is proposed to be situated.

8.2.4 In Malvern Wells, the landscapes in and around the settlement perform many essential natural, cultural and visual functions, and are a highly valuable resource for the local community. Once character is understood, it is easier to establish exactly what is required to ensure that future changes are successfully integrated without detriment to the baseline situation - and enhance it where appropriate.

8.2.5 Understanding the landscape will also help prospective developers to deliver the high quality schemes which are a prerequisite of a site located within an AONB. It could be an NDP policy requirement that developers must demonstrate that they have consulted the LSCA (as well as other studies, published strategy and guidance - see below), and factored the findings and recommendations into the scheme's siting, layout and design.

8.2.6 Strong, defensible boundaries should be created where future development sites abut open countryside in particular. These boundaries would define not only the long-term physical edge of the settlement, but also its character, context, setting, distinctiveness and sense of place, and so should reflect local and historic landscape patterns and characteristics (using locally-occurring native species / materials and traditional forms of management, for example). They will, ideally, also act as visual filters / screens where key views may be adversely affected.

8.2.7 The wider landscapes' aesthetic and perceptual qualities include tranquillity and dark skies. Assessments of effects on these and other qualities / attributes should form part of any planning application where they could be adversely affected.

8.2.8 Some of the most important characteristic landscapes elements and features in the area have been damaged, eroded or lost, especially field boundary hedgerows and unimproved pastures, and some old footpaths. The original locations of many of the lost features were identified by studying historic maps, records and photographs, as well as through fieldwork and public consultation (and work on this is ongoing). The appropriate restoration of these would have considerable benefits for landscape character, visual and social amenity, and biodiversity. New developments should enhance and deliver benefits wherever possible; however, it must also be borne in mind that improving quality and condition should be an aspiration of land management practice regardless of whether an area is developed or not.

8.2.9 To this end, it may be helpful for MWPC to publicise sources of information and advice about managing sensitive landscapes (some available on the Malvern Hills AONB website - see below). In conjunction with landowners, proposals could be developed for various environmental enhancement and management schemes. Grants may be available.

Settlement Pattern

8.2.10 Settlement pattern is related to landscape character. In Malvern Wells' case, its historic linear pattern is an important attribute, which any form of change could adversely affect and so it must be considered and respected. There are several places where the traditional patterns have been disrupted by more recent (20th century) development.

8.2.11 Within and at the edges of the settlement, fields / gardens / other spaces between buildings often form highly important green gaps. From a planning point of view it is often tempting to 'fill in' such gaps with built form; however in the Wells, the gaps prevent clustering and coalescence between buildings and / or different parts of the settlement (which often display very different and distinct characters), and articulate the historic settlement pattern. Often, they also perform other important functions including ecological.

8.2.12 Although considered on a case-by-case basis, the proposed 'density' of development is a very important factor in terms of how well new built form integrates into both the existing settlement and its surrounding landscape. The density should be characteristic of the immediate and wider location, but may also need to vary in order to avoid clustering, articulate transition from urban to rural, create meaningful and generous multi-functional green / open spaces, and so on.

8.2.13 South Worcestershire's 2015 SHLAA considered a site's potential capacity on the basis of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph), but as far as could be ascertained, this density was applied throughout the SHLAA area and did not differentiate between designated and undesignated landscapes. Neither MHAONBP nor the LPAs appear to have guidance on appropriate densities within AONBs; in Herefordshire[128], a density of between 10 and 20 dph was broadly considered appropriate within AONBs, subject to area-specific factors, so that could be used as a starting point in the Wells.

8.2.14 As noted above, it is also very important that the cumulative effects of developments proposed in different locations are considered at a very early stage in the process (this applies to all types of effects on all receptors, not just settlement pattern).

Gateways and Approaches

8.2.15 The LSCA identified various approaches and gateways. These require careful consideration, especially in terms of the parish's present and future character, identity and sense of place, and what it says about its inhabitants. Developing a locally-appropriate range of features / styles (including 'logos', colours, materials and plants) is especially important here. It may be that the gateways themselves are reconsidered - not just the current 'design', but where they actually are, and what, if anything, should mark them.

