

**ITEM NO. 12 – APPENDIX A****Sevenoaks Countryside Character Assessment Babbie Responses**

	<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Character Area and Section of Document</b>	<b>Consultee's Comment</b>	<b>Babbie's Response</b>	<b>Recommended amendments</b>
1.1	Cllr Alan Pett (Ash Ward)	Hartley and New Ash Green Landscape Description	Soils are alkaline not acidic.	Soils in this character area are mainly 'clay with flints' which <i>is</i> acidic. It overlies Chalk which is alkaline. There may be some local variation, and deep cultivation or construction activity may mix chalky material with the topsoil resulting in a more alkaline substrate.	None
1.2	Cllr Alan Pett (Ash Ward)	Hartley and New Ash Green Landscape Description	The text fails to distinguish the innovation and character etc of New Ash Green from other parts of the character area	Agreed – this was a typographical error. The last paragraph should have been split to distinguish New Ash Green from other development. For additional clarity we are also recommending additional text.	Amend last paragraph: <b>Insert</b> new paragraph after '...wide verges.' <b>Add</b> 'In other settlements' <b>Delete</b> 'Otherwise'
1.3	Cllr Alan Pett (Ash Ward)	Hartley and New Ash Green Key Characteristics	Key Characteristics List should distinguish the innovative housing at New Ash Green from other development.	Agreed	Amend list: <b>Delete</b> 'Unremarkable built form' <b>Add</b> 'Innovative early planned development at New Ash Green' 'Elsewhere built form is unremarkable'
1.4	Cllr Alan Pett (Ash Ward)	Hartley and New Ash Green Landscape Analysis: Condition	Ecological Integrity is not weak in New Ash Green	The assessment relates to the character area as a whole not just the developed area at New Ash Green	None
1.5	Cllr Alan Pett (Ash Ward)	Hartley and New Ash Green Landscape Analysis: Sensitivity	New Ash Green is muddled with other places	The assessment relates to the character area as a whole not just the developed area at New Ash Green	None
1.6	Cllr Alan Pett (Ash Ward)	Hartley and New Ash Green Landscape Analysis: Landscape Actions	Analysis of New Ash Green is wrong	The assessment relates to the character area as a whole not just the developed area at New Ash Green. The analysis is therefore a generalisation about the character area, and there will be localised	None

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				areas within it (such as the early exemplary development at New Ash Green) which do not fully accord with the analysis. A more detailed landscape and townscape study would have to be developed to illustrate more local Landscape Actions.	
2.1	Ash cum Ridley Parish Council	General	Document does not make clear whether the assessment includes residential areas within the countryside.	In general we have excluded settlements where they are defined as urban areas in the local plan. The coloured areas on the maps show the areas which were characterised.	None
2.2	Ash cum Ridley Parish Council	Hartley and New Ash Green	Assessment is superficial and the Hartley and New Ash Green character area should be split into three separate character areas	At the scale of the commissioned study the Hartley and New Ash Green character area shares many common patterns such as physiographical features including geology, soils, topography and vegetation. Similar common patterns are the pattern of cultural and human activities such as land use, settlement, field enclosure, and landscape history. A more detailed scale of landscape and townscape study would have to be developed to further divide the character area.	None
3.1	Councillor Clive Bruce	General	The document is incomprehensible	We have used an accepted methodology which is promoted by the Countryside Agency - but we do recognise that some of the language is technical in its scope and often narrow in its definitions. The assessment process is necessarily complex because a large number of factors have to be assessed. The desire for a more accessible and less technical document does have to be balanced against the need to employ technical and precise language in order to ensure rigour, precision and	None

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				transparency in the assessment process.	
3.2	Councillor Clive Bruce	Hartley and New Ash Green	New Ash Green is inaccurately described etc	The points raised are covered at points 1.1 – 1.6 and 2.2 above.	The points raised are covered at points 1.1 – 1.6 and 2.2 above.
4.1	Kent Wildlife Trust	General	Document should be seen as primarily concerning the landscape and not a strategy for nature conservation.	Agree – but we feel that this is implicit throughout the document.	None.
4.2	Kent Wildlife Trust	General	Biodiversity targets are not necessarily appropriate and may be damaging.	We are recommending the revision of the ecological actions set out under the more detailed comments below.	
4.3	Kent Wildlife Trust	General	It is not clear how the biodiversity targets were derived.	Need to check issues against the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan	Review ecological elements in all 'Landscape Actions' to reflect key BAP targets where this is not inconsistent with other landscape objectives.
4.4	Kent Wildlife Trust	Mixed Settled Downs	Inconsistent – all areas of unimproved grassland should be retained, managed restored or recreated where feasible.	Agreed.	Revise text (see also 4.3) above.
4.5	Kent Wildlife Trust	Woodlands	Again inconsistent	Agree. There is a need clarify the objectives in line with KWT's advice and to balance of nature conservation interests against landscape conservation interests	Revise text (see also 4.3) above
4.6	Kent Wildlife Trust	General	Unimproved grassland should not normally be lost to encroaching scrub	Agree. There is a need clarify the objectives in line with KWT's advice so that nature conservation interests are balanced against landscape conservation interests.	Revise text (see also 4.3) above
4.7	Kent Wildlife Trust	Greensand Parks and Farmlands	Wooded sites on Greensand may have originally been wood pasture, heathland or	Agree. There is a need clarify the objectives in line with KWT's advice, and so that nature conservation interests are balanced against landscape conservation interests.	Revise text (see also 4.3) above

