



**Salisbury District Council**

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**SALISBURY DISTRICT  
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**



**District-Wide Assessment**

**February 2008**

***CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES***

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*Environment Landscape Planning*

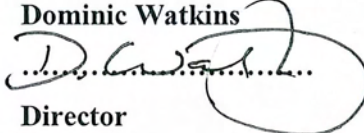


Salisbury District Council

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**SALISBURY DISTRICT  
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**

**District-Wide Assessment**

Approved By: **Dominic Watkins**  
Signed:   
Position: **Director**  
Date: **7<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

**February 2008**

***CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES***

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*Environment Landscape Planning*



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## **PREFACE**

This Technical Study was commissioned by Salisbury District Council. The Study provides a baseline inventory of the landscape character within the District, and also sets out recommendations for the application of the Study for consideration and action as appropriate by the Council. The need to protect and enhance landscape character is recognised by Government planning policy on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. To ensure that full account is given to landscape character in planning decisions, this Study is commended to the Council for use as an evidence base for informing the preparation of the Local Development Framework and in development control.

CBA is grateful for the advice and guidance provided by the Steering Group, namely:

- David Milton – Team Leader, Forward Planning and Conservation, Salisbury District Council;
- Natasha Styles – Senior Planning Officer, Forward Planning and Conservation, Salisbury District Council;
- Vincent Albano – Planning Officer, Forward Planning and Conservation, Salisbury District Council.
- Maxine Russell – Landscape Officer, Wiltshire County Council;
- Richard Burden – Landscape and Planning Advisor, Cranborne Chase and Wiltshire Downs AONB Unit;
- Charles Routh – Natural England;
- Sarah Kelly – New Forest National Park Authority;
- Will Harley – Kennet District Council;

The Consultant Team comprised:

- Dominic Watkins
- Emma Clarke
- Flora Wehl
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- Chloé Cova

*Chris Blandford Associates*  
*February 2008*



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Background**

In August 2007, Salisbury District Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment of the District.

The attractiveness of the District's landscapes is reflected in the fact that almost 50% of the total area falls within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The aim of the Study is to provide an integrated assessment of the character of the District at 1:25,000 scale, to serve as a baseline of environmental information to enable a better understanding of Salisbury District's landscapes. The Landscape Character Assessment will be specifically used as a technical evidence base to inform the Local Development Framework currently being prepared by the Council.

The overall aim of landscape planning, design and management should be to achieve 'sustainable landscapes' that are as visually, biodiverse and culturally rich as possible to meet all of society's social, economic and environmental needs. A better understanding of landscapes provided by Landscape Character Assessments – their diversity, character and distinctiveness, evolution, sensitivity to change and their management needs – is essential to help to work towards this goal.

### **Methodology**

The overall approach to the study is based on *Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland* (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002), the latest published guidance, and takes into account current best practice. Landscape Character Assessment addresses both the relatively objective process of landscape characterisation, which involves identifying, mapping, classifying and describing 'landscape character', and the more subjective process of evaluating landscape character to inform planning and land management decisions. In summary, the main stages involved in the study process were:

- Information Scoping
- Desk Study Research
- Field Survey
- Characterisation
- Evaluation
- Preparation of the Study Report

Consultation with selected key stakeholder organisations was an integral element of the Study. The purpose of the stakeholder consultation was to strengthen the evidence base by gathering opinions about landscape character from the key stakeholders, and to promote the value of the Study as a tool for informing planning and land management decisions in rural areas.

### **The Assessment**

The Assessment begins by setting out the planning policy context for this study, which includes Government Planning Policy Statements (PPS) concerning sustainable developments and sustainable development in rural areas, Regional Planning Strategy and existing local planning policy.

The study describes the physical and historical influences on the landscape, and identifies the key forces for change affecting landscape character today. It goes on to provide an overview of landscape character across the District as a whole in its national and county context. This provides the basis for the identification, mapping and description of discrete Landscape Character Units within the District.

