

Porthleven Neighbourhood Plan



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Appendix C Local Landscape Character Assessment Stage 2 Report Settlement Edge Assessment

March 2016



Porthleven Local Landscape Character Assessment Stage 2

Settlement Edge Assessment (LLCA Stage 2)

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Chapter 1 – Background to Porthleven Local Landscape Character Assessment

1.1 Creating a Porthleven Local Landscape Character Settlement Assessment

- 1.1.1 The Cornwall Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) Unit commissioned June Crossland Dip TP MRTPI, Chartered Town Planner and Geoff Pring B.SC (Hons), M.L.I., Qualified Landscape Architect, to undertake Stage 2 of the Porthleven Local Landscape Character Assessment (LLCA). The Porthleven Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Steering Group authorised the preparation of this stage of the Porthleven LLCA on the 11th May 2015. The purpose of stage 2 of the Porthleven LLCA was to provide an evidence base that would support the policy formulation stage of the NDP.
- 1.1.2 Guidance for the Local Landscape Character Assessment Stage 2 – Settlement Edge Assessment (LLCA Stage 2) was prepared by Kath Statham CMLI, Landscape Architect, from the Natural Environment Team of Cornwall Council; a member of the Cornwall AONB Partnership. This methodology was prepared as a County wide resource which could be taken forward in other Neighbourhood Development Plans in Cornwall. The Porthleven LLCA Stage 2 provided the pilot for this methodology.
- 1.1.3 The Porthleven Local Landscape Character Settlement Assessment provided the opportunity to take forward this guidance with a group of volunteers experienced in working on local landscape character assessments, with the assistance of facilitators. The Porthleven Local Landscape Character Assessment Stage 1 (LLCA Stage 1) had been successfully completed by this group earlier in the year. This provided the opportunity for the methodology to be refined and consolidated in the context of an emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan. A key principle of this work is to provide local people with the training and resources, following established guidance and methodologies, to make clear and transparent judgements on landscape sensitivity, value and capacity for change.
- 1.1.4 The initial workshop that provided training for the Settlement Assessment was undertaken on the 10th October 2015. This took place over a Saturday; the morning session provided guidance on how to assess the sensitivity of a landscape, its value and its capacity to accommodate change. The pm session was on site which provided further information on how to complete the tables provided for this assessment. Two follow up meetings took place on the 2nd November and 7th December 2015, which provided feedback from the volunteers on the settlement assessment and further guidance on the completion of the assessment. This enabled the guidance for the assessment to be amended and provided an opportunity for the group to discuss their findings in order to provide consistency in the approach and responses. The settlement edge boundaries were defined in agreement with the volunteers based on the methodology outlined in Appendix 1. The Porthleven Local Landscape Character Settlement Assessment was completed by the end of February 2016.
- 1.1.5. It needs to be emphasised that, although the assessment was undertaken with significant support and guidance from a group of qualified professionals with extensive experience in landscape/planning guidance and techniques, its essential value is that it is a landscape assessment undertaken by a group of local volunteers. Their detailed local knowledge of the is seen as an essential component for an evidence base that is to support a Neighbourhood Development Plan based on the views of the community.

