

Introduction to Stockton-on-Tees Landscape Character Assessment & Capacity Study

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What is Landscape Character?

Landscape character is what makes an area unique. It is defined by Natural England as "a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements, be it natural (soil, landform) and/or human (for example settlement and development) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse". Landscape Character Assessment is a technique used to develop a consistent and comprehensive understanding of what gives landscape its character.

Stockton-on-Tees Landscape Character Assessment

During 2009 to 2010 a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was undertaken covering all rural and urban fringe areas of Stockton Borough. The study was carried out in accordance with national guidance, as published by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) and Scottish Natural Heritage in 2002.

Through survey work and analysis seven broad 'Landscape Character Areas' were identified. The study also subdivided these Landscape Character Areas into a total of 197 smaller 'Landscape Units'.

The ***Stockton-on-Tees Landscape Character Assessment*** report and all associated appendices and figures can be downloaded separately. Figure 3 of the report shows the Landscape Character Areas, while Figure 4 shows the Landscape Units. The site survey sheets for each Landscape Unit are provided in Appendix F.

Stockton-on-Tees Landscape Capacity Study

In conjunction with the above, a Landscape Capacity Study was also undertaken to assess the degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character.

The ***Stockton-on-Tees Landscape Capacity Study*** report can be downloaded separately. The associated survey sheets are provided in Appendix B, and this information is mapped in Figure 5.

Links to the Local Development Framework

The survey data and reports provide a valuable tool to aid spatial planning, inform the preparation of planning briefs, and guide decisions on future land management.

Both the Landscape Character Assessment & Capacity Study will both help to inform the preparation of the Borough's Local Development Framework. The ***Environment Development Plan Document Issues and Options Consultation (2010)*** identified as an option the 'development of a policy to ensure development is conducive with the Landscape Character Assessment & Capacity Study'.