Experiencing Landscapes: Towards a judgement-making framework for 'cultural services' and 'experiential qualities'

Annex A

NATURAL ENGLAND

Annex A : Research Topic Guides

FINAL TOPIC GUIDE
NATURAL ENGLAND
EXPERIENCING LANDSCAPES

Consumer Focus Groups (1.5 hours long)

Introduction (5 mins)

- Household Make-up, Employment status
- Length of time living in the Area, Grew up in Country, Suburbs or Town?

General usage of and attitudes towards Landscape (10 mins)

- What do they think of immediately when we say the word Landscape? And Countryside, if easier initially? What words, images, sounds, smells or feelings come to mind? (May use a closed eyes technique eg. imagine a place and describe it in various ways)
- In what sorts of ways do they use/experience the landscape/countryside?
- How do they feel about the landscape? Is it important to them and in what way?
- How often to they 'experience' the landscape? Is it mainly on holidays, week-ends or in their daily lives or as part of their jobs? Is it mainly locally or further afield in the UK?

The general appeal of different types of Landscape (10 mins)

- (Thinking about all types of natural areas of landscape outside of towns and cities, across rural areas and coast including natural and man-made features) what kinds of landscape do they like the most or are most drawn to and why?
- Can they describe some of their favourite places? What makes them favourites? (Thinking of the whole experience)
- And what kinds of landscape to they tend not to like or not be drawn to and why?
- Do people generally agree or disagree about what makes an 'appealing' landscape versus and 'unappealing' landscape or it a very subjective thing?
- What kind of landscape do they use mostly eg because it is close and how does this differ or not from what their ideal landscapes are?
- Does a landscape always have to be 'beautiful' and what does that mean? (eg do they also value dramatic or imposing or 'bleak'). Do they value that landscapes have different characters in different places?
- What kind of landscape do they regard negatively in any way eg; unuseful/unappealing, wasted (probe?)
- What kind of landscape do they consider that they live in with respect to these issues?

Attitudes towards General Physical Features of Landscapes (10 mins)

- Looking at the list in Showcard A of General Features and Characteristics, what kinds of landscape do they like and dislike (try to probe on the negative as well as the positive)? Pick out four or five things from the list and one photo to talk about (from Photopack A)

- (Depending on what they choose, please probe) What is it about what they have chosen that they like and how does it make them feel? What kind of valley, water, field etc do they particularly like?

*Attitudes towards some General Characteristics and Qualities (10 mins)

- What do they like/value in terms of contrasting landscapes? What do they dislike/not value? Using Showcard B, where do they sit on the spectrum in terms of their natural 'comfort zone? Why is this and what do they mean by the terms used (PROBE) for example to encourage debate around the room?
- What do the different landscapes look like and how do they feel eg comfortable or exposed in them?

  - o   natural and man-made features
  - o   a highly structured landscape or a simple landscape
  - o   a variety within the landscape or a single type of landscape
  - o   a feeling of openness, such as on a moorland or a feeling of enclosure such as in a wood
  - o   a 'wild' landscape versus a 'gentle' landscape
  - o   a highly managed landscape versus a landscape which is managed minimally
  - o   a remote landscape or a populated landscape
 - o   a coastal or an inland landscape

What do they get out of different types of countryside/landscape (cultural services)? (15-20 mins)

- Write in, draw or stick photos onto the thought bubble you have been given (Stimulus C) Each person has one cultural service which they fill out and present for the group to discuss agree/disagree with
- What kinds of landscapes make them feel the following and why?
  - o   calm, relaxed, tranquil
  - o   exhilarated, excited
  - o   inspired eg to write or paint etc
- What kinds of landscape do they think are particularly good for educating them about something or learning about something?
- What kinds of landscape help them to feel they belong to their local area? eg that is typically Yorkshire?
- What kind of landscape is particular good for recreation and why? eg what do they choose for cycling, walking or horseriding?

LOCATION-SPECIFIC (20 mins)

- Looking specifically at their local landscape, (see map) and thinking about some of the issues we've already discussed what do they value in the landscape locally and why? (positives and negatives)

- When they think of this local area, eg The North Downs, what do they immediately think of? ie. what typifies it for them personally? Does it have a distinct character which unifies it or not? Which characteristics would they use to describe it to others and which would they not? eg. it is a gentle landscape…it is a dramatic landscape….

- How do they feel the local area has changed over the years, if at all in terms of:
    - its general character
    - level of development
    - condition
    - beauty
    - 'naturalness'
    - amount of wildlife or biodiversity

- What other changes have they observed and are these for better or for the worse? eg. changes in woodland, forestry cover, field systems?

