

Charnwood Borough Council  
**Green Wedges, Urban Fringe  
Green Infrastructure  
Enhancement Zones and Areas of  
Local Separation**  
Annex A - Assessment Pro Forms

Issue | 22 March 2016

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

Job number 247161-00

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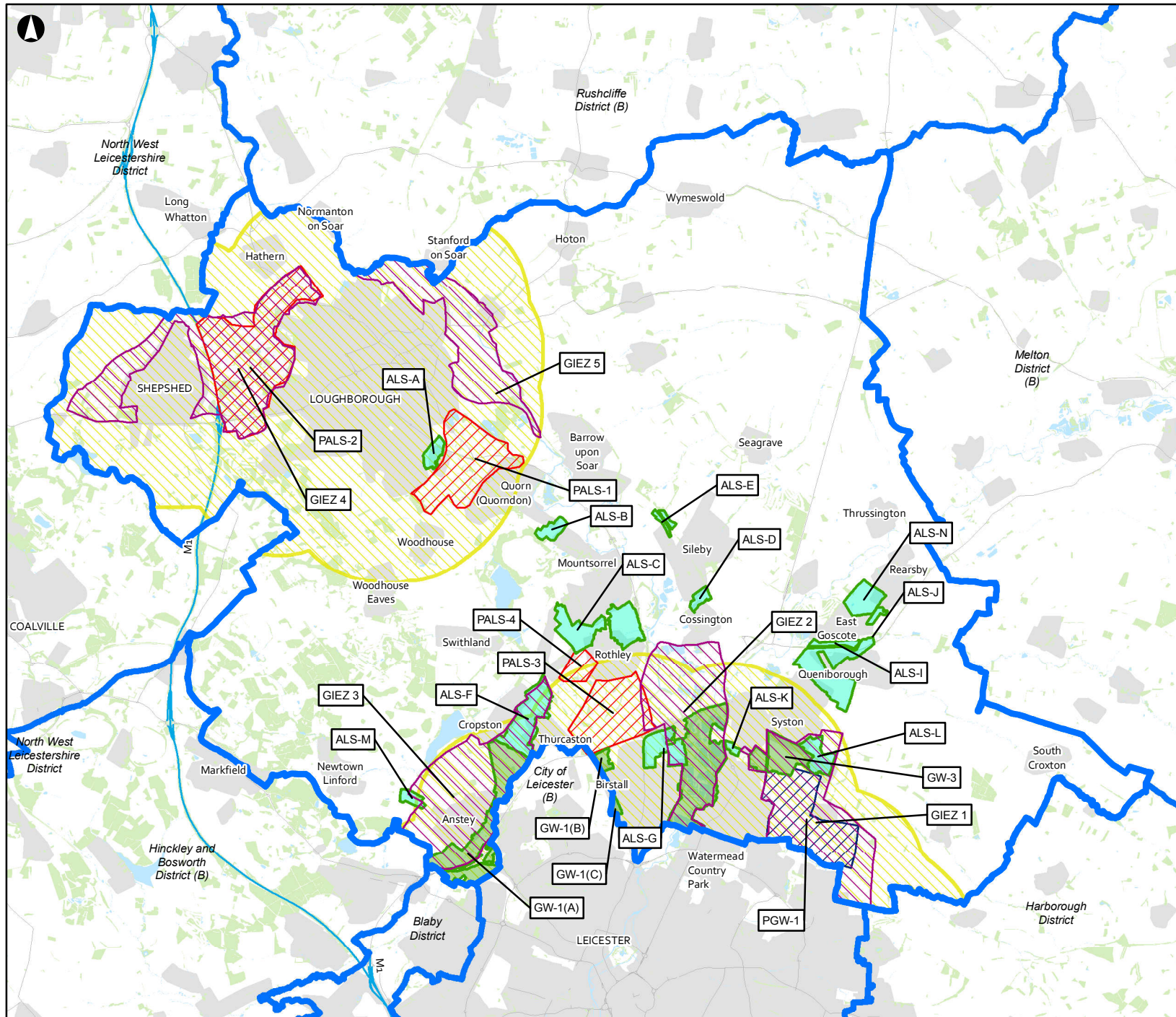
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## Existing Designations and Assessment Area

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## Legend

- Local Authority Boundaries
- Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones
- Green Wedge
- Areas of Local Separation
- Potential Green Wedge
- Potential Areas of Local Separation
- Urban Fringe GI Enhancement Zones

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P1	21/03/2016	GM	OP	ML
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Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd
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Client  
**Charnwood Borough Council**

Job Title  
Charnwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancements  
Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study



Scale at A4

1:130,000

Job No <b>247161-00</b>	Drawing Status <b>ISSUE</b>
Drawing No <b>001</b>	Issue <b>P1</b>

## Green Wedges

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Green Wedge	Green Wedge 1 (GW-1)																			
Area (ha)	226.8																			
Location Plan	<div><div><p><b>Legend</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Potential Green Wedges</li><li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li><li>Green Wedge</li><li>Areas of Local Separation</li></ul></div><div><p>©Copyrights Information</p><table><tr><td>P1</td><td>23/01/2016</td><td>GM</td><td>OP</td><td>HW</td></tr></table><table><tr><th>Issue</th><th>Date</th><th>By</th><th>Check</th><th>Appd</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table><p><b>ARUP</b> The Arup Company 10000 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 1000 Beverly Hills, CA 90210 Tel: +1 310 421 2121 www.arup.com</p><p>Client Charnwood Borough Council</p><p>Job Title Charnwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancements Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p><p>ASSESSMENT AREAS</p><p>Scale at A4 1:26,910</p><table><tr><td>Job No 247161-00</td><td>Drawing Status DRAFT</td></tr></table><table><tr><td>Drawing No 007</td><td>Issue P1</td></tr></table></div></div>	P1	23/01/2016	GM	OP	HW	Issue	Date	By	Check	Appd						Job No 247161-00	Drawing Status DRAFT	Drawing No 007	Issue P1
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Drawing No 007	Issue P1																			
Description	<p>GW-1 spreads between Anstey, Cropston, Thurcaston, Birstall and Leicester. It covers an extensive area that is broadly fragmented into 3 distinct areas. The larger part of the parcel, GW-1(A), straddles the A46, Leicester Road and Anstey Lane. This part of the parcel is located to the south and east of Anstey. It is bounded by Cropston Road and residential properties on the west and a bridle path along the northern boundary. The northern boundary of the Green Wedge adjoins the Thurcaston/Cropston Area of Local Separation.</p> <p>The two smaller detached parts of GW-1 are situated to the west of Birstall. GW-1(B) lies to the south of the A46, east of the railway line and north of residential properties on Harrowgate Drive. GW-1(C) is located to the south of Greengate Lane and west of the railway line.</p> <p>Parts of the boundaries of GW-1 sit on the administrative boundary of Charnwood Borough Council. The southern edge of GW-1 (A), south of the A46 abuts the boundary of the Blaby District Council Green Wedge between Glenfield towards Beaumont Leys, Anstey and Groby. GW-1(B) and GW-1(C), situated west of Birstall, abut the wider Leicester City Council Green Wedge.</p> <p>GW-1 has been split into three areas to ensure a robust assessment has been undertaken however, the Green Wedge is considered in its entirety in assessing its ability to meet the overall Green Wedge purposes.</p>																			

Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the Green Wedge?		
	<p>Built development within GW-1(A) consists of a few residential properties dispersed across the parcel, leisure/sports facilities in the form of Anstey Nomads Football Club, Gynsill Lawn Tennis Club and an allotment north of Anstey Lane. There is a cemetery east of Groby Road and few farm buildings within the parcel. There is also some commercial development scattered across the parcel. Overall the parcel predominantly consists of a combination of green open fields, farmland, scrub land and areas of dense woodland.</p> <p>There is no built development within GW-1(B) and GW-1(C). This area is made up of farmland, open fields and patches of dense woodland areas.</p>		
	<b>Farm buildings</b> Industrial <b>Commercial</b> Vernacular	Hotel Civic Educational <b>Residential</b>	Health Religious <b>Leisure/Sports</b> Other _____
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	<p>GW-1(A) has varying experiences and characters due to the expansive nature of the parcel. The northern part of the parcel, north of Anstey Lane, is predominantly open with long sightline views of surrounding countryside. The area south of Anstey Lane and at the rear of development along Cropston Road feels less open. Although there are patches of open fields within this area, there is a perception of enclosure by the surrounding development and by scrubland and woodland. Further south, the area is fragmented by the A46 and enclosed by shelterbelt planting which screens long sightline views south east of Groby Road.</p> <p>GW-1(B) is relatively open, however long distance views are limited by the parcel's proximity to the A46, which provides a boundary along its north east edge and the railway line which edges the north west side of the GW.</p> <p>GW-1(C) is enclosed by dense woodland along the parcel boundaries to the west and the railway line to the east. It begins to feel less enclosed travelling south from Greengate Lane, however long distance views looking south are limited due to the dense woodland edge provided by Birstall Golf Club.</p>		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	<p>GW-1(A) Looking north west from Anstey lane has a strong sense of rurality, the rolling landscape of pastoral fields, edged with mature hedge and woodland, coupled with open views looking west towards Bradgate Park provide a strong sense of rurality. However the connection to the countryside is visually impacted as the proximity to the A46 increases. For GW-1(B) and GW-1(C) there weak sense of rurality and openness, due to the close proximity to the A46 at the northern edge of GW-1(B) and the settlement of Birstall to the south east. The</p>		

	<p>railway runs along the eastern edge of GW-1(C) creating a fixed boundary, with the settlement of Birstall on the other side of the railway.</p>						
<p><b>Landscape Character and Type</b></p>	<p><i>To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded</i></p> <p>GW-1 is located within the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area. The land use within GW-1 is predominantly agricultural, however, urbanizing elements such as the A46, the railway line and high tension power cables interrupt its unity and create greater fragmentation of landscape features.</p> <p><i>Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work</i></p> <p>There is no apparent evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground. There were no historic features noted within the area and no evidence of new planting or landscape restoration work</p> <p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>Generally the land is in good condition. At GW-1(A) there are breaks in some of the hedge boundaries between fields within the foreground with denser areas of deciduous woodland stretching across the wider area. At GW-1(B) the land appears to be in good condition, consisting of arable fields lined with hedgerows and mature deciduous tree planting along the embankment of the A46. Within GW-1(C) the condition of the land is poorer at the north corner close to Greengate Lane, as you move further south the land is used solely for arable agriculture and is in good condition.</p>						
<p><b>Landscape and other features</b></p>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>GW-1(A) consists of undulating landforms edged with intact hedges and deciduous woodland create a strong sense of inhabiting the countryside, contrasting with areas closer to settlements which inhibits this experience. There are PRoWs which are actively used by walkers and dog walkers. The rising landforms as you walk north east towards Thurcaston, provides you with north west views of Bradgate Park. GW-1(B) is located adjacent to a residential building site. The landscape consists of flat arable fields with patchy hedge and tree boundaries. GW-1(C) has no PRoW's and a path towards it was indicated by a dirt track. It has undulating landforms with a dense hedge/scrub boundary with some deciduous trees along the arable field edge, however north west views across this area are obscured by rising landforms.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table><tr><td>Designed parkland</td><td><b>Scrub</b></td><td>Marsh</td></tr><tr><td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td>Rough grassland</td></tr></table>	Designed parkland	<b>Scrub</b>	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland
Designed parkland	<b>Scrub</b>	Marsh					
Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland					



	<div>Water meadows Orchard Mixed woodland Other _____</div> <div><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the Green Wedge which may help to guide development form?</i></div> <div><p>The main landscape features within GW-1(A) are the established, well defined field hedgerows and punctuated by mature trees are prominent features within the landscape. Rothley Brook and Castle Hill Country Park which runs along the eastern boundary of GW-1(A) will help to guide development form. Within GW-1(B) established hedgerows and large pocket of mature trees edging the north west corner of the parcel and GW-1(C) is lined with dense hedging along the east, west and southern edge of the parcel and interspersed with mature trees.</p></div> <div><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></div> <div><p>The main attractor within GW-1(A) are the long views looking west from Anstey Lane across rolling pastoral fields towards Bradgate Park. Another attractor is the proximity to Castle Hill Country Park and Rothley Brook. The main detractor are views of high tension power cables which cut through areas of the GW-1(A) and have a domineering impact on aspects of the landscape within this area of the parcel and also the A46 due to the noise levels and also the impact on the visual amenity within the area. The main at attractor within GW-1(B) are the well-defined field hedgerows interspersed with deciduous tree planting. The main detractor is the close proximity to the A46 which runs along the northern edge and the railway line which runs along the western edge. GW-1(C) the main attractor is the dense boundary of hedgerow and trees which lines the east, west and southern edge of the parcel. The main detractor is the railway line which runs along the east edge of the GW.</p></div> <div><i>Landscape elements:</i></div> <div><div><div>Walls Pylons _____</div><div>Fences Communications Masts</div><div>Hedges Tumuli</div><div>Trees Other</div></div></div>	<div>Grassland Deciduous woodland Shelterbelt</div> <div>Species rich grassland Coniferous plantation Arable</div>
Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements	<div><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></div> <div><p>GW-1(A) provides a physical gap between Cropston and Anstey on the northern side and also forms part of the separation between Anstey and Leicester. GW-1(A) abuts the Cropston/Thurcaston ALS-F and forms part of the gap between the settlements.</p></div> <div><p>The physical gap between Anstey and Cropston is fairly wide measuring approx. 1km at its shortest point on Cropston Road. Although there is some intervisibility between the settlements when viewed from Anstey Lane, there is an increased</p></div>	

	<p>perception of distance between the two settlements due to the undulating landform and the size of the gap.</p> <p>GW-1(A) partly forms the separation between Anstey and Leicester. From the Green Wedge there is no awareness of the proximity of the Leicester. Dense woodland and shelterbelt planting restricts intervisibility between the two settlements thus limiting awareness of proximity to Leicester. In addition the A46 Corridor to the south and east acts as strong separation between the settlements thus reinforcing the perception of distance.</p> <p>GW-1(B) and GW-1(C) comprises only part of the gap between settlements. From these parcels there is no awareness of neighbouring settlements due to limited intervisibility.</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>The A46 which cuts across the southern part of GW-1(A) provides a strong physical separation between Leicester and Anstey. In addition, the shelterbelt planting along this road prevents views and increases perception of distance. From GW-1(A), established deciduous trees impact on the perceived distance of surrounding settlements, Anstey feels further away as there is no direct view.</p> <p>With regards to GW-1(B), the A46 along the northern boundary and the Great Central Railway along the western boundary and shelterbelt planting along these boundaries restricts intervisibility.</p> <p>GW-1(C) feels to be a part of Birstall. There is no perception of closeness with Leicester area.</p>
<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>From the PRoW along the northern boundary of GW-1(A) there are opportunities for views of both Thurcaston and Cropston but this is mostly limited due to the undulating landscape. From GW-1(B) there are no views of neighbouring settlements, due to dense hedges and tree planting. The landscape within GW-1(C) rises to the south and is edged by dense hedgerow and tree planting around the parcel boundary, there are some partial views of residential housing within the settlement of Birstall along the eastern edge of the GW.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>From GW-1(A), looking at north west from Anstey Lane there are long vistas of Cropston, there are also long sightlines looking north east towards Thurcaston from Anstey Lane. The no long sightline views or vistas across GW-1(B) due to the embankment at the northern edge due to the A46 and dense hedgerow and tree planting that edges the parcel boundary. GW-1(C) has no long sightlines or vistas due to the dense hedge and tree planting along the east, west and southern boundary of the parcel.</p>



	<p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>There are no key views across the site from neighbouring land.</p> <p><i>Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>From GW-1(A), there are opportunities for sweeping views of the surrounding countryside looking east towards Bradgate Park from Anstey Lane. There are no important views from GW-1(B) or GW-1(C).</p>																																													
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td><b>Large</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td><b>Expansive</b></td><td>Open</td><td>Enclosed</td><td><b>Constrained</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td>Vacant</td><td><b>Active</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td>Unified</td><td><b>Interrupted</b></td><td><b>Fragmented</b></td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td><b>Sweeping</b></td><td>Spreading</td><td><b>Dispersed</b></td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Security:</b></td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td>Comfortable</td><td><b>Safe</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Stimulus:</b></td><td>Monotonous</td><td>Indifferent</td><td><b>Interesting</b></td><td>Inspiring</td></tr><tr><td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td><td><b>Busy</b></td><td>Noisy</td><td>Still</td><td>Peaceful</td></tr><tr><td><b>Pleasure:</b></td><td>Undesirable</td><td>Satisfying</td><td><b>Pleasant</b></td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table> <p>The perception from GW-1(A) is that it provides the greatest sense of tranquillity, interest and peacefulness due the opportunity for expansive views of countryside to the north west from Anstey Lane for example. To the east and south, GW-1(B) sits adjacent to an ongoing residential development and to the north the A46 runs parallel with the parcel, these features detract from the sense of tranquillity and pleasure and suggest this area of the parcel is urbanised. Crossing Greengate Lane to enter the GW-1(C) feels unsafe due to the tight corner of the road. However as you enter the parcel and move further it feels safe and peaceful, due to the enclosed boundary provided by dense hedgerow and tree planting on the east, west and southern sides.</p>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Large</b>	<b>Enclosure:</b>	<b>Expansive</b>	Open	Enclosed	<b>Constrained</b>	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	Remote	Vacant	<b>Active</b>	<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	<b>Interrupted</b>	<b>Fragmented</b>	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	<b>Sweeping</b>	Spreading	<b>Dispersed</b>	Channelled	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	Comfortable	<b>Safe</b>	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	Indifferent	<b>Interesting</b>	Inspiring	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	<b>Busy</b>	Noisy	Still	Peaceful	<b>Pleasure:</b>	Undesirable	Satisfying	<b>Pleasant</b>	Delightful
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current Green Wedge have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>GW-1(A) has a combination of strong to weak boundaries. It has strong boundaries on parts of the western boundary in the form of Cropston Road and Groby Road. Anstey Lane and Rothley Brook along part of the eastern boundary provides strong boundaries on that side. The parcel has weaker boundaries on the remaining sides in the form of the rear of existing development, a PRow along part of the northern boundary, shelterbelt planting, areas of dense woodland and weak field boundaries.</p> <p>GW-1(B) has strong defensible boundaries to the north and west consisting of the A46 and rail tracks respectively. It has weaker boundaries on the east and south in the form of undefined fields and the back garden of a residential development along Harrowgate Drive.</p>																																													

GW-1(C) has strong northern and eastern boundaries in the form of Greengate Lane to the north and the rail tracks with established woodland along the eastern boundary. It has less strong western and southern boundaries made up of dense planting that form field boundaries

*Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?*

The A46 provides an alternative strong defensible boundary to the south and also to the east. The A5630 Anstey Lane to the south is also a potential alternative strong boundary on that side. On the far western corner Anstey Lane and the A50 Markfield Road provides alternative strong boundaries.

*Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?*

From Anstey Lane and Cropston Road to the north east of GW-1(A), facing westwards, the edge of Cropston is visible within the landscape. When viewed from Cropston Road the edge of Anstey is not visible. The settlement edge is mostly screened by vegetation and shelterbelt planting. Shelterbelt planting along the A46 screens Anstey and also Leicester.

With regards to GW-1(B) and (C), shelterbelt planting along the Great Central Railway and the A46 restricts views of the edge of Birstall.

*Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?*

GW-1(A) is subject to a number of planning consents indicating development pressures in the area. The northern part of GW-1(A) east of Cropston Road and south of Anstey Lane is subject to planning consent under planning ref: P/13/2340/2 for erection of up to 70 dwellings.

Immediately opposite this proposal, east of Cropston Road and north of Fairhaven Road there planning consent under planning ref: P/14/0428/2 for development of up to 160 dwellings. Whilst this is outside the boundaries of GW-1 it indicates development pressures in the surrounding area that will likely impact on the character of the Green Wedge.

To the south of the Green Wedge, north of Groby Road sits the application site for the consented development of 96 dwellings (planning ref: P/14/0624/2). Similarly although this is outside the boundaries of the Green Wedge it is in the immediate vicinity and is likely to impact on the character of the area.

There is also consented development proposal within the southern part of the Green Wedge, south of the A46 for erection of 57 dwellings and another consented proposal adjacent for development of 40 dwellings.

At the time of the site visit there was ongoing construction immediately adjacent GW-1(B) within the application site granted planning permission June 2013 under planning reference: P/13/0441/2 for the erection of 185 dwellings.

There are no development pressures identified within GW-1(C).

<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this Green Wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <p>Recreational opportunities within GW-1(A) comprises of an allotment located north of Anstey Lane, a football pitch (Anstey Nomads Football Club) east of Cropston Road, and a tennis club (Gynsill Lawn Tennis Club) situated east of Gynsill Close. In addition, there are a number of public right of ways (PRoW) across the area. The parcel provide an important link / gateway to Castle Hill Country Park. There are limited recreational opportunities, including cycleways, footpaths and bridle paths within GW-1(B) or GW-1(C).</p> <table><tr><td><b>PRoW</b></td><td><b>Sports pitches</b></td><td>Playgrounds</td><td><b>Public Park</b></td></tr><tr><td>Informal Rec.</td><td><b>Dog walking</b></td><td>Picnic site</td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td>Open water</td><td><b>Watercourse</b></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	<b>PRoW</b>	<b>Sports pitches</b>	Playgrounds	<b>Public Park</b>	Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	<b>Watercourse</b>		
<b>PRoW</b>	<b>Sports pitches</b>	Playgrounds	<b>Public Park</b>										
Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping										
Open water	<b>Watercourse</b>												
<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>There is public access to some parts of GW-1(A). There is public access from the PRoW along the northern boundary from Waterfield Road and Anstey Lane. There is also public access to the central part of parcel from the PRoW through Cropston Road. There is public access to the southern part of the parcel through Latimer Street, Gynsill Close, Groby Road and the A46.</p> <p>There is no public access to GW-1(B). A PRoW provides public access to GW-1(C) through Fielding Road but this is not very prominent as it is located between residential developments.</p>												
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>GW-1(A) straddles a number of roads and also has road networks along some of its boundaries. The road network provides access and connectivity with neighbouring settlements. There are bus services through some of the surrounding road networks. There are prominent noise impacts from the A46 which influences the character of the area. Views of the A46 also impacts on the visual amenity of the area.</p> <p>GW-1(C) adjoins the Great Central Railway line on the eastern boundary and trains can clearly be heard from within the parcel.</p>												
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>The Green Wedge has a mixed planning history ranging from small scale applications like residential extensions and alterations to medium / major applications. Recent major planning application within GW-1(A) includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land to the east of Cropston Road and south of Anstey Lane is subject to outline planning permission under planning ref: P13/2340/2, for erection of up to 70 dwellings, including highways alterations to the Nook. Planning permission was granted April 2014;</li><li>• Land east of Cropston Road, at the rear of Brookside Nurseries is subject to a full planning application under planning ref: P/15/2276/2, for change of</li></ul>												

	<p>use of land to form public open space. The application is currently pending a decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area south of Groby Road is subject to outline planning permission under planning ref: P/11/0149/2 for development of up to 165 dwellings with associated open space, drainage system, new allotment and cemetery space. Consent was granted May 2012;</li> <li>• The area south of the A46 and west of Gynsill Lane is subject to full planning permission (under planning ref: P/13/2510/2) for the erection of 57 dwellings with associated access, open space, landscaping and construction of noise attenuation bunds. Consent was granted April 2015.</li> <li>• Another part of the area south of the A46 and west of Gynsill Lane is subject to outline planning permission (under planning ref: P/13/2263/2) for residential development for up to 40 dwellings. Permission was granted February 2015.</li> </ul> <p>GW-1(B) includes land subject to outline planning permission, under planning ref: P/00/2507/2 for mixed use development comprising 900 dwellings, business park (24,000 sq.m.), fire station, primary school, local centre (retail and community uses), formation of public open space. Two accesses from A6 and footbridge over A6. Consent was granted March 2003.</p> <p>No large scale planning proposals are identified within GW-1(C).</p> <p>It is noted that there are substantial development pressures within the Green Wedge in Leicester City, immediately to the west of GW-1(B) and GW-1(C). Any recommendation should take into account emerging proposals here.</p>
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	GW-1(B) is partially covered by the North Birstall Direction of Growth allocated in the adopted Charnwood Core Strategy as a Sustainable Urban Extension.
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	

**Site  
Photographs**



Photograph 1: View from PRow within GW-1(A), accessed from Cropston Road GW-1(A) looking east.