This assessment has confirmed the diversity of Salisbury District's landscapes, identifying nine different types of landscape within only 1004 square kilometres. These are:

- Narrow Chalk River Valley
- Broad Chalk River Valley Slopes
- Broad Chalk River Valley Floor
- Chalk Downland
- Chalk Escarpments
- Forest Heath Mosaic
- Greensand Terrace
- Greensand Hills
- Rolling Clay Vale

This diversity is largely influenced by the varied geology of the District (limestone, clay, greensand and chalk) and its topographic variety (rolling lowland, river valleys and floodplains, hills, terraces, escarpments and downland). This assessment also confirms that the historical settlement, development and use of the Salisbury District's landscape, and its ecological character, reflect this diversity. Within the context of this diversity of landscape types, the assessment has identified 25 areas of distinctive landscape character. These areas reflect distinct and recognisable patterns of different natural and cultural elements that combine to create a particular experience or 'sense of place.'

## **Conclusions**

***Diversity of the District's Landscapes*** - overall, the diversity and distinctiveness of the District's landscapes are considered to be a major environmental asset, making a significant contribution to the quality of life for Salisbury District's communities. Protecting landscape features and patterns that contribute to landscape diversity, including enhancing their quality, character and function where necessary, should be a key aim for planning and land management policy in Salisbury District.

***Condition and Sensitivities of the District's Landscapes*** - the Assessment identifies, in broad terms, the current condition and sensitivities of each of the 25 landscape character areas. This information highlights the main issues affecting landscape character that need to be considered in decisions involving the development and use of land within a particular character area. Key issues in relation to development planning include:

- Built development
- Infrastructure
- Small-scale and incremental change
- Settlements in their landscape settings
- Recreation and tourism
- Climate change

***Landscape Management Needs*** - taking into account the current condition, sensitivities and changes affecting the character of each landscape character area, the Assessment also identifies guidance in the form of an overall strategy and set of objectives for managing landscape change. These reflect the specific needs of different character areas - ranging from protecting the highest quality and most sensitive landscapes from adverse changes, to promoting positive management actions to strengthen specific characteristics and features within landscapes of poor condition through environmental enhancement, design and restoration projects.

***The Landscape Planning Policy Framework*** - the focus of the current national and emerging regional planning policy framework in relation to the protection and enhancement of landscape can be summarised as:

- Sustainable development is the overarching objective and priority;
- Landscape character, settlement character and local distinctiveness should be taken into consideration in development;
- Landscape character should inform but not constrain development;
- The countryside is to be protected for its own sake but development that supports the rural economy should be considered;
- Core policies need to be clear, concise and criteria-based;
- A strong evidence base is required to support policies and any Supplementary Planning Documents;
- Local landscape designations and green wedges/strategic gaps, where these are to be retained, need justification based on a formal and robust assessment;
- Design policy is an important means for achieving landscape character objectives.

The Assessment provides the evidence base required to support the Council's Local Development Framework in general, and to underpin the development of criteria-based policies in particular.

***Synergy with Existing Landscape Character Assessments*** - this 1:25,000 'district-scale' assessment of landscape character units has been undertaken to 'nest' within the framework provided by the 1:250,000 'national-scale' Character of England Map and the 1:50,000 'county-scale' assessment set out in the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment. This assessment also incorporates information from West Wiltshire District, New Forest District, Kennet District, Test Valley and the Salisbury Plain Landscape Character Assessments which share similar character area boundaries. This Assessment has sought to strongly reflect the relevant management strategies, objectives and guidelines defined in the existing County and AONB Landscape Character Assessment to ensure synergy between the documents wherever appropriate. Depending on the circumstances and scale of consideration, this assessment should be read in conjunction with the relevant assessment(s) to inform decision-making processes.

***Relationship with Landscape Designations*** - whilst recognising that large tracts of Salisbury District are covered by statutory protected landscapes (the AONB) and currently non-statutory local landscape designations (the five Special Landscape Areas), this study provides a seamless assessment of all of the District's landscapes irrespective of their quality or value.

***Applications of the Landscape Character Assessment*** - it is intended that this Landscape Character Assessment can be used by all those with an interest in landscape planning, design and management within the District. In line with the aims and objectives of the study, the principal application of this Landscape Character Assessment is in relation to the Council's development planning functions. Planners, developers, architects, urban designers, landscape architects and other professionals may also find the characterisation information and guidelines useful as a reference source for informing the site masterplanning and building design process for specific development schemes. Other applications of the Landscape Character Assessments include its use by those involved in the targeting and delivery of environmental land management schemes - e.g. Environmental Stewardship advisers, landowners and managers. Local communities and other stakeholders may also find the Study useful as a basis for guiding their responses to consultations by the planning authorities on plans, strategies and planning applications that may have significant implications for their local landscapes.



## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The district of Salisbury is located in the south of Wiltshire, around 90 miles south-west of London. The district covers some 388 square miles and has a rich and diverse environment including: 62 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); 70 Conservation Areas and 16 Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest; part of the New Forest National Park; and the Stonehenge World Heritage Site. Approximately half of the district lies within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 1.1.2 The focus of the district is the main urban area of Salisbury, which has a current population of around 44,000. The majority of the district outside of the city is rural with a dispersed pattern of smaller settlements (see **Figure 1.1**).
- 1.1.3 In August 2007, Salisbury District Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment study of the district<sup>1</sup>. The study is intended to enable a better understanding of the District's landscapes and provide an evidence base for informing policies and proposals within the forthcoming Local Development Framework (LDF) for Salisbury District.

### 1.2 Study Objectives

- 1.2.1 Based on the Brief<sup>2</sup>, the overall objectives of the Landscape Character Assessment study can be summarised as:
- Providing an integrated classification and description of Salisbury District's landscape character types and areas at a 1:25,000 scale of assessment
  - Identifying, in broad terms, the key sensitivities and capacities of the landscape to development and change with particular reference to the settings of the District's main settlements
  - Assessing the justification for the existing Special Landscape Area and the Landscape Setting of Salisbury and Wilton policy designations in line with PPS7 requirements.
- 1.2.2 In order to meet the above objectives, the study has been undertaken in three main elements:
- District-wide assessment of the landscape;
  - An assessment of the key sensitivities and capacities of the landscape within the settings of the District's main settlements in relation to development and change; and
  - A separate report presenting advice on a recommended approach to landscape policy designations for the LDF in light of the Landscape Character Assessment.

### 1.3 The Importance of Landscape Character

- 1.3.1 The UK Government signed the European Landscape Convention<sup>3</sup> on 24 February 2006. The Convention aims to encourage public authorities within member states to adopt policies and measures for the protection, management and planning of all landscapes, both outstanding and ordinary, that determine the quality of people's living environment. The Convention specially encourages local authorities to introduce exemplary and long lasting policies or measures to protect, manage and plan landscapes.

<sup>1</sup> As required by the Brief, the study area excludes the New Forest National Park within the boundary of Salisbury District.

<sup>2</sup> Landscape Character: An Assessment of Salisbury District - Consultants Brief (Salisbury District Council, July 2007)

<sup>3</sup> The European Landscape Convention opened for signature in Florence on 20 October 2000. Jim Knight, Minister for Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity announced the UK signing of the European Landscape Convention on 24 February 2006.

1.3.2 The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as:

*‘an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.’*

1.3.3 The term landscape is typically synonymous with the countryside; however, landscape is everywhere and may comprise rural landscapes, urban landscapes or townscapes, urban fringe landscapes, coastal landscapes or seascapes, etc.

1.3.4 The European Landscape Convention defines ‘landscape character’ as:

*‘a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape.’*

1.3.5 In England and Scotland, Landscape Character Assessment<sup>4</sup> is a tool that allows landscape character to be understood, explained and described in a transparent and robust way. It does this by mapping and describing the variations in physical, natural and cultural attributes and experiential characteristics that make one area distinctive from another at a range of spatial scales. Landscape Character Assessment also recognises how landscapes have changed over time, and acknowledges the changing influences of human activities and the impacts of economic development.

1.3.6 The overall aim of landscape planning, design and management should be to achieve *sustainable landscapes* that are as visually, biodiverse and culturally rich as possible to meet all of society’s social, economic and environmental needs. A better understanding of landscapes provided by Landscape Character Assessments – their diversity, character and distinctiveness, evolution, sensitivity to change and their management needs – is essential to help to work towards this goal.

