



Dilton Marsh Neighbourhood Development Plan

Key Views Topic Paper – Draft Methodology
March 2023

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The rural character and landscape setting of Dilton Marsh, in conjunction with the extensive well-used rights of way network, were identified by community consultation as priorities for protection and management by the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2. As part of the contextual assessment of local character, and the value people attribute to local landscape and townscape, the understanding of which particular views local people particularly appreciate is useful to define the sense of place and deliver good design in accordance with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Design Guide¹ (NDG).

National Design Guide

5. A place is more complex and multi-faceted than a building:

- *it is a setting for a diverse range of uses and activities, and is experienced by many people in many different ways;*
- *it is made up of buildings, and also landscape and infrastructure, which are likely to endure longer than the buildings themselves;*
- *most places evolve over a long period of time once they have been established, with many incremental changes that can affect their quality;*
- *the quality of 'delight' includes a richness of experience gained from all of our senses, not only the visual; and*
- *beauty in a place may range from a long view down to the detail of a building or landscape.*

- 1.3. The NDG explains that views, vistas and landmarks are influencing factors defining local identity and sense of place. These views are positive elements of character of places for their users. Views may be important for a number of reasons and can help inform the character of a new development, which is a key objective of the NDP.
- 1.4. This assessment seeks to provide a robust and objective evidence-base to inform and underpin a NDP policy defining and managing key views.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

2. Methodology

- 2.1 There is not an accepted definition of what constitutes a Key View (KV), in any of the published and accepted landscape guidance. The selection of views is also a result of people's perceptions, so is somewhat subjective.
- 2.2 A 'View' is defined by the OED as "*A sight or prospect that can be taken in by the eye from a particular place*".
- 2.3 Views can be important to the visual amenity of an area. GLVIA3² explains "*The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provide an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area.*" The more people that experience a viewpoint, the higher the value that may be attributed, i.e. a view identified by numerous people as important, might be considered more valued than one selected from an isolated point in the parish that few people frequent. Views enjoyed by pedestrians using a footpath are likely to be valued over than views experienced by traffic speeding past along a main road.
- 2.4 There are no statutory landscape designations or a conservation area at Dilton Marsh, however the majority of the rural landscape to the south and west of the village is defined as a locally significant 'Special Landscape Area' (SLA) in the West Wiltshire Local Plan 1st Alteration saved Policy C3(B) 'The Corsley Heath to Chapmanslade Greensand Ridge'. A set of criteria has therefore been developed to focus on the 'local' value of any KV.
- 2.5 To ensure a clear and thorough methodology to assess KVs within the designated neighbourhood area, the following criteria has been devised to assess their value using principles of *TGN 02-21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations*³:
- 1) KVs must be accessible by the public and visible from the public highway, the rights of way network, open spaces, or proposed / designated local green space.
 - 2) KVs should show a range of physical (natural or man-made) features and an expanse of the parish, not one particular object unless this is a building or feature of particular cultural heritage – examples may include the Church of the Holy Trinity (Grade II*) or the scheduled monument at 'Bratton Camp Iron Age hillfort, the Westbury White Horse, barrows and trackways on Bratton Down'.

² <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/blog/glvia-the-third/>

³ <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/news/new-guidance-assessing-landscape-value-outside-national-designations/>

3) KVs should merit at least one of the following values: aesthetic, biodiversity, cultural heritage, functional, recreational, or tranquillity.

- Aesthetic – Views with strong aesthetic qualities that appeal to the visual senses that may include memorable / distinctive views of features, or a combination of features, of landscape or townscape (such as an attractive and distinctive group of buildings).
- Biodiversity – Views containing the presence of valued natural capital assets that contribute to ecosystems, habitats and ecological networks.
- Cultural heritage - Presence of historic landmark structures (designated or non-designated heritage assets) or designed landscape elements / parkland.
- Functional – View of the landscape that have strong physical or functional links with landscape designations, including Special Landscape Areas, or are important to the appreciation of the landscape and its special qualities.
- Recreational – From a place offering recreational opportunities where experience of a view(s) is important to the enjoyment of the activity.
- Tranquillity – A location offering high levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet. Places may also exhibit a general absence of intrusive or inharmonious development, land uses, transport and lighting.

2.6 The following definition was agreed by the Steering Group:

A Key View (KV) is a publicly accessible viewpoint in the Dilton Marsh Neighbourhood Area that is reflective of what makes our settlements distinct as a rural community. The views are memorable and appreciated. They provide an attractive setting or backdrop, encompassing an important feature of settlement history and the way the built and natural landscape has been shaped by those living within, worked in it, and by nature.

2.7 KVs were suggested by members of the Steering Group and community consultation whereby they were assessed using the above criteria. All KVs were assessed using field and map surveys. The proforma at Figure 1 has been completed for each KV. All KVs were subject to public consultation to seek community opinions on the views and values identified. Consultation also provided an opportunity for additional candidate KV to be identified and considered using the above methodology.

Figure 1 – KV assessment proforma

KV Ref:		Grid Reference:	
View Direction:			
Description:			
<i>INSERT IMAGE OF VIEW</i> <i>Dated</i>			
Aesthetic:			
Biodiversity:			
Heritage:			
Functional:			
Recreational:			
Tranquillity:			
View Management Objectives:			