Stage 2 – Settlement Edge Assessment

- 2.1.1 The Local Landscape Character Settlement Edge Assessment for the settlement of Porthleven enables the sensitivity and value of the landscape surrounding Porthleven to be assessed, which leads onto the judgement on the capacity of the landscape to accommodate change. The assessment for Porthleven has been taken forward in order to assess the capacity for housing development. This provides an evidence base on the character of the landscape for the Porthleven Neighbourhood Development Plan. The settlement edge has been assessed because this is the area that will be potentially under pressure for development during the Neighbourhood Development Plan period
- 2.1.2 The methodology for the Porthleven settlement edge assessment is provided in Appendix 1 and a summary of the results of this assessment is outlined in Chapter 3. The tables for the settlement assessment for the Porthleven NDP area, which were prepared by the volunteers and reviewed by the qualified Landscape Architects, are also included in Chapter 3.
- 2.1.3 The results of this assessment are considered to provide a robust evidence base on the character of the landscape, its sensitivity to change, value and importance and capacity to accept change. The purpose of using a detailed methodology, to assist the local volunteers in the task of undertaking this assessment, was to ensure that judgements could be made based on an agreed objective approach that would provide consistency, clarity and transparency. Porthleven is the only settlement in the Porthleven NDP area and accordingly the only settlement where the assessment was required. The land immediately adjoining the settlement was assessed. This area was divided into parcels of land and further details on how these were selected are outlined below.
- 2.1.4 The impact of change on landscape and its environment is one essential consideration in the Neighbourhood Development Plan process when decisions on the future of the area are undertaken. This settlement assessment provides significant information on how these changes will impact on the future character of Porthleven and its environs. It equips the Steering Group, when policy decisions are being made, on the impact of these on the character of the area. The work is of particular value bearing in mind that the southern areas of the Parish and sections covering Porthleven town and its edge fall within the Cornwall AONB which is safeguarded through national legislation because of its outstanding landscape character and natural beauty.
- 2.1.5. It is recognised that other considerations will also be taken into account when future land use choices are made and the NDP Steering Group will decide on how to take site selection through the plan process. However, the settlement assessment can be used in either approach; where site selection is chosen, or where the policies embedded in the NDP does not necessitate the selection of sites.

2.2 Identification of settlement edge land parcels

2.2.1 Introduction

The settlement edge land parcel boundaries have been defined on the basis of the Local Landscape Character Assessment Stage 2 Methodology, in particular, Section 1 “Creating Land Parcels”.

In each case, the land parcel contains a linear section of built settlement edge as well as a proportion of the adjacent landscape. There is however, one exception to this, and that is part of the western boundary of Area 3 (see below), where it abuts Area 2. Here, the two “landscape edges” meet at a clearly defined Landscape Type transition, that between valley bottom and intermediate sloping land.

- 2.2.2 Following the guidance in Section 1.2 and 1.3 of the Methodology, land parcels generally reflect changes in landscape character types or different types of edge development, and these are described in more detail below.

More precisely, the edge definition criteria which follow from the Methodology will comply with the following principle criteria:

- Relate to change of settlement edge character
- Relate to transition between landscape character types
- Avoid landscape character change within individual land parcels
- Relate to consistent topography

In addition, the following subsidiary criteria will be referenced:

- Relationship to distinctive field boundaries.
- Relationship to road or footpath edges

Land parcel edge definition will relate to several of the above depending upon the particular location. Field boundaries, road edges or footpath alignments which do not comply with the principle criteria have not been used to determine land parcel edges.

The landscape setting aspect described in Section 1.3 generally relates to either a change in landscape type, or a distinctive highway or field boundary. Again, the reasons for determining the extent of the landscape setting are described in more detail below.

2.2.3 **Settlement edge – Area 1**

This is a small parcel and a relatively straightforward edge definition. The existing town edge (and boundary of the Conservation Area) meets the cliff edge where the coastal footpath enters the town. The cliff edge defines the seaward limit of this area.

The small section (single field) to the east of Rinsey Road is defined by the character type transition from intermediate sloping land to elevated upland plateau with ridge line and the first field boundary beyond the current edge of settlement.

On the other side of Rinsey Road the area extends to the second field boundary, since this allows a more comprehensive analysis of the landscape setting in relation to the coastal edge with the important long-distance footpath.

2.2.4 **Settlement edge – Area 2**

The largest of the areas in the study, the high ground limit is defined by the character type transition from intermediate sloping land to elevated upland plateau with ridge line from the junction with Area 1 in the south to the parish boundary in the north. From the junction with Area 1, the edge follows the settlement around the curve of the Conservation Area along Beacon Road and continues behind the development at Wellmore beside the B3304. The edge then continues along the transition between the character types of intermediate sloping land

and valley bottom, passing immediately behind Lower Methleigh and Methleigh Lodge before reaching the Parish boundary.

