

Chapter 5.0

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest

Area 2: Ulverscroft Wooded Valley

Area 3: Charley Heath and Pasture

Area 4: Swithland/Woodhouse Farmland

Area 5: Groby Estate Woodland

Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement

Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland

Area 8: Quorn/Mountsorrel/Rothley Settlements, Quarries and Farmland

Area 9: Rothley Brook Lowland Farmland

Area 10: Groby/Ratby Wooded Farmland

Area 11: Thornton Plantation Farmlands

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Introduction

The overall character of Charnwood Forest is of a rolling landscape with an elevated topography and areas of woodland and agriculture closely related to geology and hydrology. There are contrasts between upland and lowland which is closely associated with watercourses and water features within the area.

Settlement is varied with some small vernacular villages such as Newtown Linford and Woodhouse and larger settlements such as Markfield, Groby, Anstey and Mountsorrel as well as the fringe of Loughborough. Within the more central areas, settlement is limited to single dwellings with large plots or scattered farmsteads.

Quarrying is a feature of the area with smaller scale former quarries scattered throughout and large modern quarries located towards the west at Bardon and Standon-under-Bardon as well as to the east at Mountsorrel. The accumulating spoil and gradual restoration associated with these quarries creates large areas of changing landscape. Reservoirs are also a feature, with some pools associated with former quarrying such as at Markfield and Groby.

Woodland and tree cover is generally extensive but also includes a mix of types and ages. Martinshaw Wood is a large ancient woodland on the north western edge of Groby and Ratby, while to the west near Stanton under Bardon, large areas of newly planted National Forest plantations are a feature.

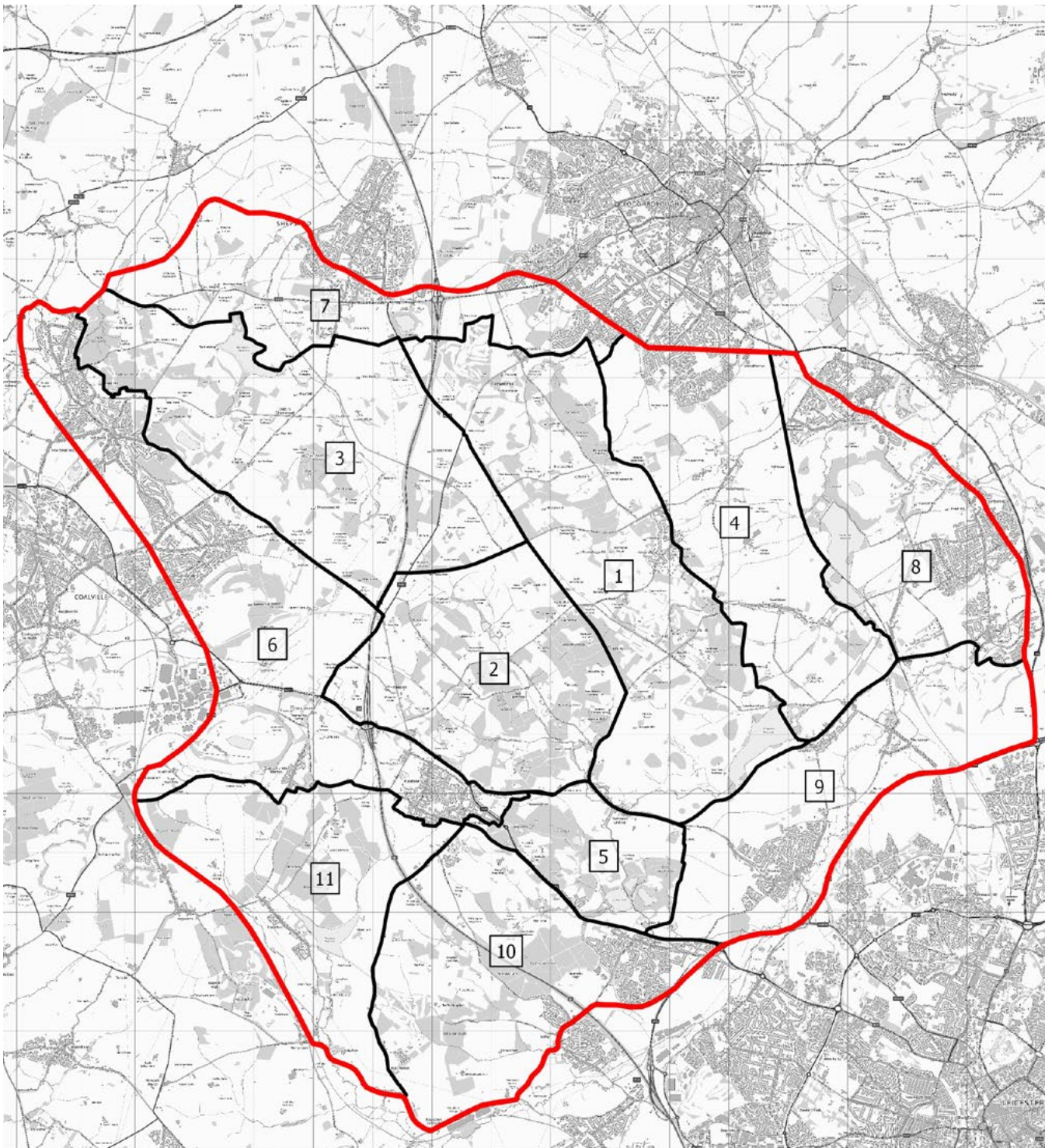
Field pattern varies with boundaries formed by hedgerows in lower lying areas or stone and slate walls which feature within the more upland, central areas.

Transport infrastructure includes the M1 motorway corridor which runs north to south through the area. The influence of the motorway varies. In some areas traffic is visible while in other areas, the heavily vegetated embankments screen views of moving traffic. Noise from traffic is a more regular feature along the corridor and affects tranquillity in areas closer to the motorway. Other main roads include the A511 which provides a link from Coalville in the west to the M1 and the A50 which links the M1 to the A46 and Leicester City to the east. The A512 also leads across the northern extent of the area, linking Loughborough in the east to Shepshed in the west. Other roads link villages and settlements and can often form straight lines cutting through the landscape. The Great Central Railway is a heritage railway between Loughborough and Leicester with a number of associated features such as brick bridges and stations.

Modern influences of large scale quarrying, settlement expansion and solar farms are evident in some areas while other parts retain a more historic character, such as around Swithland Reservoir which includes feature buildings and distinctive perimeter railings, or at Groby Pool which features ancient woodland and historic small scale quarried areas.

This Landscape Character Assessment has identified 11 distinctive Landscape Character Areas which are identified on **Figure 14** and outlined on the following pages:

Figure 14: Landscape Character Areas



Landscape Character Areas

Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest

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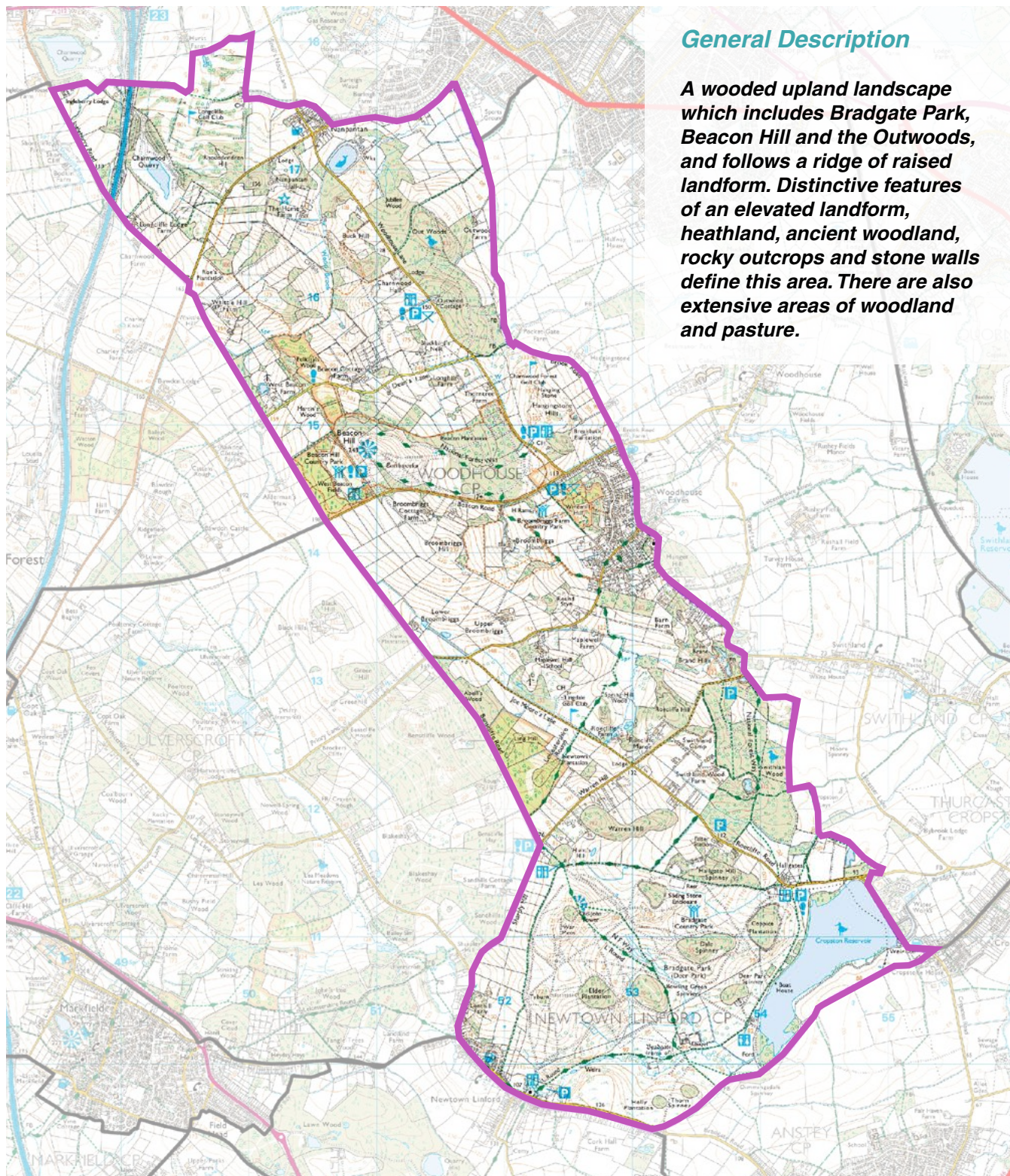
Key

 Charnwood Forest Boundary

 Landscape Character Areas

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest

Key Characteristics

- Elevated undulating topography, watercourses leading to reservoirs and small field ponds.
- Large heathland at Bradgate Park and areas at Beacon Hill and Longcliffe Golf Course. Extensive coniferous and broadleaved woodland, also grassland with some small areas of arable farmland. Ancient woodland at Swithland Wood and the Outwoods which are also SSSIs.
- Small regular field pattern enclosed with walls or hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Village settlement at Woodhouse Eaves, some large properties in extensive grounds as well as scattered farms. Secondary roads cross the area often running in straight lines and forming a grid pattern.
- A high proportion of 'honeypot' visitor sites (Bradgate Park, Beacon Hill & Outwoods). PProW focussed around Bradgate Park but multiple informal footpaths and tracks within the woodlands.
- A strong cultural heritage associated with Bradgate Park as well as international geological interest. Also multiple listed buildings at Newtown Linford and Woodhouse Eaves. Beacon Hill features an Ancient Monument.
- Enclosure created in places through mature oak and beech trees along roads, with rough grassland giving an upland feel. Far reaching views are possible from Beacon Hill and within Bradgate Park.

Specific Characteristics

Landform and Hydrology

This area has an elevated, undulating topography which broadly follows a ridge leading north west out of the centre of Charnwood Forest. The highest levels are located at Beacon Hill at 240m AOD and Broombriggs Hill at 237m AOD with further high points within Bradgate Park at the location of the War Memorial which sits at around 212m AOD. The landform then generally falls towards the north eastern edge of the area. A number of small watercourses flow towards reservoirs including Wood Brook which flows towards Nanpantan Reservoir and the River Lin which feeds Cropston Reservoir. Small field ponds are also prevalent, scattered throughout the area.

Landcover and Vegetation

The area consists of a mix of pastoral land with extensive areas of woodland and heathland as well as a small-scale former quarry at Charnwood Quarry in the north west of the area. Bradgate Park is a large area of heathland featuring open rough grassland with rocky outcrops, which consist of some of the oldest Precambrian rocks in England, and small areas of woodland. Numerous large veteran oak trees are an integral part of the historic parkland.

Further heathland is found at Longcliffe Golf Course at the northern extent of the area, as well as at Beacon Hill which is located centrally. Extensive areas of woodland are coniferous and broadleaved with ancient woodland located at Swithland Woods and at the Outwoods which are also SSSIs. The area also features open pastoral land used for sheep and cattle grazing.



Bradgate Park

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest

Field Pattern and Enclosure

Fields are generally small to medium size and of regular pattern, forming a grid in some locations. Fields are enclosed with hedgerows with hedgerow trees with extensive stone walls, especially associated with Bradgate Park and within settlements.

Settlement Pattern, Roads and PRoW

The area is not very settled, with only the large village at Woodhouse Eaves and the edge of Newtown Linford. These villages feature the use of granite stone or slate in buildings with many thatched roofs. Elsewhere, development is limited to scattered farms or large properties within extensive grounds. Few roads pass through the area with Benscliffe Road and Brook Road forming the area boundaries to the south west and north east, cut across with other minor roads linking east to west through the area.

A high proportion of 'honeypot' visitor sites include Bradgate Park, Beacon Hill and the Outwoods. There are many informal circulation routes as well as access land and a number of Public Rights of Way ensuring good access to the area. Both the Leicestershire Round and National Forest Way recreational routes cross through the area



The Outwoods



View south east from Dean's Lane

Cultural Heritage

The area is intensively managed both for conservation and for people. There is a strong cultural heritage associated with Bradgate Park which is a Registered Park and Garden and is of international importance for its history and geology. Extremely rare evidence of open air campsites dating from the late Upper Palaeolithic period was found within the park which was preserved due to the uncultivated nature of the parkland. The park also features associated buildings such as Old John Tower and the remains of Bradgate House. There are also numerous listed buildings located within the villages at Newtown Linford and Woodhouse Eaves. A Scheduled Monument is also located at Beacon Hill.

Perceptual Qualities

There is a strong sense of history within the area as a result of a combination of the historic Bradgate Park, a strong built vernacular, numerous listed buildings and mature woodlands. The area is generally enclosed as a result of the undulating landform and extent of mature woodland although some panoramic and far reaching views are possible at certain locations such as the peak of Beacon Hill and at the War Memorial within Bradgate Park. The more open areas of rough grassland combined with rocky outcrops and deer parks create an upland character.