- If the character has been affected by man over the years eg through various industries, mining, farming, quarrying, does this make them feel any different about the landscape or is that part of its character? Are the aware of/do they appreciate any type of landscape for its production capabilities as well as from a personal point of view?

- How does their local area 'match up' generally in terms of their image or experience of other types of 'landscape'?

- Do they feel lucky or unlucky in what they have locally? Are there any areas locally that they avoid, feel uncomfortable in/dislike and why?

- Please could they pick out (circle or underline) from the list (Showcard D) and from the photos (Photopack D) anything they particularly value about their own local area and also anything they do not like or value. General discussion about their choices and then what their area is particularly good/poor at delivering eg. relaxation, inspiration, recreation, history, calm etc.
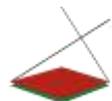
Final Coast Questions

[Moderator: probe any coast questions as they come up previously also]

- Within the context of landscape how important is coast to them?
- What aspect of a coastal landscape are beneficial to them and in what way?
- How would they map the cultural services on to coastal landscapes? Is this any different from other types of landscape?
- Does this depend on the type of coast? Are they better/worse at delivering each cultural service?
    - estuaries/mudflats etc
    - rugged coast
    - fens/marshes etc
- If coast forms part of their NCA, how much/little does this contribute towards the character of the NCA in their minds? If it does not form part of the NCA, do they miss it or try to experience it elsewhere?

* Can be skipped and covered in the extended creativity sessions.
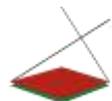
Showcard A: List of Generic/General Features

woodland, forest or 'feature' trees

hedges and walls

fields

industrial features eg quarries, collieries

villages

water eg streams, rivers, lakes, sea

moorland

bogs and marshes

wildlife

rocks and crags

historic buildings or remains
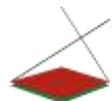
farms

parkland

coast

hills

mountains

valleys

lowland eg. plains, fens, heath

lanes and roads

grassland

SHOWCARD B: Contrasting Characteristics

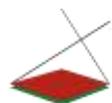|		
natural features	⟷	man-made features
highly structured	⟷	simple
variety	⟷	single-type
openness	⟷	enclosure
wild	⟷	gentle
highly-managed	⟷	minimal management
remote	⟷	populated
coastal	⟷	inland
colourful	⟷	muted

Showcard D: List of features and characteristics for Character Area

Arden

A farmed landscape which is undulating and has much woodland.

Winding lanes and isolated hamlets.

Many small fields still remain from the pattern of the ancient landscape.

Different shaped smaller fields are bounded by hedges and interspersed with small woodlands. These areas contrast with larger and more even shaped fields located on former deer parks, rural estates. There are also many regularly spaced fields which used to be common land.

Many areas of old 'wood pasture' ie. large old oak trees, well spaced out on grassland and on small remaining patches of heathland.

Narrow, meandering river valleys with long meadows alongside the rivers.

The North-eastern industrial area towards Tamworth and Nuneaton is based around the former Warwickshire coalfield. It has distinctive colliery settlements.

The North-western area, towards Halesowen is dominated by urban development and landscapes influenced by the edge of developments and suburbs.
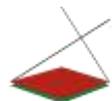
Project 4176: Post Experience Depth Interviews
1.0 hour long

Introduction

- Household Make-up, Employment status
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General usage of and attitudes towards Landscape

- In what sorts of ways do they use/experience the landscape/countryside?
- How do they feel about the landscape? Is it important to them and in what way?
- How often to they 'experience' the landscape? Is it mainly on holidays, week-ends or in their daily lives or as part of their jobs?
- And what kinds of landscape to they tend not to like or not be drawn to and why?
- How experienced are they eg regular walkers or occasional?
- Who went on the walk and is this normal?
- Would they have liked to have done anything other than walk eg cycling or any other way of experiencing the landscape?

Initial response to their walk

- Where did they choose to go for their walk and why? (draw on map roughly where they went)
- Were any other walks considered and then rejected? (Probe reasons)
- Did they enjoy their walk and why?
- What were the highlights and lowlights?
- What role did the landscape play in their overall experience?
- How do they think they benefited, if at all from this experience?
- What contrasts in the landscape did they notice?

Discussion of Diary (ask to see diary)

(If children present, ask to see any pictures and poems and have them described)

- Talking through the diary (Annex B), taking the main section what did they value most/least? What were their emotions, thoughts and feelings at the different stages? (Probe for what in the landscape actually caused each mood or emotion If group interview, check who wrote which bit and probe reasons for what they have written) Explain sections from diary as follows:
 - what they noticed
  - likes

- o dislikes
- o positive emotions
- o negative emotions
- o benefits of total experience
- o change for the worse/better?
- Did they see any wildlife? What and how did this make them feel? Was it important to the experience? Were there any habitats they particularly thought should be preserved?