2.2.5 **Settlement edge – Area 3**

This settlement edge area is defined by the extent of the valley bottom character type which spans the B3304 Methleigh Bottoms Road and extends to the Parish boundary at Treza in the north. To the west, the boundary is contiguous with Area 2, and to the east with Area 4 in the vicinity of Treza. In both cases it is the change of character type from valley bottom to intermediate sloping land that defines the area. However, the natural expansion of the settlement up to the limit of the flood plain gives the majority of the eastern side of area 3 a built edge. This area is to be excluded from the detailed assessment in accordance with the direction of Methodology Section 1.4 due to its status as “flood plain”. No tables therefore exist for Area 3, although the area is shown on Maps 1 and 2 for completeness.

2.2.6 **Settlement edge – Area 4**

This settlement edge is defined by the boundary of Tolponds Road to the south where existing residential development runs east to the junction with Torleven Road. The western edge is contiguous with the tree-lined boundary shared with Area 3. The other boundaries are formed by the extent of each of the three fields which create a consistent “one field depth” away from the other boundaries. The small portion of the rectangular fourth field which is included in area 4 which is adjacent to both Tolponds Road (for a short length) and Torleven Road, is included for completeness since there are a few bungalows opposite this section. The north-eastern edge of this small area is defined by the transition from intermediate sloping land to elevated upland plateau with ridge line character types.

2.2.7 **Settlement edge – Area 5**

Defined by the school boundary and the edge of Treviske Drive development to the south-west, this relatively narrow area is limited to the north-west by the transition from intermediate sloping land to elevated upland plateau with ridge line character types. The shorter two boundaries relate to the edge of Torleven Road where there are dwellings opposite, and to a short section of field boundary in line with the edge of the development to the south. Within the area the field pattern is not followed in creating edge definition.

2.2.8 **Settlement edge – Area 6**

The settlement edge runs behind the existing properties on Gibson Way and returns behind the Guisseney Place / Treviske Drive development to touch the corner of settlement edge area 5. From this point, the edge curves and follows the contour, line as does the current upper limit of development on this edge of the settlement, southwards in a gentle arc just below the transition from intermediate sloping land to elevated upland plateau with ridge line character types. This contour related arc meets the B3304 (Wellington Road) at the end of development along Sunset Gardens. The boundary edges of the fields included in this area which continue to the more elevated ground to the east and are not appropriate for edge definition but one, the southernmost field, has a boundary which contributes to the settlement edge area as it returns to the B3304.

2.2.9 **Settlement edge – Area 7**

The settlement edge follows the hedge line defining Warren Close and Wheal Rose where there are properties on the opposite side, and returns for a short distance towards the east along the B3304 to then follow the drive way access to Sunset Farm. Following the boundary of the farm complex and returning along a second access field boundary, the edge follows the edge of Shrubberies Hill until the existing development is reached. Here the edge returns to Warren Close. Two fields in their entirety comprise settlement edge area 7.

2.2.10 Settlement edge – Area 8

The new development at the Shrubberies forms one major edge of this settlement edge area. The boundary of Cooper Lane forms the majority of the remaining settlement edge area. The edge wraps round the single new prominent dwelling at the southern end of Coopers Lane before following the edge of Sunny Bank and re-joining the boundary where the Shrubberies meet the earlier Ocean Crescent properties.

2.2.11 Settlement edge - Area 9

This slightly complex settlement edge area comprises two sections. The first is the small parcel of land between Loe Bar Road and the cliff edge which was a net making area in times past. The second area includes the undeveloped area of the old mining area and runs along the boundary track which leads to the allotments. The greater part of the remaining defined area is within the steeply sloping land character type. The rock face, up which the coastal footpath threads, is taken as the south-easterly limit of this settlement edge area. After crossing the track which once led to car park, which is no longer accessible, the edge follows the cliff as far as the boundary of the group of dwellings, which include the Tye Rock Hotel. The edge then runs along the Loe Bar Road to the junction with the lane which runs down behind the old mining area.