Summary of Landscape Condition

The landscape is generally intact and of good condition with evidence of intense management, especially related to areas of high visitor numbers i.e. Bradgate Park, the Outwoods and Beacon Hill. The area is distinctive and has strong key characteristics which define the overall Charnwood Forest character. Due to its location and visibility within the wider area, it exerts an influence on the surrounding area.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 1: Bradgate, Beacon Hill and Outwoods Heathland and Forest

Management Recommendations

Forces for Landscape Change

- Encroachment from expansion of Loughborough in the north.
- Pressure on honeypot sites with an ever increasing need for visitor facilities such as car parking and cafes.
- General erosion of key features as a result in a gradual lack of management for example, replacing stone walls with fences.
- Potential loss of mature woodland and trees in the area, especially within Bradgate Park, due to age affecting safety, or from disease

Sensitivities for Key Landscape Characteristics

The area is popular with visitors, however, increased visitor pressures to honeypot sites could impact on the area from the provision of car park expansion, additional signage and facilities etc. Increasing access could also result in footpath erosion within the country parks.

The area includes large areas of ancient woodland as well as a large number of veteran trees such as within Bradgate Park. There is a possibility that through disease or for safety reasons, these trees could require management or removal.

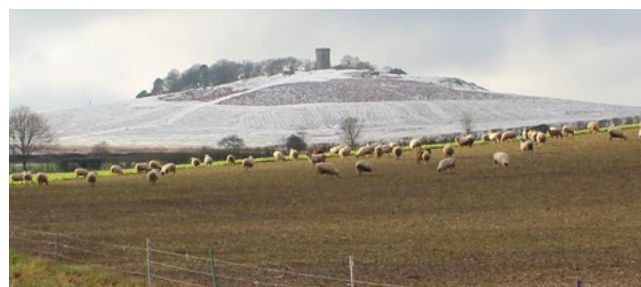
Settlement expansion has currently been limited within the villages which have a strong vernacular through their form, size and use of local materials.

Some areas are showing signs of requiring management through the replacement and repair of stone walls. Encroaching bracken is also an issue in some areas, especially where it is beginning to cover rocky outcrops.

- **Manage encroachment of bracken and scrub to maintain open grasslands within country parks and other areas to ensure longevity of the habitat.**
- **Maintain stone walls and repair/replace where necessary rather than using fencing.**
- **Gap up hedgerows and replant where lost to ensure connectivity of GI through the area.**
- **Protect and manage mature trees within Bradgate Park and other areas and consider replanting to maintain the feature.**
- **Maintain lifecycle of ageing woodlands by replanting and managing.**
- **Maintain habitat diversity through management of woodlands, open grasslands and water features to retain the matrix of habitats currently found in the area.**
- **Continue to protect and manage heritage features including ancient woodland habitat and built features such as Old John and Bradgate House.**
- **Manage visitor focus at key sites to limit visitor pressures elsewhere and to protect other areas.**
- **Ensure visitor facility expansion is controlled and suitable to the area to avoid urbanising influences.**
- **Ensure any new development is appropriate in scale and vernacular and focussed at the main settlements to preserve the pattern and form of the villages.**
- **Ensure any new developments either built or for visitors is suitably designed with ample planting to ensure assimilation into the existing well wooded landscape character.**



Cropston Reservoir



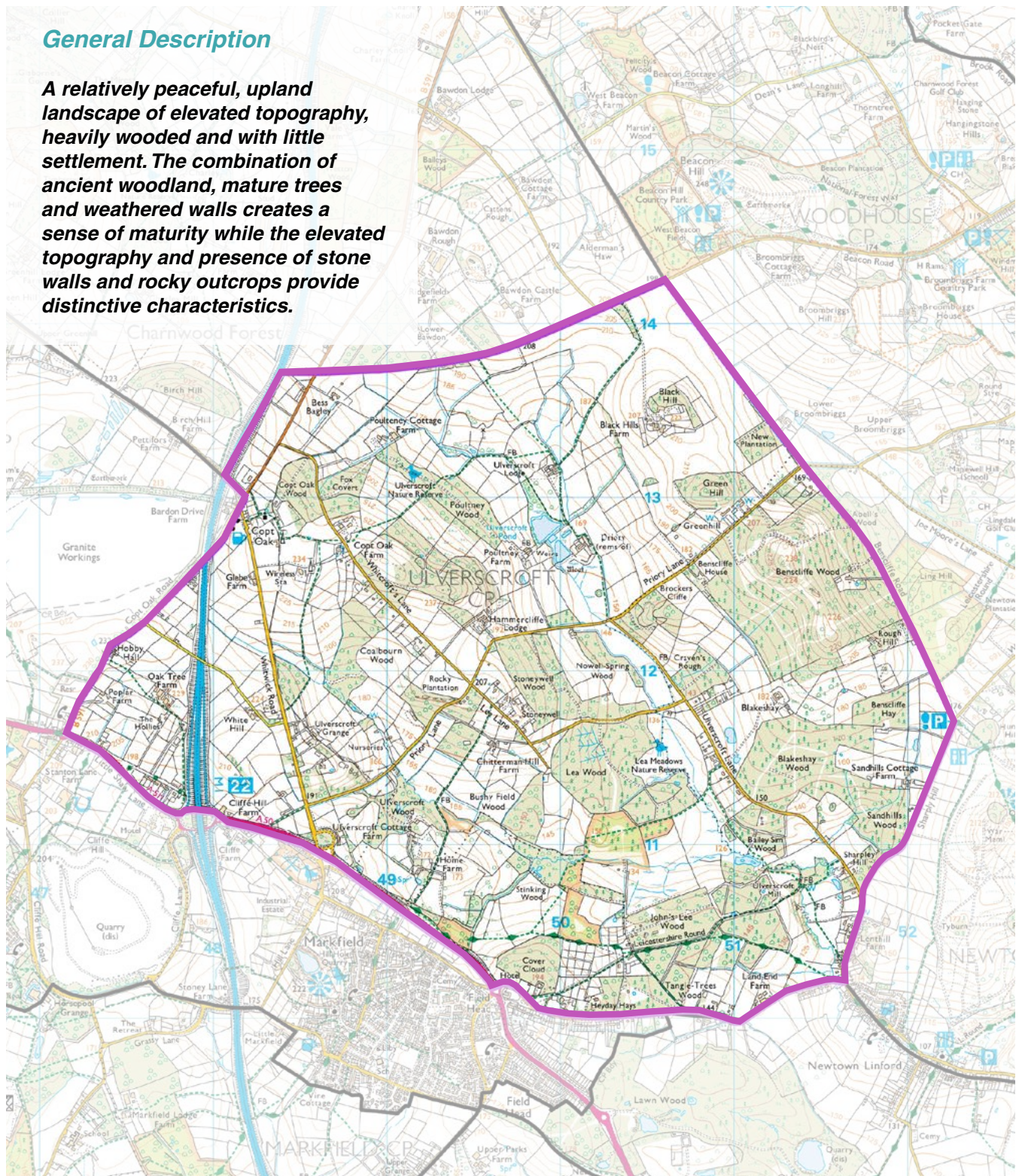
Old John Tower

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 2: Ulverscroft Wooded Valley

General Description

A relatively peaceful, upland landscape of elevated topography, heavily wooded and with little settlement. The combination of ancient woodland, mature trees and weathered walls creates a sense of maturity while the elevated topography and presence of stone walls and rocky outcrops provide distinctive characteristics.



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 2: Ulverscroft Wooded Valley

Key Characteristics

- An upland, undulating landform with higher levels to the east and west at Benscliffe Wood and Stoneywell Wood with a slight valley following a watercourse feeding Ulverscroft Pond.
- Ditches and small watercourses are evident as well as field ponds and Ulverscroft Pond at Ulverscroft Priory.
- Landcover is predominantly pastoral and woodland with a high percentage of ancient woodland although there are some smaller areas of arable farmland. A number of SSSIs are associated with woodland areas and nature reserves.
- Generally medium to small scale field pattern with some distinctive very small fields on the periphery of the area.
- Fields enclosed by a mix of hedgerows with hedgerow trees and stone walls as well as some fences and estate railings.
- A relatively low number of dwellings forming a linear pattern of large properties along roads, some of Arts and Crafts vernacular, with some scattered farms.
- Minor roads generally pass around the periphery of the area; roads are predominantly straight leading south east to north west.
- A good PRoW network with Leicestershire Round recreational route passing through the southern part. There is a lack of 'honeypot' visitor sites.
- Large amount of cultural heritage with two SM's and a number of Listed Buildings including Stoneywell Cottage and Ulverscroft Priory.
- Enclosure is created by large amount of tree cover, especially with large oak and beech trees along roads.
- Generally peaceful, although this is disturbed by low level noise from the M1 corridor.

Specific Characteristics

Landform and Hydrology

The undulating landform forms a valley either side of the River Lin. This area includes the source of the river which then flows south east towards Newtown Linford. A second tributary also flows into the river from the west. The valley landform reaches higher levels of around 234m AOD near to Copt Oak in the west of the area with levels of around 226m AOD to the east at Benscliffe Wood. Ulverscroft Pond is a medium sized waterbody which is associated with a number of smaller ponds lying adjacent to Ulverscroft Priory.

Landcover and Vegetation

This area is not intensively farmed, and landcover is predominantly pastoral fields with a large percentage of woodland and includes some pony paddocks. Woodlands are a mix of broadleaved trees with some coniferous plantation often located on rising landform creating wooded horizons. The majority of the woodland is also ancient woodland. Small areas of arable land are located towards the periphery of the area, with a larger extent towards the north at Black Hills Farm. A small area of heath is also located at Copt Oak Farm.

A large number of SSSIs are located within this area at Benscliffe Wood, Stoneywell Wood and Poultney Wood. Three nature reserves are also found, managed by the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, with Ulverscroft towards the north and Lea Meadows and Rocky Plantation located centrally.

Evergreen species including laurels and holly are present within woodlands and large oaks and beech trees are often found located along roadsides creating enclosure.

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Area 2: Ulverscroft Wooded Valley

Field Pattern and Enclosure

Field pattern is generally medium to small scale across the area although some areas of small fields are distinctive. These tend to be on the periphery of the area and are evident at Heyday Hays to the south, here a grid of small fields lie either side of the Leicestershire Round long distance footpath. Field enclosure is generally hedgerows with hedgerow trees with many stone walls. Some fences are also evident as well as estate railings at Ulverscroft Priory.

Settlement Pattern, Roads and PRow

This area is very lightly settled with a relatively low number of dwellings throughout. Properties tend to be large set within large grounds with some featuring distinctive Arts and Crafts architecture. These tend to form a linear pattern along roads such as Whitcroft's Lane and Ulverscroft Lane. Elsewhere, a low number of scattered farms are spread throughout the area.

The M1 passes north to south through the western edge of this area but only for a short length leading up to Junction 22. The M1 is visually quite contained as it leads through a cutting with vegetated embankments, however, low level background noise does percolate through the wider area to the east. Other roads generally pass around the periphery of the area, including the A50/A511 which forms the south western boundary with Benscliffe Road, Copt Oak Road and Beacon Road forming other boundaries. Other lanes cross through the area and are predominantly straight leading south east to north west with Priory Lane crossing south west to north east.

A number of footpaths create a good PRow network with the Leicestershire Round recreational route passing through the southern part from Newtown Linford towards Markfield in the west. Small amounts of open access woodland are located to the south of Lea Wood, but there is however a lack of 'honeypot' visitor sites with associated car parks and facilities.

Cultural Heritage

There are two Scheduled Monuments within the area, Ulverscroft Priory and a moat at Lea Meadows. A large number of listed buildings are also located within the area, with a cluster at Lenthill Farm on the edge of Newtown Linford. Stoneywell is an Arts and Crafts cottage, the former home of the Gimson family which is now owned and managed by the National Trust. This is also a Grade II*listed building.

Perceptual Qualities

Due to the extensive woodland within the area combined with the undulating landform, the area is enclosed. This is accentuated by large oak and sometimes beech trees often located either side of the straight roads. The area is generally peaceful, although there is some disturbance created by low level noise from the M1 corridor and traffic generally along the roads.



View north east towards Green Hill

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 2: Ulverscroft Wooded Valley

Management Recommendations

Summary of Landscape Condition

The landscape is in relatively good condition and is intact with large properties that are formally managed and highly maintained. The current condition results in a highly attractive and distinctive area with strong key characteristics. It has a sense of maturity through old woodlands and vernacular buildings as well as heritage features. The area has a low number of visitor attractions which results in a relatively peaceful and tranquil feel.

Forces for Landscape Change

- Influence of changing landuse from large property management i.e. encroaching pony paddocks and formal gardens.
- Forestry clearance without replanting could result in a change in characteristic enclosure.
- Increase in accessibility to woodlands or addition of tourist facilities would put pressure on the natural landscape and would erode the tranquillity of area.
- Potential loss of large specimen trees within woodlands and along roads.
- Extensive expansion and re-development of properties could result in a loss of the strong Arts and Crafts style of buildings.

Sensitivities for Key Landscape Characteristics

There are many large oak and beech trees along roadsides which are mature. Loss of these as a feature could result in opening up the area if not replaced when lost.

On-going forestry operations could result in opening up the area if not replanted when felled. Increased accessibility of these forests and woodlands with provision of facilities such as car parking could also alter the tranquillity of the area.

Expansion of domestic formal gardens and creation of pony paddocks would gradually alter the rural character of the area.

There is a distinctive pattern of large Arts and Crafts styled properties in the area. These are generally well hidden within the wooded landscape. New development could alter this characteristic if not developed appropriately.