Photograph 2: View from Anstey Lane looking north across community allotments.





Photograph 3: View from Anstey Lane looking south east towards the entrance to Castle Hill Country Park.



Photograph 4: View looking south east along a footpath parallel to the Leicester Road.





Photograph 5: View from Greengate Lane looking south across GW-1(C).



Photograph 6: View from Long Meadow Way looking west across GW-1(B), in the mid-ground the embankment of the A46 can be seen.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<b>(1) To prevent the merging of settlements</b>	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.	<p>It is considered that GW-1(A) makes a <b>moderate</b> contribution to the purpose of preventing merging of settlements. It provides a physical gap between Cropston and Anstey and forms part of the gap with Leicester. Although the gap is fairly extensive in scale, it still plays an important role in preventing further development which as a result of the area's intervisibility and sprawling development patterns, may lead to erosion of the gap between these settlements.</p> <p>There is large scale consented development proposed north of Anstey, to the west of Cropston Road for 70 dwellings. There is also planning consent under planning ref: P/15/0963/2, for the erection of 39 dwellings on the site of the nursery situated behind residential development east of Cropston Road.</p> <p>Both of these planned development represents development pressures that would impact on the gap between the settlements. However, it is considered that the gap is sufficiently large that this development pressures will not adversely impact the integrity of the gap.</p> <p>To the south, there is planning permission on land south of the A46 and west of Gynsill Lane under planning ref: P/13/2510/2 for development of 57 dwellings. Adjacent this, is the application site for the planning permission for the erection of up to 40 dwellings under planning ref: P/13/2263/2. Implementation of both of these planning permissions will compromise the gap between the settlements on that side.</p> <p>GW-1(A) forms part of the separation between Anstey and parts of Leicester. It is considered to provide a less critical gap between Leicester and Anstey as a result of the existing significant gap between the settlements, and the topography of the area which prevents intervisibility, reducing the perception of distance.</p> <p>GW-1(B) and GW-1(C) alone play no role in preventing the merging of settlements and as such is not considered to meet this purpose. The existing gap between Birstall and Leicester is of sufficient scale or character that the area plays no role in preventing coalescence of settlements.</p>
<b>Purpose 1:</b> <b>Assessment of strength;</b> <b>identification of zones of weakness and extension opportunity zones</b>		Overall GW-1 in its entirety makes a <b>moderate</b> contribution to this purpose particularly in terms of providing a separation between Cropston and Anstey. Development pressures east and west of Cropston Road, north of Anstey will reduce this gap but this is not considered to represent

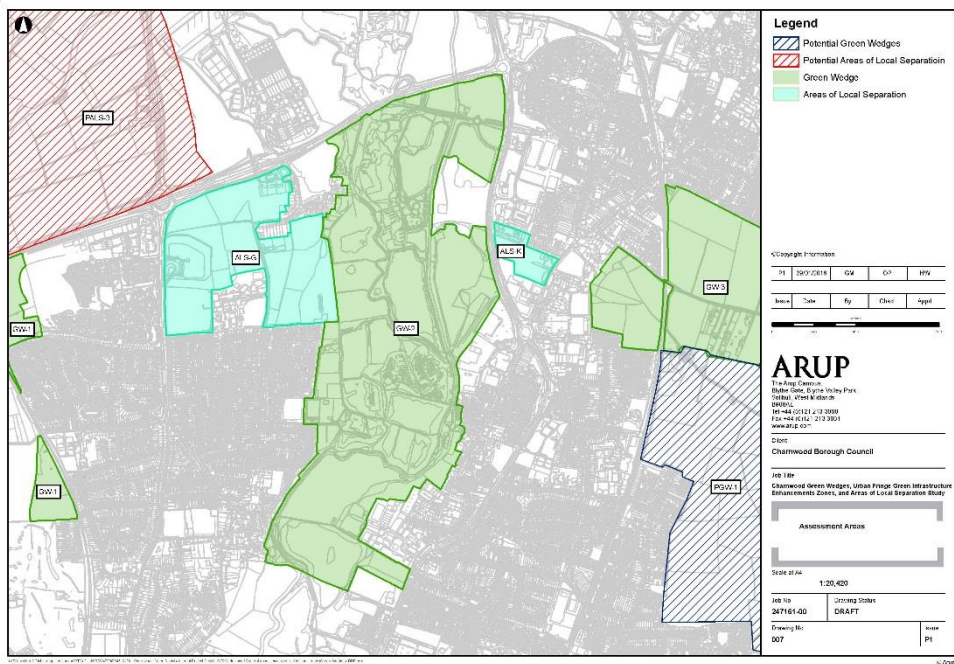


	<p>adverse encroachment of the gap as there is still sufficient physical and perceived separation between the two settlements.</p> <p>Although GW-1(B) and GW-1(C) are identified as Zones of Weakness and do not meet this purpose, they form part of the wider Leicester Green Wedge area and as such any recommendation as to their effectiveness as a separator between settlements needs to be considered in line with their Green Wedge Review. The area south of the A46 and west of Gynsill Lane is also identified as a zone of weakness due to the planned large scale development on that side. However, this area abuts the Blaby District Council Green Wedge and needs to be considered for its wider strategic role.</p>
<p><b>(2) To guide development form</b></p>	<p>Logical, defensible and readily recognisable external and intermediate boundaries guide, rather than restrict, the form of future development.</p> <p>It is considered that GW-1 as a whole is largely bounded by defensible and readily recognisable boundary features which guide rather than overly restrict the form of future surrounding developments, whilst ensuring that the integrity of the designation is maintained.</p> <p>GW-1(A) has strong defensible boundaries on the majority of its boundaries. The northern part of the parcel between Cropston Road and Anstey Lane have strong recognisable boundaries on almost all sides. Cropston Road to the west and Anstey Lane to the east provides strong regular boundaries which would guide where development should go. Groby Road to the south also provides a defensible and readily defensible boundary.</p> <p>Rothley Brook along parts of the eastern boundary provides a strong recognisable boundary although this has an irregular form.</p> <p>The central part of GW-1(A), east of the development on Cropston Road, has areas with weaker or less logical boundary forms which do not provide clarity on what form development should take. However, there are a number of alternative defensible boundary features within the Green Wedge to guide development and provide clarity on where development should go. The planning permission within the Green Wedge, east of Cropston Road (planning ref: P/15/0963/2), indicates that the Green Wedge is continuing to successfully guide development form in that area.</p> <p>GW-1(B) and GW-1(C) are also mostly bounded by strong defensible boundaries. GW-1(B) has a weak arbitrary eastern boundary</p>

		The extent of designation is generally compatible with the Borough's spatial strategy.
<b>Purpose 2:</b> <b>Assessment of strength;</b> <b>identification of zones of weakness and extension opportunity zones</b>		<p>Overall it is considered that GW-1 <b>moderately</b> fulfils this purpose.</p> <p>GW-1(B) and GW-1(C) are considered to be Zones of Weakness</p>
<b>(3) To provide a 'green lung' into urban areas</b>	<p>Forms a strongly connected corridor or network of green infrastructure which penetrates into existing or planned areas of built form.</p>	<p>For the most part, it is considered that GW-1(A) provides a connected corridor or network of green infrastructure which penetrates into existing or planned areas of built form particularly in the area north and west of the A46. The southern part of GW-1(A) is fragmented by the A46, Gynsill Lane and Anstey Lane. This area is considered to fulfil this purpose to a lesser extent. This part of the Green Wedge is considered to be a Zone of Weakness as it comprises collection of disparate green spaces weakly linked by fragmented corridors, with little penetration into existing or planned areas of built form.</p> <p>Similarly, GW-1(B) and GW-1(C) represents disparate green spaces weakly linked by fragmented corridors and as such make weak contributions to this purpose of the GW.</p>
<b>Purpose 3:</b> <b>Assessment of strength;</b> <b>identification of zones of weakness and extension opportunity zones</b>		<p>Overall GW-1 makes a <b>moderate</b> contribution to this purpose. The area south of the A46 and GW-1(B) and GW-1(C) are considered to be zones of weakness due to their fragmented form and little penetration into existing or planned areas of built form.</p> <p>However, given the close relationship of this area with the wider Blaby District Council Green Wedge and the Leicester City Council Green Wedge, any recommendation to the boundaries of this area will be considered to align with its strategic role in the wider region.</p>
<b>(4) To provide a recreational resource</b>	<p>Provides a range of publicly accessible, formal and informal opportunities for recreation.</p>	<p>GW-1(A) is partially publicly accessible through PRow's and Bridle Ways which cut across the parcel. These provide opportunities to enjoy the landscape. The GW also provides a range of formal and/or informal opportunities for recreation. Rothley Brook, which flows through parts of the GW, adds to the recreational amenity of the Green Wedge. The PRow, east of Cropston Road and adjacent Anstey Nomads Football Club provides access to King Williams Bridge. This provides a gateway to Castle Hill Country Park. There are a range of other recreational facilities within</p>

		<p>the GW including an allotment, sports facilities, and formal public park adjacent Leicester Road.</p> <p>GW-1(B) is not publicly accessible and does not provide formal or informal opportunities for recreation.</p> <p>GW-1(C) is partly accessible. The PRoW that cuts across the southern end of the GW through Fielding Road, provides access to Birstall Golf Course located south of the GW thus providing recreational opportunities.</p>
<p><b>Purpose 4:</b>  <b>Assessment of strength;</b>  <b>identification of zones of weakness and extension opportunity zones</b></p>		<p>Overall GW-1 is considered to make a <b>moderate</b> contribution to this purpose. GW-1(A) is mostly publicly accessible and provides a range of formal and informal opportunities for recreation.</p> <p>However, GW-1(B) does not meet this purpose and GW-1(C) makes a weak contribution to this purpose. As such both of these areas are considered to be Zones of Weakness.</p>
<p><b>Should the area be designated as a Green Wedge?</b></p>		<p>It is considered that GW-1 should be maintained as a Green Wedge because the area fulfils the four purposes of the Green Wedge. Overall the Green Wedge makes moderate contributions to preventing the merging of settlements, guiding development form, providing a green lung into urban areas and in providing a recreational resource.</p> <p>Two identified areas of GW-1(A) south of the A46 do not meet the overall purpose of the Green Wedge and are considered to be a zone of weakness. Implementation of the planning permissions for major large scale development (planning ref: P/13/2510/2 for 57 dwellings and P/13/2263/2 for 40 dwellings) on that part of the Green Wedge will impact on its effectiveness as a Green Wedge. However, it is noted that this area abuts the wider Blaby District Council Green Wedge and although it is identified in this assessment as a zone of weakness, it plays a strategic role in the wider region and any recommendation should be in line with emerging work undertaken by Blaby District Council.</p> <p>Similarly, although GW-1(B) and GW-1(C) are both identified as zones of weakness, the areas directly about the Green Wedge within the neighbouring Leicester City Council area and, as such, play a wider strategic role. Any recommendation for this part of GW-1 should be consistent with the emerging Leicester City Council Green Wedge review.</p> <p>Ongoing dialogue with neighbouring authorities, particularly with Leicester City Council, will be required to</p>

	ensure the consistency of recommendations across local authority boundaries.
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<b>Green Wedge</b>	Green Wedge 2 (GW-2)
<b>Area (ha)</b>	230.4
<b>Location Plan</b>	 <p><b>Legend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential Green Wedges</li> <li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li> <li>Green Wedge</li> <li>Areas of Local Separation</li> </ul> <p>Scale of map: 1:20,420</p> <p>Job title: Green Wedge 2, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Study, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p> <p>Scale of map: 1:20,420</p> <p>Job No: 347161-00</p> <p>Drawing No: 007</p> <p>Project: 347161-00</p> <p>Client: Charnwood Borough Council</p> <p>ARUP</p> <p>1000 North Street Birmingham B2 4BN UK Tel: +44 (0)121 717 3000 Fax: +44 (0)121 717 3001 www.arup.com</p>
<b>Description</b>	<p>GW-2 is located north of Leicester, bound by the settlements of Thurmaston and Birstall to the east and west respectively. It forms part of the River Soar valley corridor, with the River Soar running through the heart of the assessment area. The Grand Union Canal also runs through the area.</p> <p>The GW is bound to the north by the A46, with the A607 partially enclosing the north-eastern perimeter. The valley corridor continues south towards the City of Leicester.</p>

Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the Green Wedge?		
	The Green Wedge is almost completely free from built development. Aside from a small cluster of residential properties on Unicorn Street in the east, Birstall FC clubhouse, some small structures associated with the Watermead County Park and the canal, as well as car parks, the majority of GW-2 comprises open land. This includes a mixture of agricultural land, wooded areas, wetlands and watercourses, as well as a small area of sports pitches in the west. The Watermead Country Park, which makes up the majority of the area, has been created in former mineral extraction areas.		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
Vernacular	Residential	Other _____	
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	The area has a very open feel, with built developments small in scale and very widely distributed. Although distant views to built form in the settlements of Thurmaston to the east and Birstall to the west of the area provide some sense of enclosure, the area still retains a remote and open character.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	Although the openness of the area is not diminished, visual reminders of nearby built-form reduce the sense of rurality; furthermore, the managed nature of the country park provides more of a semi-urban feel.		
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded		
	GW-2 is located towards the southern extents of the Soar Valley character area, as defined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. Major transport infrastructure is a prominent feature within the landscape, characteristic of the wider Soar Valley.		
	The GW is located at the bottom of the valley, where much of the area is a floodplain. As a result the land is essentially rural and there is a rich diversity in habitat types unique to the River Soar sub-regional GI corridor, these include floodplain grazing marshes, lowland fens, deciduous woodland and several large water bodies. Much of the area within the GW is part of Watermead Country Park, which contains three Local Nature Reserves (Reedbed, Birstall and Watermead Country Park).		
	The valley is well used as a recreation destination with towpaths alongside the Grand Union Canal that runs parallel to the River Soar and National Cycle Routes 6 and 48 following pathways within the country park. The GW is bound on both the eastern and western edges by the settlements of Thurmaston and Birstall respectively, which climb up the valley slopes. Both settlements feature strongly in		


	<p>views out of the valley, with industrial and business parks prominent in views towards Thurmaston. This gives the areas towards the perimeter of the site an urban fringe character, however, the site feels increasingly rural towards the centre.</p> <p><i>Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work</i></p> <p>There are signs of vandalism and graffiti at the perimeters of the site, in particular along the eastern edge where Watermead Country Park abuts Thurmaston.</p> <p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>The condition of the landscape is generally good, public footpaths and waterways appear to be maintained well.</p>																										
<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>Water courses, canals, waterbodies, areas of deciduous woodland, marsh and grassland habitats characterise the area as diverse and somewhat wild. The landscape feels closer to nature than the working agricultural landscapes found in the wider countryside.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table><tr><td>Designed parkland</td><td><b>Scrub</b></td><td><b>Marsh</b></td></tr><tr><td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td><b>Rough grassland</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Water meadows</b></td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Orchard</td><td><b>Deciduous woodland</b></td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed woodland</td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td>Arable</td></tr><tr><td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the Green Wedge which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>The landscape is a designated country park with three local nature reserves which will guide future development in this area.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>The variety of habitats and the resultant diversity in flora and fauna are unique characteristics within the site. Manmade features such as the Grand Union Canal and locks are attractive features synonymous with this type of landscape. Poorly defined gateways along the eastern boundary, along with large industrial estates on the edge of Thurmaston detract from the character of the country park in these areas.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr><tr><td>Pylons</td><td>Communications Masts</td><td>Tumuli</td><td></td></tr></table>	Designed parkland	<b>Scrub</b>	<b>Marsh</b>	Peat bog	Moor/heath	<b>Rough grassland</b>	<b>Water meadows</b>	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation	Mixed woodland	Shelterbelt	Arable	Other _____			Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>	Pylons	Communications Masts	Tumuli	
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	Other: <u>Bridges, Locks</u>																									
<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>The gap between Birstall and Thurmaston is physically small, as narrow as 500m in places, while the edges of the settlements are prominent in the landscape as a result of their elevated positions on the sides of the Soar Valley. However, the perception of distance between the settlements is increased by the dense planted coverage across much of the area, which obscures views between them.</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>Marshland and grassland coverage and small clusters of woodland disrupt views between Birstall and Thurmaston and increase the sense of distance between them.</p>																									
<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>Generally, as a result of dense planted coverage through the centre of the area in the River Soar corridor, the primary views in the western part of GW-2 tend to be associated with Thurmaston, with views towards Birstall in the east. However, there are fleeting glimpses of both settlements in some areas, particularly in the south of the area across open waterbodies.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>There are long vistas in some areas, though these may be interrupted by wetland and grassland plants.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>Within the valley bottom there are limited views north/south, but there are some long vistas across GW-2 from elevated positions to the east and west, particularly from the A607 across the northern part of the area.</p> <p><i>Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>The majority of longer views are towards urban areas, particularly Birstall which is set on a prominent hillside. Views towards the open countryside to the north are very limited, interrupted by highway features.</p>																									
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td>Medium</td><td><b>Large</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td>Expansive</td><td><b>Open</b></td><td><b>Enclosed</b></td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td><b>Remote</b></td><td><b>Vacant</b></td><td>Active</td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td>Unified</td><td><b>Interrupted</b></td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td>Sweeping</td><td>Spreading</td><td><b>Dispersed</b></td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	Medium	<b>Large</b>	<b>Enclosure:</b>	Expansive	<b>Open</b>	<b>Enclosed</b>	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	<b>Remote</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	Active	<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	<b>Interrupted</b>	Fragmented	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	Sweeping	Spreading	<b>Dispersed</b>	Channelled
<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	Medium	<b>Large</b>																						
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<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	<b>Remote</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	Active																						
<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	<b>Interrupted</b>	Fragmented	Chaotic																						
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	<p>The visual diversity and distinct character within the GIEZ, in relation to its wider context, make the assessment area an interesting and immersive environment to be in. Although it is closely bound by major infrastructure and built up urban settlements, the GIEZ feels peaceful and somewhat distant from the surrounding intensity.</p> <table><tr><td>Security:</td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td>Comfortable</td><td><b>Safe</b></td></tr><tr><td>Stimulus:</td><td>Monotonous</td><td>Indifferent</td><td><b>Interesting</b></td><td>Inspiring</td></tr><tr><td>Tranquillity:</td><td>Busy</td><td>Noisy</td><td><b>Still</b></td><td><b>Peaceful</b></td></tr><tr><td>Pleasure:</td><td>Undesirable</td><td>Satisfying</td><td><b>Pleasant</b></td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table>	Security:	Unsafe	Unsettling	Comfortable	<b>Safe</b>	Stimulus:	Monotonous	Indifferent	<b>Interesting</b>	Inspiring	Tranquillity:	Busy	Noisy	<b>Still</b>	<b>Peaceful</b>	Pleasure:	Undesirable	Satisfying	<b>Pleasant</b>	Delightful
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current Green Wedge have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>For the most part, the boundaries of GW-2 are aligned with logical and defensible features. Along the eastern and western edges, the boundaries tend to be aligned with the well-defined backs of properties at the edges of Birstall, Wanlip and Thurmaston (though it is noted that there are a small number of minor anomalies e.g. around Unicorn Street in Thurmaston where a number of residential properties are included within the boundary). The northern edge is defined by the A47, which provides a strong, defensible edge.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>The dense network of rivers, canals and other waterbodies would provide robust alternative boundaries throughout much of the GW.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>The edges of both Birstall and Thurmaston are particularly prominent as a result of their elevated positions topographically. Thurmaston is particularly visible, as the majority of the urban edge consists of large warehouses and light industrial structures.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>On-going commercial development associated with the Watermead Regeneration Corridor policies in the Core Strategy are likely to diminish the rurality of the northern part of GW-2, particularly on its eastern edge.</p>																				
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this Green Wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>PRow</b></td><td>Sports pitches</td><td><b>Playgrounds</b></td><td><b>Public Park</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Informal Rec.</b></td><td><b>Dog walking</b></td><td><b>Picnic site</b></td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td><b>Open water</b></td><td><b>Watercourse</b></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>The provision for recreation within the Green Wedge is varied due to the presence of Watermead Country Park.</p>	<b>PRow</b>	Sports pitches	<b>Playgrounds</b>	<b>Public Park</b>	<b>Informal Rec.</b>	<b>Dog walking</b>	<b>Picnic site</b>	Camping	<b>Open water</b>	<b>Watercourse</b>										
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<b>Open water</b>	<b>Watercourse</b>																				
<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p>																				

	<p>The majority of GW-2 is highly accessible to the public, with a dense network of footpaths linking different areas of the Watermead Country Park. It is also notable that the long distance National Cycle Network Route 6 passes through the GW. This route also serves as an important strategic cycle route within the sub-region, linking Leicester and Loughborough.</p> <p>Links between the Green Wedge and surrounding settlements and other areas of open land are slightly more sporadic, though access is, for the most part, possible via public footpaths.</p>
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>The A607 to the east has a substantial influence over the sense of remoteness in GW-2, particularly in the northern areas, and is a relatively prominent feature in the landscape as a result of its elevated position on an embankment. Similarly, the A46 to the north also an urbanising influence, though it has limited visual connectivity as a result of dense planting buffers along its edges. The only other transport influence is in the north, where Wanlip Road cuts east-west across the GW. This road severs a small area in the north-east from the wider Green Wedge.</p>
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>As part of this assessment, only one planning applications has been identified within GW-2. A major development was granted outline consent in 2014 and is located in the north-east of the area, with permission for a business park comprising: offices; research and development/light industry; hotel; leisure facilities; cafe/pub/restaurant; playing field/sports pitches with changing facilities and clubroom; canal footbridge; and footpaths (P/12/0003/2). While the majority of the permission site is located outside of the Green Wedge area, an area in the north-east, north of Wanlip Road, would be subject to development (subject to approval of detailed matters).</p>
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>Policy CS 21 in the Core Strategy states that a ‘direction of growth’ will be identified within the Watermead Regeneration Corridor, of which GW-2 is a constituent part. This includes support for a range of developments, including smaller scale projects such as those which would support regeneration of Thurmaston waterfront and the Grand Union Canal (both of which lie within GW-2), or improve access between the Country Park, waterfront and the wider community. Larger scale office, employment and hotel development is supported around Wanlip Lane (in accordance with broader Employment and Economic Development Policy CS 6). This area is also associated with the northern part of GW-2.</p>

<p><b>Consultation Responses</b></p>	
<p><b>Site Photographs</b></p>	 <p>Photograph 1: View south, over Birstall Lock, along the Grand Union Canal towpath, which forms part of the Sustrans National Cycle Route 6. Towpaths and footpaths throughout Watermead Country Park provide opportunities for recreation, such as cycling and walking.</p>



Photograph 2: View from the western edge of GW - 2 looking east towards Thurmaston. Rayns Way Marina is clearly visible in the background and provides a bridge to the wider countryside by way of the Grand Union Canal.