Chapter 3 – Summary of Porthleven Local Landscape Character Settlement

Edge Assessment

3.1 The findings of the Local Landscape Character Assessment Stage 2 – Settlement Edge Assessment are provided at the end of this Chapter in table form. At the end of each assessment summaries are provided for each individual parcel of land on the settlement edge of Porthleven. It provides a summary of: -

- the character of the settlement edge and its landscape setting, and who sees the settlement edge and from where;
- the value of the landscape and settlement edge;
and
- a judgement of the capacity of the section of the settlement edge to accept change.

These summaries are outlined below for each individual parcel of land that has been assessed as part of this study.

3.2 Area 1

3.2.1 Character Sensitivity – Landscape Character

This landscape is sensitive and vulnerable. The character of this settlement area is defined by the land / sea edge and the close relationship the topography and land-use has with land to the west. This close relationship is vulnerable to change, and the landscape character would be fundamentally affected were there to be any change. Further development would have some effect on topography and considerable effect on character. It would also alter the setting of the village by extending it in a thin strip along the coast.

3.2.2 **Character Sensitivity – Built edge of settlement**

The built edge of this land parcel is the edge of the Conservation Area, and serves to retain the village “core” effectively within the valley and harbour mouth within which the town is located. This edge would be sensitive to change. The tranquillity and low light pollution of this settlement edge would be lost if development took place. Any development westwards would undermine the relationship of the village core and harbour in the same way that existing development to the east has already done.

3.2.3 **Visual Sensitivity – Visibility of settlement edge in its landscape setting**

The settlement edge is not visible from within the village. However, it is visible periodically when entering the settlement by road. Due to topography, this edge of settlement is highly visible from the PROW along the whole of its southwest edge, and from settlements around Mount's Bay. This edge has a high visual sensitivity.

3.2.4 **Value Judgement – Value and importance of the character and views**

This area of sloping farmland has great value as a recreational gateway to the village via the Coastal Footpath PROW. The old historic core forms the settlement edge, is in the Conservation Area and adds value to the setting. This section also falls within the AONB, and non-designated adjacent land forms part of the AONB setting. There are panoramic views of Mount's Bay and the countryside. There is comparable visibility between this area and land to the east of the village “core” which has a similar land /sea edge. Development here serves as an example of the failure to respect landscape character. The visual integrity of the old village core and harbour has been compromised due to housing development and the coastal protection structures created for its protection.

3.2.5 **Capacity – Capacity of settlement edge to accept housing growth**

THERE IS LOW CAPACITY FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THIS SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT AREA.

The settlement edge is the boundary between a Conservation Area and an AONB. It also has a footpath of National importance with outstanding views.

These factors alone would militate strongly against its development. Added to this is the fact that development in this section would alter the landscape character and the setting of Porthleven significantly.

3.3 **Area 2**

3.3.1 **Character Sensitivity – Landscape Character**

Development would change the topography and character of the land since at the moment there is no modern development in the area. This prominent section separates the settlement from west Cornwall and shelters it from the prevailing winds. The dominance and vital importance of topography in this area cannot be overstated with regard to the provision of a backdrop of open countryside. It adds to the character of the settlement giving it a sense of containment. Vegetation groups, both tree and scrub, the setting and antiquity of Methleigh

Farm, together with the much-used public right of way produce a landscape character of great richness and importance.

3.3.2 **Character Sensitivity – Built edge of settlement**

To the south of the settlement edge consists of older buildings of some character that are part of the Conservation Area and are sensitive to growth. The next section which contains some old and newer buildings are either under a sheer rock face or steep land and would be vulnerable to development. The sharing of a “green edge” with Area 3 (removed from the assessment of housing capacity due to flood zone status), adds greatly to the sense of approach to the town. Consequently, there is great vulnerability to change along this boundary, as well as adjacent to the historic core and in proximity to Methleigh Farm.