## **1.4 Planning Policy Framework**

1.4.1 National Planning Policy relating to landscape character is contained in PPS1<sup>5</sup> and PPS7<sup>6</sup>.

### ***Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development***

1.4.2 PPS1 sets out the Government’s overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. It states that one of the Government’s objectives for the planning system is that planning should facilitate and promote sustainable urban and rural development by protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and the quality and character of the countryside (para 5). In its key principles, PPS1 states that ‘*a spatial planning approach should be at the heart of planning for sustainable development*’ (para 13.iii) and ‘*design which fails to take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted*’ (para 13.iv). When preparing development plans ‘*planning authorities should seek to enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character*’ (para 27). PPS1 also requires new design to be integrated into the existing urban form and natural and built environments (para 35).

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<sup>4</sup> Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> Planning Policy Statement 1 : Delivering Sustainable Development (ODPM, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Planning Policy Statement 7 : Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (ODPM, 2004).

***Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas***

- 1.4.3 Landscape Character Assessment, along with Village or Town Design Statements and Village or Parish Plans, is recommended by PPS7 as a tool to assist Local Authorities in the preparation of policies and guidance that encourages good quality design throughout rural areas (para 13). Landscape Character Assessment is also recommended by PPS7 as a tool for creating carefully drafted, criteria-based policies in Local Development Documents to protect valued landscapes outside nationally designated areas without the need for rigid local designations, which may restrict sustainable development and the economic vitality of rural areas. PPS7 advises that local landscape designations should only be maintained or, exceptionally, extended where it can be clearly shown that criteria-based policies cannot provide the necessary protection (paras 24 and 25).

***The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West***

- 1.4.4 The draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South West<sup>7</sup> was published for public consultation in June 2006. Following the formal consultation period, an Examination in Public was held in Spring 2007. The recommendations from this are being considered by the Secretary of State, prior to approval and issuing of the revised RSS in early 2008.
- 1.4.5 The Draft RSS is based on the principles of sustainable development, and specifically identifies the need to protect and enhance the distinctiveness of the Region's natural environment (including landscape) as a key consideration in managing the spatial development of the South West.
- 1.4.6 Policy ENV1 – Protecting and Enhancing the Region's Natural and Historic Environment - states:

*'The quality, character, diversity and local distinctiveness of the natural and historic environment of the South West will be protected and enhanced, and developments which support their positive management will be encouraged. Where development and changes in land use are planned which would affect these assets, local authorities will first seek to avoid loss of or damage to the assets, then mitigate any unavoidable damage, and compensate for loss or damage through offsetting actions. Priority will be given to preserving and enhancing sites of international or national landscape, nature conservation, geological, archaeological or historic importance. Tools such as characterisation and surveys will be used to enhance local sites, features and distinctiveness through development, including the setting of settlements and buildings within the landscape and contributing to the regeneration and restoration of the area.'*

- 1.4.7 The RSS recognises that the landscapes, townscapes and seascapes of the South West are defining features of the Region, providing an important setting for settlements and contributes to local distinctiveness and a sense of place. The landscape character assessment approach is supported by the RSS as a basis for considering development impacts and promoting quality development which enhances local character and distinctiveness. Policy ENV2 – Landscape Character Areas – states:

*'The distinctive qualities and features of the South West's landscape character areas will be sustained and enhanced by Local Planning Authorities undertaking assessments of landscape character at a strategic level and in partnership with adjoining authorities (where landscape character areas cross administrative boundaries) in order to identify priority areas for the maintenance, enhancement and/or restoration of that character and provide an appropriate policy framework in LDDs for each area.'*

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<sup>7</sup> The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-2026 (South West Regional Assembly, June 2006).

- 1.4.8 The RSS also includes a specific policy on protected landscapes in the South West, which includes AONBs. The Strategy recognises that these areas have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, requires relevant authorities (including statutory undertakers and other public bodies) to have regard to the statutory purposes of AONBs. In this context, the RSS requires the relevant authorities to ensure that they have taken account of the statutory purposes of AONBs in reaching decisions or carrying out their activities. Joint working on LDDs by Local Planning Authorities is encouraged for AONBs which cross administrative boundaries. In drafting LDDs, Local Planning Authorities should have regard to statutory AONB Management Plans, and positive land management policies should be developed to sustain and enhance the area's landscape quality. The overall approach to development in these protected landscapes and in adjacent areas is set out in Policy ENV3 – Protected Landscapes – which states:

*'In Dartmoor and Exmoor National parks and the 14 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the region, the conservation and enhancement of their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage will be given priority over other considerations in the determination of development proposals. Development will only be provided for where it would:*

- *Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or;*
- *Promote the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park, or;*
- *Foster the social or economic well-being of the communities within the National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, provided that such development is compatible with the pursuit of National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty purposes;*

*Consideration will also be given to proposals which promote the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.*

*Particular care will be taken to ensure that no development is permitted outside the National Park or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which would damage their natural beauty, character and special qualities or otherwise prejudice the achievement of National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty purposes;'*

#### ***The Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan***

- 1.4.9 The approved Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan<sup>8</sup> was adopted in April 2006. Under the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, the Structure Plan and its policies are saved until April 2009 – or until superseded by the published RSS (whichever is sooner).
- 1.4.10 The Structure Plan contains two policies related to landscape protection: Policy C8 on Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Policy C9 on Special Landscape Areas. When the RSS is approved and issued, these policies will be replaced.

#### ***Local Planning Context***

- 1.4.11 Salisbury District Council has prepared and adopted (2003) a Local Plan<sup>9</sup> for the whole of the District to guide development and to protect and enhance the environment. Chapter 7 of

<sup>8</sup> Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 (Wiltshire County Council/Swindon Borough Council, Adopted April 2006)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.salisbury.gov.uk/localplan/default.asp?pageid=policy>

the Salisbury District Local Plan contains a number of policies concerned with the protection of different aspects of landscape, including in particular:

- Policy C1, C2 & C3 - Countryside Protection/The Rural Environment
- Policy C4 & C5 - AONBs
- Policy C6 - Special Landscape Areas
- Policy C7 - Landscape Setting<sup>10</sup>
- Policy C8 - Landscape Features
- Policy C9 - Woodlands
- Policy C10 - Statutory Designated Sites
- Policy C11 - Non-Statutory Designated Sites
- Policy C17 & 18 - Rivers and River Valleys

The Local Plan will eventually be replaced by a Local Development Framework (LDF) under the arrangements set out in the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*. The LDF comprises a series of Local Development Documents (LDDs) that will set out proposals for the future development use and conservation of land and buildings.

- 1.4.12 The identification of future LDDs and the timetable for their production is set out in the District Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS). This document describes the subject matter of each LDD; it also specifies which policies of the Local Plan each LDD will replace. This study will be used as part of the evidence base to inform the preparation of LDDs.

## **1.5 Approach and Methodology**

- 1.5.1 The overall approach for undertaking the Landscape Character Assessment is based on the latest guidance published by the Countryside Agency<sup>11</sup>, taking into account current best practice. Landscape Character Assessment addresses both the relatively objective process of landscape characterisation, which involves identifying, mapping, classifying and describing 'landscape character', and the more subjective process of evaluating landscape character to inform planning and land management decisions.