- What other qualities did they notice? For example, was how the land was managed/unmanaged affecting their experience?

Discussion of the Photos

- What photographs did they take and why? What did they like/dislike about them and what did they represent?
- Going through the checklist (Annex A) what did they choose for each area? If they found any of tasks difficult to do, why was this? eg. Because that landscape doesn't have it? (Interviewer writes the corresponding number on the back of the photo from the checklist or whatever they represent, if not on the checklist?)
- Did they tend to notice and value individual features or experience the character of the place as a whole?
- If there is some consistency in what was taken, ask why they have mainly taken 'open' views eg with lots of sky versus photos of XYZ
- Which is their best photo and explain why? ie the one that most epitomises the walk for them and why? (star item on back)

Overall 'valuation' of this landscape experience

- Overall, how much did they value this experience?
- Was there anything about the landscape that could be improved to enhance the experience?
- What did they most get out of this walk? How did they benefit, if at all?
- Was the walk they took good/poor at and the landscape they experienced helping to deliver any of the following:
  - o recreation, exercise
  - o ability to ponder/relax
  - o a feeling of history
  - o a sense of your local identity
  - o learning
  - o inspiration

- What would they most like protected in this landscape?
- What would they like most changed in this landscape?
- Do they think landscape should be a constantly evolving thing over time?
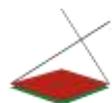
- If they were to lose something from this landscape, what would they most miss?
- If the landscape where to disappear, what would they say would be its epitaph?

- (IF TIME AVAILABLE) Describe the landscape in the following terms, if possible, and say whether the 'amount' of each was right for them personally? eg too much of one and too little of another eg Not open enough etc? (things that Natural England might be able to effect or influence)

  - natural and man-made features
  - a highly structured landscape or a simple landscape
  - a variety within the landscape or a single type of landscape
  - a feeling of openness, such as on a moorland or a feeling of enclosure such as in a wood
  - a 'wild' landscape versus a 'gentle' landscape
  - a highly managed landscape versus a landscape which is managed minimally
  - a remote landscape or a populated landscape
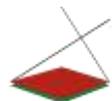
Annex A: CHECKLIST FOR WALK ACTIVITIES

CAMERA

We are interested in what you notice and how you feel during your walk. Please take photographs of anything in the landscape, whether it is a single thing like a tree or a hedge etc, a part of the landscape like a hill or a valley, or a whole view.

Take things spontaneously and allow all members of the group to join in.

You can take as many photographs as you like, but please try to take at least one in each of the following categories:

o   **Tick here when done**

1. something attractive	
2. something unattractive	
3. something that inspired you	
4. somewhere where you felt a sense of calm or relaxation	
5. somewhere which was typically 'local' eg made you feel at home	
6. something or somewhere that gave you a sense of history	

o

PICTURES AND POEMS

If you or especially your children (if relevant) would like to draw a picture or write a poem after the walk we would also like to see this at the interview to discuss it with them too.
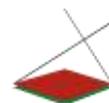
DIARY (given to you by recruiter)

Annex B: LANDSCAPE DIARY

We would like you to keep a record of your trip into the countryside. When you are there, look around you and keep a record of anything special, for example:

- aspects of the landscape that you particularly like
- features within the landscape that you feel are important
- any moods or feelings that the countryside gives you.

Also keep a record of anything that you don't like, perhaps places that feel cluttered or uncared for.

And keep your eyes open for any wildlife. Also, try to notice any sounds and even smells (positive and negative)!

Write as much as you can as we will use this as a discussion point during our interview.

If you, your children or other members of the group would like to draw a picture or write something (a poem perhaps?) after the walk we would also like to see this at the interview.

Please complete this diary as you are going along – and/or immediately you get back home.

Thank you. And enjoy your time!

What was the day and date of your walk?	
Where did you go?	
How long were you walking for?	
How many people (including any children) were there altogether?	
What was the weather like?	
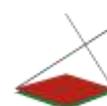
	What you notice……
What are you noticing during the walk? **Make a list at different points during the walk**	

Describe scenes or individual moments which you particularly like and say why.	What you particularly like…
Describe scenes or individual moments which you particularly dislike and say why.	What you particularly dislike…
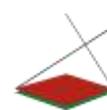
	Positive emotions and thoughts
Did you feel any positive emotions during the walk - eg peace, excitement? **Explain how you felt and what made you feel this way.**	

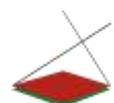| Did you feel any negative emotions during the walk - eg fear, alienation?	Negative emotions and thoughts
Explain how you felt and what made you feel this way.	

What did you and/or your group most get out of the overall experience?	Overall experience
Was there anything in this landscape that you felt is changing for the better or worse?	Change for the better or worse?