3.3.3 **Visual Sensitivity – Visibility of settlement edge in its landscape setting**

The settlement edge is visible from:

- most of the settlement and from higher land to the east and further up the valley; the two main roads entering the settlement, one runs along its entire length; and
- the PROW on the eastern plateau.

The greatest impact is the almost total visibility of the settlement edge from within the settlement and any development would detract from people’s enjoyment of outdoor activities in the settlement.

3.3.4 **Value Judgement – Value and importance of the character and views**

The views of this settlement edge from within the settlement are of great value to the residents and visitors alike. The views from most of the settlement would be all urban if this settlement edge was developed. The character would also change with all the buildings going away from the valley bottom to the east being old and in the Conservation Area and the new development going west from the valley bottom being new. This would give the impression of two completely different settlements either side of the valley bottom.

3.3. **Capacity – Capacity of settlement edge to accept housing growth**

THERE IS LOW CAPACITY FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THIS SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT AREA.

Any development on this prominent high rising land to the west of the settlement would completely change the setting of the village, since at the moment there is no development in this area. The settlement edge can be viewed from almost the entire settlement by people enjoying outside activities. The area is tranquil and acts as a green backdrop to the settlement. It is also a barrier separating the countryside beyond. There are no roads or transport links to this section. Any road would have to go through the historic Methleigh farm.

3.4 **Area 3**

**Excluded from capacity assessment due to flood plain status
(see section 2.2.5 above)**

3.5 Area 4

3.5.1 Character Sensitivity – Landscape Character

The upper part of this area is sensitive and vulnerable, but the lower two fields significantly less so. Development would have an effect on the character. However, the even slope of the land is typical of the topography upon which much of this side of Porthleven is built, and as such any development would alter the setting of the village only to a limited degree. The mature tree line between area 3 and 4 provides an effective screen and is characteristic of vegetation through this valley.

3.5.2 Character Sensitivity – Built edge of settlement

Built edge is not sensitive or vulnerable to growth. New development could enhance the built edge through a reduction in the dramatic linear “cut-off” of the existing northern edge of the settlement and an increase in the existing vegetation cover locally. There would be more traffic and footfall through the existing settlement.

3.5.3 Visual Sensitivity – Visibility of settlement edge in its landscape setting

The settlement edge is not visible from within the village. The upper part of the settlement edge is visible from the A394 above the allotments when travelling from Breage to Helston over a short distance, as is a considerable part of the settlement from this location. The upper part of the area is glimpsed from some gaps in the hedgerow along the elevated Rinsey Road to the west above Area 2, and from the PROW track which passes through Methleigh Farm. Visual sensitivity increases with elevation, which indicates the desirability to increase vegetation cover along hedgerows / field boundaries.

3.5.4 Value Judgement – Value and importance of the character and views

This is typical of the farming landscape around the settlement. There are mature trees on the hedges and a small stand of mature trees in the NW corner, but most importantly a strong line of screening trees along the western boundary. This abuts a locally designated semi natural habitat area within the flood zone settlement Area 3. The buildings on the edge of the settlement have no historic value apart from possibly one pre 1908 cottage. The “sharp edge” of the town in this location does not relate to landscape criteria in any way, and thus appears very arbitrary and imposed. There is no recreational value.

3.5.5 Capacity – Capacity of settlement edge to accept housing growth

THERE IS MODERATE / HIGH CAPACITY FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THIS SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT AREA.

Although this settlement edge has capacity for growth, it should not be developed until land which has a less negative effect on the visible settlement edge and setting of the village has been used.

IN PARTICULAR DEVELOPMENT IN THIS AREA SHOULD INITIALLY OCCUR ONLY IN THE LOWER TWO FIELDS DUE TO INCREASING VISUAL SENSITIVITY WITH HEIGHT.

In addition, a landscape which reflects the pattern of existing land-use, and builds on vegetation already characteristic of the location should be a feature of any development.