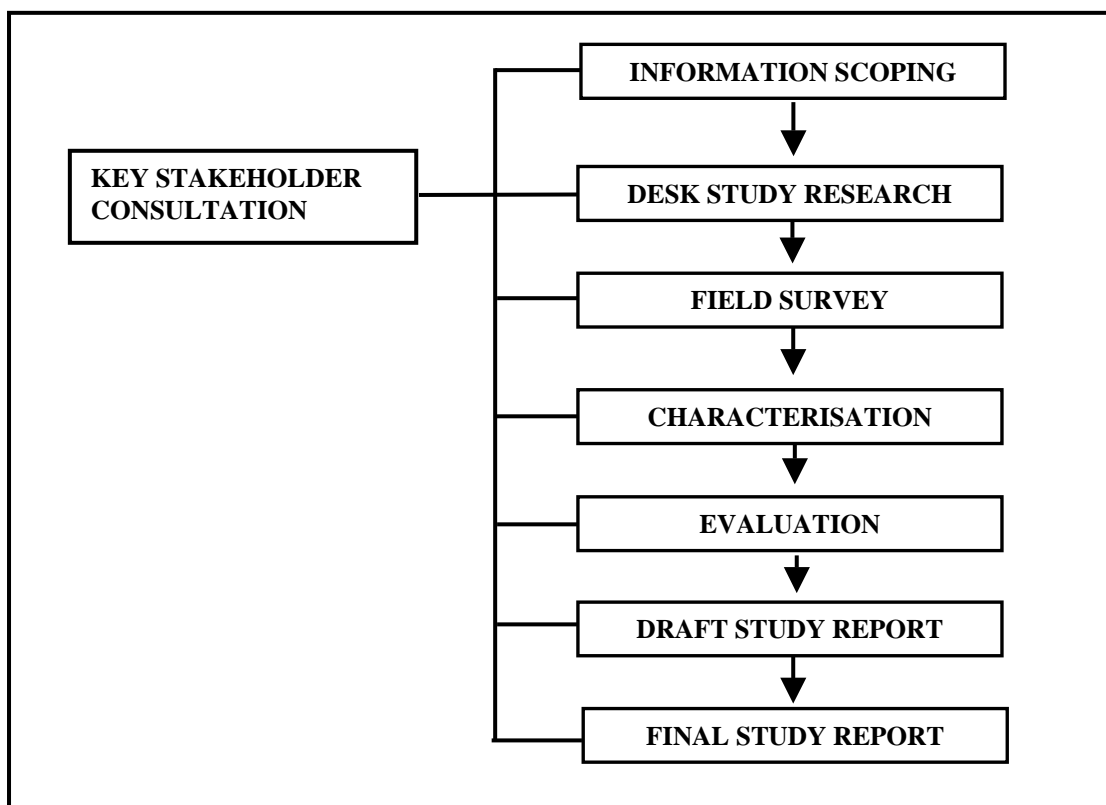
- 1.5.2 The study process is illustrated in Box 1, and described below.

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<sup>10</sup> Landscape Setting – relates to the historic towns of Salisbury and Wilton

<sup>11</sup> Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).

### Box 1 – Landscape Character Assessment Process



#### *Information Scoping*

1.5.3 This preliminary stage involved the following main tasks:

- Identify and review existing landscape character assessments covering Salisbury District;
- Obtain landscape character assessment information for incorporation into the landscape character assessment;
- Identify shortfalls in coverage of landscape character assessment, and determine further work required where necessary to provide an appropriate level of information for incorporation into the District landscape character assessment.

#### *Desk Study Research*

1.5.4 This stage involved desk-based research to identify the physical and historical factors that have influenced the shape and use of the landscape. This work drew on a variety of documents and maps that describe the physical geography and cultural history of the District (see Appendix B for details). The desk research also identified the forces for change affecting the character of the District's landscape.

1.5.5 In summary, the desk work involved:

- Review of existing national, county and local landscape character assessment classifications, including the Countryside Agency's Character of England Map, the Wiltshire County Landscape Character Assessment; the Cranborne Chase and West

Wiltshire Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment; and existing assessments for neighbouring local authority areas;

- Production and analysis of map overlays of physical and cultural components of the landscape;
- Identification of draft Landscape Character Types and draft Landscape Character Areas.

### ***Field Survey***

1.5.6 Field surveys were undertaken during September, October and November 2007. The aim of the surveys was to undertake a visual analysis of how different features and elements combined to create distinctive patterns in the landscape. The surveys were undertaken from key viewpoints within each draft Landscape Character Area by a team of field assessors using a structured checklist. The checklist included:

- Landform
- Rivers/drainage
- Land cover
- Field pattern and field boundaries
- Communication routes
- Settlement form/pattern
- Building styles
- Scale
- Texture
- Enclosure
- Stimuli
- Sense of tranquillity
- Movement
- View types and composition
- Landmarks

1.5.7 The survey information (including photographs) was used to (i) inform the descriptions of landscape character and (ii) to test and refine the boundaries of the draft Landscape Character Types and Areas.

### ***Characterisation***

1.5.8 The characterisation stage involved the combination of the desk study research and field survey analysis to identify and map generic Landscape Character Types and geographically unique Landscape Character Areas at 1:25,000 scale.

1.5.9 In the absence of Historic Landscape Characterisation Information for the county, a 'high-level' analysis of the historical time-depth of the landscape was undertaken, to identify historic features, field patterns and boundaries, and historic development of settlements.