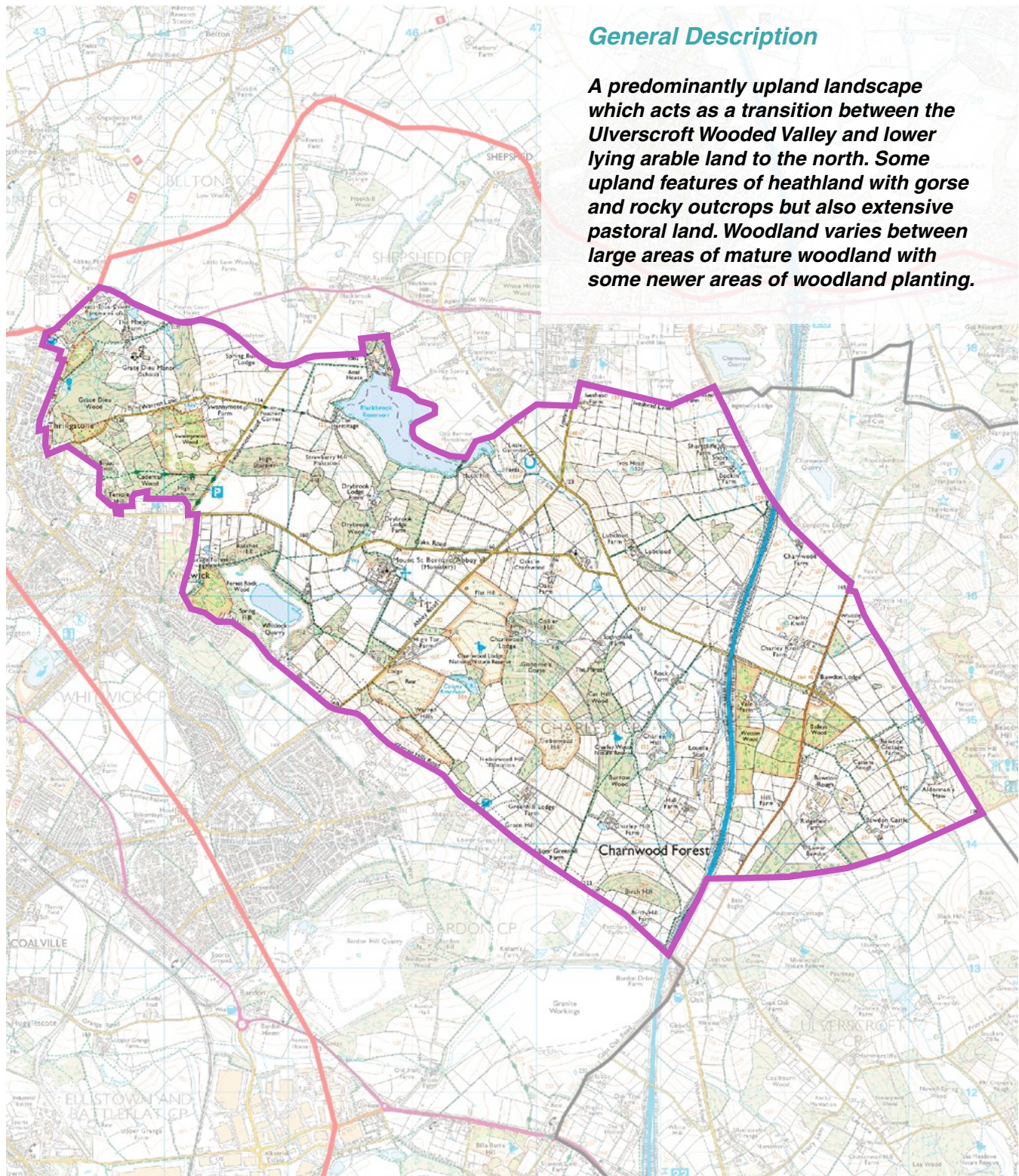
- **Maintain stone walls and estate railings and repair/replace where necessary rather than using fencing.**
- **Gap up hedgerows and replant where lost to ensure habitat connectivity through the area.**
- **Maintain lifecycle of ageing woodlands and roadside trees by replanting and managing and to retain woodlands located on horizons.**
- **Continue to protect and sensitively manage heritage features including ancient woodland habitat and built features such as Ulverscroft Priory and Stoneywell Cottage, as well as SSSIs.**
- **Continue to control and manage visitor sites.**
- **Control conversion of farmland to pony paddocks to maintain rural landscape character.**
- **Maintain vernacular of buildings to retain distinctive 'Arts and Crafts' characteristics as well as associated grounds.**
- **Ensure any new development maintains the linear pattern of large properties along roads and is well integrated within the landscape with planting to maintain character of buildings so as not to become dominant within views.**
- **Maintain large oak and beech trees along roadsides to maintain enclosure.**



Ulverscroft Priory

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 3: Charley Heath and Pasture



General Description

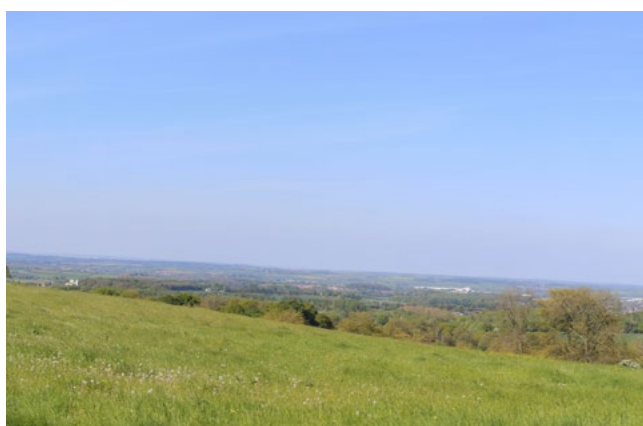
A predominantly upland landscape which acts as a transition between the Ulverscroft Wooded Valley and lower lying arable land to the north. Some upland features of heathland with gorse and rocky outcrops but also extensive pastoral land. Woodland varies between large areas of mature woodland with some newer areas of woodland planting.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 3: Charley Heath and Pasture

Key Characteristics

- An elevated and undulating landform with a slight valley leading north west to south east following the route of the Black Brook, feeding Blackbrook Reservoir.
- Predominantly farmed pastoral land but with some large areas of woodland and smaller areas of heathland with rocky outcrops as well as scattered trees. Ancient habitat includes heathland and woodland at Grace Dieu Wood, Drybrook Wood, Cat Hill Wood and Burrow Wood. Also SSSIs at Charnwood Lodge, Blackbrook Reservoir and Grace Dieu Woods. Large oaks and beech trees line roads.
- Medium sized fields in a regular pattern are bound by hedgerows and often stone walls with trees following field boundaries. Some walls are in need of repair.
- Little settlement with scattered farms and large individual houses. Minor roads tend to be straight and form a grid across the area. Accessibility is good with a number of PRoW and open access land.
- Some cultural heritage in the form of listed buildings and SM's at Warren Hills and Grace Dieu Priory. Mount St Bernard Abbey is a distinctive feature.
- Large scale, open areas with long views from high points and some more tranquil areas, although some disturbance from noise from the M1.



View from Lubcloud

Specific Characteristics

Landform and Hydrology

The landform within this area is generally elevated and gently undulating, although generally falls towards the north and lower levels beyond. A slight valley follows the route of the Black Brook which flows from the elevated levels in the south towards the lower lying north. This brook feeds the Blackbrook Reservoir. The highest points are found at Timberwood Hill which sits at around 248m AOD with the elevated landform leading towards the north west towards Whitlock Quarry. Across the valley to the north east, further highpoints are located at Ives Head which sits at 201m AOD and Lubcloud at 187m AOD.

Further water courses include Shortcliffe Brook which follows the north eastern boundary, Dry Brook which also flows into Blackbrook Reservoir and Grace Dieu Brook which flows through the north western part of the area. Field ponds are scattered throughout the area and larger waterbodies include Blackbrook Reservoir, Colony Reservoir and a pool at Whitlock Quarry.

Landcover and Vegetation

Landcover is mixed but predominantly consists of pastoral farmland with some pony paddocks and mixed woodland with smaller areas of arable land, gorse heathland and quarrying. Extensive woodland is located to the north west and includes ancient woodland at Grace Dieu with further ancient woodland at Drybrook Wood, Cat Hill Wood and Burrow Wood. Woodlands include some coniferous plantations as well as other deciduous semi-natural woodlands.

A large area of heathland is found at Charnwood Lodge. This is a National Nature Reserve which includes many important historic features associated with Charnwood Forest including Precambrian rock outcrops and Triassic deposits. The area is very typical of the Charnwood Forest character with elevated levels, open acidic grasslands, woodland and rocky outcrops. A further nature reserve managed by the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust is located to the south east at Charley Woods.

Large oak and beech trees are often present along the straight roads following walls.

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Area 3: Charley Heath and Pasture

Field Pattern and Enclosure

Outside of woodland and heathland areas, the field pattern tends to consist of medium sized pastoral with some arable fields. Fields are of a regular form and almost grid like in some areas, and are enclosed by hedgerows or granite dry stone walls. Individual trees also follow field boundaries either within hedgerows or following lines of walls. Some of the walls are in need of repair within the area.

Settlement Pattern, Roads and PRow

Development is limited with no village settlement but a scattering of farms and large individual properties set within substantial grounds which feature the use of granite and slate. Charley Hall is located towards the south of the area and Grace Dieu Manor, now a school, is located towards the north west.

The A512 forms the northern and north western boundary and the M1 corridor passes north to south through the area. As with the majority of the M1 corridor through Charnwood Forest, the route lies within a cutting with vegetated embankments which helps to reduce the visibility of the busy road. Otherwise, minor roads passing through the area tend to be straight in an almost grid like pattern across the area.

The area is well served by Public Rights of Way with numerous public footpaths and bridleways. There is also large areas of access land and woodland such as at Wetton Wood and Baileys Wood in the east, Timberwood Hill located to the south and Swannymote Wood and Grace Dieu Wood in the north west. Access to Charnwood Lodge NNR is however regulated by the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust to protect its ecological interest.

Cultural Heritage

Listed buildings are scattered throughout the area and include Charley Hall and attached outbuilding range and walls and Grace Dieu Manor which is now the location of Grace Dieu Manor School. Distinctive features of interest are also found at Mount St Bernard Abbey which is located centrally on a localised high point making it visible within the area. Grace Dieu Priory located at the northern extent of the area is also a Scheduled Monument.



Mount St Bernard Abbey

Perceptual Qualities

The area has a large scale with areas of extensive open grassland and heathland allowing long views across the area, especially from high points such as within Charnwood Lodge and at Lubcloud. Some areas are wild and feel exposed, but these contrast with enclosure created by woodland and lower levels such as towards the north. Central raised areas are tranquil but disturbance is created from noise from the M1 and busy roads which lead through the area.



View south from track close to Blackbrook Reservoir

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 3: Charley Heath and Pasture

Management Recommendations

Summary of Landscape Condition

The overall condition of the landscape is good with a pattern of walls and hedgerows generally intact and the landscape managed. In some places however, hedgerows are gappy and require infill planting and walls are in need of repair. The area is distinctive with strong characteristics.

Forces for Landscape Change

- Encroachment of bracken onto rocky outcrops, although smaller scale than other areas.
- Pressures from residential expansion on the western edge and related pressures such as increased road traffic.
- Potential loss of woodland from not replacing felled plantations.
- Potential loss of boundary walls and mature trees following walls along roadsides.
- Potential pressure from neighbouring quarrying expansion.

Sensitivities for Key Landscape Characteristics

There are a number of mature oak and beech trees following stone walls along roadsides, these should be maintained and replanted where necessary to retain this key feature.

Areas of heathland with gorse and rocky outcrops are generally smaller than in other areas and should be protected from bracken encroachment. Charnwood Lodge Nature Reserve is an important location featuring distinctive elements of heathland, rocky outcrops and woodland which are key characteristics of the character area.

New development in adjacent areas will result in ever increasing amounts of traffic on local roads which tend to be straight allowing fast speeds and impact on the tranquillity of the area.

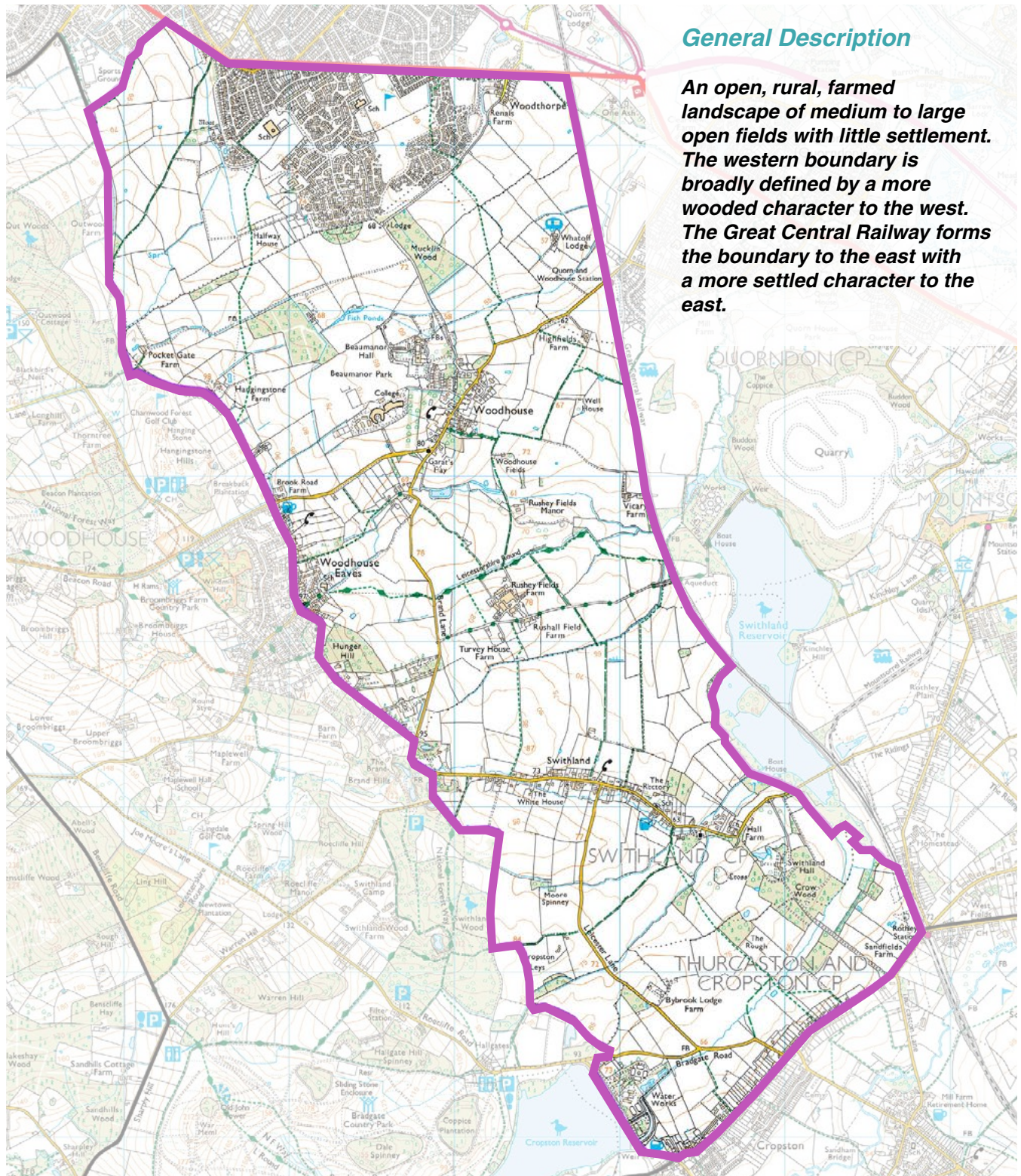
- **Manage encroachment of bracken to maintain open grasslands and rocky outcrops where present, to ensure retention of the key features.**
- **Maintain stone walls in field boundaries and along roads and repair/replace where necessary.**
- **Gap up and replant hedgerows with additional hedgerow trees to maintain the existing pattern of the landscape.**
- **Protect and manage mature trees for example along roadsides, and consider replanting to maintain the feature.**
- **Maintain lifecycle of ageing woodlands by replanting and managing especially along north western edge to maintain buffer to adjacent settlements.**
- **Ensure plantation woodlands are replanted when felled to maintain overall wooded character.**
- **Maintain habitat diversity, especially in sensitive areas such as Charnwood Lodge and wildlife sites and SSSIs, through management of woodlands, open grasslands and water features to retain the matrix of habitats currently found in the area.**
- **Continue to protect and sensitively manage heritage features including ancient woodland habitat and built features such as Mount St Bernard Abbey and buildings at Grace Dieu.**



Charnwood Lodge interpretation board

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 4: Swithland/Woodhouse Farmland



General Description

An open, rural, farmed landscape of medium to large open fields with little settlement. The western boundary is broadly defined by a more wooded character to the west. The Great Central Railway forms the boundary to the east with a more settled character to the east.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 4: Swithland/Woodhouse Farmland

Key Characteristics

- Lower lying, gently undulating landform crossed by small watercourses and wet ditches.
- Predominantly arable fields, with some pasture and smaller blocks of woodland than in other areas.
- Field pattern varies but is generally a medium to large scale open regular pattern of fields bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees and some fences.
- Small villages (Swithland and Woodhouse) and a more urban character in the north associated with the southern edge of Loughborough. Network of minor roads and footpaths/bridleways.
- Numerous listed buildings in villages at Woodhouse and Swithland.
- A uniform landscape of medium to large scale. Open and generally tranquil with a rural feel and views to neighbouring areas.