3.6 Area 5

3.6.1 Character Sensitivity – Landscape Character

The landscape is situated at high level just below the ridge line. The land is farmland, well managed in all respects and is used for both arable and livestock. It is partially bounded by and contains established Cornish hedges; the remaining edges flow seamlessly into similar adjacent land. The defining characteristic of this open green area is its elevated nature, forming as it does with its north-eastern edge, the transition from intermediate sloping to elevated plateau and ridgeline character type. When viewed from some locations to the SW, the upper edge, which is sometime screened by the conifers along the school boundary is viewed as skyline. Having said that it's not in an AONB, and has no real recreational associations. As stated previously it is viewed from broadly the SW only from specific locations, at a higher level than the majority of the village and this dictates as to those who have the opportunity to benefit from this experience.

3.6.2 Character Sensitivity – Built edge of settlement

As stated previously, in more detail, only very minimal amounts of the local residential settlement actually abuts this area, represented by fairly recent housing to both the north and south-east of the school site. The settlement edge is principally the tree-lined school boundary.

3.6.3 Visual Sensitivity – Visibility of settlement edge in its landscape setting

Expansion of the settlement into this area could mean the ridge line being broken. Thus this area is deemed to be very sensitive to settlement growth. As previously stated, the area is viewed principally from the south-west, and only from specific locations at a higher level than the majority of the village. This limits the numbers of viewers. Visual sensitivity increases as you move up the slope closer to the ridge which surrounds the village. It will be important to ensure that any development does not break the skyline thereby having an adverse visual impact on the surrounding rural landscape.

3.6.4 Value Judgement – Value and importance of the character and views

The view of this area from Methleigh Farm would be almost urbanised if this settlement edge expanded with the ridgeline being potentially broken from certain locations to the south-west. Such expansion would impact greatly on the character of the existing school grounds which flow seamlessly into the open countryside which gives the school pupils a regular appreciation of a rural environment. The value of this land parcel is to retain an undeveloped fringe around the settlement.

3.6.5 Capacity – Capacity of settlement edge to accept housing growth

THERE IS MODERATE CAPACITY FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THIS SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT AREA.

For reasons as stated in the adjacent columns expansion would be detrimental to both the character and the amenity of this area should development break the skyline when viewed from any location to the south-west.

3.7 Area 6

3.7.1 Character Sensitivity – Landscape Character

This settlement edge does have some landscape and scenic quality and is characteristic of farm land in the area. There are no known conservation issues and it has no recreational uses or cultural associations. It is perceived as attractive rural countryside. The topography is typical of the sloping character of this side of Porthleven. No particular biodiversity or field pattern value.

3.7.2 Character Sensitivity – Built edge of settlement

If this area were considered for development, it would be a natural extension to village edge and possibly be the least sensitive area for expansion. The only possible problem is vehicular access but that would apply to most areas in the village. Recent age of settlement provides no particular character quality to the settlement edge.

3.7.3 Visual Sensitivity – Visibility of settlement edge in its landscape setting

Providing ridge line is respected, this area should not be too sensitive to change and as stated before would be a natural area for expansion. The space between Wellington Road to the south and the school site in the north forms a natural visual “infill”.

3.7.4 Value Judgement – Value and importance of the character and views

The views are pleasant and tranquil but only really visually extensive from the higher ground to the south-west. For most of the village view would be limited.

3.7.5 Capacity – Capacity of settlement edge to accept housing growth

THERE IS HIGH CAPACITY FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THIS SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT AREA.

Could accept some growth without seriously affecting character of the Village subject to appropriate layout of housing types and the inclusion of landscaping to avoid any possible change to the skyline. Probably the best area for expanding settlement edge.

3.8 Area 7

3.8.1 Character Sensitivity – Landscape Character

The area is an AONB site with gently sloping topography and has some expansive and dramatic scenic views. It borders on one side an old historic route into the village of Porthleven. It is used by walkers, and visitors and residents accessing the “Village” and New Penrose Walks. It is perceived as a tranquil pleasant area. The farm group of buildings (Sunset) is typical of isolated farm settlements and its setting is only partially compromised by existing development.

