

## CONSULTANTS BRIEF FOR LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT IN SUPPORT OF LISKEARD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

**Introduction:** The Liskeard Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, acting on behalf of the Liskeard Town Council, is seeking to procure a landscape character assessment in support of our proposed 'Area of Local Landscape and Heritage Value' planning policy. (See Appendix A for a copy of the Policy).

**Background:** The Draft Liskeard Neighbourhood Plan includes a policy relating to the control of development in an area to the north and west of town referred to as 'Area of Local Landscape and Heritage Value'. This policy is to control quality and conserve the best landscapes and views rather than to act as a blanket prevention to development. The area between this and Bodmin Moor AONB is already AGLV and this part is we argue, just as valuable. The area also acts to prevent coalescence with St Cleer to the north and contains assets including ancient woodland at High Woods, CWS at Keasts Park and Halbathick Woods, a sacred well at Ladye Park, a remnant Ducal Deer Park across the main valley as well as the Caradon Liskeard disused mineral line that is part of the WHS. In early consultation some people marked up their cherished views.

Unfortunately, published data on the area as depicted on the Cornwall Council Interactive Map is out-of-date and does not include the latest information about the heritage and other features present. This has led to objections to the policy from developers seeking to bring forward opportunities in the area, on the basis that the policy is unjustified.

**Requirement:** We require a simple, succinct but robust independent landscape character assessment to support the evidence base and reasoned justification for this policy. The work is to be in accordance with the accepted professional Guidelines on Landscape and Impact Visual Assessment 3rd edition (published by the Landscape Institute and IEMA).

*[Note that reference should be made to the Caradon Hill Area Heritage Project (CHAHP) information which is not published online but available from CC HERS or CAU].*

### Appendix A

#### POLICY OSL10

##### Area of Local Landscape and Heritage Value

***The area between the development limit and the Caradon AGLV,( CL8 & 9 saved policies), is designated as an area of local landscape and heritage value with a view to future redesignation as an extension to the area of great landscape value. Within this area any permitted development should recognise and respect the landscape character, pattern and scale of settlement, and reflect the traditional building styles, materials and design of the local area . Proposals to create greater recreational linkages in the form of permissive paths connecting to the existing network of paths and bridleways, signage and interpretive material will be supported.***

#### Reasoned Justification

To the west and north of the town lies the locally cherished landscape including the World Heritage Site Liskeard & Caradon railway track-bed and Ladye Park/Old Park valley with its associated Ducal deer park, and the historically significant Moorswater valley. These important landscapes are highly valued locally for their contribution to character and the distinctiveness of Liskeard and should be retained, respected and enhanced. They are considered to be of equal and in places superior quality to the already designated Area of Great Landscape Value north from Treworrey to St Cleer and also forms an important part of the distinctive setting of Liskeard. National Planning Policy Framework says that policies may “identify and protect areas of tranquility which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason” (NPPF para 123). This is reiterated in Cornwall Local Plan Policy 23 which says that “Development must take into account and respect the sensitivity and capacity of the landscape asset, considering cumulative impact and the wish to maintain dark skies and tranquility in areas that are relatively undisturbed”

The ‘Liskeard Town Framework’ and ‘Cornwall Council’s Historic Environment data sheet 2011’ for Liskeard and Looe refer to the need for further studies/assessment of Liskeard’s heritage and landscape hinterland. The latter includes comments on Liskeard’s setting ‘on its hilltop overlooking wide tranches of landscape as an important characteristic’ and mentions missing evidence, threats and proposed projects e.g. ‘threats to landscape setting and development on skyline around the outer limits’. (The CLP also shows respect for “physical boundaries of existing settlements,” such as the elevated northern edge of the town which looks down into the Ladye Valley and across to the AGLV, seeking to provide protection from inappropriate development into open countryside).

The document above points out that the underlying structure of the area remains medieval or earlier. This paper emphasises that the areas beyond the urban centres and around Bodmin Moor are under studied and that an historic landscape characterisation study is required (which has not been carried out to date) which would provide a detailed assessment of the heritage assets and setting of the rural hinterland of Liskeard. ‘Planning Future Cornwall Growth Factors Liskeard and Looe CNA version 2 2013’, says that ‘studies are required on the Liskeard and Looe streetscape, links to world heritage site, conservation areas, & historic landscape character reviews’. Cornwall local plan (Oct 2016) policy 23a states the intention to reassess the extent of each Area of Great Landscape Value “to inform and produce strong revised statements of these local designations of landscape value.” Liskeard people see this area as a valuable local resource – it has quiet, Cornish lanes, abundance of flora and fauna and sweeping landscape views and as such is well-used and enjoyed by walkers, cyclists, horse riders, running groups, families with buggies, dog walkers etc. thus contributing to the local communities ‘health and well-being’ ( One of NPPF core planning principles and CLP policy 17). It is traversed by the designated Caradon heritage trail, forming a green corridor that supports both recreation and nature conservation. This areas protection and enhancement could also provide economic benefits to the town through its attractive setting and heritage assets, especially the World Heritage Site railway track bed link.