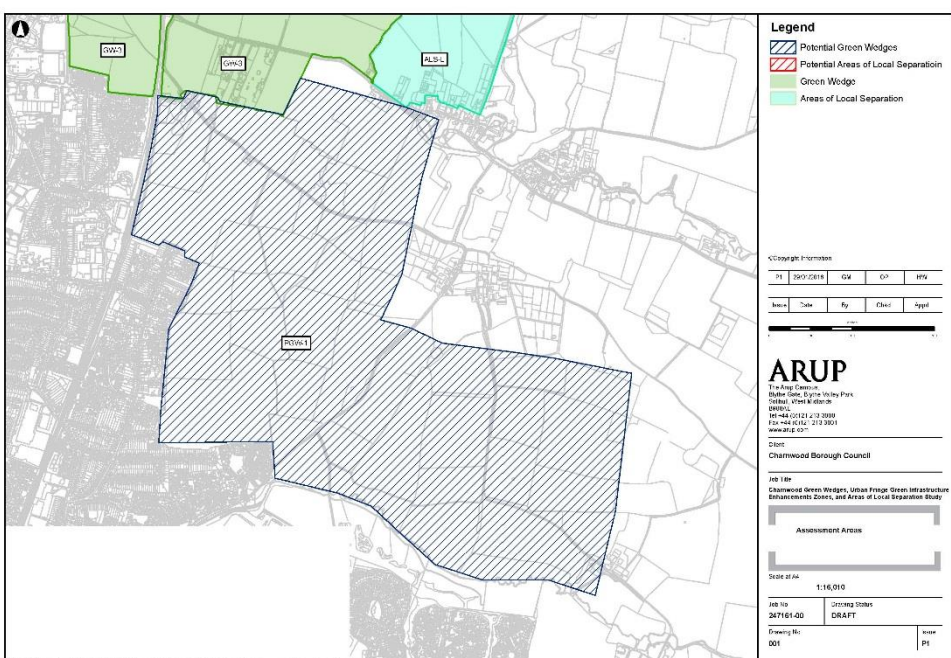
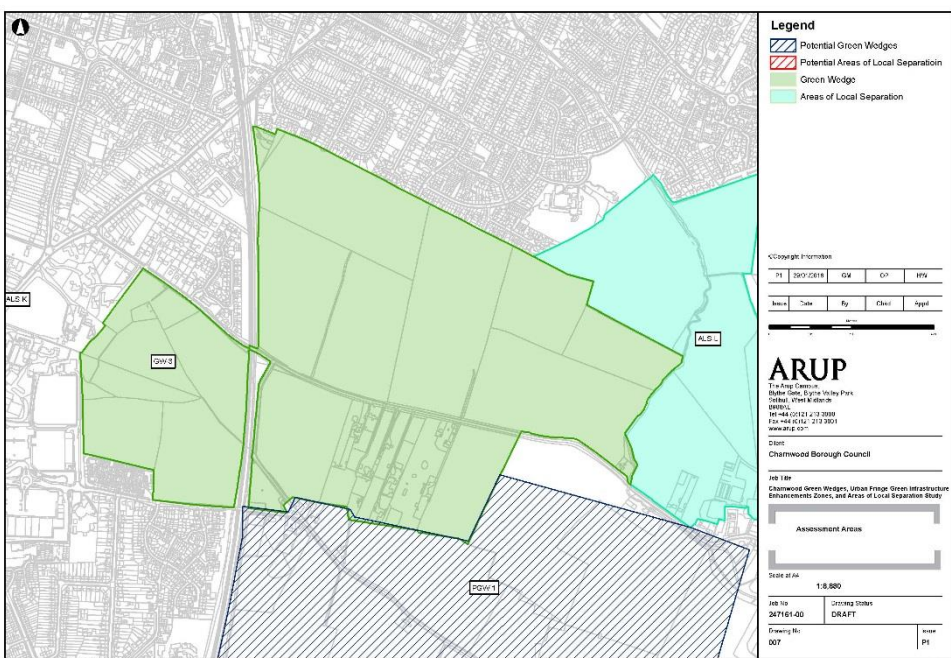
Photograph 3: View from Mill Lane, on the eastern edge of the GW, across Watermead Country Park towards Birstall. Grassland and dense woodland screen views to Birstall. Art interventions highlight the gateway to the country park.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<b>(1) To prevent the merging of settlements</b>	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.	<p>GW-2 provides the gap between Thurmaston and Birstall, restricting development which might contribute to the merging of these settlements. The gap is, physically, relatively narrow in places and would be vulnerable to compromise. It is noted though that dense planting within the area impedes intervisibility between the two settlements and perceptually increases the distance between these settlements, diminishing the vulnerability of the gap somewhat. GW-2 serves as a clear physical gap in the built-form which closely contains the area to both the east and west.</p> <p>A small area to the north of Wanlip Road would play a diminished role in preventing coalescence between settlements following build out of phase 3 of the Watermead Business Park (consented through planning application P/12/0003/2).</p>
<b>Purpose 1:</b> <b>Assessment of strength;</b> <b>identification of zones of weakness and extension opportunity zones</b>		<p>GW-2 makes a <b>moderate</b> contribution to the purpose, maintaining the gap between Thurmaston and Birstall and preventing development which may lead to a merging of the two settlements.</p> <p>An identified Zone of Weakness is located in the north-east of the area, north of Wanlip Road, and would not contribute to this purpose.</p>
<b>(2) To guide development form</b>	Logical, defensible and readily recognisable external and intermediate boundaries guide, rather than restrict, the form of future development.	<p>GW-2 is largely bounded by defensible and readily recognisable linear boundary features, comprising the well-defined edges of properties at the fringes of Wanlip and Birstall on the western edge and the A46 to the north.</p> <p>The eastern edge is less precisely defined. While, for the most part, it is logically aligned with linear features, such as the edges of lakes and watercourses as well as the backs of properties, there are some small anomalies which lead to an undue restriction of development (for example, around Unicorn Street in Thurmaston).</p> <p>Part of the Green Wedge north of Wanlip Road is judged to restrict rather than guide development, and furthermore would appear to conflict with the policies on the Watermead Regeneration Corridor, set out in the Core Strategy. Wanlip Road could serve as an alternative and equally defensible boundary here.</p>
<b>Purpose 2:</b> <b>Assessment of strength;</b> <b>identification of zones of weakness and extension</b>		<p>GW-2 makes a <b>moderate</b> contribution to this purpose, continuing to guide development around the edges of Birstall and Thurmaston. Defensible boundary features, for the most part, maintain the integrity of the designation.</p>



<i>opportunity zones</i>		An identified Zone of Weakness is located in the north-east of the area, north of Wanlip Road, and makes a lesser contribution to this purpose by restricting development.
<b>(3) To provide a 'green lung' into urban areas</b>	Forms a strongly connected corridor or network of green infrastructure which penetrates into existing or planned areas of built form.	<p>GW-2 encompasses the Watermead Country Park and three Local Nature Reserves, maintaining a dense network of different GI features which are well connected and penetrate a substantial distance into the surrounding urban areas of Birstall and Thurmaston.</p> <p>It is noted that, despite the GW fulfilling this purpose strongly, there may be opportunities to better integrate its features into surrounding urban areas and improve connectivity (in line with Core Strategy policy).</p>
<b>Purpose 3: Assessment of strength; identification of zones of weakness and extension opportunity zones</b>		GW-2 makes a <b>strong</b> contribution to this purpose. The GW forms a strongly connected corridor of GI which includes three local nature reserves as part of a wider country park.
<b>(4) To provide a recreational resource</b>	Provides a range of publicly accessible, formal and informal opportunities for recreation.	<p>GW-2 provides a substantial range of different opportunities for recreation, both formal and informal. The area is highly accessible via a network of high quality footpaths, which link the Grand Union Canal and River Soar corridors with surrounding open land, much of which is part of the three identified country parks. Furthermore, the NCN Route 6 cycle path traverses the GW. These provide numerous, formal opportunities for walking and cycling. In the west of GW-2, there are a series of sports facilities which provide valuable recreation opportunities for local residents.</p> <p>In addition, a range of interesting habitats, associated with the nature reserves, are publicly accessible and provide opportunities for both quiet reflection, as well as wildlife conservation activities.</p> <p>The northern and north-eastern areas provide less opportunity for recreation and are more associated with forthcoming employment developments associated with the Watermead Regeneration Corridor.</p>
<b>Purpose 4: Assessment of strength; identification of zones of weakness and extension opportunity zones</b>		<p>Overall, it is judged that GW-2 makes a <b>strong</b> contribution to this purpose. A range of publicly accessible recreation opportunities exist within the GW, and there are signs of active community involvement in the Watermead Country Park.</p> <p>An identified Zone of Weakness, north of Wanlip Road, is judged not to fulfil this role. This area provides no public</p>

	access or opportunities for recreation.
<b>Should the area be designated as a Green Wedge?</b>	<p>GW-2 continues to perform against all four of the GW purposes, in particular by providing a dense GI network which penetrates into the built up areas of Birstall and Thurmaston and facilitating a wide range of recreation opportunities. The extent of the Green Wedge is also consistent with Core Strategy policy, and largely supports the ongoing development of the Watermead Regeneration Corridor.</p> <p>An identified Zone of Weakness in the north-east, north of Wanlip Lane, should be considered for exclusion from the designation. It is judged that this area performs less strongly against the GW purposes and, furthermore, its ongoing designation would seem to contradict the principles of the Watermead Regeneration Corridor policy in the Core Strategy, which supports development of employment uses in this area. Additionally, there is outline consent for development of a Business Park here, which would impinge on the openness of the area.</p>

<b>Green Wedge</b>	PGW-1 / GW-3
<b>Area (ha)</b>	388
<b>Location Plan</b>	 <p><b>Legend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential Green Wedges</li> <li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li> <li>Green Wedge</li> <li>Areas of Local Separation</li> </ul> <p><b>ARUP</b> The Arup Group Baker House, 100 Victoria Park Leicester, LE1 6JH Tel: +44 (0)1533 412121 Fax: +44 (0)1533 412122 www.arup.com</p> <p><b>Client</b> Charnwood Borough Council</p> <p><b>Job Title</b> Charnwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancements Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p> <p><b>Scale of A6</b> 1:16,000</p> <p><b>Job No</b> 247161-00</p> <p><b>Drawing No</b> 001</p> <p><b>Issue</b> P1</p>
<b>Description</b>	 <p><b>Legend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential Green Wedges</li> <li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li> <li>Green Wedge</li> <li>Areas of Local Separation</li> </ul> <p><b>ARUP</b> The Arup Group Baker House, 100 Victoria Park Leicester, LE1 6JH Tel: +44 (0)1533 412121 Fax: +44 (0)1533 412122 www.arup.com</p> <p><b>Client</b> Charnwood Borough Council</p> <p><b>Job Title</b> Charnwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancements Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p> <p><b>Scale of A6</b> 1:16,000</p> <p><b>Job No</b> 247161-00</p> <p><b>Drawing No</b> 007</p> <p><b>Issue</b> P1</p> <p>This pro forma describes the assessment for a potential Green Wedge to the north-east of Leicester. This encompasses the former Syston / Thurmaston (GW-3) identified in the 2004 Local Plan and the potential Green Wedge assessment area (PGW-1) around the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension as identified in the Charnwood Core Strategy. The assessment area is located between Thurmaston, Syston, Barkby, Barkby Thorpe and Hamilton.</p>



Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the Green Wedge?		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
	Vernacular	Residential	Other _____
	PGW-1 contains very little built development. The majority of the area consists of expansive, open agricultural fields and small wooded plantations. There are occasional built structures, predominantly in the form of agricultural buildings and structures in the north-west and south-east of the PGW, and a small cluster of residential properties is located along Barkby Thorpe Road. A farm shop is located within a cluster of farm buildings in the extreme east of the PGW.		
	GW-3 has a similarly open and undeveloped character. Built development is restricted to a cluster of large residential properties and associated grounds on Barkby Lane.		
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	The assessment areas and surrounding landscape are highly open and rural, interrupted only occasionally by small scale buildings. Although there is some sense of proximity to the urban areas of Leicester to the south, and visual connectivity with the urban fringes of Syston and Thurmaston in the northern area (particularly in the western part of GW-3), there are also key visual and perceptual linkages with the wider countryside, particularly to the east.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	Occasional buildings have little impact on the sense of openness or rurality of the area. There are some urbanising influences, which include the Midland Mainline; this cuts through the western part of the PGW, and there are also vistas from publically accessible areas within the PGW to the edges of urban areas to the south and west of the PGW.		
Landscape Character and Type	PGW-1 is located within the High Leicestershire character area as defined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. The assessment characterises the landscape as an undulating ridge and valley landscape with open and extensive views over productive farmland.		
	PGW-1 is typical of the High Leicestershire area. Other than distant views towards the expanding settlements of Leicester and Thurmaston, there is a remote and tranquil character throughout much of the area, with surrounding urbanisation having limited influence. Mixed farming is the predominant land use within the area, with farmsteads isolated and sheltered by deciduous tree belts, often with arable cultivation on the ridges and pastures in the valleys. The fields are predominantly large and regular, bounded by mature hedgerows with frequent		

	<p>mature deciduous trees. Small copses of woodland, along with the tree and scrub lined watercourse of Melton Brook, which runs east to west along the landscape valley, give the area a highly wooded appearance. Historical features are retained within the landscape in the form of two ancient monuments in the south east corner of the potential green wedge, a Roman Villa and the deserted mediaeval village at Hamilton. The remnants of earthworks and ridge and furrow patterning are still strong features within the landscape.</p> <p>GW-3 is located in an area of transition between the Wreake Valley and High Leicestershire character areas as outlined within the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. As a result, the Green Wedge experiences characteristics of each of the two Charnwood character areas. There are similar urbanising influences impacting on the Green Wedge, as experienced in the wider Wreake Valley, due to the site's proximity to Syston, however, the open and undulating topography helps to screen the settlement edge at various points within the Green Wedge, in particular facing northwards and north-westwards towards Syston from Barkby Lane.</p> <p>Distant views outwards from Barkby Lane and Barkby Thorpe Lane (GW-3) towards the undulating landscape of the High Leicestershire character area create a sense of continuity between the Green Wedge and the wider countryside, resulting in the site retaining a strong rural character despite its proximity to Syston. The landscape is predominantly arable grassland arranged into large geometric fields. There is a distinct lack of tree coverage within the Green Wedge other than a small settlement off Barkby Lane that is nestled among some mature mixed woodland. As a consequence, GW-3 feels expansive and exposed.</p> <p><i>Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work</i></p> <p>In PGW-1, historic earthworks around the mediaeval village of Hamilton remain as definitive features within the landscape. There is little evidence of pollution or excessive erosion along Melton Brook. New areas of woodland have been planted around some of the farmsteads and alongside Barkby Thorpe Road. In GW-3, there are few signs of pollution or degradation other than minor breaks in some hedgerow boundaries.</p> <p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>The hedgerow network is healthy and provides strong definition to field boundaries.</p>
<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>Large, regular agricultural fields bounded by mature hedgerows and frequent hedgerow trees characterise PGW-1 as a distinctively rural working landscape. In the case of GW-3, there is a lack of diversity in landscape features, with very large open fields diminishing the scale of the small areas where diversity exists along the perimeters of the Green Wedge. This has resulted in a sense of unity between the area and the wider countryside.</p>

A definitive green link exists between GW-3 and the playing fields characterising ALS-K to the west in the form of a corridor of mature deciduous trees. Although the tree corridor does not serve as a pedestrian link between the two areas, it provides a potentially important environmental link for wildlife. There are areas of parkland within this corridor although these features have been impacted upon by built areas of Syston to the north and Thurmaston to the south.

*What is the dominant landcover?*

Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh
Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland
Water meadows	<b>Grassland</b>	Species rich grassland
Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation
Mixed woodland	Shelterbelt	<b>Arable</b>

Other: Grazing Pastures

*What landscape features or other features exist within the Green Wedge which may help to guide development form?*

Established, well defined field hedgerows are prominent features within the landscape. Melton Brook and the adjacent land will help to guide development due to the flood risks associated with the land.

*What are the main attractors / detractors?*

The sense of remoteness within PGW-1 is a key attractor. The landscape is well established and the areas of mature woodland, established hedgerows along with frequent mature individual hedgerow trees combine with the undulating landform to create a visually diverse and interesting landscape. The increasing dominance of new development in distant views is beginning to detract from the landscape character.

In the case of GW-3, the undulating landform and vantage point overlooking a valley afford attractive views over distant countryside. The main detracting feature is the scale and uniformity of the fields; pylons are also visible within the Green Wedge. The Midland Main Line railway also dissects the site, forming a visual and physical barrier within the landscape.

*Landscape elements:*

Walls	Fences	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>
<b>Pylons</b>	Communications Masts	Tumuli	

Other: Brook, Historical Earthworks

<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>PGW-1 covers a substantial tract of land to the north-east of the Leicester urban area. Topography has a significant influence on vistas and views across this area, with the landscape sloping upwards to the north from the bottom of the Melton Brook valley. As such, Barkby Thorpe in the north has limited intervisibility with Hamilton and Thurmaston to the south and Barkby Thorpe is quite removed from the urban area.</p> <p>Further west, specifically along Barkby Lane and Barkby Thorpe Lane, long vistas open up southwards towards Hamilton and Thurmaston, as well as the wider Leicester urban area to the south, particularly from Barkbythorpe Road and Hamilton Grounds Farm. In the latter case, there is a perceived proximity to the Hamilton urban area facing across the valley as a result of the prominent urban edge and position in the landscape topographically.</p> <p>GW-3, in particular the area to the west of the Midland Main Line, has a closer visual relationship with the edge of Syston to the north and Thurmaston to the south. While the configuration of the settlements here create a sense of enclosure within the built-up areas, there are still strong visual ties to the wider countryside and the land has a rural character. The existing gap between these settlements is relatively small, yet this part of GW-3 does still constitute a sizeable physical break which would assist in maintaining physical separation between the settlements. Further east, GW-3 would make a substantial contribution to the separation between the proposed SUE and the edge of Syston, given the feeling of close proximity (strong intervisibility) between Barkby Lane and the settlement to the north.</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>Prominent tree belts and hedgerows have some impact upon distant views and also act as primarily influences in the undulating topography of the landscape. In particular, parts of the northern edge of the PGW have a strong sense of remoteness as a result of a prominent ridgeline roughly along Barkby Thorpe Lane, though the visual relationship with Syston to the north is noted.</p>
<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position? Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>Views between Thurmaston and Barkby Thorpe / Barkby are relatively limited whereas there is strong intervisibility between Hamilton and Thurmaston as a result of the topographical character of the landscape, with Thurmaston rising to the west of PGW-1. At present, the Leicester-Hamilton Green Wedge (within the City of Leicester) provides something of a break between these settlements and there is a strong visual linkage between them. The SUE proposed in the Charnwood Core Strategy around Thurmaston would substantially reduce the scale of the physical gaps between settlements around PGW-1 and GW-3 and increase visual linkages between these settlements. There are, additionally, long east-west</p>

	<p>views along the axis of the Melton Brook between the urban area and the wider countryside.</p> <p>The area of GW-3 west of the Midland Main Line is the most visually linked to the existing urban edges of both Syston and Thurmaston. Particularly in the latter case, the settlement is raised topographically and there are prominent physical features which stand out in the landscape (for example, aspects of the retail park).</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land? Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>The eastern extent of PGW-1 has a strong visual linkage with the distant hills of the countryside to the east, which is highly open and sparsely populated. There are also long views southwards from Syston across the existing GW-3 designation towards the northern edge of the PGW-1.</p>																																													
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td>Medium</td><td><b>Large</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td><b>Expansive</b></td><td>Open</td><td>Enclosed</td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td><b>Remote</b></td><td><b>Vacant</b></td><td>Active</td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td><b>Unified</b></td><td>Interrupted</td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td><b>Sweeping</b></td><td>Spreading</td><td>Dispersed</td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Security:</td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td>Comfortable</td><td><b>Safe</b></td></tr><tr><td>Stimulus:</td><td>Monotonous</td><td>Indifferent</td><td><b>Interesting</b></td><td><b>Inspiring</b></td></tr><tr><td>Tranquillity:</td><td>Busy</td><td>Noisy</td><td><b>Still</b></td><td><b>Peaceful</b></td></tr><tr><td>Pleasure:</td><td>Undesirable</td><td>Satisfying</td><td><b>Pleasant</b></td><td><b>Delightful</b></td></tr></table>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	Medium	<b>Large</b>	<b>Enclosure:</b>	<b>Expansive</b>	Open	Enclosed	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	<b>Remote</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	Active	<b>Unity:</b>	<b>Unified</b>	Interrupted	Fragmented	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	<b>Sweeping</b>	Spreading	Dispersed	Channelled	Security:	Unsafe	Unsettling	Comfortable	<b>Safe</b>	Stimulus:	Monotonous	Indifferent	<b>Interesting</b>	<b>Inspiring</b>	Tranquillity:	Busy	Noisy	<b>Still</b>	<b>Peaceful</b>	Pleasure:	Undesirable	Satisfying	<b>Pleasant</b>	<b>Delightful</b>
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current Green Wedge have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>GW-3 is predominantly strongly defined by rectilinear settlement edges, watercourses and readily recognisable field boundaries. The southern edge is less strongly defined, following weaker, natural features which are intermittent.</p> <p>The exact boundaries of PGW-1 being considered as part of this assessment will be guided by the outline planning application for the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension (P/13/2498/2). Given the openness of the countryside throughout PGW-1, there are relatively few distinguishable, linear features which could form a robust boundary to guide development form. A future Green Wedge may be defined using a combination of roads (e.g. Barkbythorpe Road, Barkby Lane etc.), watercourses (e.g. Melton Brook), as well as softer, natural features such as historic or well established hedgerows or tree belts, and prominent topographical features such as ridgelines or valley sides. In other cases, existing boundaries could be strengthened or made more consistent, or there may be potential to create new defensible boundaries through as part of the Sustainable Urban Extension (for example through reserved matters applications in relation to P/13/2498/2, if consent is granted).</p>																																													