Specific Characteristics

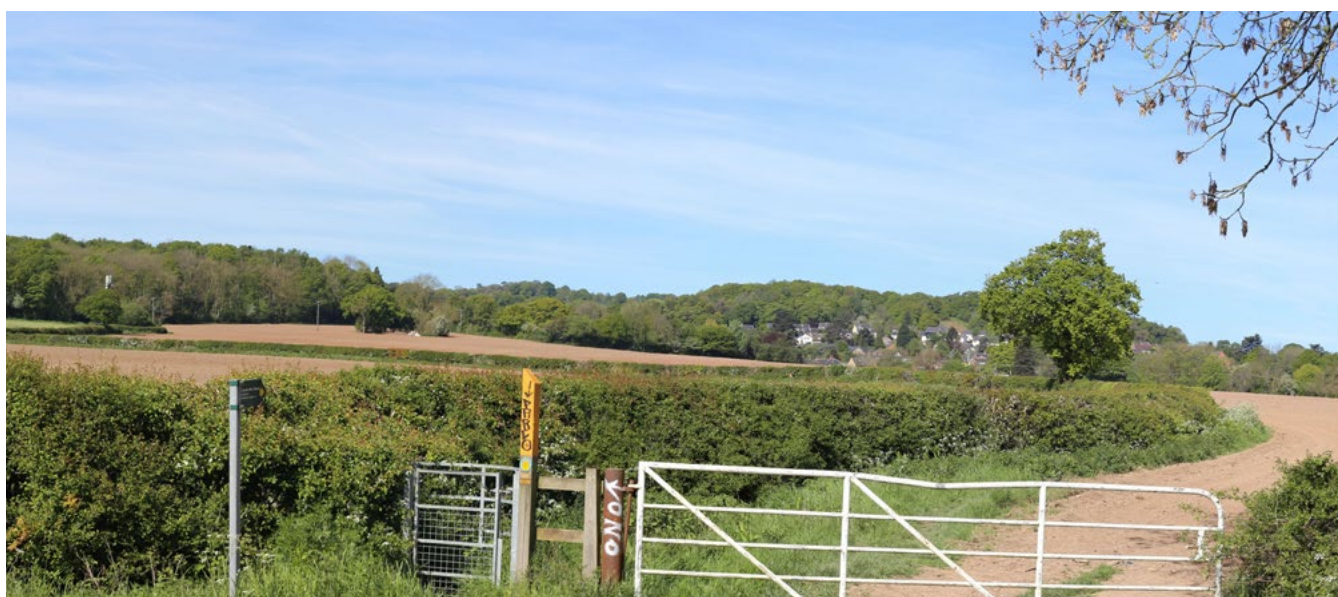
Landform and Hydrology

This area occupies a lower lying landform which is overall, gently undulating. Highest levels are located along the edge of Woodhouse Eaves which reaches up to 115m AOD with other local high points located to the north of and south of Swithland village which reach 87m AOD and 98m AOD respectively. On the north eastern edge, levels are only around 55m AOD, indicating a much gentler landform than in other areas. The area acts as a transition between lower lying and generally flatter areas to the north east and more upland and undulating areas to the south west.

A number of small watercourses and brooks cross the area, including the River Lin as it flows towards Swithland Reservoir. Wet ditches are evident as well as some field ponds, although less than in other areas.

Landcover and Vegetation

Landcover consists of mostly arable fields but with some large areas of pasture, and a lower level of deciduous woodland cover than in other areas. Ancient woodland is located at Mucklin Wood on the southern extent of Loughborough, and at Crown Wood on the edge of Swithland, but these areas are small compared to other areas. There are no SSSIs within the character area.



View to Woodhouse Eaves from Brand Lane

Chapter 5.0

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 4: Swithland/Woodhouse Farmland

Field Pattern and Enclosure

The pattern of arable fields are generally medium to large scale forming a regular pattern with smaller pastoral fields located on the edge of Swithland village. Larger pastoral fields are associated with Woodhouse village to the north. Field boundaries are formed from native hedgerows with hedgerow trees and some fences.

Settlement Pattern, Roads and PRow

Small linear villages include Swithland and Woodhouse which feature the use of local Swithland slate and granite with some thatched roofs. The area also includes the edges of Cropston and Woodhouse Eaves with the villages located on lower levels and featuring wooded edges. The northern part of the area has a slightly more urban character due to the presence of the residential edge of Loughborough.

The Great Central Railway forms quite a decisive boundary along the north eastern edge while a network of minor roads crosses through the area linking between the villages. The area is well served with public footpaths and bridleways and the Leicestershire Round long distance footpath passes east to west between Woodhouse Eaves and Swithland Reservoir.

Cultural Heritage

The area features a high number of listed buildings which are generally associated with the main roads through the villages of Woodhouse Eaves, Woodhouse and Swithland. A number of listed buildings and features are found at Beaumanor Hall to the north of Woodhouse.

Perceptual Qualities

The area appears rather uniform with the pattern of fields and villages and is of a medium to large scale. It is open compared to other more wooded areas but is generally quite tranquil with a rural feel. There is greater disturbance towards the north associated with the southern edge of Loughborough. The area features views towards the west and Area 1 with the edge of Woodhouse Eaves visible on the rising landform.



View across farmland from close to Great Central Railway line

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 4: Swithland/Woodhouse Farmland

Management Recommendations

Summary of Landscape Condition

The overall condition of the landscape is considered to be generally good, but some areas are of lower quality and require management through infill planting and management of hedgerows which are fragmented in some areas. The northern part of the area is influenced by expanding development on the southern edge of Loughborough.

Forces for Landscape Change

- Encroachment from increasing development on the southern edge of Loughborough.
- Intensive farming practices affecting field boundary hedgerows and trees.
- Potential expansion of village settlements would alter their character within the landscape.

Sensitivities for Key Landscape Characteristics

New residential development on the southern edge of Loughborough is encroaching into the landscape. Expansion within the village settlements could result in a dilution of the local vernacular if not carried out appropriately.

Intensive farming methods could result in the further loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees in an area which has a lower level of woodland cover than other areas in the forest.

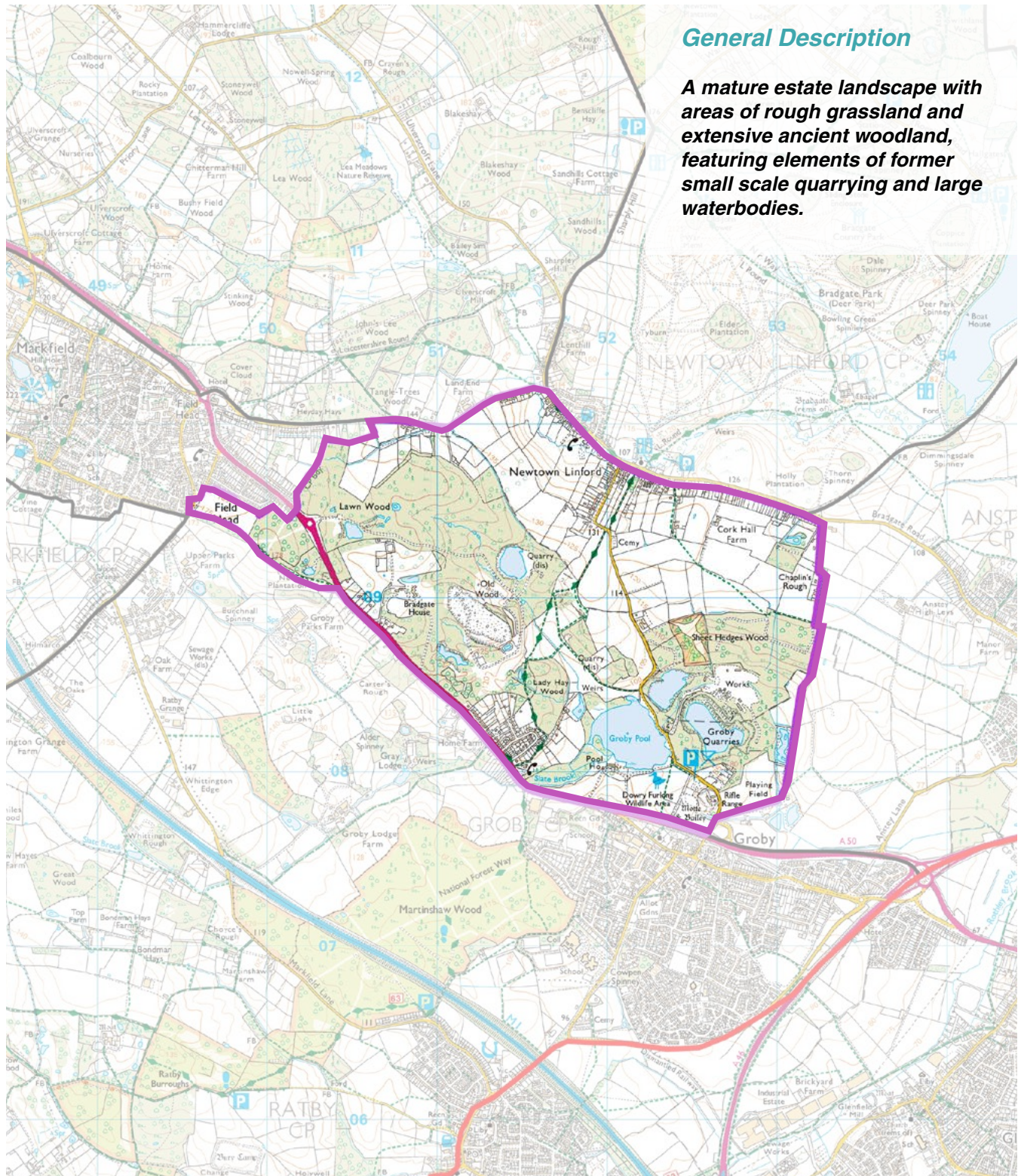
- **Gap up hedgerows and replant where lost to ensure habitat connectivity through the area and to maintain the overall field pattern.**
- **Plant new hedgerow trees where possible to increase the overall tree cover of the area.**
- **Manage and protect areas of ancient woodland and maintain the lifecycle of the woodlands by replanting where necessary.**
- **Expand areas of woodland where possible and ensure appropriate management.**
- **Ensure any new development in the main villages is appropriate in scale and vernacular style to preserve the pattern and form of these villages.**
- **Ensure any further new developments on the edge of Loughborough are suitably designed with ample planting to ensure integration into the existing landscape character and softening of development edges.**



View to Mucklin Wood

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 5: Groby Estate Woodland



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 5: Groby Estate Woodland

Key Characteristics

- A locally undulating landform which includes a number of small field ponds and large pools including Groby Pool, fed by the Slate Brook.
- Heavily wooded with extensive ancient woodland interspersed with open rough grassland. Some arable fields on the eastern edge. Evidence of historic quarrying with some rock faces overgrown by trees.
- Field pattern is medium to small with a linear pattern, especially on the outskirts of Newtown Linford. Fields enclosed with a mix of hedgerows and post and rail fences.
- Includes the edge of Groby and Newtown Linford village. A50 forms main road corridor defining the area with few road connections through the area. Network of PRow including National Forest Way.
- Numerous listed buildings in Newtown Linford although heritage interest is also associated with Groby Pool House. The pools and some woodland at Groby Pool are a SSSI.
- A generally open, rural landscape, but enclosure is created by the undulating landform and large areas of woodland. The area has a managed estate feel and is quite tranquil, but affected by underlying noise from the M1.

Specific Characteristics

Landform and Hydrology

This relatively small character area has a locally undulating landform which reflects the historic quarrying which has occurred in the area. Disused quarries have resulted in a number of large pools. Groby Pool is a large pool fed by the Slate Brook. Smaller water courses and field ponds are also scattered within the woodland areas.

Landcover and Vegetation

The area features a high proportion of deciduous woodland, the majority of which is ancient woodland. Within the woodland are areas of open, rough grassland. Pastoral fields with tree lines and scattered trees are located towards the edge of the area, for example on the south western edge of Newtown Linford, while arable fields are located towards the north eastern edge and south eastern edge of Newtown Linford. Around the former quarried areas are some rock faces, often with trees growing out of the exposed rock surfaces.

Woodland is mostly mature broadleaved species.



View to Lady Hay Wood

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 5: Groby Estate Woodland

Field Pattern and Enclosure

Fields, where present, are small to medium in size and form a linear pattern on the outskirts of Newtown Linford. Arable fields in the north eastern corner are of a slightly larger size. Field boundaries are formed of native hedges with hedgerow trees or timber post and rail fences.

Settlement Pattern, Roads and PRow

The area falls between settlements and includes the edges of Groby and Newtown Linford villages. Other buildings include Bradgate House and Groby Pool house. The A50 forms the southern boundary to the area with Bradgate Road forming the northern boundary. A network of public footpaths cross the area with the National Forest Way leading through the woodland, north into Newtown Linford. Other informal tracks also lead through the woodlands.

Cultural Heritage

The area has a history of small scale quarrying with a number of disused sites and subsequent pools. Groby Pool House and Bradgate House are listed buildings while a number of further listed buildings are located within Newtown Linford. The pool and some associated woodland at Groby Pool are SSSIs.

Perceptual Qualities

The area is of small scale with enclosure associated with the undulating landform and extensive woodland. More open areas of farmland are located towards the north of the area. The area is relatively peaceful, although does experience some underlying background noise from the M1. The mature woodland and disused quarries give a mature feel to the landscape.



View from National Forest Way

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 5: Groby Estate Woodland

Management Recommendations

Summary of Landscape Condition

This area is a mature landscape with mature trees and areas of open grassland which has the feel of an estate. The condition of this area is generally good with evidence of management of key areas such as Groby Pool.