Heritage / Historic Landscape Character

8.2.16 It is often the case that historic landscape character is not a subject covered in studies accompanying planning applications. This is usually because it is not part of the 'scope' of the project, falling outside the remit of the archaeologist, the conservation expert and the landscape architect. In Malvern Wells' case, it is a highly important factor, as despite the area's history of enclosure, many valuable historic (and ancient) features still exist. Not all have been 'formally' identified or recorded on the HER / WBR / other information source, but given the high importance of some of the features it is likely that they will be in due course.

8.2.17 Planning officers can ask for an historic landscape character assessment to be included in an application if it is considered relevant, and should ask for it to be carried out in accordance with guidance such as that published by HE and others (e.g. *Topic Paper 5 Understanding Historic Landscape Character* - see Section 3.7 above), with reference to local studies such as this.

8.2.18 Local heritage walks and trails could be developed (see below), and there are grants available for local history projects.

8.2.19 The various springs, spouts and wells in and around the settlement are of more than local heritage / cultural significance, attracting visitors and interest from all over the world. It is understood that the intention is to apply for the water features to be locally-listed as a minimum, and that their protection / restoration / enhancement will be the subject of a specific NDP policy.

Biodiversity

8.2.20 There is a diverse range of ecological habitats within and adjacent to the parish. Some of these habitats are countywide / local designations which are important to factor in to any proposal for change / new development. Many of the habitats identified during the assessment are not designated, but they are healthy, playing an essential environmental role in providing vital connections to the wider ecosystem. Most are highly vulnerable to the effects of new development and changes in use, direct and indirect, with factors such as pollution and disturbance to consider. Their protection and appropriate management are essential, and should be the subject of NDP policy. Initiatives to encourage opportunities for wildlife and good management practices could be developed by the local community.

8.2.21 There is also evidence of erosion and loss of habitats which has resulted in connectivity being broken in places. Many of these habitats also function as highly valuable and visible elements and features

[128] https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2547/shlaa_rural_report_nov_2015.pdf

in the landscape, and so their erosion and loss has led to adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Active management of all these habitats is critical to their long term survival.

8.2.22 Ecological surveys will be needed to determine the presence / absence of species if new development / change of use and / or activity are proposed. Planning applications for future development should normally include an ecological survey in accordance with best practice (esp. BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity: Code of practice for planning and development or later version). However, such surveys are also useful at an earlier stage, to determine ecological sensitivity / capacity.

8.2.23 Importantly, ecology surveys should consider connectivity and the potential for remedying indirect adverse effects on the wider landscape and well as on the area / site in question.

8.2.24 A useful source of information about the Government's planning-related environmental intentions and requirements is set out in the Natural Environment PPG, which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment.

Significant Vegetation

8.2.25 Significant mature tree cover makes a highly important contribution to the landscape character (historic and modern) and visual amenity of the area, including that of the Malvern Hills AONB. It also currently screens many Areas from certain views, and provides a variety of wildlife habitats.

8.2.26 However, the long-term future of the trees cannot be guaranteed. Some of the trees are nearing the ends of their useful lives, and several species are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and pests and diseases (new types of the latter are being reported more and more frequently). Potential effects arising from new development must be considered in the light of both existing and proposed vegetation and the fact that there is no certainty that what is there now, or what is planted in the future, will survive.

8.2.27 If sites are proposed for development, consideration should be given to what level of effects is predicted without existing / proposed vegetation, as well as with it. This could affect future decisions about which sites are more suitable for development than others. It is also a relevant factor in the assessment of cumulative effects, and matters such as coalescence.

8.2.28 It is recommended that this issue is given consideration in the preparation of the NDP. Ideally, tree health should be monitored, and where there is cause for concern - for the tree and / or for peoples' health and safety - the matter should be brought to the attention of those responsible for it.

8.2.29 A community project could be set up to survey, map and assess existing trees (their species, age, condition, the contribution they make to the villagescape, historic landscape character, visual amenity and so on, guided by some research / specialist advice especially regarding tree health and susceptibility to change). A list would be produced of appropriate species to plant in new developments / elsewhere, to ensure this key feature is maintained. This could encourage awareness of the trees' landscape / historical / ecological importance, and the need for good management and locally-appropriate replanting.