	<p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>See above for detailed commentary on possible boundary features.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>The edge of the Leicester urban area to the south (encompassing Hamilton and Thurmaston) is relatively prominent and visible from some distance within PGW-1; in particular, the newly completed housing at <i>The Oaks</i>, Barkbythorpe Road. This development has little screening from the wider countryside to the north-east. Similarly, the edge of Syston is highly visible across GW-3.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>The North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension, encompassing up to 4,500 new homes and 13ha of employment land, would have a significant influence on the PGW which could change the landscape in the area.</p>												
<p><b>Recreational opportunities</b></p>	<p><i>Does this Green Wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table> <tr> <td><b>PRoW</b></td> <td>Sports pitches</td> <td>Playgrounds</td> <td>Public Park</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Informal Rec.</td> <td><b>Dog walking</b></td> <td>Picnic site</td> <td>Camping</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Open water</td> <td><b>Watercourse</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Recreation opportunities are currently limited to countryside walks over public footpaths, or horse riding on the designated bridleway in the south of PGW-1 (though there was limited evidence of its active usage during a site visit on 02/02/2016). The Melton Brook is an attractive watercourse but appears to be underutilised as a recreational resource, with limited public access.</p> <p>There is no public access across GW-3 and no evidence of informal recreation observed from site visits to publically accessible areas.</p> <p>Taking into account the illustrative masterplan for the SUE, it is noted that there are likely to be numerous opportunities to enhance both formal and informal recreational opportunities across PGW-1 as the development progresses. Recommendations on how this might be achieved are described in the pro-forma and recommendations for GIEZ-1.</p>	<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park	Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	<b>Watercourse</b>		
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<p><b>Public access</b></p>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>The wider PGW-1 area is relatively well linked by public footpaths and PRoWs, with paths linking Hamilton, the Hamilton medieval village site, Thurmaston, Barkby and Barkby Thorpe. GW-3 has very limited public access, as there are few PRoWs across this area (both north of Barkby Lane and west of the Midland Main Line)</p>												

<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>A series of minor roads cut across the landscape of PGW-1 and GW-3, though these do not adversely impact the sense of remoteness felt across much of the countryside here due to their character and scale.</p> <p>A key forthcoming change proposed as part of application P/13/2498/2 for the SUE is the construction of a link road between Barkby Thorpe Lane and the A607 (which also cuts across ALS-K further west). This road would have an urbanising influence on the area of GW-3 to the west of the Midland Mainline and would have some impact on its openness. However, the broader area would still retain a largely open character and constitute a sizeable physical break between Syston and Thrumaston, with linkage to the broader area of GW-3 further east.</p>
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>An outline planning application was submitted in 2014 (<i>P/13/2498/2</i>) for a Sustainable Urban Extension, encompassing up to 4500 dwellings, up to 13ha of employment land, two local centres, one district centre, one food store, reserved land for traveller site, school and healthcare facilities, allotments, open space and other associated works. The application was pending a decision at the time of the assessment, however it is noted that Charnwood BC have reached a resolution to grant permission subject to S106 agreements.</p> <p>A further application (<i>P/14/1670/2</i>) has been submitted for 224 dwellings with associated public open space, landscaping and infrastructure, on land to the west of the Midland Main Line and south of the proposed link road (see <b>Transport Infrastructure</b>). This application has not yet been determined.</p>
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>Policy CS 19 in the Charnwood Core Strategy (<i>North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension</i>) applies to the whole of the PGW area. This includes provision for an extension to the Leicester Hamilton Green Wedge, “including access to and long term management of a formal parkland as part of an accessible, comprehensive and high quality network of multi-functional green spaces”.</p>
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	

**Site  
Photographs**



Photograph 1: Facing south-west across PGW-1 towards Hamilton from Hamilton Grounds Farm.



Photograph 2: The southern edge of PGW-1, facing north towards Barkby Thorpe. The view is typical of the wider area and reflects the highly open landscape with long vistas.





Photograph 3: The Melton Brook, at the southern edge of PGW-1. This watercourse and associated green corridor could be better utilised in a future Green Wedge designation.



Photograph 4: Facing northwards across GW-3 from Barkby Lane towards the prominent edge of Syston.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
(1) To prevent the merging of settlements	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.	<p>The area of search for the new Green Wedge covers a substantial area of predominantly open land and protects a series of wider strategic gaps between settlements, for example, between Hamilton / Thurmaston and Syston / Barkby / Barkby Thorpe. This gap is at lesser risk of compromise as a result of its large scale, as well as limited intervisibility between the settlements due to topography. The gap between Thurmaston and Syston is more sensitive, being of a smaller scale and, as a result of the configuration of the two settlements, perceptually reduced (particularly in the area of GW-3 west of the Midland Mainline).</p> <p>However, the assessment must take into account the pattern of development proposed as part of the pending planning application for the North East of Leicester SUE, (which is supported in the Charnwood Core Strategy). The Illustrative Masterplan for the proposed development indicates that there will be a substantial northward expansion of the built area of Thurmaston, which would significantly reduce the physical and perceived separation between Thurmaston, Syston and the villages of Barkby and Barkby Thorpe. A Green Wedge within this area could assist in maintaining the essential and narrow gaps between Thurmaston and Hamilton, Barkby Thorpe, Barkby and Syston, ensuring that the unique characteristics of these unique settlements are maintained and providing a network of physical gaps between them. The topography and landscape pattern of the area already affords some long vistas between these settlements, and subject to a decision on the proposed scheme the perceived distance of these gaps may be reduced, as well as the physical distance.</p> <p>The area of GW-3 to the west of the Midland Main Line would be particularly sensitive. The gap between Thurmaston and Syston has already been compromised further east (see pro-forma for <b>ALS-K</b>), and this open, more rural area provides an important separator between the two settlements. Consideration should be afforded as to how this area might be maintained and incorporated into the wider strategic network of gaps here, particularly given the proposed development pattern for the SUE which will sever connections to the open countryside in PGW-1 to the south-east.</p>

<b>Purpose 1:</b> <b>Assessment of strength;</b> <b>identification of zones of</b> <b>weakness and extension</b> <b>opportunity zones</b>		PGW-1 and GW-3 have the potential to meet this purpose <b>strongly</b> (subject to definition of appropriate boundaries).
<b>(2) To guide development form</b>	Logical, defensible and readily recognisable external and intermediate boundaries guide, rather than restrict, the form of future development.	<p>If a Green Wedge were to be designated within the PGW-1 area, there are a series of defensible and readily recognisable features which could be used to define the majority of its boundaries, including man-made and natural (including topographical) features. However, it is noted that, in several locations, boundaries would need to be strengthened or created in order to guide development form.</p> <p>The designation would be line with the borough's spatial strategy, as set out in the adopted Core Strategy, which advocates the designation of a Green Wedge here and could therefore contribute to guiding the form of the SUE.</p> <p>As a result of the proposed development pattern set out in the Illustrative Masterplan submitted with the SUE planning application (P/13/2498/2), it is judged that GW-3 would play a lesser role with regard to this purpose. While the area to the west of the Midland Mainline may play some role in guiding the shape and configuration of the SUE in relation to the existing settlement form of Thurmaston and Syston, this area would be physically disconnected from the wider Green Wedge area further east. The primary role of the area of GW-3 to the north of Barkby Lane would be to restrict development and maintain the separation of settlements, as opposed to guiding development form. As such, this area is judged to be a Zone of Weakness.</p>
<b>Purpose 2:</b> <b>Assessment of strength;</b> <b>identification of zones of</b> <b>weakness and extension</b> <b>opportunity zones</b>		<p>PGW-1 has the potential to meet this purpose <b>moderately</b>. Particularly in the swathe of land along Barkbythorpe Road between Barkby and Thurmaston, as well as the area around Barkby Lane, consideration should be given to the nature of boundary features which may need to be created (given this area is particularly open).</p> <p>GW-3 would play a lesser role in guiding development form and is identified as a Zone of Weakness.</p>
<b>(3) To provide a 'green lung' into urban areas</b>	Forms a strongly connected corridor or network of green infrastructure which penetrates into existing or	Existing connections between green infrastructure features are disparate; rights of way which run through the area are broken and penetrate neighbouring settlements in few areas. Furthermore, land adjacent to these settlements is often agricultural land, which provides little opportunity for interaction with the settlements. In particular, GW-3 performs particularly weakly with respect to this.

	planned areas of built form.	<p>It is however recognised that, through the development of detailed proposals for the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension, opportunities exist to better link and integrate green spaces. Natural valleys or currently fragmented networks of features (e.g. wooded plantations) could provide logical corridors in which to concentrate connections. In particular, the Melton Brook corridor forms an existing, natural network of green infrastructure which already links into the wider countryside, particularly further east, while the broad spine running northwards across the Barkbythorpe Road corridor would provide a logical axis (particularly in topographical terms) which would penetrate between the two key areas of built development being developed as part of the SUE.</p> <p>Subject to definition of precise boundaries, there is scope for PGW-1 to penetrate deeply into the urban form of the Sustainable Urban Extension, with linkage to the Leicester-Hamilton Green Wedge to the south (in the Leicester City Council area).</p> <p>GW-3 would be physically severed from this network by the proposed development form associated with the SUE, thus performing weakly against this purpose.</p>
<b>Purpose 3:</b> <b>Assessment of strength;</b> <b>identification of <i>zones of weakness and extension opportunity zones</i></b>		<p>PGW-1 has the potential to meet this purpose <b>moderately</b> subject to development of a more detailed strategy to link green infrastructure across the area.</p> <p>GW-3 is identified as a Zone of Weakness, given it would be physically disconnected from the identified 'lungs' further south.</p>
<b>(4) To provide a recreational resource</b>	Provides a range of publicly accessible, formal and informal opportunities for recreation.	<p>Land adjacent to existing settlements is primarily agricultural and therefore provides little opportunity for recreation in close proximity to residential properties, particularly GW-3 in the north. Recreational opportunities are characterised by traditional walking or bridle routes. There is some limited public access to natural and semi-natural green spaces, particularly around Barkbythorpe Road and to the east of PGW-1 in the Melton Brook corridor.</p> <p>The development of detailed designs for the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension provides an opportunity to strengthen existing recreation opportunities and broaden the range of facilities available. Existing green</p>

		<p>corridors could, for example, be better utilised.</p> <p>Further detail is set out in the pro-forma and findings for GIEZ-1.</p>
<p><b>Purpose 4:</b>  <b>Assessment of strength;</b>  <b>identification of zones of</b>  <b>weakness and extension</b>  <b>opportunity zones</b></p>		<p>Currently, PGW-1 and GW-3 meet this purpose <b>weakly</b>. While it is recognised that there is potential for the area to meet the purpose moderately or strongly subject to enhancements, the area north of Barkby Lane is identified as a zone of weakness where the ability of a potential Green Wedge to meet this purpose is more limited (given the area is beyond the boundary of the SUE application site and currently provides no public access).</p>
<p><b>Should the area be designated as a Green Wedge?</b></p>		<p>It is recommended that the area assessed is partially designated as a Green Wedge. The proposed development of a SUE would have a significant impact on how the landscape around Thurmaston functions and interacts with built form. It is clear, as set out in the assessment, that there is potential for a Green Wedge to meet all four purposes. Definition of detailed boundaries, through the Boundary Assessment, should be undertaken with consideration for emerging Illustrative Masterplan for the area.</p> <p>Taking this into consideration, broad areas immediately to the east and west of Barkbythorpe Road, in PGW-1, are judged to be unsuitable for designation as they will form part of the developed area of the SUE and would make little or no contribution to the GW purposes.</p> <p>Subject to further refinement through the Boundary Assessment, two areas of particular strength with respect to the Green Wedge purposes, (and also consistent with the emerging Illustrative Masterplan for the SUE), are: the Melton Brook corridor in the south; and a broad arc of open land aligned with the ridge, a prominent topographical feature immediately to the west of Barkby Thorpe, stretching westwards between Barkby Lane and Barkby Thorpe Lane towards the edge of Syston.</p> <p>GW-3 is identified as a Zone of Weakness, as it is broadly adjudged not to meet three of the four Green Wedge purposes; however, its role in preventing the merging of the settlements of Syston and the Sustainable Urban Extension around Thurmaston as well as Syston and Barkby is recognised and as such an alternative Area of Local Separation designation (combined with ALS-L to the east) may be more appropriate.</p>

## Areas of Local Separation

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Area of Local Separation	ALS-A																												
Area (ha)	22.7																												
Location Plan	<div><div><p><b>Legend</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Potential Green Wedges</li><li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li><li>Green Wedge</li><li>Areas of Local Separation</li></ul></div><div><p>Copyright information</p><table><tr><th>PI</th><th>Date</th><th>GM</th><th>GP</th><th>HW</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>24/01/2016</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table><table><tr><th>Issue</th><th>Date</th><th>By</th><th>CHK</th><th>Appd</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table><p>Scale</p><p>0 10 20</p><p><b>ARUP</b> The Arup Companies Byrne Gate, Byrne Valley Park Central West Midlands B504AE Tel +44 (0)121 213 3000 Fax +44 (0)121 213 3001 www.arup.com</p><p><b>Client</b> Charnwood Borough Council</p><p><b>Job Title</b> Charnwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p><p><b>Assessment Areas</b></p><p>Scale of A6</p><p>1:5,000</p><table><tr><th>Job No</th><th>Drawing Status</th></tr><tr><td>247161-00</td><td>DRAFT</td></tr></table><table><tr><th>Drawing No</th><th>Issue</th></tr><tr><td>007</td><td>P1</td></tr></table><p>© Arup</p></div></div>	PI	Date	GM	GP	HW		24/01/2016				Issue	Date	By	CHK	Appd						Job No	Drawing Status	247161-00	DRAFT	Drawing No	Issue	007	P1
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Description	<p>The Area of Local Separation is situated to the south-east of Loughborough and west of Woodthorpe. It straddles both Allendale Road and the A6004. The AoLS is bounded by residential properties to the west and south, by Main Street and residential properties to the east and a bridleway to the north. The AoLS abuts land to the east that was previously designated as the Loughborough/Quorn Green Wedge in the 2004 Charnwood Borough Local Plan.</p>																												


Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?		
	There are some residential properties along part of the southern and eastern edges of the AoLS. The remainder of the AoLS predominantly consists of open space that appears to be associated with the surrounding residential uses as well as areas of woodland.		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
Vernacular	Residential	Other _____	
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	The AoLS itself is predominantly open but feels enclosed by surrounding established residential properties on Manor Road, Highland Drive and Allendale Road to the south and west of the AoLS. Long distance views to the north west are restricted by woodland and shelterbelt planting. Mixed woodland on the eastern part of the AoLS reduces the sense of openness on that side.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	Surrounding residential properties as well as highways (Allendale Road and the A6004) diminish the sense of rurality. There is a sense that ALS-A is part of the surrounding built-up areas with limited links to the wider countryside.		
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded.		
	ALS-A falls within the Soar Valley Landscape Character Area as outlined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment, which is a flat wide floodplain which experiences regular flooding. The major engineering features are the raised landscaped embankments of the A6, mainline railway and electricity pylons.		
	Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work		
	There is no evidence apparent on site of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work.		
	Landscape condition		
	The land is generally in good condition with well-defined hedged edge and feature good quality tree species which add to the overall landscape quality.		
Landscape and other features	How do landscape features characterise the area?		
	Timber fence and established hedgerows edge boundaries on both sides of the Allendale Road. Dense hedging and deciduous woodland surround the site edging		



	<p>areas of residential housing to the east, west and southern edge of the parcel. A pond sits on the northern edge of the parcel between the Allendale Road and Main St and is offset by a PRow leading from Main St towards the residential development of Grange Park.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table><tr><td>Designed parkland</td><td>Scrub</td><td>Marsh</td></tr><tr><td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td>Rough grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Water meadows</td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Orchard</td><td><b>Deciduous woodland</b></td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed woodland</td><td><b>Shelterbelt</b></td><td>Arable</td></tr><tr><td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>An area of PRow actively used by dog walkers, suggests more could be done to activate this AoLS for recreation and sports activities.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>The main detractor is the area of undesignated land in this ALS-A, on Allendale Road as you approach the Grange Park residential properties. It is unclear if this area is publically accessible.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr><tr><td>Pylons</td><td>Communications Masts</td><td>Tumuli</td><td>Other</td></tr><tr><td>_____</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation	Mixed woodland	<b>Shelterbelt</b>	Arable	Other _____			Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>	Pylons	Communications Masts	Tumuli	Other	_____			
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<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>ALS-A provides a physical gap between Loughborough and Woodthorpe. Approximately 200m at its narrowest point, this gap is of a small scale. The AoLS has a limited relationship with Woodthorpe and there is a greater perception of proximity with Loughborough, (albeit the edge of this settlement).</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>From the centre of the AoLS, around Allendale Road, woodland to the east disrupts views south east towards Quorn. The lack of intervisibility between Woodthorpe and Loughborough, as a result of dense woodland at the eastern edge of ALS-A, increases the perceived separation between these two settlements. Shelterbelt planting to the north adjacent to the A6 and field boundary planting throughout the assessment area generally disrupt views across the wider landscape, but there are still some partial views of residential properties to the east of Loughborough.</p>																														

<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>Views of Woodthorpe from within ALS-A are predominantly restricted by woodland. The AoLS is bounded on the west and partly on the south by residential properties at the edge of the Loughborough urban area, some of which are visible from publically accessible parts of the AoLS. However, these views are mostly restricted by shelterbelt planting.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>Woodland restricts any long north west or easterly vistas across the AoLS to the next settlement.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>None available</p> <p><i>Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>None</p>																																													
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td>Large</td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td>Expansive</td><td><b>Open</b></td><td>Enclosed</td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td><b>Vacant</b></td><td>Active</td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td>Unified</td><td><b>Interrupted</b></td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td>Sweeping</td><td>Spreading</td><td>Dispersed</td><td><b>Channelled</b></td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <p>The perception of the landscape of the AoLS varies from east to west. The landscape looking north west towards the settlement of Loughborough is open but vacant, with no dog walkers or residents using the area for recreation. Looking north east, this area of landscape is a lot more active, with wildlife visible in the pond between Allendale Road and Main St. There is a PRoW which is used actively by dog walkers for recreation. The vegetation is denser with well-established hedging and mature trees lining the eastern boundary of the Allendale Road.</p> <table><tr><td><b>Security:</b></td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td><b>Comfortable</b></td><td>Safe</td></tr><tr><td><b>Stimulus:</b></td><td>Monotonous</td><td>Indifferent</td><td><b>Interesting</b></td><td>Inspiring</td></tr><tr><td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td><td>Busy</td><td>Noisy</td><td><b>Still</b></td><td>Peaceful</td></tr><tr><td><b>Pleasure:</b></td><td>Undesirable</td><td>Satisfying</td><td><b>Pleasant</b></td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table> <p>Dog walking/ running/walking routes</p>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	<b>Medium</b>	Large	<b>Enclosure:</b>	Expansive	<b>Open</b>	Enclosed	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	Remote	<b>Vacant</b>	Active	<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	<b>Interrupted</b>	Fragmented	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	Sweeping	Spreading	Dispersed	<b>Channelled</b>	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	<b>Comfortable</b>	Safe	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	Indifferent	<b>Interesting</b>	Inspiring	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	Busy	Noisy	<b>Still</b>	Peaceful	<b>Pleasure:</b>	Undesirable	Satisfying	<b>Pleasant</b>	Delightful
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>The AoLS predominantly has moderate to weak boundaries. Main Street forms a strong defensible eastern boundary to the AoLS. Woodland on part of the eastern</p>																																													

	<p>boundary and shelterbelt planting, an established line of vegetation and residential properties on parts of the western boundary form moderate boundaries to the AoLS.</p> <p>The weaker boundaries consists of an unmade public footpath along the northern boundary.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>Allendale Road which runs north-south across the centre of the AoLS and the A6004 which runs east-west across the north of the AoLS would provide alternative strong defensible boundaries.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>Shelterbelt planting and woodland screens the edge of the Loughborough urban area. Although there are some views of the settlement edge from the north west of the AoLS, the settlement is not very prominent within the landscape.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>The scale of existing major consented planning applications indicates development pressure that would impact on the AoLS and limit the extent to which the area separates Woodthorpe and Loughbrough. Consented development would considerably reduce this gap.</p>												
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways /bridle paths)</i></p> <table> <tr> <td><b>PRoW</b></td> <td>Sports pitches</td> <td>Playgrounds</td> <td>Public Park</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Informal Rec.</td> <td><b>Dog walking</b></td> <td>Picnic site</td> <td>Camping</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Open water</b></td> <td><b>Watercourse</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>There is a PRoW east of Allendale Road which is a popular route for those who live in the nearby residential areas. There is a watercourse east of Allendale Road which provides opportunities to see wildlife, the planting is denser and more mature in this location which increases the sense of rurality and reduces the sound of traffic from the Allendale Road and Woodthorpe Roundabout.</p>	<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park	Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping	<b>Open water</b>	<b>Watercourse</b>		
<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park										
Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping										
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<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>There is fairly good public access to many parts of the AoLS. There is a PRoW along the northern boundary and good pedestrian paths running north-south across the AoLS along Allendale Road and the adjacent brook. The unlocked timber fencing from Allendale Road indicates potential public access to the south-western part of the AoLS. However, this is not clearly defined and is not signposted.</p>												
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>ALS-A straddles both the A6004 and Allendale Road and the Woodthorpe A6004</p>												

	<p>roundabout also lies within the AoLS, which detract from the sense of rurality. Traffic noise from the busy A6004 can be heard from within the AoLS. Woodthorpe is linked to the transport network via Main Street which forms the eastern boundary of the AoLS.</p>
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>There is extant outline planning permission on the western part of the AoLS under planning ref: <i>P/12/2640/2</i>, for the erection of up to 130 dwellings with associated infrastructure to be accessed off Allendale Road. Planning permission for the proposal was granted in August 2013. The red line boundary covers a significant part of the Area of Local Separation comprising the field in the west of the AoLS to the south of the A6004 and to the west of Allendale Road. In addition, part of the north of the AoLS to the north of the A6004 is covered by land within the red line boundary for a planning application (planning ref: <i>P/12/2641/2</i>) for the erection of up to 200 dwellings, which is currently under construction.</p>
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>No other local planning policies cover the Area of Local Separation from the 2004 Local Plan.</p>
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	
<b>Site Photographs</b>	 <p>Photograph 1: View from within the ALS, from Allendale Road facing north-west. The edge of Loughborough is predominantly screened by Shelterbelt planting.</p>





Photograph 2: View from within the ALS from Allendale Road, facing west towards the edge of Loughborough.