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			acid grassland.		
4.8	Kent Wildlife Trust		Ditch profiling and reprofiling as suggested is often damaging to biodiversity	Agree. More appropriate wording is required to reflect biodiversity issues.	Revise text (see also 4.3) above
4.9	Kent Wildlife Trust		It is generally felt that the creation of new ponds near existing ponds is preferable to the suggested restoration of existing ponds	Agree. More appropriate wording is required to reflect biodiversity issues.	Revise text (see also 4.3) above
5.1	Cllr Mrs A N Gee	General	Pages should be numbered.	Agree.	Pages to be numbered in final version
5.2	Cllr Mrs A N Gee	Darent Valley: Eynsford And Shoreham Landscape Description	Eynsford misspelled.	Agree.	Last sentence should read To the south of Eynsford ...
5.3	Cllr Mrs A N Gee	Darent Valley: Eynsford And Shoreham Sensitivity	Why is visibility 'moderate'	'Visibility' is being used in a technical sense and is made up from the interaction of 'landform' and 'extent of tree cover' as explained in the methodology.	None.
5.4	Cllr Mrs A N Gee	Darent Valley: Eynsford And Shoreham	Detailed comments are made with the general thrust that more information on the environment around Eynsford should be included.	Further very detailed information within this section would unbalance the document, but Sevenoaks District Council should retain the information so that should a more detailed landscape character assessment is made in this area in future.	None
6.1	English Nature	General	SSSI's should be referred to in the document, especially Otford to Shoreham Downs SSSI, Scords Wood and Brockholt Mount SSSI	Agree.	Incorporate a brief description of the larger SSSI's in the document.

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			and Knole Park SSSI.		
7.1	West Kingsdown Parish Council	General	Landscape Actions have financial implications but no indication of funding	Landscape Actions are discussed in the methodology. They 'are included with the view to influencing opinions, generating support and guiding policy'.	None
7.2	Kingsdown Parish Council	West Kingsdown Key Characteristics	There is negligible chestnut coppice in the area. Many woods have been replanted with mixed native species.	Change wording to reflect this.	<b>Delete</b> 'coppice' from last phrase. (i.e. to read 'Blocks of Woodland')
7.3	Kingsdown Parish Council	West Kingsdown Landscape Description	As 7.2 (above)	Change wording to reflect this.	<b>Delete</b> 'chestnut coppice' at end of last paragraph <b>Add</b> 'native species'
8.1	Horton Kirby and South Darenth Parish Council	Darent Valley – Horton Kirby Landscape Description	The two 'nucleic villages' should be named.	Agree.	<b>Add</b> 'Horton Kirby and South Darenth,' after 'villages,' in last paragraph.
9.1	Head of Planning and Regeneration Services Gravesham Borough Council	General	Presentation in a ring bound format and with maps reproducible in Black and White would make the document easy to handle and use. A large colour map should also be included.	Sevenoaks District Council may wish to consider this and Babbie would be happy to design the document in this format	SDC to consider  SDC comment - Babbie be requested to design the document in a ring bound format.
9.2	Head of Planning and Regeneration Services Gravesham Borough Council	General	The report should be indexed	Sevenoaks District Council may wish to consider this and Babbie would be happy to index the document	SDC to consider  SDC comment - Babbie be requested to index the document

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9.3	Head of Planning and Regeneration Services Gravesham Borough Council	General	There should be a glossary or footnotes to explain technical or vernacular terms such as 'shaws' and 'arabalisation'	Agree.	Provide brief glossary of obscure terms. Suggestion supported by Management Team.
10.1	Sundridge with Ide Hill Parish Council	Sundridge farmlands Landscape Description	Montreal Park was demolished before the last war – perhaps this should be a reference to Combe Bank or Chevening	Babtie will contact the field surveyor to clarify.	Awaiting information.  SDC comment – text will be amended if appropriate
10.2	Sundridge with Ide Hill Parish Council	Sundridge farmlands Landscape Description	Sundridge misspelled as 'Sunridge'.	Agree.	Second sentence: <b>Delete</b> 'Sunridge' <b>Add</b> 'Sundridge'
10.3	Sundridge with Ide Hill Parish Council	Sevenoaks Wooded Chart Landscape Description	Goathurst misspelled as 'Goudhurst'.	Agree.	Final paragraph: <b>Delete</b> 'Goudhurst' <b>Add</b> 'Goathurst'
10.4	Sundridge with Ide Hill Parish Council	General	Need page numbers	Agree. See 5.1	See 5.1