1.5.10 For each generic Landscape Character Type, its boundaries were mapped and its key characteristics described. For each unique Landscape Character Area, its boundaries were mapped and characterisation information recorded under the following headings:

- Location and Boundaries
- Key Characteristics
- Summary of Visual Character

- Human Influences (historic environment features, field patterns and boundaries and historic development of settlements)
- Biodiversity

1.5.11 For the purposes of the study, information for relevant landscape character areas from the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment (June 2003) was incorporated where appropriate for consistency.

1.5.12 As set out within the brief for this Study, detailed assessment of the landscape character of the District within the New Forest National Park boundary was not undertaken.

### ***Evaluation***

1.5.13 This stage involved making the following judgements about each Landscape Character Area:

- Current Condition
- Inherent Landscape Sensitivities (landscape character and visual sensitivity)
- Key Landscape Changes
- Management Strategy and Objectives

1.5.14 The methodology for evaluating the inherent sensitivities of each defined Landscape Character Area to change was based on the criteria for judging sensitivity set out in an accompanying paper to the Countryside Agency's Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland<sup>12</sup>, taking into account current best practice. It should be noted that the sensitivity evaluation is based on the relatively broad-brush analysis undertaken at 1:25,000 scale for the Study. Also, the degree of sensitivity is not absolute and it will vary according to the nature of change under consideration; it is therefore only indicative.

1.5.15 Within this report, sensitivity is assessed in terms of the landscape resource (both its character as a whole and the individual elements contributing to character) and the visual sensitivity of the landscape (including a combination of factors, such as views and visibility).

1.5.16 The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Sensitivity Study identifies inherent landscape sensitivities for each Landscape Character Area defined within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment (June 2003). For the purposes of this Study, information within the Sensitivity Study has been summarised within each Landscape Character Area relating to Salisbury District. For those Landscape Character Areas that fall within the AONB, detailed information set out within the Sensitivity Study should be used to inform decision-making.

1.5.17 The condition, sensitivity and change analysis, together with the proposed management strategies and objectives for each Landscape Character Area, can be used to inform:

- The identification of spatial development options within the Local Development Framework
- Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of Local Development Framework site allocations
- The highlighting of landscape issues that may need to be considered in greater detail in relation to development control decisions

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<sup>12</sup> Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland, Topic Paper 8 – Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity (Swanwick, 2004)

- The application of criteria-based landscape protection and enhancement policies within the Local Development Framework.

### ***Key Stakeholder Consultation***

- 1.5.18 Consultation with selected key stakeholder organisations was an element of the Study. The purpose of the stakeholder consultation was to strengthen the evidence base by gathering opinions about landscape character from the key stakeholders, and to promote the value of the Study as a tool for informing planning and land management decisions in rural areas.
- 1.5.19 The consultation involved meetings with the stakeholders to explore views on what gives different places their local identity and distinctive character. This information was fed into the desk study research and field survey stages of the Study to refine and validate the preliminary draft mapping of Landscape Character Types and Areas by the Consultant Team.
- 1.5.20 It is anticipated that community involvement in the future application of the Landscape Character Assessment will be encouraged through development of ‘bottom up’ character-based design guidance at the local level (e.g. Village Design Statements, Town Design Statements, Parish Plans etc.).

## **1.6 Structure of the Report**

- 1.6.1 The study report is structured as follows.

*Section 1.0* sets out the context for the Study. It explains the background to the Study, its aims and objectives, and highlights the importance of landscape character. It also describes the planning policy framework for the Study, and outlines the approach and process behind the assessment methodology.