Photograph 3: View from within the ALS from Allendale Road, facing west towards the edge of Loughborough.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	<p>Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.</p>	<p>ALS-A provides an essential gap between Loughborough and Woodthorpe, restricting further development that would result in merging of these settlements. Although the gap is not of a significant scale, the dense wooded area east of Woodthorpe restricts intervisibility between the two areas and maintains a perception of physical separation. Within the AoLS, perceptual awareness of the proximity of Woodthorpe is diminished. Allendale Road, which runs north-south across the AoLS, further adds to the perception of separation between the two settlements.</p> <p>There is consented planning applications to the west of Allendale Road for 130 dwellings, and to the north of the A6004 for 200 dwellings. Subject to build-out of these consented applications, the physical gap between the two settlements would be substantially reduced and these areas will no longer function as part of this physical separator. As such, these areas are identified as Zones of Weakness.</p> <p>However, although these identified developments would considerably reduce the gap, it is considered that implementation of the applications would not completely compromise the gap or result in coalescence of the settlements as a small physical gap will remain and the perception of separation between the settlements will be maintained owing to the existing screening from the established dense wooded area west of Woodthorpe.</p> <p>Allendale Road and the A6004 provides alternative strong defensible boundaries by which the AoLS could be defined. The remaining area gap is a critical separation which, if compromised, would result in coalescence between the settlements.</p> <p>Overall the area is considered to make a <b>strong</b> contribution to the overall AoLS purposes.</p>
<p><b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b></p>		<p>It is considered that, aside from the identified Zones of Weakness, the AoLS fulfils the strategic role by maintaining a physical gap between Loughborough and Woodthorpe. Furthermore, identified development pressures place this separation at greater risk of compromise.</p>
<p><b>Is this the area’s primary planning function?</b></p>		<p>The key role of the area in planning terms is to maintain the gap between the two settlements. However, the northern and western parts of the ALS are subject to planning consent for residential development. As such, the primary planning function for this part of the ALS is as residential use.</p>



<p><b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b></p>	<p>While this area would be subject to countryside policies, falling outside the defined settlement limit, its character is becoming increasingly urbanised and its function is increasingly aligned with the neighbouring urban area of Leicester. Furthermore, as a result of the particular sensitivity of the gap to compromise, it is judged that the AoLS policy could provide the necessary level of protection to ensure it is not reduced in scale further.</p>
<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>	<p>ALS-A provides a critical gap between Woodthorpe and Loughborough. It is recommended that its designation as an Area of Local Separation should be retained on part of the ALS to ensure protection of the area from further encroachment, preventing merging between settlements. The northern part of ALS-A, north of the A6004 is subject to planning consent for residential development. It is recommended that this area is excluded from the AoLS designation and the boundary of ALS-A should be amended as appropriate.</p> <p>It is also considered that the boundary of ALS-A should be amended to exclude the western area that is subject to development consent.</p>

<b>Area of Local Separation</b>	ALS-B (Quorn, Mountsorrel)
<b>Area (ha)</b>	22.4
<b>Location Plan</b>	
<b>Description</b>	ALS-B lies between Quorn and Mountsorrel; with Quorn to the west and Mountsorrel to the south-east. The northern part of the parcel straddles Leicester Road. It is situated in a fairly built up area with built development on the north-west boundary and parts of the south-east boundary. The AoLS is bounded by Woodland Lane to the west and Granite Way to the east.


Site Audit		
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?	
	ALS-B contains some agricultural/light industrial structures and outbuildings associated with the Quorn Grange Hotel, situated towards the north-western edge of the AoLS. There is a cemetery within the central part of the AoLS and a pylon with control station on the part of the area north of Leicester Road.	
	Farm buildings	Hotel
	Industrial	Civic
	Commercial	Educational
Vernacular	Residential	Health
		Religious
		Leisure/Sports
		Other _____
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?	
	Notably, the majority of built form present in the AoLS is concentrated at the edge of Quorn. The remainder of the area consists of open fields and agricultural land and there are strong visual links with the wider countryside to the north, with long views across the Soar Valley which increase the sense of openness. Although the cemetery and associated planting diminishes the openness of the central part slightly, restricting views from Mountsorrel towards Quorn, there is still an overall strong sense of openness and feeling of a definite gap between the two settlements. Leicester Road physically severs the two parts of the AoLS but this not disrupt long distance north-south views across the area and beyond remain.	
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?	
	While the development on the edge of Quorn locally reduces the openness of the AoLS, it does not have an overtly urbanising effect; indeed, in many respects it creates a softer urban edge at the fringe of Quorn, which increases the sense of remoteness within ALS-B (despite the proximity between the two settlements). Facing north from Mountsorrel, the sloping topography reduces the visual connectivity with Quorn beyond and maintains a rural feel.	
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded	
	ALS-B is located in an area of transition between the Soar Valley and Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Areas as outlined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. Although this is the case, the site features many of the characteristics associated with the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area such as wooded farmland, strong influences of local quarrying and long distance views over surrounding countryside from high vantage points. The use of dry stone walls in demarking field boundaries is another feature synonymous with the Charnwood Forest, which is evident within the ALS.	
	The land use within the ALS is predominantly arable agricultural land although the site is bounded by Buddon Wood on the south eastern edge and smaller areas of deciduous woodland along the eastern perimeter, which give the area a wooded character. Additionally, Mountsorrel Cemetery plays host to a scattering of mature,	

	<p>mixed species trees and acts as a green finger, interrupting the expanse of agricultural land while reducing the perceived scale of the fields. Signs of industry impact on the site in the form of prominent agricultural sheds belonging to Woodside Farm and broken views towards the nearby quarry and recycling centre.</p> <p><i>Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work</i></p> <p>There is evidence of fly tipping and dumping of construction materials at points along the perimeter of the site. Noise from the nearby quarry and recycling plant is clearly distinguishable from within the site.</p> <p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>Generally the land is in good condition. There are breaks in some of the hedge boundaries between fields. The Mountsorrel Cemetery and privately owned grounds of Quorn Grange are well maintained and feature good quality tree species which add to the overall landscape quality.</p>																						
Landscape and other features	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>Mature, deciduous woodland surrounding the site creates a sense of enclosure from within the arable fields. Coupled with rolling topography, there is a sense of being within the countryside which is juxtaposed by the sounds and views of heavy industry that surrounds the site.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table><tr><td>Designed parkland</td><td>Scrub</td><td>Marsh</td></tr><tr><td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td>Rough grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Water meadows</td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Orchard</td><td><b>Deciduous woodland</b></td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr><tr><td><b>Mixed woodland</b></td><td><b>Shelterbelt</b></td><td><b>Arable</b></td></tr><tr><td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>The location of Mountsorrel Cemetery</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>The condition and treatment of areas along the site edges detract from the landscape quality around the perimeter of the ALS. Impacts on views and noise from surrounding industry also detract from the character of the landscape. Views of high tension power cables that cut through the ALS are prominent from most points within the site. The main attractors are in the form of the enclosure created by Buddon Wood and the mature tree species within Mounsorrel Cemetery. The rolling topography provides views out which enhance the sense of rurality.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Walls</b></td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr></table>	Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation	<b>Mixed woodland</b>	<b>Shelterbelt</b>	<b>Arable</b>	Other _____			<b>Walls</b>	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>
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	Pylons	Communications Masts	Tumuli	Other																									
<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>There is a very short distance between Quorn and Mountsorrel in physical terms (300m wide at its narrowest point). Currently, the AoLS provides the only gap between the two settlements. Although the cemetery locally reduces the openness of the area, the proliferation of soft planted features around the site restrict intervisibility between the two settlements and increases the perceptual distance between them. Similarly, the dense planting buffer along the fringe of Granite Way reduces the direct visual connection from Quorn to Mountsorrel (though the significant physical presence of the quarry beyond, a landmark feature in the wider area, accentuates the short distance between them.</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>Topographical characteristics, combined with Mountsorrel Cemetery, have some impact upon the views between Quorn and Mountsorrel. In particular, the level of tree cover within Mountsorrel cemetery acts to screen visibility between the settlements and the perception of distance between the two is exaggerated as a result.</p>																												
<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>There is limited direct intervisibility between the two settlements as a result of substantial woodland screening at each urban fringe. The sloping topography upwards from Mountsorrel further diminishes this visual link. In the centre of the AoLS there is a sense that both settlements are at close physical proximity, though neither settlement edge is strongly prominent.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>There are some long north to south vistas observed from within the AoLS, though these are often interrupted by Mountsorrel Cemetery and areas of woodland along the perimeter of the assessment area.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land? Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>There are strong vistas to/from the AoLS northwards across the wider countryside of the Soar Valley and towards Barrow upon Soar beyond.</p>																												
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table> <tr> <td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td>Large</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td>Expansive</td><td>Open</td><td><b>Enclosed</b></td><td>Constrained</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td><b>Vacant</b></td><td>Active</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Unity:</b></td><td>Unified</td><td><b>Interrupted</b></td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td><b>Sweeping</b></td><td>Spreading</td><td><b>Dispersed</b></td><td>Channelled</td></tr> </table>				<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	<b>Medium</b>	Large	<b>Enclosure:</b>	Expansive	Open	<b>Enclosed</b>	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	Remote	<b>Vacant</b>	Active	<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	<b>Interrupted</b>	Fragmented	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	<b>Sweeping</b>	Spreading	<b>Dispersed</b>	Channelled
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	<p><i>Perception:</i></p> <p>The variance in landform and distinct character of trees within the grounds of Mountsorrel Cemetery form an interesting dynamic within the AoLS, predominantly as a result of the obscuring and revealing of views while circulating the area. The tranquillity of the AoLS is impacted upon by the close proximity of operational activities at Mountsorrel Quarry and a waste transfer facility which can be heard from within the assessment area.</p> <table> <tr> <td><b>Security:</b></td> <td>Unsafe</td> <td>Unsettling</td> <td>Comfortable</td> <td><b>Safe</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Stimulus:</b></td> <td>Monotonous</td> <td>Indifferent</td> <td><b>Interesting</b></td> <td>Inspiring</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td> <td>Busy</td> <td><b>Noisy</b></td> <td>Still</td> <td>Peaceful</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Pleasure:</b></td> <td>Undesirable</td> <td>Satisfying</td> <td><b>Pleasant</b></td> <td>Delightful</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	Comfortable	<b>Safe</b>	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	Indifferent	<b>Interesting</b>	Inspiring	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	Busy	<b>Noisy</b>	Still	Peaceful	<b>Pleasure:</b>	Undesirable	Satisfying	<b>Pleasant</b>	Delightful
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<p><b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b></p>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>The parcel has a mixture of strong and weak boundaries. Wood Lane and Granite Way provide strong defensible boundaries on the western and on parts of the eastern boundaries. While the northern edge is predominantly logical, following the backs of rectilinear properties with regular gardens, a small section cuts through the grounds of the Quorn Grange Hotel and does not follow a recognisable feature.</p> <p>Parts of the northern, eastern and southern edges are bounded by weakly defined field boundaries with sparse vegetation.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>There may be opportunities to realign the boundary with more readily recognisable features, such as the edges of physical structures at Quorn Grange, or roads to the south and west of the AoLS. To the north the countryside is very open and there are fewer existing features that could provide an alternative defensible boundary.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>Neither the Quorn nor the Mountsorrel settlement edge is strongly prominent. The edge of Quorn is irregular and softened by dispersed planted features and there is a strong tree buffer at the edge of Mountsorrel (though structures related to the Quarry are clearly visible).</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>In the immediate term, there are no substantial pressures on the landscape arising from development proposals.</p>																				
<p><b>Recreational opportunities</b></p>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <p>There is a cemetery at the centre of the AoLS that provides informal recreational opportunities for walking or quiet reflection.</p>																				



	PRow      Sports pitches      Playgrounds      Public Park <b>Informal Rec.</b> Dog walking      Picnic site      Camping Open water      Watercourse      None
<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>There is public access to the cemetery from Leicester Road, but there are no other PRowS across the area.</p>
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>Transport infrastructure surrounding the AoLS includes Leicester road which cuts across the northern part of the parcel, Granite Way on the east and Wood Lane to the south west, which link the AoLS with the surrounding area and enhances accessibility.</p>
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>No applications for major development have been identified within the AoLS as part of this assessment.</p>
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>The area to the south of Leicester Road is also covered by the <i>Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside</i> designation (though it is noted that the specific policy related to this in the 2004 Local Plan has now been deleted).</p>
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	
<b>Site Photographs</b>	

Photograph 1: View from Granite Way looking west towards Mountsorrel Cemetery. The cemetery and ridge line screen views towards Quorn. The mix of tree species within the cemetery are distinct within the AoLS.



Photograph 2: View from the entrance of Mountsorrell Cemetery looking south towards Mountsorrel Quarry. Although the quarry is mostly screened from view by a dense belt of woodland, the quarry works can be clearly heard within the AoLS and surrounding area.



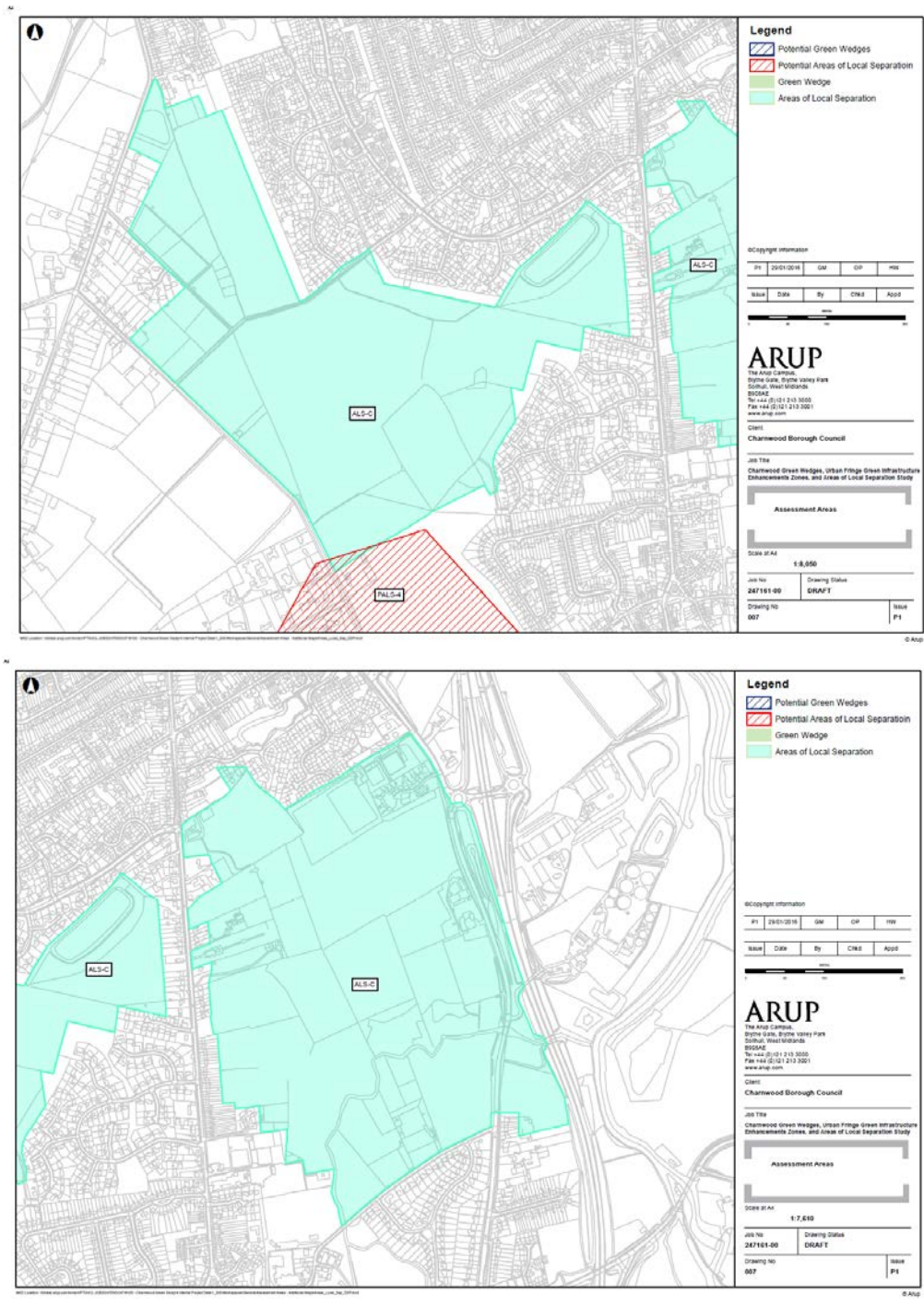
Photograph 3: View from a field gateway along Woodlane looking north. The

	AoLS is on a valley slope with the southern perimeter located towards the top of the valley, providing distant views to the wider Soar Valley.
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Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	<p>Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.</p>	<p>ALS-B provides the gap between Quorn and Mountsorrel, restricting development which may result in the merging of these settlements. The gap is very small in scale, particularly in the Leicester Road axis where ribbon development has reduced the physical separation between the two settlements substantially. Further development of this corridor combined with the visual severance to the wider countryside to both the north and south of the AoLS, is likely to compromise the perceived separation of Quorn and Mountsorrel. Although within the southern part of the AoLS, any loss of openness in this axis would reduce the sense of remoteness and rurality within the gap and limit its effectiveness as a separator. It is noted that there are no applications considered within the assessment which fall within the AoLS.</p> <p>A small identified area to the south is both functionally and, in landscape terms, closely related to the existing AoLS and contributes to maintaining the openness of the gap between the two settlements. As such, it should be considered as an Extension Opportunity Zone.</p> <p>Overall, ALS-B is judged to make a <b>moderate</b> contribution to the overall AoLS purpose.</p>
<p><b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b></p>		<p>Although no specific development pressures are identified within ALS-B in the immediate term as part of this assessment, it is deemed that the area fulfils the strategic role by maintaining the physical gap between Quorn and Mountsorrel, which is potentially sensitive to development as a result of its narrow scale and rural character.</p>
<p><b>Is this the area’s primary planning function?</b></p>		<p>While ALS-B is only afforded an Area of Local Separation designation, on account of its key role in maintaining the narrow physical gap between Quorn and Mountsorrel, the area also performs other functions.</p> <p>Mountsorrel Cemetery is located in the centre ALS-B, whilst much of the rest of the area performs a role as agricultural land. However, it is deemed that, strategically, the area’s primary function is to prevent the coalescence of settlements.</p>
<p><b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b></p>		<p>ALS-B has a predominantly countryside function, consistent with surrounding areas designated as part of the open countryside. However, it is not felt that a countryside designation could provide the necessary protection to ensure that the gap between the two settlements is not compromised. This would not provide the additional level of protection provided by Policy CT/4 to protect the</p>

	integrity of the gap. Furthermore, smaller developments, which might impact upon the gap, would not necessarily be completely restricted.
<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>	<p>The area should be maintained as an Area of Local Separation. An identified Extension Opportunity Zone immediately to the south, that is functionally and visually part of the strategic gap between the two settlements, has been identified.</p>

<b>Area of Local Separation</b>	Area of Local Separation C (ALS-C)
<b>Area (ha)</b>	122.39
<b>Location Plan</b>	 <p>The location plan consists of two maps. The top map shows a large area of Local Separation C (ALS-C) in a residential area. The area is bounded by Mountsorrel Lane to the north, Rothley Lane to the south, and the A6 Loughborough Road to the east. The area is divided into two parts by residential properties. The bottom map shows a similar view of the area, but with a different boundary for the Area of Local Separation C (ALS-C). The maps include a legend, copyright information, and ARUP project details.</p> <p><b>Legend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential Green Wedges</li> <li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li> <li>Green Wedge</li> <li>Areas of Local Separation</li> </ul> <p><b>ARUP</b> The ARUP Company Byrne Lane, Byrne Valley Farm Sofham, Northamptonshire NN30AE Tel: +44 (0)121 213 3000 Fax: +44 (0)121 213 3001 www.arup.com</p> <p><b>Client:</b> Charmwood Borough Council</p> <p><b>Job Title:</b> Charmwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancements Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p> <p><b>Assessment Areas</b></p> <p><b>Scale:</b> Scale 1:10,000</p> <p><b>Job No:</b> 247161-00</p> <p><b>Drawing Status:</b> DRAFT</p> <p><b>Drawing No:</b> 007</p> <p><b>Issue:</b> P1</p>
<b>Description</b>	<p>ALS-C is located south of Mountsorrel and north of Rothley. It is divided into two areas by residential properties either side of Mountsorrel Lane.</p> <p>The AoLS is bounded by the A6 Loughborough Road to the east and The Ridings to the west. To the north, it is partly bounded by Swithland Lane and W Cross Lane and is partly bounded by Homefield Lane to the south.</p>



Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?		
	Built form is limited to the eastern part of the ALS. It consists of residential development on Manor Holt Close, Rothley Park Kindergarten, Rothley Sports and Social Football Club, a nursery and some farm buildings. However, the majority of the area is made up of open fields in agricultural use, pasture fields used for grazing, scrubland and dense woodland in some areas.		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
Vernacular	Residential	Other _____	
	Does the AoLS feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	The western part of the AoLS feels mostly open, particularly when viewed from West Cross Lane and The Ridings. However the established residential development to the east of this area of the AoLS adds a feeling of enclosure to parts of the AoLS. The eastern part of AoLS C is also generally open with opportunities for long distance views when viewed from Homefield Lane. The established development along the western and northern boundary creates a feeling of enclosure on that side with the Loughborough Road acting as a boundary to the east.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	The western part of the AoLS feels more open, rural and tranquil than the eastern side. Overall, the surrounding residential development, the busy A6 which cuts across the eastern part of the AoLS, and views and traffic noise from the A6 Loughborough Road which adjoins the eastern boundary impact on the sense of rurality of the area.		
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded		
	AoLS.is located within the Charnwood Forest Fringe (Swithland and Rothley Brook) sub-area of Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area as outlined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. Charnwood Forest Fringe landscape is of greater variety with expansive rolling agricultural fields and the broad Rothley Valley. It is generally less wooded than the Charnwood Forest Core. The character is influenced by some detracting urban fringe elements, such as the A6 motorway, the railway and various commercial and industrial businesses in close proximity to the AoLS.		
	Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work		
	There is no obvious evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground within the AoLS. There are no historic features within the AoLS and no evidence of new planting and landscape restoration work.		