8.2.30 New woodlands could also be created, but if proposed, consideration would have to be given to landscape character and pattern, to ensure that woodland would be appropriate in the identified area. For example, planting blocks of woodland in geometrically-shaped enclosed commons fields may appear 'logical', but it may be visually incongruous and out of place in the older historic parkland character areas, which are 'organic'.

8.2.31 Advice on woodland planning, design, specification and management should be sought from stakeholders, arboriculturalists, landscape architects and ecologists.

8.2.32 Importantly, whilst it is tempting to cut down and remove stumps of dead and dying trees, these provide highly valuable habitats for a host of different animals and organisms, the latter often being a major contributor to healthy environments.

8.2.33 The LSCA was informed by WBRC data on ancient / veteran trees growing / standing within / on the edges of the parish; however, the records are based on surveys carried out during c. 2008 - 2009, and it would be a worthwhile exercise to check whether the trees still exist, record (perhaps tag) them, and update the Ancient Tree Inventory records.

8.2.34 Some free-standing trees are along old, lost field boundaries and trackways, others are remnants of Malvern Chase and minor historic parklands. Landowners' permission may be required to visit / inspect some of the trees, and due to their high value and susceptibility to change, MHDC's tree officer should probably be consulted / asked for advice / kept informed.

8.2.35 The LSCA surveys suggest that there are other valuable ancient / veteran / notable trees within the parish (including within the settlement itself) which have not been recorded. Some would have lined old trackways, others may be woodland remnants - their locations and original landscape function / contribution can usually be worked out through analysis of old maps. Such trees should be added to the Ancient Tree Inventory, and could be protected by TPOs if considered appropriate by the LPA.

8.2.36 Due to their antiquity and the range of native species they contain, some of the hedges in the parish may be classified as 'Important' under the Hedgerow Regulations. This is a constraint to development, and so should be checked early on in the planning process.

Recreation / Access / Amenity

8.2.37 The parish is well-served by a network of footpaths - including popular long-distance and themed trails - which make an important contribution to the health and well-being of local people and their environment. They are also used by visitors who often contribute to the local economy.

8.2.38 There are opportunities to create additional 'informal' footpaths and links (subject to landowner agreement and any other constraints), and / or to restore old ones which have long-since been stopped-up. Local themed trails exist, but others could be considered, covering history, cultural associations, legends and folklore, foraging, different types of play and exercise - formal and informal - and so on. This may be of interest to several 'focus' groups and perhaps the local schools (a very good initiative for this and other projects is Learning Through Landscapes[129], which helps teachers use the landscape as a resource which is in line with the National Curriculum).

8.2.39 Anecdotal evidence suggests that cycling is a popular activity throughout the parish, enjoyed by locals and visitors, young and old. However, many people say that they are deterred by fast roads and narrow lanes with no dedicated cycle paths / cycleways. Several said they would like to see more provision for different types of cycling (on and off-road, BMX, trials, mountain, children, beginners, disabled and so on), new / improved cycle links within the parish and to the wider areas, and perhaps a new 'cycle centre' with bikes for hire and information about local trails.

8.2.40 The section of the dismantled railway north of Hanley Road has been identified in the Local Travel Plan as a future cycleway, and in the NDP as an 'active travel corridor'. It would be a good idea to look at places where new formal / informal pedestrian / cycle links could be created from existing PRsoW within / beyond the parish to the new cycleway / footpath.

8.2.41 There have also been suggestions that the old, disused railway tunnel through the Hills '… *would make an ideal cycle route, though for the moment the bats have the place to themselves*'.

Local Green Spaces

8.2.42 Through the NDP process, a total of four areas were proposed for designation as Local Green Space. Other candidate LGSs were identified through public consultation exercises, and some could come forwards as a result of the LSCA's findings, and / or be proposed at a later date. For example, LGS designation could be proposed if new development was planned on a certain site but it was clear that the retention of an area as open green space was essential in order to maintain the settlement pattern, and / or for public amenity / community use, and / or to protect wildlife / create new habitats.

Green Infrastructure

8.2.43 The parish has a relatively good local Green (and Blue) Infrastructure network, with many GI assets performing a variety of highly important GI functions. There is also room for improvement.