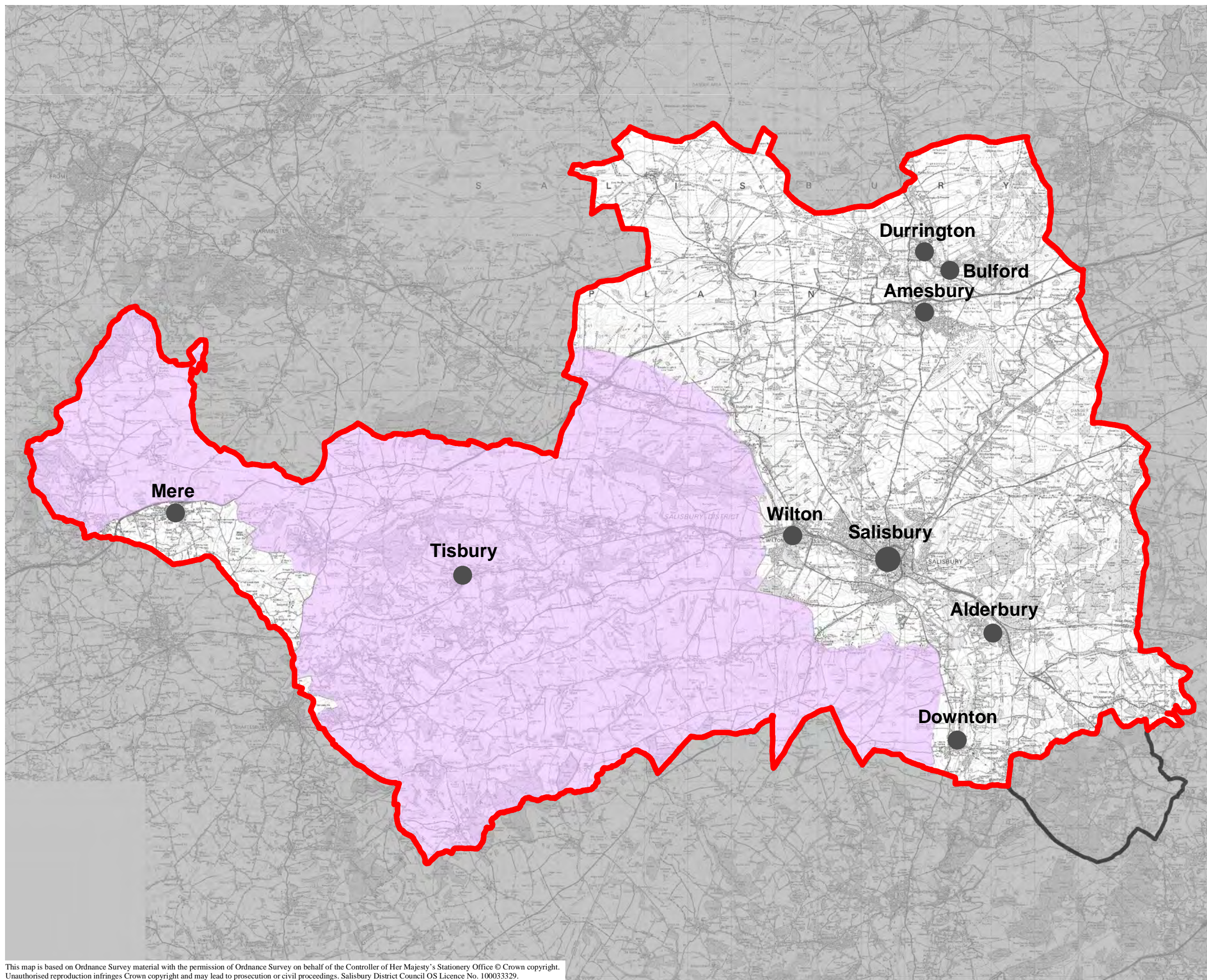
*Section 2.0* provides an overview of the District. It describes the physical and historical influences on the landscape, and identifies the key forces for change affecting landscape character today.

*Section 3.0* provides an overview of landscape character across the District as a whole in its national and county context.




*Section 4.0* of the report provides detailed ‘profiles’ of the Landscape Character Units identified within the District. These have been subdivided into 25 Landscape Character Areas that reflect distinctive variations in local character. The profiles describe the character of each Landscape Character Area, and set out a management strategy and objectives for informing land use planning decisions and environmental land management initiatives.

*Section 5.0* sets out the main conclusions of the Study, and provides recommendations to the Council for its consideration and action as appropriate. Recommendations are provided for the application of the Landscape Character Assessment and for further work required to enhance the evidence base on the landscape character of the District.

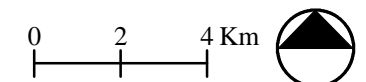




**KEY**

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty within Salisbury District
-  New Forest National Park within Salisbury District

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**FIGURE 1.1**  
THE STUDY AREA