	<p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>Overall the landscape condition is good, it is predominately arable or pastoral land with well-established hedges interspersed with trees edging the field boundaries.</p>																														
<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>The western area of the AoLS consists of large, regular field patterns bounded by stabilised hedgerows and mature deciduous trees along with densely planted areas of woodland and scrub along The Ridings, creating a sense of enclosure. The eastern area of the AoLS consists of more open pastoral land edged with timber fencing and clusters of trees and scrub.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Designed parkland</td><td><b>Scrub</b></td><td>Marsh</td></tr> <tr> <td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td>Rough grassland</td></tr> <tr> <td>Water meadows</td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr> <tr> <td>Orchard</td><td><b>Deciduous woodland</b></td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Mixed woodland</b></td><td><b>Shelterbelt</b></td><td><b>Arable</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>Rothley Brook runs through parts of ASL-C creating a natural boundary. There are long sightline across arable field dotted with deciduous trees.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>The main attractors are the areas of dense vegetation along Rothley Brook. The detractors are the proximity to the busy Loughborough Road and the sight of pylons which impact on views.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Pylons</b></td><td><b>Communications Masts</b></td><td>Tumuli</td><td>Other</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">_____</td></tr> </table>	Designed parkland	<b>Scrub</b>	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation	<b>Mixed woodland</b>	<b>Shelterbelt</b>	<b>Arable</b>	Other _____			Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>	<b>Pylons</b>	<b>Communications Masts</b>	Tumuli	Other	_____			
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<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>ALS-C provides physical separation between parts of Rothley and Mountsorrel. As a whole, the AoLS is expansive and provides a substantial gap. However, as a result of its irregular shape, the gap is much narrower in places, particularly in the area west of Mountsorrel Lane. Intervisibility between the settlements is restricted by the sprawling nature of the AoLS, the landform and clusters of woodland across the AoLS. This increases the perception of distance between the settlements. However, there is existing merging of the two settlements along Mountsorrel Lane.</p>																														

	<p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>The undulating landform, patches of woodland area, shelterbelt planting, and clusters of deciduous planting disrupts views across and increases perception of distance between settlements.</p>																																													
<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>Throughout much of ALS-C, there are views towards built areas, though there is limited sense throughout much of the area that these constitute unique settlements.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the AoLS to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>When viewed from Homefield Lane on the eastern part of the AoLS, there are opportunities for long vistas across the AoLS to Mountsorrel. There are opportunities for long distance views across ALS-C to Mountsorrel from The Ridings although this is mostly limited. There are also opportunities for some long distance views of the edge of Rothley when viewed from the A6.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>Views outwards towards the wider countryside are very restricted as a result of the largely enclosed nature of this area of open land.</p>																																													
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td>Large</td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td><b>Expansive</b></td><td>Open</td><td>Enclosed</td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td>Vacant</td><td><b>Active</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td>Unified</td><td>Interrupted</td><td><b>Fragmented</b></td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td>Sweeping</td><td><b>Spreading</b></td><td>Dispersed</td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Security:</b></td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td><b>Comfortable</b></td><td>Safe</td></tr><tr><td><b>Stimulus:</b></td><td>Monotonous</td><td>Indifferent</td><td><b>Interesting</b></td><td>Inspiring</td></tr><tr><td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td><td>Busy</td><td>Noisy</td><td><b>Still</b></td><td>Peaceful</td></tr><tr><td><b>Pleasure:</b></td><td>Undesirable</td><td>Satisfying</td><td><b>Pleasant</b></td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table> <p>The AoLS is split into two parts, separated by the Mountsorrel Lane. The eastern area of the AoLS abuts the A6 Loughborough Road and is in close proximity to a number of a number of industrial and commercial businesses and a water sewage treatment plant. Therefore the sense of tranquillity and pleasure within this area of AoLS diminishes as a result. The western area of the AoLS consists of a number of large scale arable fields, lined with hedges and trees with limited routes through the parcel. The Ridings bounds the western edge of this area of the parcel and is a quiet road lined with mature trees and hedges. This not only provides a more visually pleasing experience but there is a strong sense of tranquillity within this area.</p>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	<b>Medium</b>	Large	<b>Enclosure:</b>	<b>Expansive</b>	Open	Enclosed	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	Remote	Vacant	<b>Active</b>	<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	Interrupted	<b>Fragmented</b>	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	Sweeping	<b>Spreading</b>	Dispersed	Channelled	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	<b>Comfortable</b>	Safe	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	Indifferent	<b>Interesting</b>	Inspiring	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	Busy	Noisy	<b>Still</b>	Peaceful	<b>Pleasure:</b>	Undesirable	Satisfying	<b>Pleasant</b>	Delightful
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<p><b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b></p>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>Overall the AoLS has a combination of strong to weak boundaries. The western part of the AoLS has strong defensible boundaries to the west in the form of The Ridings and Gipsy Lane, and on parts of the northern boundary in the form of West Cross Lane and Swithland Lane. The western part of ALS-C has weaker boundaries on all other sides comprising of shelterbelt planting and the back gardens of residential properties to the east and partly to the north and south, and an obscure field boundary to the south.</p> <p>The eastern part of ALS-C has strong defensible boundaries to the east in the form of Loughborough Road and partly to the south in the form of Homefield Lane. A small part of the western boundary constitutes a strong boundary in the form of Mountsorrel Lane. Other than these, the eastern part of ALS-C has weak boundaries on all other sides comprising of field boundaries, and the back garden of residential properties.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>The western part of ALS-C straddles both Gipsy Lane and West Cross Lane. Both of these provides potential alternative strong defensible boundaries if the ALS boundaries were amended on that side. On the eastern part of ALS-C, Rothley Brook which cuts across the south-eastern part of the AoLS and the A6 road provide alternative defensible boundary for the ALS.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>The eastern edge of Mountsorrel is mostly screened by woodland and shelterbelt planting. However, there are some opportunities for views of the settlement edge when viewed from Homefield Lane and the A6.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>At the time of the assessment, there was ongoing construction within the eastern part of AoLS, south of West Cross Lane, on part of the application site for the 2014 planning consent for residential development of up to 130 dwellings under planning ref: P/14/0058/2.</p> <p>A large portion of the eastern part of AoLS-C is subject to planning permission for development of residential development for up to 250 dwellings under planning reference P/12/2005/2.</p>
<p><b>Recreational opportunities</b></p>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways /bridle paths)</i></p> <p>Recreational opportunities within the eastern part of ALS-C includes Rothley Park and Rothley Sports and Social Club to the north and Rothley Brook which flows through the southern part of the ALS. Part of the western boundary of the AoLS immediately abuts Rothley Bowls Club. There is a cemetery within the AoLS accessed from Mountsorrel Lane.</p>

	<p>Other than a PRow that cuts through part of the area from The Ridings, there are no other recreational opportunities within the western part of ALS-C.</p> <table><tr><td><b>PRow</b></td><td><b>Sports pitches</b></td><td>Playgrounds</td><td><b>Public Park</b></td></tr><tr><td>Informal Rec.</td><td>Dog walking</td><td>Picnic site</td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td>Open water</td><td><b>Watercourse</b></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	<b>PRow</b>	<b>Sports pitches</b>	Playgrounds	<b>Public Park</b>	Informal Rec.	Dog walking	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	<b>Watercourse</b>		
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Open water	<b>Watercourse</b>												
<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>There is a PRow on the western part of ALS-C from The Ridings leading to established residential area on Woodfield Road and Templar Way to the east. Other than this, there is no other public access to the AoLS except through the public roads that cut across the area.</p>												
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>On the eastern part of ALS-C, the A6 road, Homefield Lane and the A6 Loughborough road impacts the AoLS in terms of traffic noise and on the sense of rurality.</p> <p>The western part of the AoLS straddles West Cross Lane and part of Gipsy Lane and is bounded by the Ridings Road along the western boundary.</p>												
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>There is extant outline planning permission on land south of West Cross Lane, under planning ref: P/14/0058/2 for residential development of up to 130 dwellings. Permission was granted December 2014. At the time of the site visit construction appeared to be ongoing.</p> <p>In addition, part of ALS-C east of Mountsorrel lane, includes land subject to outline planning permission under planning ref: P/12/2005/2 &amp; P/15/0156/2, for residential development of 45 dwellings. The application was allowed at appeal in April 2013.</p>												
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>The Ridgeway Conservation Area lies close to the south of ALS-C.</p>												
<b>Consultation Responses</b>													

**Site  
Photographs**



Photograph 1: View from within the western part of ALS- C, from West Cross Lane facing north-west.



Photograph 2: View from the southern boundary of the eastern part of ALS-C, from Homefield Lane facing northwards towards Mountsorrel. There are opportunities for views of the edge of Mountsorrel from this side although this is not prominent in the landscape.





Photograph 3: View from the south-eastern part of AoLS – C, from the A6 road facing east towards the A6 Loughborough Road.



Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	<p>Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.</p>	<p>There is existing coalescence between Mountsorrel and Rothley along Mountsorrel Lane. However, ALS-C still provides an important separation between parts of Mountsorrel and Rothley.</p> <p>The western part of ALS-C provides a gap between parts of Mountsorrel and Rothley. The north western gap on Swithland Lane is a critical gap between the two settlements due to the small scale of the gap and the pattern of development on that side. This gap provides important links with countryside west of Swithland Lane in visual and landscape terms. Further development on this area will comprise this separation resulting in coalescence on that side.</p> <p>The area to the west of development on Mountsorrel Lane is not considered to make any contribution to the ALS purposes as this area is almost entirely enclosed by established development. This area is considered to be a zone of weakness.</p> <p>However, the remaining part of the western side of ALS-C provides actual and perceived separation between Rothley and Mountsorrel. There is planning approval for development of up to 130 residential dwellings south of West Cross Lane. There was on-going construction on the application site at the time of the site visit. Despite this large scale development pressure on this part of ALS-C, it is considered that the remaining area is of sufficient scale to effectively maintain its role as a separator on that side.</p> <p>A small area to the west of Swithland Lane is considered to be an Extension Opportunity Area. This area is connected to the extreme western part of ALS-C in landscape and visual terms, and is judged as playing an important role in preventing ribbon development which might erode this gap and compromise the role of the wider AoLS.</p> <p>There are significant development pressures on the eastern part of ALS-C. There is outline planning consent for up to 250 dwellings on a large part of the area. A reserved matters application for 45 dwellings, was submitted under planning reference P/15/0156/2. Planning consent was granted August 2015.</p> <p>The planned development will significantly compromise perceived and actual separation on that side. When built out,</p>

		<p>the remaining area will be much narrower and will be mostly enclosed by development. As a result this part of ALS-C will make little to no contribution the overall ALS purposes. This area is considered to be a zone of weakness.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that the AoLS makes a <b>moderate</b> contribution to the overall AoLS purpose.</p>
<b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b>		<p>The AoLS partially fulfils the strategic role by providing a physical gap between Mountsorrel and Rothley. It is considered to only partially fulfil this role because of the existing coalescence between the two settlements on Mountsorrel Lane and the major development pressures identified within the AoLS.</p> <p>The majority of the eastern part of ALS-C is identified as a zone of weakness due to development pressures in the area. Although there will remain a small gap following implementation of the planning consents, this gap will not make any contribution to the AoLS purposes as it will be enclosed on almost all sides by development. On the western side of ALS-C, the relatively small area west of development on Mountsorell Lane and south of Walton Way is considered to be a zone of weakness due to the enclosed character of the area and as it makes no contribution to the overall AoLS purposes.</p>
<b>Is this the area's primary planning function?</b>		<p>A significant part of the eastern part of ALS-C and a smaller part of the western side is subject to planning consent for residential development. As such, the primary planning function for this parts of the ALS is as residential use. However, the primary function of the remaining parts of the AoLS is to prevent merging of settlements by maintaining the gap between the settlements.</p>
<b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b>		<p>While this area would be subject to countryside policies, falling outside the defined settlement limit, its character is becoming increasingly urbanised particularly with regards to the eastern part of the ALS. Furthermore, as a result of the particular sensitivity of the gap to compromise, it is judged that the AoLS policy could provide the necessary level of protection to ensure it is not reduced in scale further.</p>
<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>		<p>The area should be maintained as an Area of Local Separation.</p> <p>It is recommended that the boundaries of ALS-C are amended to exclude consented application P/15/0156/2, as well as a wider area to the south, which will effectively be</p>

	<p>isolated from the wider AoLS following build out of the consented scheme. It is judged that a small corridor of land is retained here as a critical separation between Rothley and Mountsorrel.</p> <p>With respect to the western part of ALS-C, it is recommended that the Extension Opportunity Area identified west of Swithland Lane is included within the boundaries of ALS-C.</p>
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<b>Area of Local Separation</b>	ALS-D
<b>Area (ha)</b>	14.3
<b>Location Plan</b>	
<b>Description</b>	ALS-D is located between the settlements of Sibley and Cossington. It is bounded to the south by a small brook and the rear gardens of properties at the edge of Cossington, to the west by field boundaries and Cossington Road, to the north by the edge of Sibley and to the east by the Midland Mainline railway.


Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?		
	Built form in the AoLS is clustered around Main Street / Cossington Road, including a nursery, a small complex of farm structures and a residence. The remainder of the AoLS encompasses agricultural fields and smaller, pastoral fields around the brook.		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
Vernacular	Residential	Other _____	
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	Much of the AoLS retains an open character, though the cluster of buildings around Main Street / Cossington Road diminish the sense of openness in this area, particularly the perceived separation between the settlements since there is little ‘break’ in built form between the two settlements.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	Despite the clustering of built form along Main Street / Cossington Road, the gap retains a sense of rurality owing to strong linkages with the wider countryside to the west and south. Much of the gap is very open, albeit small in scale.		
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded		
	The AoLS is located within the Soar Valley character area as outlined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. The assessment area itself is representative of many of the characteristics of the wider Soar Valley area containing low lying floodplains, visible settlements on rising topography and a mix of large, regular fields and smaller historic field patterns.		
	There is a noticeable divide in landscape character either side of Cossington Road / Main Street, representative of the character and age of the settlements adjacent to the AoLS The field east of the divide, overlooked by Sileby, is expansive and regular, indicative of modern agricultural land, and opens onto views of the countryside to the east.		
	The area west of the divide has a greater sense of enclosure due to slightly more irregular field boundaries in a tightly knit layout. A narrow brook flanked by mature scrub forms a distinct feature within the landscape. The character of the land to the west of Cossington Road / Main Street is influenced by the historic nature of the buildings at the edge of Cossington that give the landscape a greater sense of age and permanence.		
	Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work		

	<p>Bare ground is evident in areas of high footfall, particularly along the PRoW that passes through the fields within the western segment of the assessment area. There are signs of woodland management with remnants of felled trees visible on the land just south of Brook Farm. Recently installed timber post fencing lines Main Street upon entering into Cossington.</p> <p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>The landscape appears to be in good/working condition, there are signs of maintenance such as clipped hedges and ploughing of the field east of Cossington Road. Areas west of Cossington Road / Main Street feel less maintained where hedges have become patchy and fences are leaning.</p>																														
<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>The large regular field pattern east of Cossington Road add to the sense of openness felt within this part of the AoLS. The topography gently slopes up towards the eastern edge, opening up to views of the countryside, however, the Midland Mainline railway which bounds the eastern edge of the AoLS physically separates the field from the wider countryside.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table><tr><td>Designed parkland</td><td>Scrub</td><td>Marsh</td></tr><tr><td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td>Rough grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Water meadows</td><td><b>Grassland</b></td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr><tr><td><b>Orchard</b></td><td>Deciduous woodland</td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed woodland</td><td><b>Shelterbelt</b></td><td><b>Arable</b></td></tr><tr><td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p><i>What other landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS?</i></p> <p>A narrow brook that runs along the southern boundary may provide an alternative defensible boundary within the AoLS, however, much has an open feel and there are few readily recognisable physical features which might form a logical edge.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>The main attractors within this AoLS are the discrete signs of age within the landscape west of Cossington Road / Main Street. The quaint character of the edge of Cossington has a direct influence on the rural character of the adjacent land, which is unique to the area. The landscape appeal east of Cossington Road / Main Street is diminished by the railway line that bounds the site and has a much more universal character.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr><tr><td>Pylons</td><td>Communications Masts</td><td>Tumuli</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Other: Brook/Pond</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland	Water meadows	<b>Grassland</b>	Species rich grassland	<b>Orchard</b>	Deciduous woodland	Coniferous plantation	Mixed woodland	<b>Shelterbelt</b>	<b>Arable</b>	Other _____			Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>	Pylons	Communications Masts	Tumuli		Other: Brook/Pond			
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<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>Along Main Street / Cossington Road there is little sense of separation and the gap is very small, but within the more open areas there is a greater sense of remoteness. The edge of Sileby (Molyneux Drive) is slightly raised topographically above Cossington, increasing the perceived distance somewhat, though the openness of the landscape here is notable.</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>The area to the west of Main Street is dissected by a small brook, lined with small shrubs and bushes. There is an intimate field pattern, defined by a network of established hedgerows, which further breaks up the area. These planting features interrupt views between the two settlements and increase the sense of remoteness, despite the gap being physically very small (150m wide at its most narrow point).</p>																									
<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>Sileby and Cossington are visible from a number of publically accessible areas within the AoLS, though north-south views between the settlements are interrupted locally by natural features and planting.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>Long vistas across the AoLS are confined to the eastern part of the area (facing south-westwards from Sileby towards Cossington). This area is highly open and topographically prominent, sloping upwards towards Sileby.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>Views north towards Sileby can be observed from land adjacent to the eastern edge of Cossington.</p> <p><i>Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>Views from within the AoLS to the wider countryside to the east and west provide a strong connection with the wider rural landscape.</p>																									
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	<p>The level of perceived interest and tranquillity vary according to location within the AoLS. The land east of Cossington Road/Main Street varies little in visual diversity as a consequence of its use for agriculture, however the land to the west of the road is inherently more visually interesting due to the variety and age of features within the landscape. The AoLS is predominantly still, other than infrequent increases in noise levels created by passing trains.</p> <table><tr><td><b>Security:</b></td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td>Comfortable</td><td><b>Safe</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Stimulus:</b></td><td>Monotonous</td><td><b>Indifferent</b></td><td><b>Interesting</b></td><td>Inspiring</td></tr><tr><td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td><td>Busy</td><td>Noisy</td><td><b>Still</b></td><td>Peaceful</td></tr><tr><td><b>Pleasure:</b></td><td>Undesirable</td><td><b>Satisfying</b></td><td><b>Pleasant</b></td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table>	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	Comfortable	<b>Safe</b>	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	<b>Indifferent</b>	<b>Interesting</b>	Inspiring	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	Busy	Noisy	<b>Still</b>	Peaceful	<b>Pleasure:</b>	Undesirable	<b>Satisfying</b>	<b>Pleasant</b>	Delightful
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>The AoLS is bounded by defensible features to the north, south and east, consisting of the hard settlement edge of Sileby (characterised by rectilinear features made up of residential properties with regular gardens), a small brook and the railway line. The boundary to the west is weakly defined and does not appear to follow a logical or readily recognisable feature.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>Within the AoLS, the edge of the nursery is characterised by strongly defined planting and could be an alternative southern boundary. Aside from the road running north-south, there are few other clear boundary features within the eastern area of AoLS. Alternative, stronger boundary features exist to the west (stronger planting buffers, the continuation of the brook etc.).</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>The settlement edge of Sileby, along the northern boundary of the AoLS, is a dominant feature within the landscape. There is very little screening of the settlement edge and the adjacent landscape is very open.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>No specific pressures arising from planning applications are identified.</p>																				
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>PRoW</b></td><td>Sports pitches</td><td>Playgrounds</td><td>Public Park</td></tr><tr><td>Informal Rec.</td><td><b>Dog walking</b></td><td>Picnic site</td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td>Open water</td><td>Watercourse</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>Aside from opportunities for walking, no formal recreation opportunities have been identified.</p>	<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park	Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	Watercourse										
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<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p>																				

	Aside from a footpath along the western edge, there is relatively limited public access.
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>Transport infrastructure has a strong presence within the AoLS. Cossington Road/Main Street divides the area in two and is the main access route to the adjacent settlements of Cossington and Sileby. The Midland Mainline also bounds the area along the eastern edge.</p>
<b>Planning History</b>	No recent planning applications within ALS-D have been identified as part of this assessment.
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	Policy CS 1 in the Core Strategy supports the development of up to 3,000 new homes and 7 hectares of employment land in the identified Service Centres, including Sileby. However, it is noted that this policy does not specifically apply to ALS-D.
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	
<b>Site Photographs</b>	 <p>Photograph 1: View south from the edge of Sileby towards Cossington. The tops of houses in Cossington can be seen in the background protruding above a belt of trees.</p>



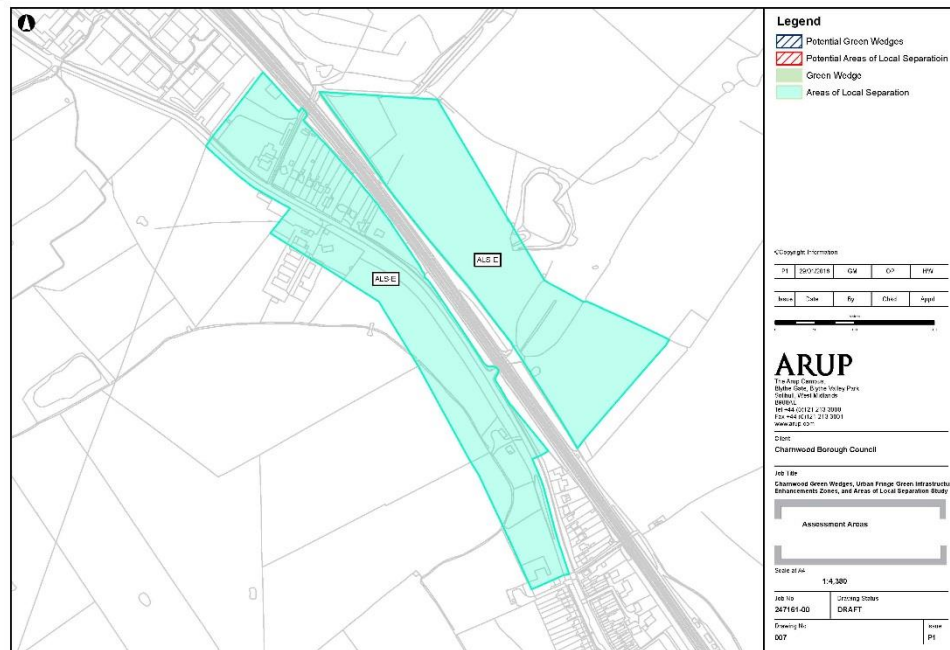
Photograph 2: View from Cossington Road looking north towards Sileby. The settlement edge of Sileby is strongly defined by rear gardens of residential properties.



Photograph 3: View looking south-east towards Cossington from the PRoW crossing the land in the south-west corner of the AoLS. The settlement edge is less defined as a result of mature tree planting providing visual screening.