3.8.2 Character Sensitivity – Built edge of settlement

This area borders on the south-eastern edge on an old historic route into Porthleven. This road is almost on the ridgeline and any development on higher level of this site would be very detrimental. The lower area of site would have less visual effect and would not disturb “Old” road. The current settlement edge has no particular design merit.

- 3.8.3 **Visual Sensitivity – Visibility of settlement edge in its landscape setting**
Development approaching ridge line would be visible from across the village and possibly as far as Breage. The higher parts of this area are particularly vulnerable in this regard. Visual separation of Sunset farm is an important factor in this location.
- 3.8.4 **Value Judgement – Value and importance of the character and views**
This is a well-loved area with residents and visitors with great views across the village to the sea. Within the AONB and leads to the Coastal Footpath walks and Penrose estate.
- 3.8.5 **Capacity – Capacity of settlement edge to accept housing growth**

THERE IS MODERATE CAPACITY FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THIS SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT AREA.

Development on lower area might be possible if it is logistically suitable, but any building on the upper slopes and intruding onto the skyline ridgeline (which is very close) would destroy the character of the area completely.

3.9 Area 8

- 3.9.1 **Character Sensitivity – Landscape Character**
The landscape is prominent within the settlement with it being the highest point. The land slopes gently to the south. There is some unmanaged land to the south of the land parcel which contributes to the biodiversity of the landscape. The same is true of the Cornish hedges which surround the landscape. The presence of the right-angled corner on Coopers Lane is believed to indicate an Iron Age settlement which is of historic importance.
[\(https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/cornwallarchaeological-unit/cau-current-projects/\)](https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/cornwallarchaeological-unit/cau-current-projects/).
- 3.9.2 **Character Sensitivity – Built edge of settlement**
The built edge of the settlement is made up of relatively new buildings (built 1990's and 2015). The boundaries are rear gardens with walls and hedges. The buildings of The Shrubberies are dominating in size when looked at from both within the landscape and from the outside looking in. There is a sharp edge to the settlement boundary which contradicts the topography and ignores pattern of the landscape. There is no highway within the landscape.
- 3.9.3 **Visual Sensitivity – Visibility of settlement edge in its landscape setting**
The settlement edge can be seen from within the settlement with the exception of the low-lying harbour area and Methleigh Bottoms including the recreational area. From the far end of the pier part of the settlement edge can be seen. The land parcel can be seen from the high-level National Trust path and the coastal path from the Rinsey direction towards the settlement. This would be considered an important vista to walkers along the path. There is also a small section of the landscape that can be seen from Methleigh Farm and vice versa. Buildings at the western settlement edge dominate the landscape from all parts of the settlement. The existing settlement edge of the Shrubberies breaks the skyline in an intrusive manner. Further development beyond and above the current settlement edge would be a severe visual intrusion within the AONB and detrimental to the setting of the town. The views from the landscape are panoramic and far reaching. The view from the coastal path into the landscape is of a high quality. There is a mine shaft in one of the fields that is of historical importance (*The Early History of Porthleven, S.N. Pascoe*).

3.9.4 **Value Judgement – Value and importance of the character and views**

The character of the landscape area is important within the settlement. It represents an area of great historical importance, it is within an AONB and a SSSI lies adjacent to the land parcel. It is also adjacent to a National Trust estate. The views are also considered to be of great importance as it is one of the only parts of the settlement that offers almost 270° views both out to sea and into the surrounding landscape. This, in turn, means that the land parcel can be viewed from far and wide. Such visual sensitivity and prominence is the defining feature of the area. The tranquillity of the landscape is of high importance and would change significantly if the landscape were to alter.

3.9.5 **Capacity – Capacity of settlement edge to accept housing growth**

THERE IS LOW CAPACITY FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THIS SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT AREA.