8.2.44 GI should form an integral part of planning for the future, and is an important aspect of both national and local planning policy. The July 2019 version of the Natural Environment PPG notes that '*Green infrastructure opportunities and requirements need to be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and taking into account existing natural assets and the most suitable locations and types of new provision*'.

8.2.45 GI should therefore be the subject of specific studies if and when required, especially as part of planning applications. It should also be noted that effects on GI (both adverse and beneficial) are a recommended part of the landscape and visual assessment process (see GLVIA3 para. 2.10).

[129] http://www.ltl.org.uk/

8.2.46 If not already considered, there may be opportunities to develop a GI Strategy for Malvern Wells, and perhaps a GI NDP policy. The European Commission has adopted a strategy for GI[130] to ensure that '*the enhancement of natural processes becomes a systematic part of spatial planning*'. The Commission's strategy will focus on promoting GI in the main policy areas including land use. See also Natural Environment PPG para. 007.

Views and Visual Amenity

8.2.47 The LSCA identified several 'exceptional' key views throughout the parish and beyond, both at specific points / locations, and along 'view routes'. Those which are deemed worthy of protection could be the subject of an NDP policy.

8.2.48 If this is considered appropriate, then further work would be necessary to develop the policy. For example, there are currently 36 KVPs. The community may decide to identify other candidates, and / or to reduce the final list of candidates down to the 'top ten / twenty'. Ideally, a schedule would be produced for each Key View, with photographs (panoramic if necessary) showing not just the view from the KVP, but which LSCA Areas are visible from them. The location of key features and focal points could also be pin-pointed. The schedules should include a brief summary of the KVPs locations, and note a) which visual receptors are likely to experience views at each KVP / along each key view route, and b) their level of visual sensitivity.

8.2.49 KVPs located beyond the parish boundary are unlikely to be acceptable as the subject of a key views policy because they and views from them would be a consideration for the parish within which the KVP was situated.

8.2.50 If new development is considered to be appropriate in a certain location but additional planting is found to be necessary to protect a Key View, steps can be taken to try to incorporate this into the scheme layout and design, but subject to the previous comments about the dangers of relying on vegetation as a screen.

Future Planning and Design Guidance

OVERVIEW

8.2.51 The LSCA's findings can be used to help guide decisions about where new houses (and potentially, other forms of development) would be most appropriately located in and around the settlement, especially in terms of the local and wider landscape context, and which areas need to be protected. It may help in drawing the future settlement boundary. However, in time the baseline situation may change, which could affect the study's conclusions: new development can affect the character, sensitivity and capacity of the surrounding landscape / villagescape. (Note that this study is a record of the situation at midsummer 2019, which is when the baseline surveys were completed; subsequent planning decisions will need to be monitored, and the schedules and plans updated as required.)

8.2.52 Further detailed landscape assessment of both the LSCA Areas and wider study area may also be required in the light of material changes in the wider landscape (for example changes to the agricultural economy resulting in either more or less intensive farming methods; climate change effects and pests / diseases which may result in loss of trees), and the documents updated accordingly. Ideally, a review of the baseline situation should take place every few years and the findings factored in to any future decisions.

8.2.53 Problems with evaluating the effects of development can arise when planning applications are made in 'outline', to establish whether the principle of the proposed development is acceptable. Although the main constraints may have been identified at the pre-planning stage and do not give cause for concern, matters such as access, siting, layout, engineering operations and other 'details' including style, materials, lighting, colour and landscaping are either only illustrative or have not yet been considered in sufficient depth to be able to identify the likely effects.

8.2.54 In most studies accompanying planning applications, only 'significant' effects are considered; but as set out above, the many smaller changes which occur can accumulate to the point where they become significant. Even if a scheme is well-designed, and urbanising influences kept to a minimum, it is not generally possible to control what happens in private gardens where domestic paraphernalia - sheds, cars, washing lines, bins, play equipment, ornamental lawns and vegetation etc. - are likely to be highly visible, especially in views from the Hills.