<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment Commentary</b>
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.	<p>ALS-D provides the gap between Sileby and Cossington. The eastern part of the gap is highly open and there is strong intervisibility between the two settlements. While the western part has a stronger sense of remoteness as a result of various established hedgerows and planted natural features, which disrupt views between the two settlements, the landscape here is highly enclosed and provides the historic rural setting for Cossington. Although no specific development pressures have been identified as part of this assessment, it is noted that further ribbon development along Cossington Road would result in coalescence between the two settlements. The prominent topography of the eastern area would make it particularly sensitive to change.</p> <p>Overall, ALS-D is deemed to meet the purpose <b>moderately</b>.</p>
<b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b>		Although there are no specific development pressures have been identified within ALS-D as part of this assessment, it is deemed that the area fulfils the strategic role by maintaining the physical gap between Sileby and Cossington, which is narrow in character and likely to be compromised if any further development were to come forward.
<b>Is this the area's primary planning function?</b>		Much of the AoLS may be appropriate for a countryside designation as a result of its character and function, given much is in agricultural use, but it is judged that its primary role in planning terms (at a strategic level) is to maintain separation between the two settlements.
<b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b>		While a countryside designation could provide a degree of protection against development, the small scale of the gap and its potential sensitivity to compromise is such that it is suggested that an AoLS designation is most suitable for maintaining this gap.
<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>		The area should be retained as an AoLS. This area is adjudged as performing the strategic AoLS role by forming part of the physical gap between the settlements. There may be scope to incorporate a realignment of the western boundary to improve its strength and permanence.

<p><b>Area of Local Separation</b></p> <p><b>Area (ha)</b></p> <p><b>Location Plan</b></p>	<p>ALS-E</p> <p>11.5</p>
	 <p><b>Legend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential Green Wedges</li> <li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li> <li>Green Wedge</li> <li>Areas of Local Separation</li> </ul> <p><b>ARUP</b> The Arup Group Limited Global Services Central, 15th Floor 100 Broad Street, Birmingham B1 2HT Tel: +44 (0)121 633 3000 Fax: +44 (0)121 633 3001 www.arup.com</p> <p><b>Client</b> Charnwood Borough Council</p> <p><b>Job Title</b> Charnwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancements Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p> <p><b>Assessment Areas</b></p> <p><b>Scale of Map</b> 1:4,380</p> <p><b>Job No</b> 207161-00</p> <p><b>Drawing Status</b> DRAFT</p> <p><b>Drawing No</b> 007</p> <p><b>Issue</b> P1</p>
<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>ALS-E is located between the settlements of Sileby to the south-east and Barrow upon Soar to the north-west. It is divided into two areas by the Midland Mainline railway. The area to the south-west encompasses a land buffer adjacent to Barrow Lane, whilst the area to the north-east is bound by field boundaries and the edges of woodland.</p>



Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?		
	The western area is influenced by ribbon development along Barrow Lane. This consists of a series of residential properties, as well as small commercial premises. A further commercial property with substantial hard standing is located in the south of the AoLS at the edge of Sileby.		
	The area to the east of the railway line is much more open and includes a small area of allotment gardens set amongst open pastoral fields and pastures.		
	Farm buildings Industrial <b>Commercial</b> Vernacular	Hotel Civic Educational <b>Residential</b>	Health Religious Leisure/Sports Other _____
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	At a very local scale, the ribbon development which is clustered along Barrow Road reduces the openness of the area. This is diminished further by Barrow Road and the Midland Mainline, which limits east-west views within the AoLS. However, facing outwards (east/west), there are linkages to areas of very open countryside.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	The area itself retains an inherently open character, but west of the Midland Mainline, and particularly in the northern part of AoLS, the residential properties contribute to a more semi urban character. This area also has a relatively weak visual linkage to the wider countryside as a result of dense planting along field boundaries.		
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded		
	The site is located within the wider Soar Valley Character Area as outlined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment, characterised by wide river floodplains flanked by rising valley slopes to the east and west. Major infrastructure, including the A6 and Midland Main Line railway, feature prominently within the landscape. Small scattered settlements and localised industry protrude from the valley slopes.		
	On a site wide scale, transport infrastructure impacts greatly on the AoLS's character with The Midland Main Line cutting through the area. The west of the site is characterised by Barrow Road, connecting Barrow Upon Soar with Sileby, enclosed on either side by a railway embankment and overgrown hedge and tree planting which interrupt views across the valley floodplains. East of the railway embankment is characterised by irregular field patterns bounded by mature, unmanaged hedgerows. The presence of The Midland Main Line obscures views west over the Soar Valley, however, high points towards the south-east of the site take in long distance views across rolling countryside to the east.		

	<p><i>Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work</i></p> <p>Bare ground is evident where vehicles have pulled onto grass verges or into adjacent fields. There are also signs of fly-tipping.</p> <p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>The condition of the landscape is variable. Some of the fields and hedge boundaries are well managed, however, field boundaries in some areas are in need of restoration. Planting along verges appears to be generally overgrown but acts as an effective screen to Barrow Road and the railway embankment.</p>																									
Landscape and other features	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>Mature hedge and tree planting along verges enclose the main thoroughfare, Barrow Road, and restrict views across the Soar Valley. The railway embankment through the site adds to the sense of enclosure. The site’s proximity to neighbouring settlements along with the strong visual presence of transport infrastructure create an urban fringe character within the AoLS.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table><tr><td>Designed parkland</td><td><b>Scrub</b></td><td>Marsh</td></tr><tr><td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td><b>Rough grassland</b></td></tr><tr><td>Water meadows</td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Orchard</td><td><b>Deciduous woodland</b></td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed woodland</td><td><b>Shelterbelt</b></td><td><b>Arable</b></td></tr><tr><td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>A parcel of land used for allotments and a small pond surrounded by dense scrub along with the railway embankment could influence the form of further development.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>The wildlife and biodiversity value of a small isolated pond and some established hedge field boundaries are main attractors for the site. The rising landform also affords views across the wider landscape which improves the sites perceived connection with the countryside.</p> <p>The railway line impacts negatively on the site, causing physical disconnect and noise. The railway line is also visually intrusive on east/west views into and out of the site.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr></table>				Designed parkland	<b>Scrub</b>	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	<b>Rough grassland</b>	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation	Mixed woodland	<b>Shelterbelt</b>	<b>Arable</b>	Other _____			Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>
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	<p>Pylons                      Communications Masts                      Tumuli</p> <p>Other: <u>Small Pond/allotments</u></p>
<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>The gap between Barrow upon Soar and Sileby feels narrow at certain points along Barrow Road, in particular where development is visible to both the north-west and south-east. Ribbon development has ultimately reduced the gap and the land to the west of Barrow Road is particularly sensitive in this respect.</p> <p>To the east of the Midland Main Line, the AoLS protects only a small part of a much wider swathe of open land between the two settlements. There is a greater sense of remoteness here, though as a result of the sloping topography (rising to the north-east), the easternmost part of the AoLS is substantially higher. This area has a stronger visual connection with Barrow on Soar, increasing the sense of proximity, whilst views to Sileby are obscured.</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>The corridor along Barrow Road is quite densely planted, which restricts views between the two settlements whilst moving along this road. Similarly, there are established planting buffers in the landscape east of the Midland Main Line which diminish intervisibility.</p>
<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>In some locations within the AoLS, both settlements are visible, though these views tend to be limited to Barrow Road (where the gap is at its narrowest perceptually as a result of ribbon development) and the easternmost part of the AoLS as a result of its higher position in the landscape. Views towards Sileby are more limited as a result of its position beyond a ridgeline (in particular, the area east of the Midland Main Line around Homefield Road). It is also noted that the British Gypsum works is highly prominent on the skyline to the north.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>There are long vistas in some limited axes, particularly upon leaving Sileby along Barrow Road looking north towards Barrow Upon Soar. There are also strong views westwards towards Mountsorrel across the Soar Valley.</p> <p><i>Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas? Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>From some southern points within the assessment area there are distant views across the Soar Valley. The most south-eastern point takes in panoramic views across the Soar Valley and looking east towards The Wolds. There are also views towards the AoLS from the A6 looking east, back across the valley. The British Gypsum works, just north of the AoLS, is highly prominent within each of the</p>

	views.																																													
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td><b>Small</b></td><td>Medium</td><td>Large</td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td>Expansive</td><td>Open</td><td><b>Enclosed</b></td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td><b>Vacant</b></td><td>Active</td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td>Unified</td><td>Interrupted</td><td><b>Fragmented</b></td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td>Sweeping</td><td>Spreading</td><td><b>Dispersed</b></td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <p>The AoLS is enclosed as a result of railway infrastructure that carves the area in two. Coupled with frequent traffic along Barrow Road, as a pedestrian, the area could be perceived as unsettling. This is further heightened due to noise created by vehicular traffic and the railway line. The transport infrastructure impacts on visual stimuli within the AoLS, forming an engineered character within the landscape although this is somewhat softened by dense planting.</p> <table><tr><td><b>Security:</b></td><td>Unsafe</td><td><b>Unsettling</b></td><td>Comfortable</td><td>Safe</td></tr><tr><td><b>Stimulus:</b></td><td>Monotonous</td><td><b>Indifferent</b></td><td>Interesting</td><td>Inspiring</td></tr><tr><td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td><td>Busy</td><td><b>Noisy</b></td><td>Still</td><td>Peaceful</td></tr><tr><td><b>Pleasure:</b></td><td>Undesirable</td><td><b>Satisfying</b></td><td>Pleasant</td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	<b>Small</b>	Medium	Large	<b>Enclosure:</b>	Expansive	Open	<b>Enclosed</b>	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	Remote	<b>Vacant</b>	Active	<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	Interrupted	<b>Fragmented</b>	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	Sweeping	Spreading	<b>Dispersed</b>	Channelled	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	<b>Unsettling</b>	Comfortable	Safe	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	<b>Indifferent</b>	Interesting	Inspiring	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	Busy	<b>Noisy</b>	Still	Peaceful	<b>Pleasure:</b>	Undesirable	<b>Satisfying</b>	Pleasant	Delightful
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>The boundaries of the AoLS are very weak and cut across fields and properties in some parts.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>An established network of field boundaries could provide a more robustly bounded area, which is also more extensive (the current designation prevents ribbon development but does not maintain the wider swathe of the gap). Prominent topographical features within the eastern segment of the assessment area may also be used.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>Neither edge is highly prominent, though there are frequent glimpses of the British Gypsum site which serves as something of a landmark at the edge of Barrow upon Soar. The edge of Sileby is less visible, set back beyond a ridgeline.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>Despite the lack of major planning applications identified as part of this assessment, Barrow Road would be particularly sensitive to further ribbon development, which would likely lead to perceptual and physical merging between the two settlements.</p>																																													
<b>Recreational</b>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle</i></p>																																													

<b>opportunities</b>	<p><i>ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <p><b>PRoW</b>      Sports pitches      Playgrounds      Public Park  Informal Rec. Dog walking      Picnic site      Camping  Open water      Watercourse</p> <p>Allotments to the east of the railway line serve local residents.</p>
<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>The extent to which the site is publicly accessible is restricted to pathways alongside Barrow Road. Much of the land is privately owned and the areas performs predominantly as a thoroughfare for vehicular traffic.</p> <p>A public footpath skirts the northernmost edge of the assessment area, to the east of the railway line.</p>
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>Barrow Road and the Midland Main Line railway line are key movement corridors through ALS-E and also physically divide the area, reducing visual inter-connectivity. There are also distant views towards the A6 to the west.</p>
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>The northern part of ALS-E has been subject to a number of historic planning permissions. However, these have been minor and there no relevant major planning applications have been identified as part of this assessment.</p>
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>A small area in the south-west of the AoLS is designated a <i>Site of Regional, County and District Level ecological or geological interest</i>, and a small site to the east of the railway line is designated as Allotments (though it is noted that all of the associated policies for these designations in the 2004 Local Plan have been deleted).</p> <p>Policy CS 1 in the Core Strategy supports the development of up to 3,000 new homes and 7 hectares of employment land in the identified Service Centres, including Sileby and Barrow upon Soar. However, it is noted that this policy does not specifically apply to ALS-E.</p>
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	

**Site  
Photographs**



Photograph 1: View from the edge of Barrow Upon Soar looking south along Barrow Road towards Sileby. The edge of Sileby can be seen in the distance however dense tree and scrub planting along the edges of Barrow Road screens views either side.



Photograph 2: View from the edge of Barrow Road, opposite the railway underpass, looking west across the Soar Valley. The wide flat valley floor affords distant views to Mountsorrel on the valley slopes opposite.

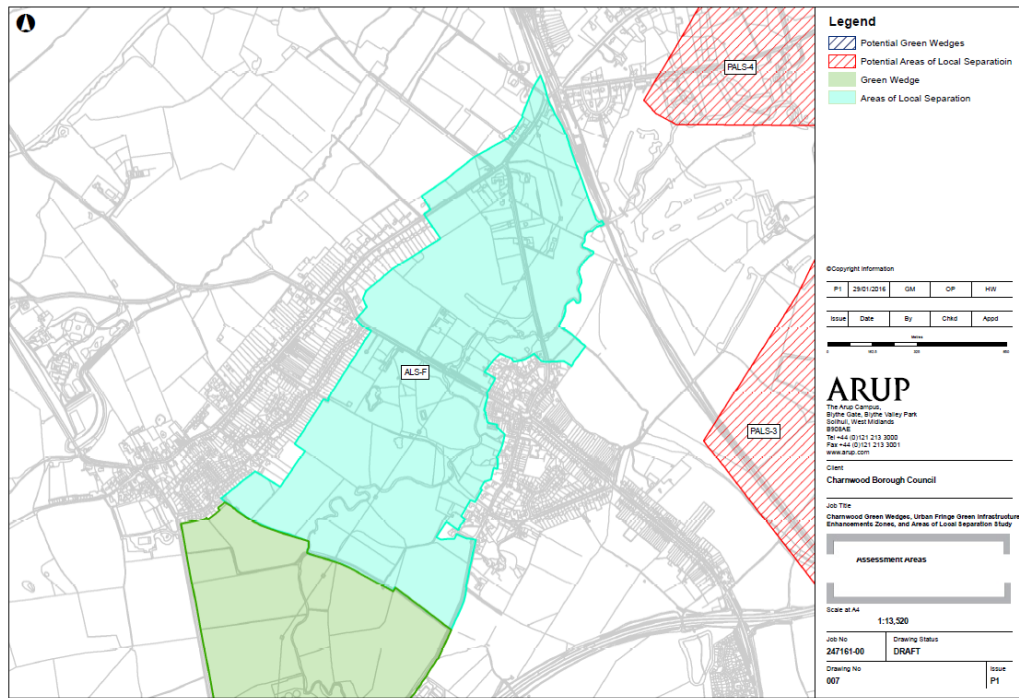




Photograph 3: View from the most easterly point within the AoLS, looking north towards Barrow Upon Soar. The assessment area east of the railway embankment begins to climb, resulting in clear views to the wider landscape. The British Gypsum plant is a prominent feature in the landscape (far right).

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	<p>Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.</p>	<p>The primary role of ALS-E is to prevent ribbon development on Barrow Road between Sileby and Barrow upon Soar, which would lead to perceptual merging of the two settlements. As a result of the British Gypsum plant to the north, and historic ribbon development along Barrow Road, there is only a very small physical break between the two settlements; the AoLS protects the last remaining area of unspoilt rurality, covering areas to the east and west of the Midland Mainline railway line and forming the gap between the two settlements. The gap to the west of Barrow Road is at particular risk of compromise, as a result of: intervisibility between the two settlement edges (particularly facing from Sileby towards Barrow upon Soar as a result of its elevated topography); and strong visual links with the wider Soar Valley, which contribute to the integrity of this gap in perceptual terms.</p> <p>As a whole, the area immediately to the east of the Midland Main line, in its current form, is less crucial to the integrity of this gap given its visual isolation from both settlements and its low-lying position in the landscape. However, the far eastern edge of the AoLS is much more prominent and has vistas towards Barrow upon Soar. There may be scope to widen the scope of the AoLS to include an Extension Opportunity Zone to the south and east, increasing the robustness of the designation in preventing harmful development in this narrow, sensitive gap and strengthening its boundaries.</p> <p>Overall, ALS-E is judged to meet the purpose <b>moderately</b>.</p>
<p><b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b></p>		<p>The whole of the area is deemed to meet the strategic role by providing physical separation between Barrow upon Soar and Sileby, though it is noted that the western part of the area forms the part of the gap which is most likely to be at risk of coalescence.</p> <p>An identified Extension Opportunity Zone, to the south and east of the current AoLS, also provides physical separation between these settlements and, as a result of its prominent location topographically, is at risk of compromise (due to its strong intervisibility between the two settlements).</p>
<p><b>Is this the area's primary planning function?</b></p>		<p>Despite its close proximity to the settlements of Sileby and Barrow upon Soar, ALS-E is well integrated into the wider countryside and has a countryside function. However, a further consideration is the narrow gap between the settlements of Sileby and Barrow upon Soar in the Barrow Road corridor (particularly in perceptual terms). As such,</p>

	the area to the west of the Midland Mainline functions primarily as a buffer to development. The area east of the railway, as it is currently defined, would appear to play a lesser role with respect to this, though it is noted that the wider swathe of countryside (encompassing land to the south and further east) is important strategically for preventing further coalescence between the two settlements.
<b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b>	ALS-E has a countryside function, in a similar vein to surrounding areas designated as part of the open countryside. However, it is not felt that a countryside designation could provide the necessary protection to ensure that the gap between the two settlements is not compromised, given its small scale. As such, the continued designation of the area as an AoLS would seem appropriate.
<b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b>  <b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b>	ALS-E should be retained and potentially extended to include Extension Opportunity Areas to the east and south, which it is felt would ensure the ongoing permanence and robustness of the gap between Sileby and Barrow upon Soar, as well as strengthening its boundaries.

Area of Local Separation	Area of Local Separation F (ALS-F)
Area (ha)	107.8
Location Plan	<div></div>
Description	<p>ALS-F is situated to the east of Cropston and to the west of Thurcaston. The parcel straddles Leicester Road and Thurcaston Lane. It is bounded by a railway line on the north-east and the rear of residential dwellings on Anstey Lane on the east.</p> <p>On the north-west the area is bounded by the rear of residential development on Latimer and Station Road and bounded by a bridleway along the western boundary.</p>

Site Audit													
<b>Existing Uses and Density of Buildings</b>	<p><i>What built development exists within the AoLS?</i></p> <p>The parcel predominantly consists of farmland, grazing land, scrubland, and open green fields. However, there is some sporadic built development dispersed across the area. There is sporadic development to the north of the ALS on both sides of Station Road and on Thurcaston Lane consisting of residential dwellings, and commercial developments. At the centre of the ALS, there is a cemetery south of Leicester Road and some agricultural buildings on either side of Leicester Road. Cropston Cricket Club playing pitch sits on the south-western edge of the ALS.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><b>Farm buildings</b></td> <td>Hotel</td> <td>Health</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Industrial</td> <td>Civic</td> <td>Religious</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Commercial</b></td> <td>Educational</td> <td><b>Leisure/Sports</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vernacular</td> <td><b>Residential</b></td> <td>Other _____</td> </tr> </table> <p><i>Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?</i></p> <p>The southern end of the parcel feels more open with long views, looking east across the countryside. The parcel begins to feel less open as you move northwards, entering the settlement of Thurcaston. Development along Latimer Road and Anstey Lane, and patches of scrubland creates a feeling of enclosure although there are patches of open fields within this area. There is a sense of openness on the northern part of the parcel but this is punctuated by dense woodland areas and dense vegetation along parts of Thurcaston Lane restricting eastern views.</p> <p><i>Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?</i></p> <p>The area generally feels rural although it is not very open in some areas including from the PRow to the east accessed from Anstey Lane. Built development to along the eastern and western boundaries encloses the ALS on those sides but the feeling of enclosure diminishes as you go further into the ALS. Pylons within the parcel and views of the adjacent surrounding development reduces sense of rurality.</p>	<b>Farm buildings</b>	Hotel	Health	Industrial	Civic	Religious	<b>Commercial</b>	Educational	<b>Leisure/Sports</b>	Vernacular	<b>Residential</b>	Other _____
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Vernacular	<b>Residential</b>	Other _____											
<b>Landscape Character and Type</b>	<p><i>To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded.</i></p> <p>ALS-F lies within the Landscape Character Area of Charnwood Forest as outlined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. It has a landscape mosaic of pasture, frequent woodland and exposed hilltops of acidic grassland with bracken and heathland. It includes many wildlife areas and ancient semi-natural woodlands.</p> <p><i>Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work</i></p> <p>No apparent evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground. There are two Grade II listed bridges within the parcel, there is also evidence of the ridge and furrow throughout areas of the parcel. There was no apparent evidence of new planting or landscape restoration work.</p>												

	<p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>Landscape in good condition, with evidence of the historical feature of ridge and furrow visible within areas of pastoral fields. There are dense areas of planting along the banks of Rothley Brook with established hedgerows lining smaller pastoral fields, interspersed with trees. Larger fields were edged by post and wire with some fallen mature trees in fields.</p>																														
<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>The ALS-F consists of both arable fields and fields for grazing with boundary edges formed predominantly of fencing, some fields consist of dense hedged and tree lined boundaries.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table><tr><td>Designed parkland</td><td><b>Scrub</b></td><td>Marsh</td></tr><tr><td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td><b>Rough grassland</b></td></tr><tr><td>Water meadows</td><td><b>Grassland</b></td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Orchard</td><td><b>Deciduous woodland</b></td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed woodland</td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td><b>Arable</b></td></tr><tr><td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>The ridge and furrow earthworks and also Rothley Brook which runs through the ALS-F would help guide development form.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>Pylons detract from the sense of ruralness in this area. Rothley Brook is a main attractor along with evidence of ridge and furrow in pastoral fields.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Pylons</b></td><td><b>Communications Masts</b></td><td>Tumuli</td><td>Other</td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">_____</td></tr></table> <p>Landscape elements include hedged and timber post and wire fencing along the boundary of pastoral fields, which are intermittently lined with small, medium and large mature deciduous trees. High scale pylons run through the ALS, impacting on the rural experience due to their dominant scale.</p>	Designed parkland	<b>Scrub</b>	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	<b>Rough grassland</b>	Water meadows	<b>Grassland</b>	Species rich grassland	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation	Mixed woodland	Shelterbelt	<b>Arable</b>	Other _____			Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>	<b>Pylons</b>	<b>Communications Masts</b>	Tumuli	Other	_____			
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<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>The parcel provides a physical gap between Thurcaston and Cropston. It also provides a gap between Cropston and Rothley on the north-east. The physical gap between Thurcaston and Cropston is not significantly large, measuring approx.</p>																														