Forces for Landscape Change

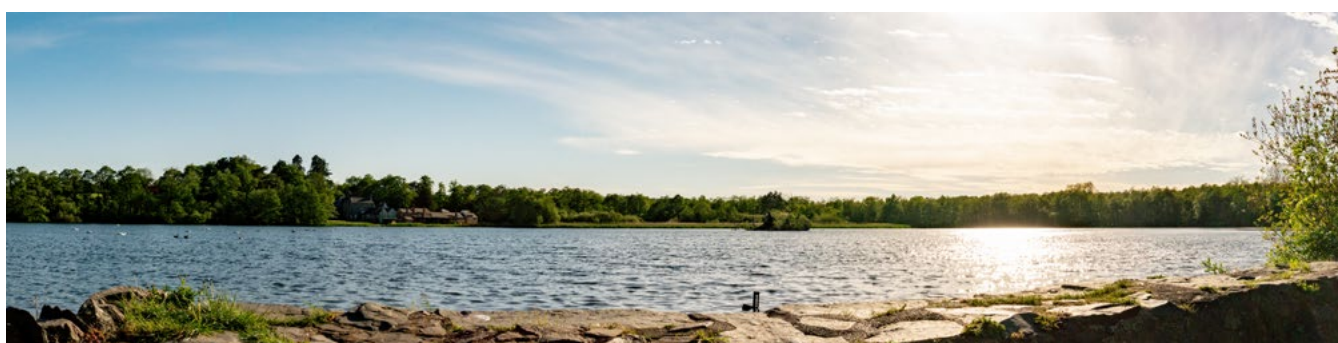
- Potential loss of woodland if not managed appropriately.
- Loss of hedgerows which are replaced by fencing in some areas.
- Increase in visitor pressure to Groby Pool.

Sensitivities for Key Landscape Characteristics

Much of the woodland and trees are mature and should be effectively managed to ensure longevity. Bracken is encroaching into some areas of open grassland and exposed rock faces which should be managed to maintain the prominence of these features.

The current management regimes should be continued to retain the estate character of this relatively small area.

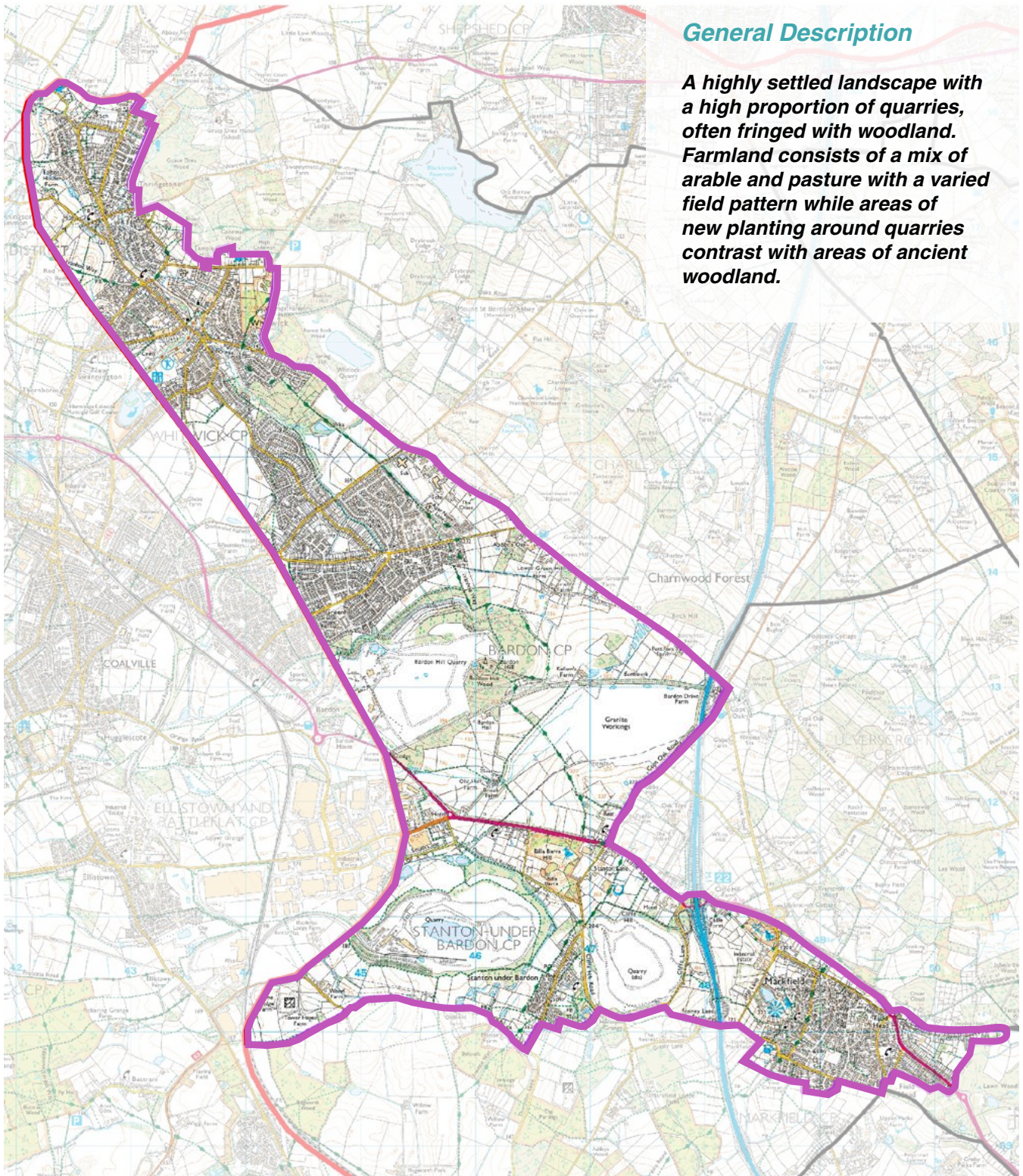
- **Manage encroachment of bracken and scrub to maintain areas of open grassland, exposed rock and former quarries to ensure longevity of the habitats.**
- **Gap up hedgerows and replant where lost to ensure habitat connectivity through the area.**
- **Maintain lifecycle of ageing woodlands by replanting and managing.**
- **Continue to protect and sensitively manage heritage features and SSSIs including ancient woodland habitat and built features at Groby Pool.**
- **Ensure visitor facilities are suitably managed to avoid urbanising influences.**



Groby Pool

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement



General Description

A highly settled landscape with a high proportion of quarries, often fringed with woodland. Farmland consists of a mix of arable and pasture with a varied field pattern while areas of new planting around quarries contrast with areas of ancient woodland.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement

Key Characteristics

- **Undulating landform heavily affected by extensive quarrying.**
- **Highly settled with Whitwick and Thringstone, Agar Nook, Stanton-under-Bardon and Markfield villages.**
- **Small brook flows through the settlements and multiple field ponds.**
- **Mix of landuses including arable, pasture and woodland as well as quarrying and associated spoil mounds.**
- **Fields enclosed by hedgerows with hedgerow trees as well as some walls and fences.**
- **Mix of woodland with pine plantations and mixed woodland as well as new plantations and grasslands associated with quarry restoration.**
- **Small scale regular fields on settlement edges and around peripheries of quarries, bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. Also some walls along roads.**
- **Linear villages of Thringstone, Whitwick and Stanton-under-Bardon, with small number of scattered farms. Markfield is a large clustered village located on higher ground. Settlements link along roads with the A511/A50 corridor passing through.**
- **Several PRoW through area with Ivanhoe Way looping through.**
- **Listed buildings associated with villages and some located close to quarries such as Bardon Hall.**
- **A rich heritage of quarrying in the area with Bardon Hill Quarry evident on OS maps dating back to 1884.**
- **Large scale expansive views from higher levels often close to quarries. Background noise from industrial areas and settlements.**

Specific Characteristics

Landform and Hydrology

This linear area has a generally undulating landform but also includes a number of large quarries which have greatly altered the natural landform over time. Stanton-under-Bardon Quarry occupies the majority of the southern part of the area with Bardon Hill Quarry located to the north. The quarries create extreme low points but are often associated with local high points. Billa Barra Hill for example reaches 235m AOD and is located adjacent to Stanton-Under-Bardon Quarry while Bardon Hill Wood adjacent to Bardon Hill Quarry reaches 278m AOD. This is also found at Markfield where Hill Hole nature reserve lies at around 222m AOD immediately adjacent to the former Hill Hole Quarry. Away from these features, the landform is more gently undulating with settlement in the north west associated with lower levels.

Water courses flow through the settlements including Grace Dieu Brook which flows through Thringstone and Whitwick. Small field ponds are scattered throughout the area with larger water bodies associated with the quarries for example at Stanton-under-Bardon.

Landcover and Vegetation

The area is highly settled with quarrying and associated spoil heaps occupying the majority of the area. Between these main landuses are small areas of mixed arable and pastoral farmland and small heathlands and woodlands. Woodland is mixed with some pine plantations and some mixed broadleaf and pine. There are also areas of new plantation and grasslands associated with areas of quarry restoration. A low proportion of woodland is ancient woodland for example at Whitwick and around Bardon Hill Quarry. This area also includes a small area of heathland.

Billa Barra Hill and Hill Hole are local nature reserves managed by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. Billa Barra Hill at Bardon Hill Quarry is important for its acidic grassland habitat and pre-Cambrian geology while Hill Hole at Markfield features a meadow, woodland, heath grassland and a water body at the bottom of the quarry. The Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust also managed a further local nature reserve at Altar Stones Lane, close to Markfield which includes heath grassland and Precambrian rock outcrops. A number of SSSIs are also located within the area, associated with heathlands and grasslands or geological features.

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement

Field Pattern and Enclosure

Fields tend to be located on settlement edges and around the peripheries of the quarries with the field pattern consisting of small, regular fields. These are enclosed with a mix of hedgerows with hedgerow trees but also some walls and timber fences. Walls are also present along roadsides.

Settlement Pattern, Roads and PRow

The area is highly settled with a number of linear villages and scattered farms. Villages tend to be linear following a central road and include Thringstone, Whitwick and Agar Nook located within the north western area and Stanton-under-Bardon to the south. Markfield is a large village with a more clustered form, located on the eastern edge and on a raised landform, which is a unique feature for Charnwood Forest as a whole. Settlements extend along the roads with the A50/A511 corridor passing through southern part of the area across the M1. The M1 leads for a short distance north to south through the area but is not a visually dominant feature.

Numerous public footpaths lead through the area with a number of short lengths through the settlements and a loop route around Standon-under-Bardon Quarry. The Ivanhoe Way long distance route also loops through the area leading around the quarries and through Whitwick and Thringstone. Elsewhere, small areas of access land are located adjacent to Whitwick, Billa Barra Hill and close to Markfield.

Cultural Heritage

A number of listed buildings are located within the settlements of Whitwick and Thringstone and on the western edge of Markfield. Other listed buildings are associated with quarries such as Bardon Hall and the associated Lodge. The area features a rich heritage of quarrying with quarries at Bardon Hill, Cliffe Hill and Markfield Quarry visible on OS maps dating back to 1884. Scheduled monuments are also evident with a moated site near Kellam's Farm near Bardon and at Whitwick Castle.

Perceptual Qualities

The area has a large scale due to the extent of settlement and expansive quarrying in the area. Wide extensive views are also possible from higher levels, often from locations close to quarries, with views across the restoration areas or extraction areas to adjacent character areas. The area is not particularly tranquil with noise from quarrying and industrial areas as well as settlements and roads.



View of Bardon Hill Quarry

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement

Summary of Landscape Condition

This is a changing landscape heavily influenced by settlement and quarrying with urban fringe influences which results in a generally low landscape condition, although areas of interspersed farmland and restoration schemes are managed and of a medium condition.

Forces for Landscape Change

- Expansion of quarrying activity resulting in further loss of farmland.
- Maturing quarry restoration schemes will alter the landscape over time, increasing woodland cover.
- Greater opportunities for recreation once restoration schemes have established.
- Pressure from further settlement expansion especially due to the close proximity to Coalville, outside of the Charnwood Forest area.
- Pressure of further industrial development due to the close proximity to the major road network and Junction 22 of the M1.

Sensitivities for Key Landscape Characteristics

Increased expansion of quarrying will result in further impacts on the landscape such as the loss of open fields and associated hedgerows and trees as well as the existing field pattern.

Any further development in the form of settlement expansion or industrial developments would also increase the urban influences on the area and potentially erode the landscape character, without appropriate design.

Management Recommendations

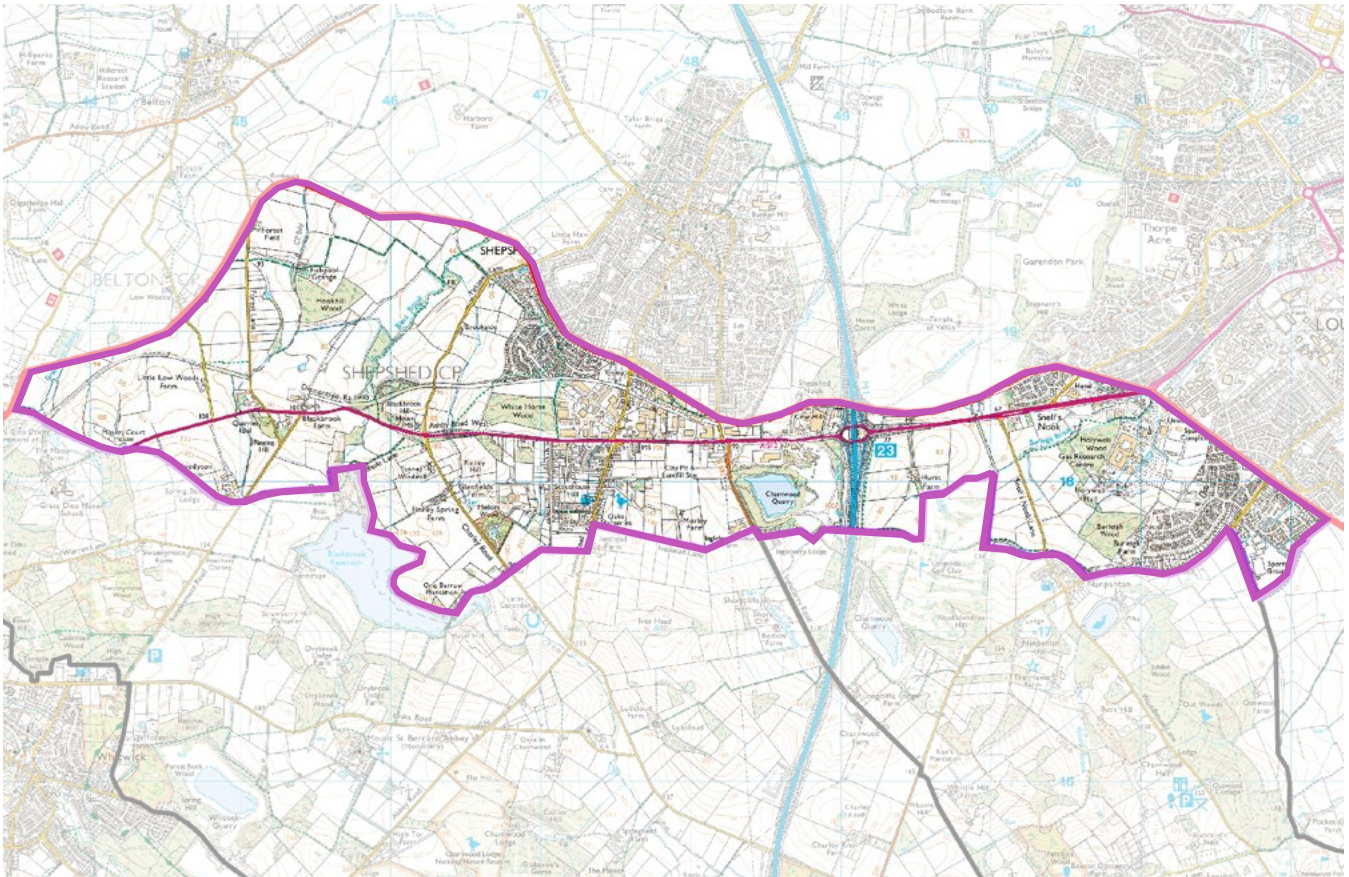
- **Ensure continued management of restored landscapes to ensure establishment and effective regeneration.**
- **Ensure extensive new woodland and habitat creation within future quarry restoration plans.**
- **Maintain stone walls and repair/replace where necessary rather than using fencing.**
- **Maintain habitat diversity through management of woodlands, open grasslands and water features including SSSIs and wildlife sites to retain and enhance the matrix of habitats found in the area.**
- **Ensure any new residential development is focussed at the main settlements and includes adequate landscape proposals to integrate development into the landscape.**
- **Ensure any new industrial development proposals include woodland planting to soften buildings within views.**
- **Maintain woodland vegetation at the summit of Billa Barra to retain long views.**
- **Gap up hedgerows and replant where lost to strengthen field pattern through the area.**
- **Explore possibilities of creating new recreation facilities in areas of restored quarrying to provide for local communities.**