[130] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52013DC0249

8.2.55 The baseline information in this study can therefore be used to identify the potential for effects not dealt with, or not adequately covered, in a planning application, for example effects arising from night-time lighting and disturbance. It can also help to guide the community in terms of what types of environmental and other studies ought to be submitted with a planning application, and the level of assessment / nature of information required. These issues can be raised with the planning authority during the consultation period.

8.2.56 An assessment of the cumulative effects of the development of several sites should also be part of the studies accompanying the application if relevant, especially if in-combination, the threshold for EIA is likely to be breached. It is the LPA's responsibility to ensure this is carried out.

8.2.57 Many parts of the study area are highly vulnerable to change, and additional residential development is likely to exacerbate the current situation, increasing the rate at which erosion and loss occur. However, it is also possible for this to act as a catalyst for environmental enhancement, for example the restoration / creation of new GI assets and links and the introduction of better management practices, especially if made a prerequisite of new house-building schemes. The redevelopment of some poor quality 'brownfield' sites can also potentially result in improvements to landscape / townscape character.

8.2.58 When planning applications are submitted, all these and other matters need to be covered in detail, especially how the long-term (ideally, 25 years +) management of the landscape will be secured, and who will be responsible for it. As noted above, this is especially important where existing and / or proposed vegetation is relied on to screen and mitigate adverse landscape effects, and / or to protect and enhance biodiversity, since there is no certainty that vegetation will achieve the required objectives, and it cannot be relied on in the long term. This must be factored into the decision-making process: if the effects without the vegetation in place would be significantly greater, a site's capacity / suitability for development could well be reduced.

8.2.59 A worthwhile initiative which could form part of the NDP process (and possibly NDP policies) would be to draw up site-specific and detailed parameters / design codes for built form and landscaping which developers would be expected to take into account.

8.2.60 A Government website[131] explains how 'good design' can be achieved in planning with the use of these 'tools'. In terms of 'parameters', it advises '… *considering the most important parameters for an area such as the mix of uses, requirement for open space or transport infrastructure, the amount and scale of buildings, and the quality of buildings*'.

8.2.61 It goes on to say that ''*Design codes seek to capture the specific requirements of a place and encourage interested parties to think together about each development in its entirety as a unique place*'.

8.2.62 It also explains that '*A Local or Neighbourhood plan is essential to achieving high quality places. A key part of any plan is understanding and appreciating the context of an area, so that proposals can then be developed to respect it. Good design interprets and builds on historic character, natural resources and the aspirations of local communities*.'

8.2.63 The issues associated with inappropriate colours and materials in particular should be emphasised in any design guidance, and better solutions proposed. Attention to detail is essential, and the LPA should be alert to the problems of the specification of materials such as synthetic slate roofs, the glare from which can be highly visible and distracting under certain light conditions. Landowners could perhaps be persuaded to change the colour of existing high-contrast pale roofs to dark, or replace reflective materials with matte ones when refurbishing.

8.2.64 Using colours which have similar tonality to the surrounding palette helps to visually integrate built form into the wider landscape. A grey / brownish render would be a better choice than white in many situations. White trims, gable ends and other features / apparatus should also be avoided where they give rise to unacceptable / uncharacteristic contrast.

8.2.65 'Green roofs' require special mention here. It is often assumed that if buildings proposed on the Hills' lower slopes / the plain are constructed with planted flat roofs, they will be fully camouflaged when viewed from the Hills' ridges and slopes above.

8.2.66 However, firstly, even from the highest parts of the Hills, buildings are rarely if ever seen in 'plan-form', they are viewed at an angle, so roofs and elevations are read together, along with surfaces. Even if the roof is planted with grass which is the same as that growing in the surrounding area, the

[131] http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/design/which-planning-processes-and-tools-can-we-use-to-help-achieve-good-design/

mitigation will almost certainly be 'negated' by the materials and colours used on the elevation, which are often white / pale due to the assumption that they are not going to be visible. Or, pale materials / colours are used for the hard edge / 'trim' around the grass roof, which simply draws the eye to the angular shape in the landscape (see photos in baseline sections above).

