

Our ref LTP/1199/117  
Your ref  
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Transport Policy

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Dear Julia

**WEST YORKSHIRE LTP2 SEA ENVIRONMENT REPORT CONSULTATION  
DRAFT**

Thank you, for consulting the Countryside Agency on the above report, which we received on November 7th.

Our role as statutory consultee is governed by the nature of our environmental interests. The extent of our environmental interests relate to:

- landscape character and tranquility;
- visual amenity and enjoyment of the countryside as a whole;
- recreational opportunities; and
- enjoyment of access land or a public right of way.

On receiving a consultation the Countryside Agency will assess the report against the criteria, "is there a significant effect on the landscape or the enjoyment of it through access".

**Overall Comments**

On the whole the report is well presented, clearly structured and provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state of the environment in west Yorkshire. We are pleased to see that many of the comments raised in our response to the draft scoping report (copy attached), have been addressed, however, we identified a lack of reference to the distinction between urban and rural areas, this is still not adequately covered in the Environmental Report.

**Specific Comments**

**3.1.5:** The Countryside Agency welcomes the use of Countryside Character, it is however disappointing that no landscape character assessment information has been included from the



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five local authorities. Urbanisation of the countryside through small, as well as large scale, changes is a problem in areas such as West Yorkshire. Small scale transport infrastructure 'improvements' are one of the most important potential detractors to landscape character, it is crucial that all the information available on landscape character is utilised in producing the environmental assessment. The following publications should provide additional information:

1. Rural traffic – Getting it Right (1997, Countryside Commission) CCP/515
2. Roads in the Countryside (1995, Countryside Commission) CCP/459
3. Rural Routes (joint ICE/CA publication) – isbn 0-7277-3203-X, November 02

**3.1.9:** In our previous response the Countryside Agency recommended the Walking the Way to Health website for information to contribute to this section, as a measure of improving quality of life. We recommend that WHI is used as an indicator for monitoring, see comments on monitoring.

#### **Cycling & walking**

The Report refers to cycling and walking strategies produced by the constituent authorities but makes no reference to the Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIP's) that each authority is currently producing. RoWIP's are statutory part of LTP2 and should be used to inform the Report. The importance of RoWIP's was identified in the Countryside Agency response to the Scoping Report.

#### **Monitoring**

The Countryside Agency welcomes the use of Countryside Quality Counts, for monitoring landscape change.

The Report needs strengthening in the area of walking and cycling and we suggest the following potential indicators:

- % of journeys made on foot/cycling for journeys to work
- Quality and number of footpaths and cycle paths (% or length increase over time)
- Number of participants in the Healthy Walking Initiative.

Information for the latter is available from the Primary Care Trusts.

If you require any further information or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Chris Marshall  
Regional Planning and Transport Team Leader