View west from Hill Lane on the edge of Markfield

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland



General Description

A lower lying, predominantly open, arable landscape with some small pockets of pasture and small blocks of ancient woodland. The character area lies between central upland areas to the south and the wider lowland to the north. This area is heavily influenced by settlement from the urban edges of Shepshed and Loughborough.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland

Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling landform, generally falling to the north. Small water courses include Black Brook and Burleigh Brook as well as scattered field ponds.
- Wider extent of arable farmland with some pasture and smaller blocks of woodland. Ancient woodland close to Shepshed and Loughborough and SSSIs at Charnwood Quarry and Blackbrook Hill.
- Varied field pattern with some small fields close to Shepshed and larger fields to the west. Field enclosure mainly hedges with some walls.
- An urban fringe landscape which includes the edge of Shepshed and Loughborough and associated influences such as Loughborough University which features within views. The A512 leads east to west through the area with minor roads leading south. Some PRow leading out of Shepshed and Loughborough.
- Relatively low number of listed buildings, although some vernacular stone and brick buildings.
- A large to medium scale open landscape with some long views. Lower level than central areas of the forest, but still views to lower extent to the north. Not particularly tranquil with noise from roads including the M1 and settlements.

Specific Characteristics

Landform and Hydrology

This linear area has a gently rolling landform but generally falls towards the north. Minor valleys follow the route of the Black Brook which flows around Shepshed and the Burleigh Brook which flows into Loughborough. The highest point is located to the west of Morley Farm in the south which rises to 147m AOD with a further high point at Woodyton Farm on the south western boundary which is located at 130m AOD.

As well as the brooks and small watercourses, a small number of field ponds are located across the area and a large water body is located at Charnwood Quarry adjacent to the M1.

Landcover and Vegetation

The lower lying levels result in a greater extent of arable farmland, especially to the west of Shepshed, with only small areas of pastoral land. Woodland cover is lower than in other areas, but a large proportion of the woodland is ancient woodland. Charnwood Quarry is also an extensively quarried area between the M1 and A512. Only two SSSIs are located within this area, at Charnwood Quarry and at the woodland adjacent to Blackbrook Hill House.



View south east from Fishpool Grange

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland

Field Pattern and Enclosure

Field pattern varies with some smaller, regular fields associated with pastoral land close to the edge of Shepshed and Loughborough with a pattern of linear pastoral fields on the eastern side of Forest Lane to the west of the area. The more prevalent arable land consists of much larger fields which extend to the west of Shepshed and beyond. Field enclosure is formed by hedges with hedgerow trees and although some stone walls are evident, these are used less than in other areas within Charnwood Forest.

Settlement Pattern, Roads and PRow

The area is settled and covers the southern extent of Shepshed and the south western extent of Loughborough. Development includes residential areas, with some recent developments, but also industrial uses which spread along the A512 out of Shepshed and Loughborough as well as the south western extent of Loughborough University.

The A512 forms the main road which leads east to west through the linear area with minor roads heading north to south off it. Some public footpaths lead out of the main settlements of Shepshed and Loughborough, but there is no access land within the area.

Cultural Heritage

There are a relatively low number of listed buildings within the area, although the Fenney Windmill to the south west of Shepshed is a feature of interest. Further listed buildings are associated with the edge of Loughborough and include Holywell Farmhouse and outbuildings within the university grounds. There are a number of buildings which however feature local vernacular brick or stone features.

Perceptual Qualities

The area is of a medium to large scale and is more open, especially to the west, with long views possible away from the settlements. Development including the edge of Shepshed and Loughborough University buildings do however feature within many views. Longer views are predominantly to the north across the more open, lower levels beyond the Charnwood Forest boundary. From some locations planes leaving or approaching East Midland Airport are regularly visible.

The area is not particularly tranquil due to disturbance from main roads such as the A512 and M1 motorway and from the edge of developments.



View along Iveshead Road towards settlement edge

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 7: Loughborough/Shepshed Mixed Farmland

Management Recommendations

Summary of Landscape Condition

The overall condition of this area is considered to be good. Hedgerows and stone walls are generally intact and managed although some hedgerows need gapping up in places and stone walls appear in need of repair.

Forces for Landscape Change

- Continual expansion of large settlements, including Shepshed and Loughborough, into open farmland.
- Potential expansion of quarrying activity adjacent to the M1 resulting in further loss of farmland.
- Pressure from further industrial development due to the close proximity to the major road network and Junction 23 of the M1.

Sensitivities for Key Landscape Characteristics

Any further development in the form of settlement expansion or industrial developments and also including expansion of Loughborough University would increase the urban influences in the area and potentially erode the landscape character, without appropriate design.

Intensive farming methods could result in the further loss of hedgerows, hedgerow trees, reducing overall tree cover, as well as stone walls.

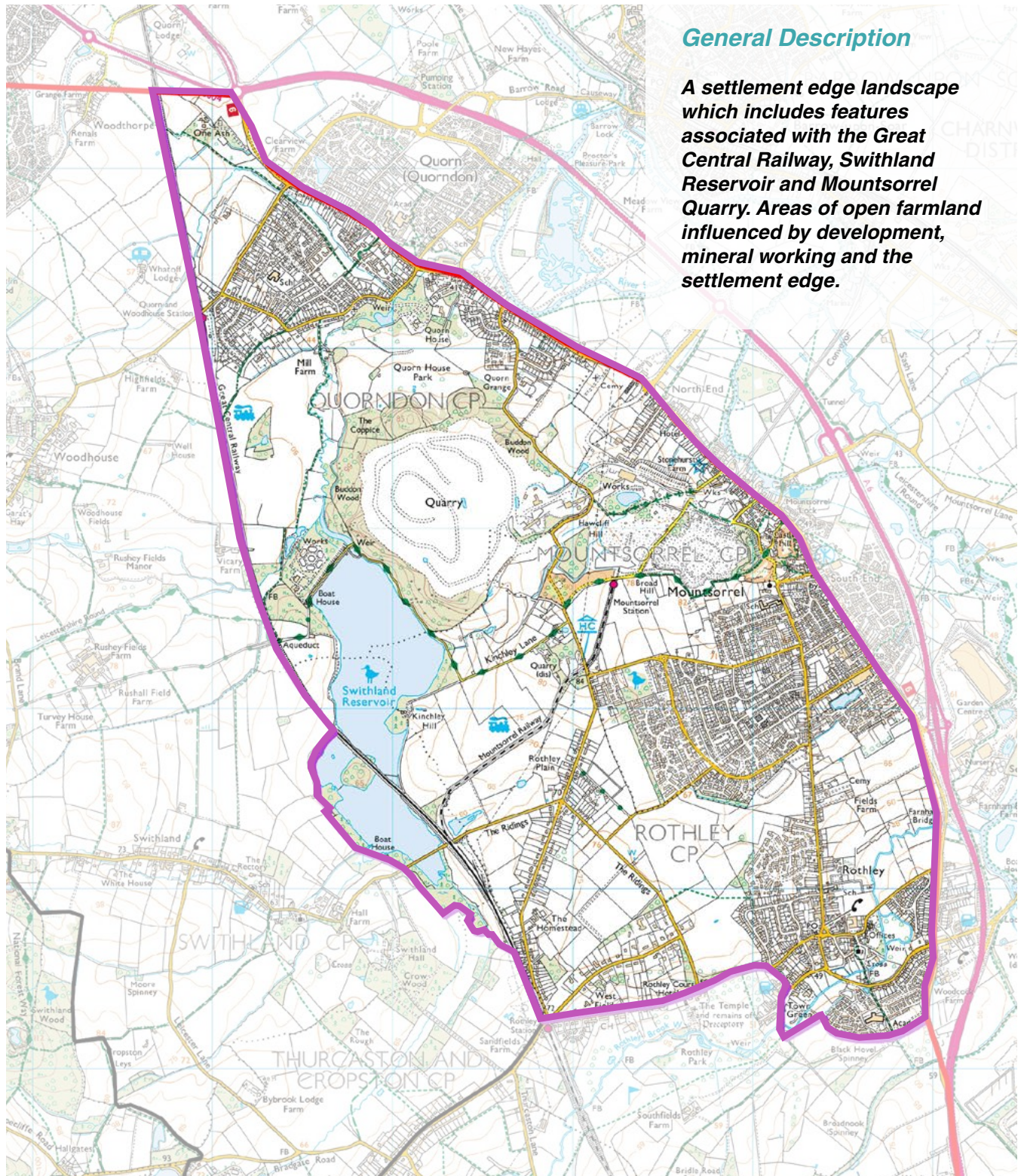
- Ensure new development is well integrated within the landscape with adequate planting to soften urban edges and maintain the existing vegetated edges to settlements.
- Maintain stone walls and repair/replace where necessary rather than using fencing.
- Gap up hedgerows and replant where lost to strengthen field pattern through the area.
- Ensure woodland around Charnwood Quarry is managed to maintain screening effect.



View north west from Nanpantan

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 8: Quorn/Mountsorrel/Rothley Settlements, Quarries and Farmland



General Description

A settlement edge landscape which includes features associated with the Great Central Railway, Swithland Reservoir and Mountsorrel Quarry. Areas of open farmland influenced by development, mineral working and the settlement edge.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 8: Quorn/Mountsorrel/Rothley Settlements, Quarries and Farmland

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating landform but with landform changes created from extensive quarrying and spoil mounds in and around Mountsorrel Quarry. Large water body at Swithland Reservoir and other smaller watercourses leading into Mountsorrel and Quorn.
- An area of predominantly settlement and quarrying but with some arable and pastoral fields and woodland. Ancient woodland around Mountsorrel Quarry, and by Swithland Reservoir and extensive SSSI at quarry and reservoir.
- A changing field pattern around Mountsorrel due to quarrying. Otherwise a mix of field sizes but a regular pattern of fields enclosed by hedgerows with some walls.
- Highly settled including Quorn, Mountsorrel and Rothley villages which create a settled edge to the forest. A network of minor roads leading out from the villages but relatively few public footpaths.
- Multiple listed buildings associated with village centres, but also at Swithland Reservoir and along the railway corridor. Other heritage features include reservoir railings which are consistent around the reservoir area and brick structures (bridges etc) along the railway line. There is a Community Heritage Centre at Mountsorrel/Rothley Station.
- Larger scale and more open than other areas. Mountsorrel Quarry and associated mineral workings are dominating in close proximity. Other interest and industrial architecture associated with reservoir and railway. Some road and vehicular noise, but otherwise quite peaceful.

Specific Characteristics

Landform and Hydrology

Landform across this area is generally gently undulating although extremes of high points and low points are created through extensive quarrying at Mountsorrel Quarry and the associated mineral workings. A local high point is also located at Castle Hill in Mountsorrel which is the site of a prominent War Memorial, erected in 1926. Small watercourses flow through Quorn and Mountsorrel with the River Lin which feeds Swithland Reservoir, joining the River Soar beyond the forest boundary to the north of Mountsorrel. Swithland Reservoir is a large water body with a number of small field ponds also scattered through the area.

Landcover and Vegetation

The area is highly settled, with a large land take also associated with the quarry at Mountsorrel and the associated mineral workings with spoil mounds expanding. Away from the settlement and quarry, farmland is a mix of arable and pastoral and woodlands are generally deciduous including mature birch woodlands present on the edge of the reservoir and quarry. Buddon Wood around the edge of Mountsorrel Quarry is ancient woodland while the quarry and reservoir are both large SSSIs.

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 8: Quorn/Mountsorrel/Rothley Settlements, Quarries and Farmland

Field Pattern and Enclosure

This is a changing landscape with some fields being lost to expanding spoil mounds. Where present, fields are of varying sizes but generally form regular patterns between the settlements. Field boundaries are formed by hedgerows with some stone walls.