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11.1	Mr NC Britten Chairman Sevenoaks District Committee (CPRE)	General	Need page numbers	Agree. See 5.1	See 5.1
11.2	Mr NC Britten Chairman Sevenoaks District Committee CPRE	General	Include example Field Survey Sheet as an Appendix	Agree.	Include example Field Survey Sheet as an Appendix
11.3	Mr NC Britten Chairman Sevenoaks District Committee CPRE	General	Include Maps to show how the SCCA nests with the Countryside Agency's Character of England Map and the Landscape Assessment of Kent (KCC)	This would be helpful but not essential. SDC may wish to consider.	SDC may wish to consider.  SDC comment This would be very expensive and cannot be justified
11.4	Mr NC Britten Chairman Sevenoaks District Committee CPRE	General	Include cross reference to the AONB Management Plans	Agree that some explanatory text would be helpful. Full cross referencing would be helpful but not essential. SDC may wish to consider.	SDC may wish to consider  SDC comment - Agree to the additional text
11.5	Mr NC Britten Chairman Sevenoaks District Committee CPRE	General	General Comments on naming of areas e.g. 'Otford Valley West' is an invention	Sevenoaks DC may wish to advise on this name and suggest an alternative if appropriate.	SDC may wish to consider  SDC comment - While they may not be recognised names they have chosen by Babbie and in the absence of better alternative they should remain.

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11.6	Mr NC Britten Chairman Sevenoaks District Committee CPRE	General	Highlight areas falling within the AONB.	Agree.	Add textual reference to each character area within the AONB.
11.7	Mr NC Britten Chairman Sevenoaks District Committee CPRE	General	Inconsistency in evaluation scales. Nine possible Landscape actions are 'over nuanced'	Disagree. The methodology is nationally recognised and supported by the Countryside Agency.	None.
11.8	Mr NC Britten Chairman Sevenoaks District Committee CPRE	General	A map showing the judgements on landscape actions and a final chapter setting out conclusions would be useful.	Sevenoaks District Council may wish to consider this and Babbie would be happy to compile the maps and text. There is a last chapter - 'Summary of Issues' which gives some conclusions.	SDC may wish to consider.  SDC comment - This more detailed work will be looked at in forthcoming Supplementary Planning Guidance as part of the preparation of the LDF.
12.1	Sevenoaks Friends of the Earth	General	Organic and biodynamic agriculture have a positive effect on the landscape	Agree that organic farming can have landscape benefits	<b>Add</b> paragraph on benefits of less intensive farming practices which reduce or avoid the need for herbicides and pesticides under Sevenoaks Summary of Landscape Issues: 2.0 Agricultural Landscapes
12.2	Sevenoaks Friends of the Earth	General	Designate the District a GM -free Zone	It is not within the powers of SDC to do this	None



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12.3	Sevenoaks Friends of the Earth	General	Low impact buildings made of straw bales are likely to be the most harmonious.	Disagree- they may be appropriate in some locations, but in most areas the local vernacular style and materials should be a major influence on the design of new buildings.	None.
13.1	Sevenoaks District Council Environmental Select Committee	Maps	The landscape character and landscape types maps should be merged to give an overview of the terrain across the district.	We would wish to retain two separate maps because landscape type is a different concept to landscape character. However we could bring out the relationship between the detailed character areas and the landscape types into which they fall by amending the colouring and key text to the landscape character map.	Amend landscape character map to show relationship with landscape types
14.2	SDC Environmental Select Committee	Hextable Fringe	Swanley Village should be included in the assessment.	The village was assessed but it was not considered distinctive enough to warrant a specific reference. However if SDC consider that a short description of the village be included we would not object.	SDC to consider  SDC comment - Babbie be asked to provide additional text to cover Swanley Village
14.3	SDC Environmental Select Committee	General	Further clarification of the assessment categories is desirable in order to ensure that they make an effective contribution to planning consideration.	It is important to stress that this is a <i>landscape</i> character assessment, distinct from an assessment of, for example, development capacity (although the landscape character assessment could be used as an essential input into such a study). The assessment categories relate to the landscape - for instance under Landscape Actions, an assessment of 'Create' means create a new, more robust and distinctive landscape. This assessment should be considered in the planning process, along with a variety of other material considerations so that a balanced decision can be made.	None

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				We have also issued Internal Guidelines for Development Control which gives some general advice on landscape character in the light of perceived pressures which illustrate how the guidelines might be used in practice in the consideration of the planning process.	
15.1	Crockenhill Parish Council	Crockenhill Fringe	Crockenhill is summarised as 'poor' but the assessment does not make clear how this will be used in the planning process to improve the area.	<p>Under landscape actions we have made recommendations which, for instance, could be incorporated into new developments if they were to be granted consent: e.g. 'A stronger woodland element is needed, and could be implemented as wooded edges to paddocks and as a network of small woodlands through the character area' and 'A design code should be agreed in order to develop distinctive local character in built form.'</p> <p>The guidelines relate both to the planning process and to land management. We hope that the document will be influential in promoting an awareness of landscape character to landowners, farmers, horse owners, foresters and others who shape the landscape around Crockenhill Fringes and throughout the district.</p>	None.