8.2.67 Secondly, architects and developers often specify sedum, because it is a cheaper solution than grass (more load-bearing construction is necessary for grass due to the depth of water-laden soil required). Also, it supposedly requires less maintenance. The problem is that sedum turns bright red in autumn (and when conditions are dry for prolonged periods), so a red angular shape becomes very apparent in what is usually a green or late-summer gold landscape. Furthermore, recent studies have concluded that grass roofs are ecologically richer and more diverse than sedum, and much better at attenuating water disposal; maintenance need not be at all onerous.

8.2.68 Developers could be obliged to select from a range of locally-appropriate colours and materials which have been identified through detailed studies such as Environmental Colour Assessment (ECA)[132]. Ideally, ECAs should be carried out at an early stage in the planning and design process, alongside landscape, visual and other assessments.

8.2.69 An ECA was recommended during the first stage of this LSCA, and although at the time of completing the LSCA none had been commissioned, it is understood that it is being considered. It would be useful if the ECA identified where built form is characteristically 'light' / 'bright' / 'pale' (for example villas on the spring line), and where the settlement and its landscapes / landscape context are 'dark'. The latter areas often form highly important gaps, providing visual context, and balance / integration / contrast. The ECA would also consider colours and materials for roofs in particular, which can be problematic but easily overlooked in terms of effects on views from above (especially when seen in combination with elevations and flat surfaces).

8.2.70 MHAONB publications such as *Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development*[133], *Guidance on building design*[134] and *Guidance on how development can respect landscape in views*[135] are the first point of call when matters such colour and materials are being considered, as well as location / siting / planting and so on. In fact, Malvern Wells has its own section in *Guidance on building design*.

8.2.71 In addition, the RCA study carried out for the NDP sets out several recommendations relating to landscape character and views within the settlement boundary which could have direct or indirect relevance to several of the LSCA Areas. The LSCA and RCA study are 'sister' documents and should therefore be reviewed together / cross-referenced - it is important to ensure that both the settlement and its contextual landscapes are read holistically, and that the recommendations of both studies are followed where there is interinfluence / intervisibility between LSCA Areas and the settlement.

8.2.72 Design parameters / strategies could be drawn up as part of the NDP process, and ideally would be informed by existing published guidance. Important sources of information include Natural England's NCA profiles and SEOs, as well as MHAONBP - the website[136] has links to its publications.

DESIGN-RELATED MATTERS SPECIFIC TO MALVERN WELLS' CHARACTER

8.2.73 The LSCA identified several factors which relate specifically to Malvern Wells' distinctive and in places unique character, and which will be important considerations in the planning, design and delivery of new development within the parish.

8.2.74 As well as those noted above, such as significant vegetation, they include:

i. Enclosed Commons LCT: this character type covers the majority of the parish, and the landscapes of the area are good representations of it. In theory, new development should respect and reflect the LCT of the area within which it lies.

   In terms of new residential development specifically, the LCA states that within this LCT, '*The low density wayside settlement pattern of small cottages and occasional farmsteads is gradually being*

[132] For examples of ECAs carried out in AONBs, see http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/guidance_on_colour_use_screen.pdf and http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/uk-landscape-research-reports/2058-high-weald-aonb-colour-study/file.html

[133] http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/guidance_on_colour_use_screen.pdf

[134] http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MalvernBuildingDesignGuideLoRes_001.pdf

[135] http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/64339-MHAONB-Guidance-on-Respecting-Landscape-in-Views-v09.pdf

[136] http://www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk/publications/planning-related-publications/

altered as cottages are enlarged and new dwellings built. In principal, these landscapes can accept additional wayside dwellings if the proposals are in accordance with policy, but the density should remain low and any new building must respect the style, materials and the small scale of the traditional cottages.'

It should also be noted that within the parish, the LSCA identified historic features within the Enclosed Commons LCT which are likely to pre-date enclosure, and as a result are of high / very high value.

ii. Malvern stone used as a building material is one of the most significant defining characteristics of the Wells (and the wider Malvern area); however, it is no longer available except as 'windfalls' (for example when a house or wall is demolished), and usually only in very small quantities. None of the alternatives used in recent years fully replicate Malvern stone's character and qualities, especially its colour and how it weathers, but Forest of Dean stone is gaining popularity (see Waitrose Great Malvern). Some Herefordshire stones also work well[137]. Cotswold stone is usually a visual disaster. Sometimes other stones are used for the wall itself, but Malvern stone is used to form the characteristic 'cock and hen' toppings.