The low capacity is due to a combination of the high level of historical importance of the area and the visual sensitivity and prominence which is a defining feature of the area. It offers an important sense of approach to recreational users, being within an AONB, adjacent to a SSSI and a National Trust estate.

3.10. **Area 9**

3.10.1 **Character Sensitivity – Landscape Character**

This area, other than one field, has been allowed to revert to nature and would be vulnerable to any settlement growth. There is no other land on the settlement edge with similar character and topography and this would be damaged by development. This area is unique being important to nature and also of great historic importance. It also separates the urban area from the countryside visually with very few properties visible looking into this settlement edge. The topography is complex, as is the character, being unusually varied for such a relatively small area.

3.10.2 **Character Sensitivity – Built edge of settlement**

The built edge consists of random properties some cottages, some bungalows and a small modern terrace. There is a very low density of development on the settlement edge and it blends into the landscape giving a sense of arrival at the settlement. Increased traffic in this area would cause congestion with no through road available. The tranquil atmosphere would disappear and light pollution would increase.

3.10.3 **Visual Sensitivity – Visibility of settlement edge in its landscape setting**

The settlement edge is not visible from within the settlement and does not detract from the setting of the village from within. There is a very obvious visual sense of arrival when approaching from the southeast along the Coastal Footpath. The town opens up to view gradually and at a pace very suited to the walkers that arrive from this direction. The settlement edge is visible from open countryside to the east of the settlement and from the Lizard peninsula.

3.10.4 Value Judgement – Value and importance of the character and views

The three distinct areas in this section all contribute to the character of the area and are all typical of other parts of Cornwall where land slopes down to the cliffs. The area is designated AONB and part is SSSI. There is evidence of historic activity in this case mining and the making of fishing nets inter mingled with farmland. The views from the south west coast path are extensive and walkers and people who use the beach have a high sensitivity. The gradual sense of arrival at the outskirts of the settlement and the sudden appearance of the Town clock and pier all add to the character and visual impact of the settlement edge.

3.10.5 Capacity – Capacity of settlement edge to accept housing growth

THERE IS LOW CAPACITY FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THIS SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT AREA.

This section is an AONB and the area adjacent to the settlement edge is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Also, old net drying field of historic interest to local people. The south west coast path travels through this section. All of the above combine to give this area low capacity for growth, these qualities or designations alone would signify a low capacity for growth. The transport links to this side of the settlement are inadequate for any increased traffic flow.

3.11 Conclusion

3.11.1 The purpose of the Local Landscape Character Settlement Edge Assessment for the settlement of Porthleven is to enable the sensitivity and value of the landscape surrounding Porthleven to be assessed, which leads onto the judgement on the capacity of the landscape to accommodate change. Outlined in this report is the process undertaken, a detailed methodology and the results of this assessment. It needs to be emphasised that this assessment has been undertaken for Porthleven in order to assess the capacity of the landscape to accommodate change. This provides an evidence base on the character of the landscape of the settlement edge of Porthleven for Neighbourhood Development Plan area.

3.11.2 As outlined in section 2.2 on the identification of settlement edge parcels, nine parcels of land were selected that contains a linear section of built settlement edge as well as a proportion of the adjacent landscape. These parcels of land were assessed and the results are outlined in Chapter 3. No other areas of land were considered in this assessment and the findings in this assessment only relate to the parcels of land shown on plan 2. Therefore, no assumptions can be made on the capacity for change on any land adjoining the selected land parcels.

3.11.3 This assessment only addresses the landscape impact of change in the landscape that forms the settlement edge of Porthleven. The Neighbourhood Development Plan process provides the opportunity, if considered to be appropriate, to undertake site allocations. The local landscape character settlement edge assessment provides a local evidence base on the sensitivity of the landscape, its value and capacity for change. This provides evidence on landscape matters alone. Judgements on site selection in the Neighbourhood Development Plan will also take into consideration other factors which form part of the decision-making process on allocations.

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