Settlement Pattern, Roads and PRow

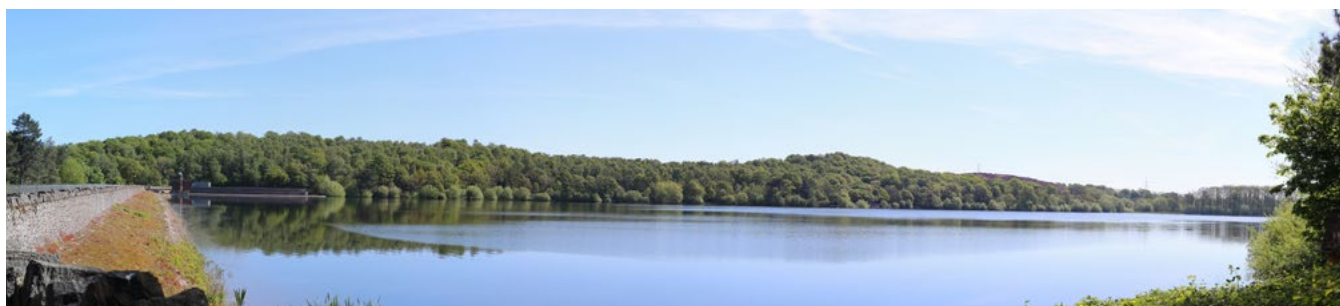
The area is heavily settled and includes the villages of Quorn, Mountsorrel and Rothley which have a wooded character to the settlement edges. These villages have expanded over time and recent developments include use of local stone in detailing. The villages form a settled edge to the forest. A network of minor roads lead out from the villages while the former A6 forms the north eastern boundary. The Great Central Railway line forms a distinctive boundary to the west of the area. There are relatively few public footpaths through the area but the Leicestershire Round long distance route leads around Swithland Reservoir, into Mountsorrel and small areas of access land are located around Mountsorrel Quarry.

Cultural Heritage

There are numerous listed buildings associated with the historic cores of the villages within the area but also listed features are associated with both Swithland Reservoir including a pumping house, bridge and fountain, and the Great Central Railway which includes the Quorn and Woodhouse Station. The reservoir boundary is demarcated through distinctive railings which are visible in a number of locations across the area. Other features of interest include bridges and station buildings associated with the railway. The Community Heritage Centre at Mountsorrel/Rothley Station provides information relating to the history of the area.

Perceptual Qualities

The area is of a larger scale than other areas due to the extent and influence of the quarrying but also due to the large reservoir and areas of open fields away from the settlements. The quarry and spoil mounds are dominating features in close proximity. The presence of industrial architecture associated with the reservoir and railway corridor create an awareness of the industrial heritage within the area. There is some disturbance from quarry vehicles and road noise but otherwise, away from the settlements, the area is quite peaceful.



Swithland Reservoir

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 8: Quorn/Mountsorrel/Rothley Settlements, Quarries and Farmland

Management Recommendations

Summary of Landscape Condition

The area includes large scale mineral workings from Mountsorrel Quarry which has a large influence on the area. The overall condition is moderate with some farmland areas fragmented with gappy hedgerows.

Forces for Landscape Change

- Ongoing changes as a result of expanding quarrying and associated mineral workings resulting in potential loss of woodland and farmland.
- New residential development increasing urban influence on the area.
- New planting associated with quarry restoration and new developments will mature to increase tree cover.

Sensitivities for Key Landscape Characteristics

Any further expansion in quarrying at Mountsorrel will continue to affect the landscape character through the loss of hedgerows and farmland as well as possible areas of woodland. The restoration of these areas give potential for new woodland planting and habitat creation which will increase woodland cover and biodiversity in the area. There is also potential for these areas to provide recreation facilities for local residents. The loss of historic features associated with the heritage railway such as former stations and bridges as well as the brick buildings and perimeter railings at Swithland Reservoir would affect the industrial heritage influence of the character area.

- Gap up hedgerows and replant where lost to maintain field pattern and ensure habitat connectivity through the area.
- Maintain habitat diversity through management of woodlands, especially SSSI woodland around Mountsorrel Quarry, open grasslands and water features to retain the matrix of habitats currently found in the area.
- Continue to protect and sensitively manage built heritage features associated with the Great Central Railway and Swithland Reservoir to maintain the industrial heritage of the area.
- Ensure any further new developments are suitably designed with ample planting to soften edges and ensure assimilation into the landscape.
- Ensure areas of restoration around Mountsorrel Quarry reflect the rural character of the area with the inclusion of woodland planting.
- Promote appropriate management of woodland and grassland habitats to enhance biodiversity in the area.
- Explore potential to increase access to restored quarry areas for local residents.



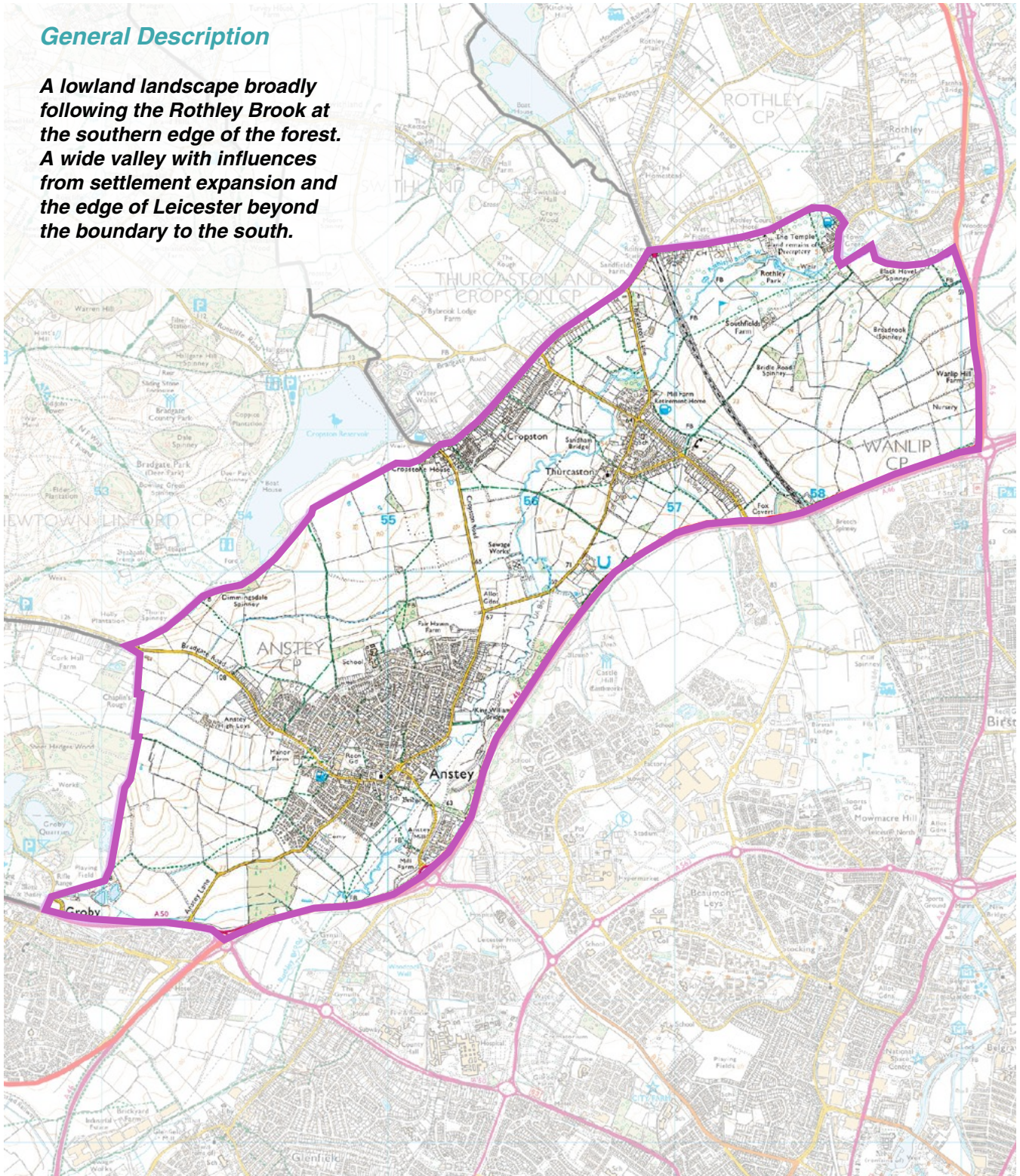
View north towards edge of Mountsorrel

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 9: Rothley Brook Lowland Farmland

General Description

A lowland landscape broadly following the Rothley Brook at the southern edge of the forest. A wide valley with influences from settlement expansion and the edge of Leicester beyond the boundary to the south.



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 9: Rothley Brook Lowland Farmland

Key Characteristics

- Lower level, generally gently sloping and wide valley following Rothley Brook extending south west to north east through the area.
- Extensive arable farmland with some small areas of pasture along the brook. Relatively little woodland cover with some woodland belts.
- Mix of some large and medium arable fields in regular pattern bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Settlement concentrated on villages with expansion at Anstey. Minor roads link settlements; area bounded by A46 dual carriageway to the south. Good network of footpaths and bridleways.
- Pylons and overhead lines follow the line of the brook.
- Some listed buildings within village centres. (No SSSIs or ancient woodland).
- Lowland, wide valley with views to higher ground to the north, including towards Bradgate Park. Urban influences and views to the wider expanse of Leicester City to the south east.

Specific Characteristics

Landform and Hydrology

This area covers a lower lying landform which follows the Rothley Brook extending south west to north east along the edge of Charnwood Forest. The landform gently slopes from high points of around 85 to 115m AOD on either side of the corridor, down towards the brook. A number of small field ponds are also scattered along the brook corridor.

Landcover and Vegetation

The area features a greater extent of arable farmland with only some smaller areas of pasture along the Rothley Brook. There is also a much lower extent of tree cover with only small woodland belts and trees within Rothley Park Golf Course which also features areas of open grassland. A belt of willow and alder woodland and mature scrub follows the line of the brook.

Chapter 5.0

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 9: Rothley Brook Lowland Farmland

Field Pattern and Enclosure

Field patterns vary with generally a mix of medium to large fields, but with some small fields on the edges of the settlements. Fields form a regular pattern and are bound by tall hedgerows with hedgerow trees which increases the sense of tree cover across the area.

Settlement Pattern, Roads and PRow

The area is rather well settled and includes the villages of Cropston and Thurcaston which have a linear form as well as Anstey, and the southern edge of Rothley. The villages have all experienced modern expansion, although this is most evident at Anstey. Minor roads link the settlements with the A46 which forms the southern boundary to the forest. A good network of footpaths and bridleways also cross the area.

Cultural Heritage

A number of listed buildings are located within the village centres at Thurcaston, Cropston and Anstey, as well as Rothley Court Hotel and Chapel which are Grade I listed on the edge of Rothley. Packhorse Bridge which crosses Rothley Brook on the edge of Anstey is also a Scheduled Monument.

Perceptual Qualities

The area has a lowland feel due to the lower lying landform and open corridor along the Rothley Brook. Views are possible out of the area to the higher ground of Bradgate Park to the north and towards the edge of Leicester City to the south. Views of the wider expanse of Leicester City across the A46 corridor create an urban influence along the southern edge of the area.



Rothley Brook corridor

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 9: Rothley Brook Lowland Farmland

Management Recommendations

Summary of Landscape Condition

This area has an overall moderate landscape condition. The open arable fields are managed but the field pattern is fragmented by broken hedgerows and there are influences from settlements edges and busy road corridors.

Forces for Landscape Change

- Ongoing pressure for settlement expansion resulting in further loss of open farmland.
- Additional pressures for recreational needs from nearby residents on the current informal footpath network resulting in footpath erosion, or from upgrading footpaths resulting in further urbanising influences.

Sensitivities for Key Landscape Characteristics

The settlement of Anstey has already expanded due to recent developments, and the close proximity to the A46, A50 and edge of Leicester is likely to result in pressure for further growth. Also, due to their locations, Cropston and Thurcaston are also likely to be under pressure for expansion in order to absorb the additional housing need not locatable within Leicester City.

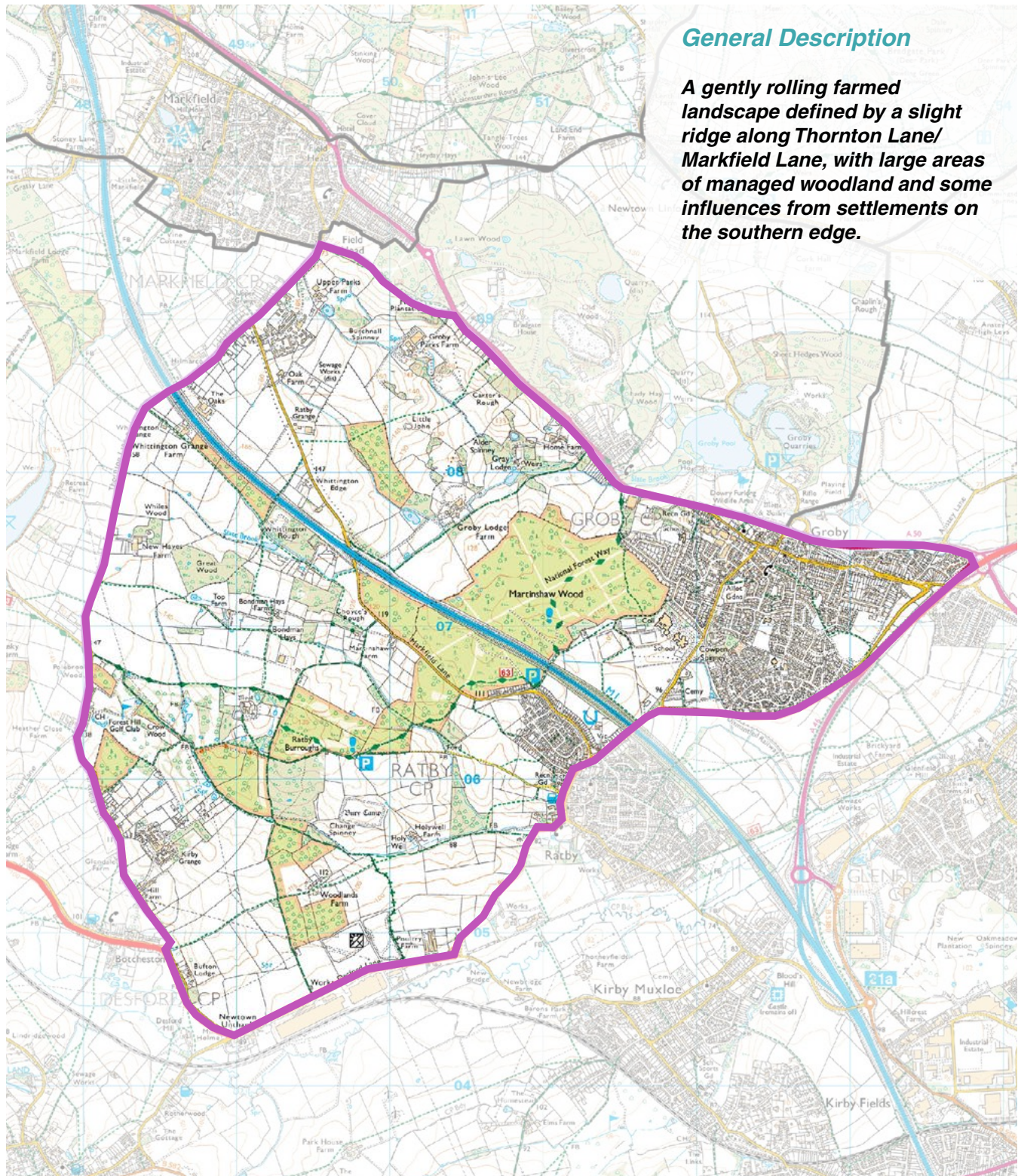
- Gap up hedgerows and replant where lost to strengthen field pattern through the area.
- Maintain habitat diversity along the Rothley Brook corridor through the management of trees and open grasslands within the floodplain to enhance the matrix of habitats currently found in the area.
- Ensure any new development is well integrated within the landscape with planting to soften urban edges.
- Ensure any new development is appropriate in scale and vernacular style and focussed at the main settlements to preserve the pattern and form of the villages.
- Ensure recreation provision is appropriate for the area to avoid undue urbanising influences.