Some new buildings feature panels / 'seams' of Malvern stone set within rendered facades - a 'nod' to the material and a strategy which can work well.

Stone samples should be brought to the site and the appropriateness of their colour / texture / form (e.g. blasted / tumbled) assessed in the light of a) the local character context, and b) the places from which they would be visible.

The different mortaring styles and colours used must also be considered, as they are often associated with different character areas.

iii. Many of the Malvern stone walls - especially those which act as retaining walls - may be reaching the end of their useful lives. There have been several collapses along the A449 in recent years, and during refurbishment of the terraced gardens and steps below Belle Vue Terrace in the 1990s, the stone walls were found to be unsafe, and had to be rebuilt.

iv. Gas street lamps are another highly distinctive and defining local characteristic (most are Grade II listed structures). Where appropriate, existing lamps should be protected and restored, and new matching ones installed if appropriate (many of the gas street lamps on Belle Vue island were custom-made as part of the 1990s refurbishments).

v. There are still several old orange (low pressure sodium discharge) street lamps in existence, for example along Upper Welland Road are significant detractors at night - not just along the road, but in the wider landscape. Their replacement with 'low light-spill' lamps (or new gas lamps) would be a great improvement.

vi. Old, native roadside hedges retained within / on the edges of the settlement: these are important to character, visual amenity and biodiversity, and should be restored where necessary, and properly managed.

vii. Improved / semi-improved grassland should be restored to and managed as traditional pasture / hay meadow.

8.2.75 Another matter which needs to be considered is the 'style' of new built form. It is sometimes desirable to 'mimic' traditional / local styles in order for built form to properly integrate into its surrounding context without giving rise to adverse effects. However, styles change with the times, as is very evident in Malvern Wells - in fact the diversity of architectural styles is a defining characteristic. This period in the Wells' architectural history and evolution is being, and will continue to be, marked by 'contemporary' buildings, which are reflecting changing fashions, aspirations, social structures and so on.

8.2.76 Such buildings can certainly be accommodated, but 'ubiquitousness' must be avoided - for example, there is a tendency for 'ecohouse' designs to be 'systematic'; and timber cladding seems to be popular throughout the UK. It is very important that local character / vernacular influence siting, layout and design, and any proposals must be clearly demonstrated how this has been / would be achieved (without resorting to 'pastiche').

8.2.77 Finally, during the course of the LSCA studies, local people frequently mentioned the lack of physical association and / or cultural / social relationship between the various parts of the settlement - Upper

[137] See file:///C:/Users/Carly/Downloads/Herefordshire_Building_Stone_Atlas%20(2).pdf and https://www.blackmountainquarries.co.uk/

Wyche / Lower Wyche / Fruitlands areas, and Upper Welland, for example, no doubt the result of the settlement being c. 4km long, and linear. Also, anecdotal evidence suggests that people tend to shop / socialise in the communities which lie closest, which are often outside the parish.

8.2.78 Due mainly to topography, the central 'core' and 'heart' of the settlement is tightly 'packed' and constrained, so there are few opportunities for the creation of new community areas, indoors or out. The cemetery is a highly important central space in terms of amenity, but it does not lend itself to certain types of events / recreational pursuits.

8.2.79 The results of the public consultation exercises carried out for the NDP showed that 42% of respondents felt the need and / or desire for some form of community space in addition to the current provisions. Suggested locations included:

- Former Abbey College playing fields, Hanley Road
- Scout Hall
- Worcestershire Golf Club land
- Old Malvern Wells Station yard
- Behind squash club.

8.2.80 The LSCA and other studies' findings could be used to identify locations for new community spaces - some of the LSCA Areas and / or parts of them could potentially be suitable candidates, subject to a full assessment of capacity for that type of use.

8.2.81 Other land uses / facilities which the community identified as needing further consideration, and which could be the subject of further study, include:

- New school
- New school playing fields
- New community centre (built form and open space)
- Allotments (currently none available in the parish)
- New cemetery
- New woodlands
- New cycle centre.

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