View north towards Bradgate Park across open farmland

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 10: Groby/Ratby Wooded Farmland



General Description

A gently rolling farmed landscape defined by a slight ridge along Thornton Lane/ Markfield Lane, with large areas of managed woodland and some influences from settlements on the southern edge.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 10: Groby/Ratby Wooded Farmland

Key Characteristics

- A rolling landform, generally falling towards the south east which includes Slate Brook and tributaries to Rothley Brook as well as numerous scattered field ponds.
- Heavily wooded in part with extensive ancient woodland and open access land at Martinshaw Wood as well as areas of more recent plantation. Mix of arable and pastoral land with some small scattered rocky outcrops surrounded by stone walls (ie Little John).
- Medium to large regular field pattern enclosed with hedgerows featuring hedgerow trees and some stone walls.
- Includes Groby and the edge of Ratby as well as some large houses (Bradgate House and Markfield Court). M1 forms main road corridor through the area but is mostly screened by vegetated embankments. Few minor roads connect through the area but good network of PRow and access land at Martinshaw Wood.
- Multiple listed buildings in Groby centre. Scattered SM and listed buildings elsewhere.
- A generally open feel with some views towards the edge of Leicester, but enclosure is created by extensive woodland which extends into settlements at Ratby and Groby. The area is quite tranquil, but affected by underlying noise from the M1.

Specific Characteristics

Landform and Hydrology

The area has a rolling landform which generally falls towards the south east from higher levels along Thornton Lane/Markfield Lane of around 145-165m AOD to lower levels of around 80-100m AOD along the south eastern boundary which forms the boundary to Charnwood Forest. Small valleys follow minor watercourses which run into the Rothley Brook, including the Slate Brook. Field ponds are scattered within the western area, associated with the higher levels.

Landcover and Vegetation

The area consists of a mix of arable and pastoral farmland with extensive woodland and some scattered trees, and also includes the Forest Hill Golf Club. Much of the woodland is open access land, including the extensive Martinshaw Wood which is ancient woodland which straddles the M1 corridor. More recent plantation is also evident within the area. Some small areas of rocky outcrops for example 'Little John' which is surrounded by a stone wall, located in the north of the area. Woodland generally consists of mixed broadleaved species although pine trees are also present.

A solar farm is also located close to the southern boundary.



View north across Groby Park

Chapter 5.0

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 10: Groby/Ratby Wooded Farmland

Field Pattern and Enclosure

Fields are a mix of sizes ranging from some large linear fields to smaller fields close to settlements. These form a regular pattern in the south of the area and are more irregular in the north. Fields are bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees, often oak, with stone walls in some areas.

Settlement Pattern, Roads and PRow

The area includes the village of Groby and the north western part of Ratby to the north of Main Street. Other development includes large scattered farmsteads as well as Kirby Grange in the south and Ratby Grange in the north, also some large houses such as Bradgate House and Groby Lodge.

The M1 motorway forms the main road corridor through the area, although vegetation along the embankments result in it being screened along the majority of the length. Other than this, there are few minor roads crossing through the area with only Markfield Lane linking Ratby and Markfield and Thornton Lane which forms the western boundary. The area does feature a good network of footpaths and bridleways with access land at Martinshaw Wood and the National Forest Way leading across the area.

Cultural Heritage

There are multiple listed buildings located within the Conservation Area at Groby with four other listed buildings or structures located within the area. Scheduled Monuments include the Old Hays moated site and associated manorial earthworks and camp outside Ratby and a motte and bailey castle and manorial complex at Groby.

Perceptual Qualities

The area has a generally open feel but enclosure is created by the extensive woodland which extends into settlements at Ratby and Groby through tree planting along the main roads. Away from the settlements, the area is generally quite tranquil, although disturbance is created as a result of underlying noise along the M1 corridor.



View north towards Kirby Grange

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 10: Groby/Ratby Wooded Farmland

Management Recommendations

Summary of Landscape Condition

The overall condition of the landscape is moderate to good with some farmland areas and new woodland plantations well managed, but others more fragmented with gappy hedgerows.

Forces for Landscape Change

- Ongoing pressure for settlement expansion in Groby and Ratby resulting in further loss of open farmland and woodland.
- Additional pressures for recreational needs from nearby residents on the current informal footpath network resulting in footpath erosion, or from upgrading footpaths resulting in further urbanising influences.
- Modern renewable energy pressures in the form of solar farms which could expand in the area, altering the farmland character.
- Recent woodland plantations will continue to mature creating a more mature woodland cover.

Sensitivities for Key Landscape Characteristics

Groby and Ratby are located close to the main road network and M1. This makes them vulnerable to further expansion, especially as they are close to Leicester City. This will result in loss of open farmland and a greater influence from urbanising influences.

The influence of the National Forest is clear within the area with many newer woodland plantations evident. These will continue to mature, expanding the already wooded character of the area.

Solar farms are a modern feature of the landscape which could become more common in the future, altering the character of the local landscape.

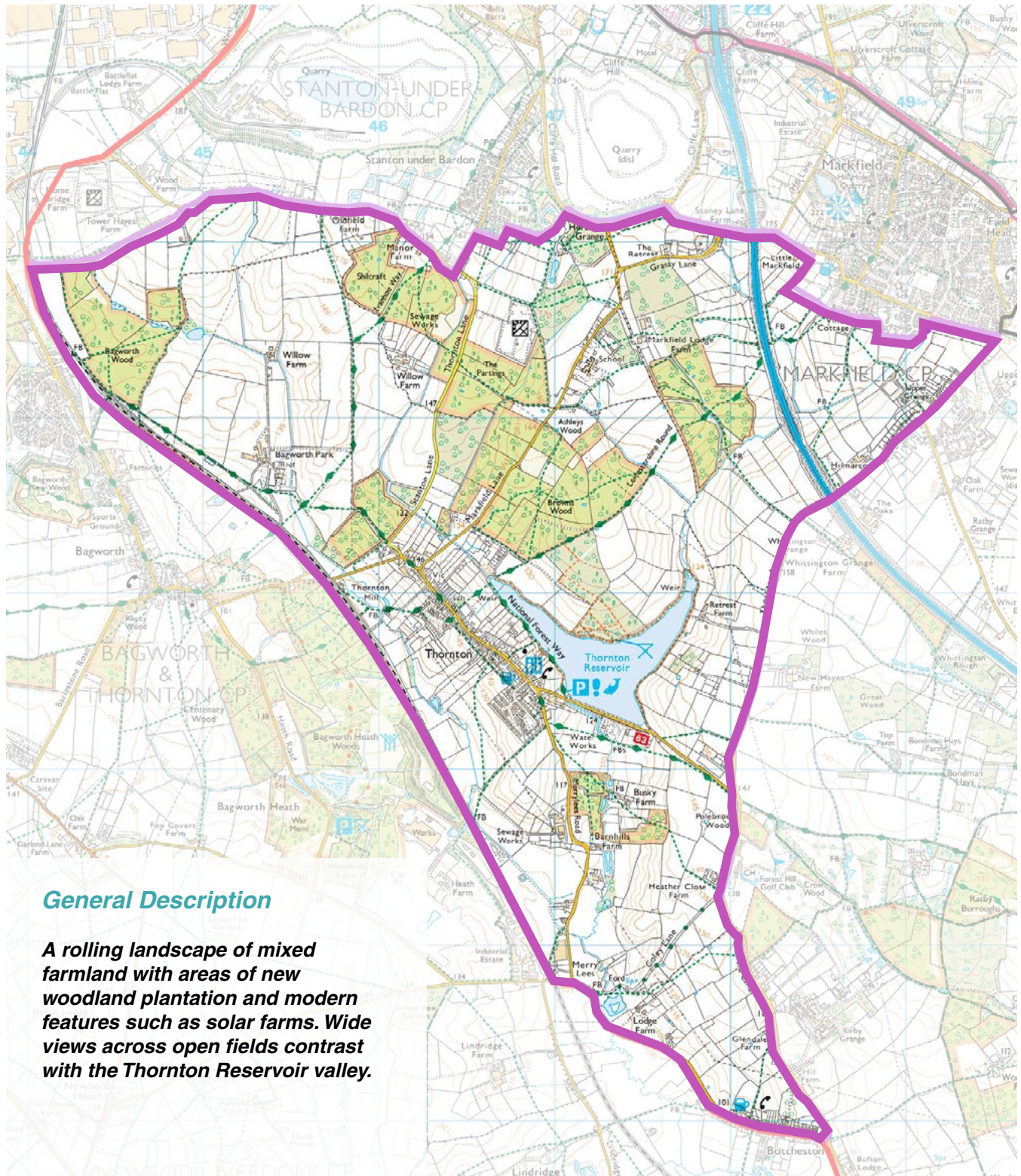
- **Gap up hedgerows and replant where lost to reinforce the field pattern through the area.**
- **Ensure any new development is well integrated within the landscape with planting to soften urban edges.**
- **Ensure any new development is appropriate in scale and vernacular style and focussed at the main settlements to preserve the pattern and form of the villages and scattered farms.**
- **Protect the existing vegetation on settlement fringes to retain their wooded setting and reduce dominating the local landscape.**
- **Ensure recreation provision is appropriate for the area to avoid undue urbanising influences.**
- **Maintain lifecycle of ageing woodlands by replanting and managing.**
- **Ensure plantation woodlands are replanted when felled to maintain overall wooded character.**
- **Promote good woodland management in newly planted areas to create diverse woodland habitats and promote these areas for informal recreation.**
- **Continue to protect and sensitively manage ancient woodland habitat especially at Martishaw Wood which links across the M1 corridor.**



Little John

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 11: Thornton Plantation Farmlands



General Description

A rolling landscape of mixed farmland with areas of new woodland plantation and modern features such as solar farms. Wide views across open fields contrast with the Thornton Reservoir valley.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 11: Thornton Plantation Farmlands

Key Characteristics

- A rolling landform with small valleys falling towards Thornton Reservoir and associated small water courses.
- A mix of open arable fields with some pasture and large areas of woodland, often young plantation.
- Modern renewable energy pressures in the form of solar farms which could expand in the area, altering the farmland character.
- Field pattern is varied with some large arable fields and small regular pastoral fields, especially close to the settlements. Fields are generally enclosed with hedges with some hedgerow trees and some post and rail fences in places.
- Linear villages include Thornton and Botcheston with other scattered farms and a school on Markfield Lane. Villages are linked by winding lanes, numerous PRow provide good links through area.
- Low number of listed buildings in Thornton and two SM's.
- Areas of large open fields mixed with narrow enclosed valleys. Some long views from raised areas. Generally quiet although less managed condition with outgrown hedgerows.

Specific Characteristics

Landform and Hydrology

This area features a rolling landform with high points of around 175m and 155m AOD on the northern and eastern boundaries falling to lower levels of 124m AOD at Thornton Reservoir. Small valleys are formed from associated water courses. Field ponds are scattered throughout Browns Wood and The Partings to the north of the reservoir and along the northern edge of the area.

Landcover and Vegetation

The area consists of a mix of arable and pastoral fields but with open arable fields much more prevalent in the north west of the area. Large areas of woodland are located centrally as well as on the western boundary with some scattered mature trees in fields and along hedgerows. There are no ancient woodlands within the area, but many are new plantation woodlands which are a result of National Forest initiatives in the area. Pine trees are a feature at Thornton Reservoir. Pastoral fields are more extensive within the southern part of the area.



Thornton Reservoir

Chapter 5.0

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 11: Thornton Plantation Farmlands

Field Pattern and Enclosure

Field pattern varies through the area with some large open arable fields in the west and a more regular pattern of medium sized pastoral fields in central and eastern areas. Small fields are associated with the edge of Thornton village. Fields are generally enclosed with hedges with some hedgerow trees and some post and rail fences in places.

Settlement Pattern, Roads and PRow

Thornton and Botcheston (on the very southern boundary) are of a linear form with Thornton located on a slight ridge which follows Main Street. Both villages feature red brick buildings. There are also a number of scattered farms and a school located on Markfield Lane. The villages are linked by winding lanes. There is localised influence from the M1 which crosses the eastern edge of the area. The area has a high number of public footpaths with all three of the long distance recreational routes crossing the area (Leicestershire Round, Ivanhoe Way and National Forest Way) as well as a large amount of open access woodlands.

Cultural Heritage

There are a low number of listed buildings with only three located within Thornton, although there is a Scheduled Monument, a moat and fishponds, close to the edge of the village.

Perceptual Qualities

The area features a contrast of larger scale, more open areas towards the west with a smaller, more enclosed feel around Thornton Reservoir and the associated valleys at the centre. Some long views are possible, mainly from the more open and raised areas to the west. The area is generally quiet although has a less managed condition than other areas with some hedgerows outgrown.



View north west from public footpath off Thornton Lane

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Area 11: Thornton Plantation Farmlands

Management Recommendations

Summary of Landscape Condition

The overall condition of the landscape is moderate with newly planted woodlands showing signs of management but many hedgerows being fragmented or outgrown.

Forces for Landscape Change

- Ongoing pressure for settlement expansion both in neighbouring Markfield and on smaller villages resulting in further loss of open farmland and woodland.
- Additional pressures for recreational needs from nearby residents on the current informal footpath network resulting in footpath erosion.
- Recent woodland plantations will continue to mature creating a more mature woodland cover.
- Modern renewable energy pressures in the form of solar farms which could expand in the area, altering the farmland character.

Sensitivities for Key Landscape Characteristics

Markfield is located close to the main road network and M1 making it a potential focus for future expansion.

The influence of the National Forest is clear within the area with many newer woodland plantations evident. These will continue to mature, expanding the already wooded character of the area.

Solar farms are a modern feature of the landscape which could become more common in the future, altering the character of the local landscape.

- **Gap up hedgerows and replant where lost to reinforce field pattern and strengthen field pattern through the area.**
- **Ensure any new development is well integrated within the landscape with planting to soften urban edges.**
- **Ensure any new development is appropriate in scale and vernacular style and focussed at the main settlements to preserve the pattern and form of the villages and scattered farms.**
- **Ensure recreation provision is appropriate for the area to avoid undue urbanising influences.**
- **Maintain lifecycle of ageing woodlands by replanting and managing.**
- **Ensure plantation woodlands are replanted when felled to maintain overall wooded character.**
- **Promote good woodland management in newly planted areas to create diverse woodland habitats and promote these areas for informal recreation.**