	<p>500m at its shortest point on Leicester Road. However, there is an increased perception of distance between the settlements due to limited intervisibility. The north-eastern part of the ALS provides a physical gap between Cropston and Rothley along Station Road. This gap is not significantly large measuring roughly 600m at its shortest point. There is existing sporadic development within this gap. However the Great Central Railway Line further accentuates the separation between the two settlements and increases the perception of distance.</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>The railway line and buffer planting along the railway line edge provides a strong separation between Cropston and Rothley increasing the perception of distance. There is little established/permanent physical separation between Thurcaston and Cropston, though occasional planted features may disrupt views locally.</p>																																			
<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>From the PRow which cuts across the southern area of the parcel, there are opportunities for limited south east views of Thurcaston and north west views of Cropston. Deciduous vegetation breaks up views of Thurcaston, however, views of Cropston are more open.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>There are long north western sightlines of Cropston available from Anstey Lane and from the PRow that cuts across the parcel.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>From the neighbouring settlement of Cropston you have western views towards Bradgate Park.</p> <p><i>Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>There are expansive north west views towards Cropston across fields of ridge and furrow, deciduous trees punctuate the landscape with patchy hedgerows.</p>																																			
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td>Medium</td><td><b>Large</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td><b>Expansive</b></td><td>Open</td><td>Enclosed</td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td>Vacant</td><td><b>Active</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td>Unified</td><td>Interrupted</td><td><b>Fragmented</b></td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td><b>Sweeping</b></td><td>Spreading</td><td>Dispersed</td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Security:</b></td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td>Comfortable</td><td><b>Safe</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Stimulus:</b></td><td>Monotonous</td><td>Indifferent</td><td>Interesting</td><td><b>Inspiring</b></td></tr></table>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	Medium	<b>Large</b>	<b>Enclosure:</b>	<b>Expansive</b>	Open	Enclosed	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	Remote	Vacant	<b>Active</b>	<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	Interrupted	<b>Fragmented</b>	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	<b>Sweeping</b>	Spreading	Dispersed	Channelled	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	Comfortable	<b>Safe</b>	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	Indifferent	Interesting	<b>Inspiring</b>
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	<div> <div> <b>Tranquillity:</b>  <b>Pleasure:</b> </div> <div>           Busy            Undesirable         </div> <div>           Noisy  <b>Satisfying</b> </div> <div>           Still            Pleasant         </div> <div>           Peaceful            Delightful         </div> </div> <p>There is a sense of tranquillity as you walk north west along the PRoW towards Cropston, across Sandham Bridge (Grade II listed) and enter a field of ridge and furrow, however the sense of pleasure is impacted by the Pylons towering above you and also the lack of intact hedging at the boundary of fields.</p>
<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>ALS-F have a combination of strong to weak boundaries. It has a strong defensible northern boundary in the form of the train tracks and on a small part of the eastern boundary in the form of Anstey Lane.</p> <p>The edge of established development along parts of the western and part of the eastern boundaries provides moderate boundaries on that side.</p> <p>The weaker boundaries consists of field boundaries, vegetation and a PRoW along the southern boundary and on parts of the eastern and western boundaries.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>Thurcaston Lane and Leicester Road which both cut across the parcel provides an alternative strong defensible boundary. In addition Rothley Brook on the south-western part of the parcel provides an alternative strong defensible boundary.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>ALS-F has high visibility from the wider countryside and looking east from Cropston Rd, north west from Anstey Ln. From the Leicester Rd, northern and southern aspects of the ALS are visible. However where the ALS is bound between Cropston and Thurcaston visibility is less prominent.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>There are no major planning application proposed within the area. The existing established ribbon development pattern along Station Road and the existing sporadic development on that side indicates that that area may be susceptible to further encroachment.</p>
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways /bridle paths)</i></p> <div> <div> <b>PRoW</b>            Informal Rec.            Open water         </div> <div> <b>Sports pitches</b>  <b>Dog walking</b>  <b>Watercourse</b> </div> <div>           Playgrounds            Picnic site         </div> <div>           Public Park            Camping         </div> </div> <p>The ALS-F provides recreational opportunities due to the PRoW going from Thurcaston, heading north west to Cropston. It is a popular route with dog walkers and walkers across the Rothley Brook. In addition Cropston Cricket Club is located on the north-western edge of the area.</p>

<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>Overall there is public access to almost all parts of the parcel. A number of PRow's cuts across the parcel. There is public access through the public paths from Thurcaston Lane, Station Lane, Leicester Road, Anstey Lane and Cropston Lane.</p>
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>Leicester Road and Thurcaston Lane cuts across the parcel. Also the northern part of the parcel straddles part of Station Road. The transport infrastructure cutting across the parcel provides links to neighbouring settlements.</p>
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>The parcel have a mixed planning history. Historically, there have been applications for new dwellings, extensions to dwelling, changes of use, farm buildings etc. within the parcel. There are no recent major planning applications put forward within the ALS considered within this assessment.</p>
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>ALS-F lies within the Landscape Character Area of Charnwood Forest. The south-western boundary of ALS-F immediately abuts the Leicester (Beaumont Leys)/Birstall/Thurcaston/Anstey/Cropston Green Wedge as designated in the adopted Charnwood Core Strategy.</p> <p>The Rothley Ridgeway Conservation Area abuts the AoLS to the north.</p>
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	

**Site  
Photographs**



Photograph 1: View looking north east towards residential housing within the settlement of Thurcaston



Photograph 2: View looking west towards residential housing within the settlement of Cropston, Rothley Brook is visible in the foreground.



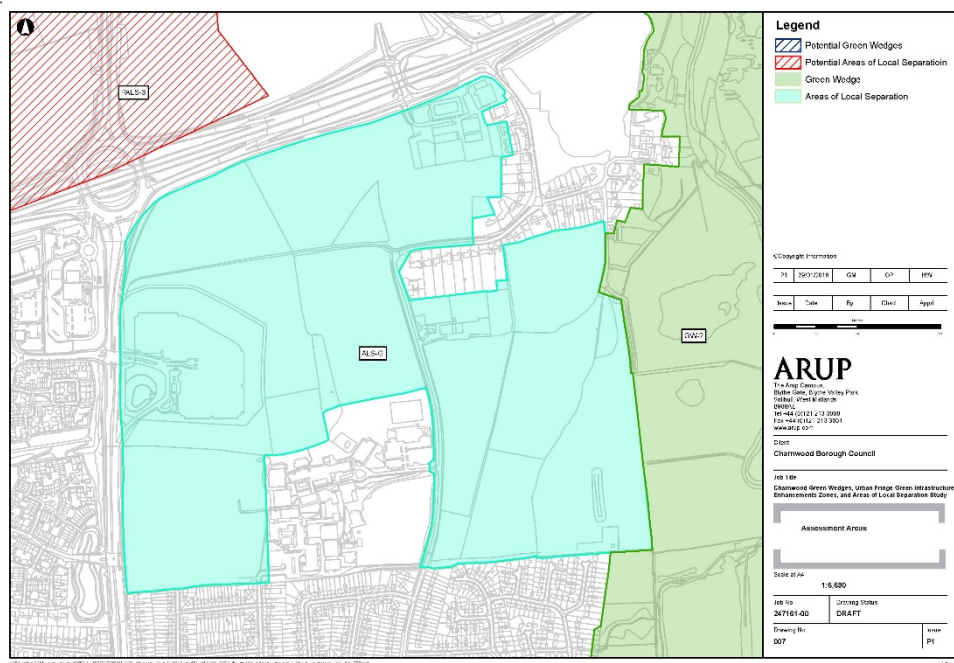


Photograph 3: View looking north west towards residential housing within the settlement of Cropston, evidence of ridge and furrow can be seen in the foreground of this pastoral field.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	<p>Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.</p>	<p>ALS-F provides the essential gap between Cropston and Thurcaston, restricting development which, as a result of the area's open landscape and development patterns, would lead to the merging of these settlements. In particular, the area along Leicester Road would be particularly at risk of ribbon development that may compromise the gap.</p> <p>Although the railway line along the north-eastern boundary of ALS-F provides physical separation between Cropston and Rothley, increasing the perception of distance, it is considered that ALS-F still contributes strongly to maintaining a wider gap between the two settlements. The area north and south of Station Road is considered to be at particular risk of compromise as a result of existing patterns of ribbon development and evidence of some historic planning applications for individual residential properties in this area. Although not major development, cumulatively such developments might result in the perceptual merging of the settlements.</p> <p>A broader area to the north of Station Road is identified as part of this wider gap between Rothley and Cropston, and linked to the existing AoLS in functional and landscape terms. This Extension Opportunity Area would strengthen the integrity of the designation and ensure this important physical gap is maintained, as well as ensuring that its boundaries are suitably robust.</p> <p>Overall it is considered that the parcel makes a <b>strong</b> contribution to the overall AoLS purpose.</p>
<p><b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b></p>		<p>It is considered that the parcel fulfils the strategic role by maintaining the physical gaps between Cropston and Thurcaston, and between Rothley and Cropston. These physical gaps may also be more at risk of compromise along key roads such as Leicester Road and Station Road, where development may both physically and perceptually reduce the gaps between the settlements.</p>
<p><b>Is this the area's primary planning function?</b></p>		<p>ALS-F lies within the Landscape Character Area of Charnwood Forest. However, it is judged that its primary function in planning terms, strategically, is as a physical buffer between settlements.</p>
<p><b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b></p>		<p>Policy CS12 (Green Infrastructure) of the adopted Charnwood Core Strategy includes policies to protect the character of Charnwood Forest. However this does not preclude development and as such will not prevent coalescence between settlements. While the Rothley</p>



	<p>Ridgeway Conservation Area, located to the north, would provide a degree of protection against development for the identified Extension Opportunity Area, this would not completely preclude development and would only guide the type of development which might be acceptable in this area.</p> <p>Furthermore, countryside policies would not specifically restrict development which would impact upon the gap (which is of a narrow and sensitive character), thus an AoLS designation would seem the most appropriate to prevent coalescence between the settlements.</p>
<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>	<p>It is recommended that ALS-F should be maintained as an Area of Local Separation due to its role as an effective open, physical gap between settlements.</p> <p>It is recommended that the AoLS boundaries should be amended to include the area to the north of Station Road with the railway line as the eastern boundary, and field boundaries as the north, south and west boundaries on that side. This area, an identified Extension Opportunity Area, forms an important part of the wider physical break between the settlements and, if compromised, would affect the wider gap. An extension to the north would also allow for the boundary of the AoLS to be aligned with a more prominent, defensible feature.</p>

Area of Local Separation	ALS-G
Area (ha)	65
Location Plan	<div></div>
Description	ALS-G is located between the settlements of Wanlip, to the north, and Birstall, to the south. The area is bound along two of its edges by major transport infrastructure; the A46 and A6 to the north and west respectively. Immediately adjacent to the ALS is Watermead Country Park, enclosing the assessment area’s eastern perimeter.

Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
	Vernacular	Residential	Other <b><u>Transport</u></b>
	ALS-G is predominantly of an open character consisting of open arable fields, rough pasture land and small wooded plantations. There are a small number of built clusters throughout the area, including a complex of farm buildings in the north-east, a small garden centre directly to the south of Wanlip and a modern park and ride facility, consisting of a large car park and ancillary office, in the far east.		
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	Although some areas have a strong sense of openness, in particular the east-west axis of undeveloped land which crosses Wanlip Lane in the centre of the area (where there is a genuine sense of a ‘break’ in the built fabric), urbanising influences both within and at the immediate edges of the area increase the sense of enclosure and reduce the sense of scale. In particular, the building at the northern edge of the Cedars Academy is very prominent, while to the west the Park and Ride facility and the business park beyond is a visible presence. The east of the area feels much more open and rural, with a degree of connection to the Watermead Country Park.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	As a result of the configuration of built-development across the AoLS, the sense of rurality is diminished substantially; there are frequent visual reminders of the urban fringe environment. The area to the east of Wanlip Lane provides a more substantial break, both visually and physically.		
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded		
	ALS-G is located within the Soar Valley, characterised in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment as wide floodplains heavily influenced by major engineering features and highly urban settlements. The Soar Valley has long been a major transport corridor and this impacts directly on the character of the AoLS as it is bound on both its northern and western edges by the A46 and A6 respectively. Recent developments have seen a new park & ride facility constructed along the sites western perimeter to take advantage of the direct routes into Leicester.		
	The site also adjoins the northern end of Watermead Country Park resulting in a distinct split in the character of the landscape. This is reinforced by a ridge line that runs from north to south along the centre of the AoLS. The western edge has a distinctly urban character, influenced by busy transport infrastructure, adjacent business parks and the recreational use of the land for sports in the south western fields. East of the ridge has a more rural character, with arable land bordered by		


	<p>tall, dense hedges interrupted frequently by mature deciduous tree planting. The topography slopes gently down towards Watermead Country Park, allowing distant views across a heavily wooded landscape. There are small areas of woodland plantation dotted within the site, in particular a belt of evergreen and deciduous woodland along the north-south ridge that helps to screen views towards Birstall.</p> <p><i>Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work</i></p> <p>There are signs of improvement works within the site in the form of recently planted trees along Wanlip Lane. Very young tree planting has been planted on an engineered embankment which surrounds the park &amp; ride facility to provide screening.</p> <p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>The landscape condition is good and appears to be well maintained. Generally the landscape diversity improves towards the eastern areas of the AoLS.</p>																						
<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>Small areas of woodland, sloping topography and arable fields mixed with views towards the edges of urban settlements combine to form a semi-rural / urban fringe character.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table><tr><td>Designed parkland</td><td>Scrub</td><td>Marsh</td></tr><tr><td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td>Rough grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Water meadows</td><td><b>Grassland</b></td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Orchard</td><td>Deciduous woodland</td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed woodland</td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td><b>Arable</b></td></tr><tr><td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>A prominent ridgeline running from north to south may help to guide development form.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>Areas of established woodland, individual mature tree species and tall hedgerows are key attractors within the site and help to create a semi-rural character. Recently developed business parks surrounding the site and buildings forming part of The Cedars Academy in the centre are prominent features that aren't sensitive to the landscape character. Road noise is clearly apparent throughout the AoLS.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Walls</td><td>Fences</td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr></table>	Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland	Water meadows	<b>Grassland</b>	Species rich grassland	Orchard	Deciduous woodland	Coniferous plantation	Mixed woodland	Shelterbelt	<b>Arable</b>	Other _____			Walls	Fences	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>
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<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>At Wanlip Lane, which provides the primary route between Wanlip and Birstall, there is little sense of separation between the two settlements. There is strong intervisibility between the two settlements, and while the gap opens up slightly to both the east and west, the break in built form along Wanlip Lane is very small (around 150m wide) and sensitive. This is likely to be impacted further upon completion of outstanding permission P/12/1674/2, which will see artificial sports pitches built to the north of The Cedars Academy.</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>The two constituent parts of the AoLS have a contrasting feel. The area to the east of Wanlip Lane feels very open, with little in the way of physical features to disrupt views between the two settlements. To the west, the sloping topography (rising westwards towards a ridge) restricts visual linkage between Wanlip and Birstall to the west, increasing the sense of remoteness here.</p>										
<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>There are strong visual links between Wanlip and Birstall in several parts of the AoLS. In the northern area, there are views from Wanlip towards a business park west of Loughborough Road. Around Wanlip Lane, the two settlements appear to directly abut each other, whilst there is still strong intervisibility further east (despite the larger scale of the gap between the two settlements).</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>Particularly to the east of Wanlip Lane there are long vistas across open land between the two settlements.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land? Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>The primary views are facing southwards towards the urban area of Leicester, and there is little visual connection between the AoLS and the wider countryside to the north (with visual linkage severed by the A46).</p>										
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td><b>Large</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td>Expansive</td><td>Open</td><td><b>Enclosed</b></td><td>Constrained</td></tr></table>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Large</b>	<b>Enclosure:</b>	Expansive	Open	<b>Enclosed</b>	Constrained
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<b>Enclosure:</b>	Expansive	Open	<b>Enclosed</b>	Constrained							

	<p><b>Remoteness:</b> Wild Remote Vacant <b>Active</b></p> <p><b>Unity:</b> Unified Interrupted <b>Fragmented</b> Chaotic</p> <p><b>Visual Dynamic:</b> Sweeping Spreading <b>Dispersed</b> Channelled</p> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <p>Landscape perception varies between different locations within the AoLS, relative to the proximity of the A6 and A46. Areas towards the west are increasingly impacted upon by the noise of vehicular traffic, whereas the eastern extents of the AoLS adopt a sense of stillness and visual appeal resulting from the close proximity of Watermead Country Park.</p> <p><b>Security:</b> Unsafe Unsettling <b>Comfortable</b> Safe</p> <p><b>Stimulus:</b> Monotonous Indifferent <b>Interesting</b> Inspiring</p> <p><b>Tranquillity:</b> Busy Noisy <b>Still</b> Peaceful</p> <p><b>Pleasure:</b> Undesirable <b>Satisfying</b> <b>Pleasant</b> Delightful</p>
<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>ALS-G predominantly has a defensible boundary. To the north and west, the A46 and A6 are permanent and defensible. Similarly, to the east, the AoLS is bounded by a strong defined, established planting buffer at the edge of the Watermead Country Park, whilst the edges of Wanlip and Birstall are largely rectilinear and strongly defined.</p> <p>There are a small number of areas where the boundary cuts across open land is aligned with features which are not readily recognisable, specifically: to the rear of properties on Rectory Road; and at the edge of Cedars Academy.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>In some cases, where the boundary cuts across open land, more readily recognisable features exist, thus some minor adjustments may be appropriate.</p> <p>Within the AoLS itself, established hedgerows and other piecemeal physical features provide alternative boundary features but much of the area is very open.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>The edge of Birstall is largely rectilinear and stands out within the landscape. The Palmer Tomkinson Centre at the Cedars Academy is a substantial built feature which is prominent on the landscape and very visible from Wanlip to the north.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>The development of sports pitches to the north of the Cedars Academy will have a profound impact on the character of the AoLS by effectively severing the open link between the two areas to the east and west of Wanlip Lane.</p>



<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <p><b>PRoW</b>                      <b>Sports pitches</b>                      Playgrounds                      Public Park  Informal Rec. <b>Dog walking</b>                      Picnic site                      Camping  Open water                      Watercourse</p> <p>There are sports pitches in the south-west of ALS-D (though it is noted that these form the grounds of The Cedars Academy and are not likely to be publicly accessible). There are footpaths / PRoWs which traverse the AoLS, including between Wanlip Lane and the A6, and in the east of the area at the edge of Watermead Country Park (though it is noted that linkage through to the latter is limited). These provide opportunities for walking and dog walking at the edge of Birstall.</p>
<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>There is a relatively good level of accessibility through the AoLS, provided by a series of footpaths (though it is noted that access westwards to the Country Park is limited).</p>
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>Transport infrastructure has a significant influence on ALS-G. Major roads (A6 and A46) effectively enclose the area and sever linkage with the wider countryside, and are also audibly (and, to an extent visually) highly intrusive throughout much of the area. Rectory Road / Wanlip Lane is a minor road and is of a smaller scale, though it was noted during a site visit (02/02/2016) that it is still utilised by substantial levels of through traffic.</p>
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>There have been a number of notable planning applications across ALS-G in recent years. Rectory Field Nursery, located in the centre of the AoLS to the south of Wanlip, has been subject to several applications, most recently an outline application for the erection of four residential dwellings (P/15/1277/2) which was refused in September 2015 (though it is noted that this scheme is of a small scale).</p> <p>In 2003, permission was granted conditionally for the construction of a 1,000 car park and ride facility to the east of the A6 (P/00/2507/2), which has now been constructed.</p>
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>There are a number of other designations identified in the Local Plan Proposals Maps, including: the Soar Valley Area of Local Landscape Value, which covers the eastern area of the AoLS; an education designation in the south-west; and a small area in the east designated under <i>Protection of Floodplains</i>. However, it is noted that all of the specific policies which relate to these designations, which were articulated in the previous Local Plan, have been deleted.</p> <p>It is noteworthy that ALS-G lies directly adjacent to the Birstall Direction of Growth area, set out in the Charnwood Core Strategy. A small area in the west of</p>

	the AoLS, the completed Park and Ride site, was allocated in the Local Plan for transport development (TR/22).
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	
<b>Site Photographs</b>	 <p>Photograph 1: View, from the southern end of Church Road, looking south towards Birstall. The separation between Wanlip and Birstall feels expansive at this point within the AoLS.</p>



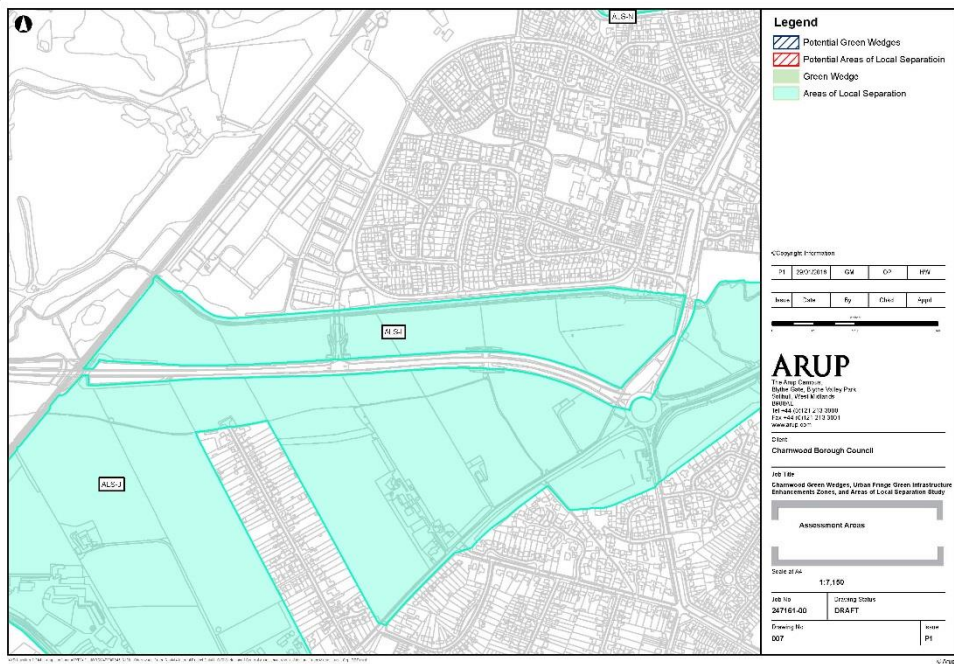
Photograph 2: View looking south, from Ryeclose Spinney, towards Birstall. Cedars Academy is a prominent feature within the view, protruding from the hillside. A small wooded area at the top of the hill screens views west towards Birstall.



Photograph 3: View looking east across Watermead Country Park, adjacent to the plant nursery along Wanlip Lane. Thurmaston is visible on the opposite side of the Soar Valley.

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment Commentary</b>
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.	<p>The gap between Birstall and Wanlip is judged to be very small in scale and particularly sensitive to change. ALS-G thus provides an essential gap between the two settlements; if encroached upon further, it is judged that the two would effectively coalesce. The area is subject to development pressures which might result in the merging of the settlements, and the AoLS helps to maintain a narrow band of land which physically separates the two and maintains their unique, contrasting characteristics. Furthermore, the wider AoLS maintains an important area of open land which provides a physical break between the two settlements, which have a strong visual relationship.</p> <p>Overall, ALS-G is judged to meet the purpose <b>strongly</b> in its entirety.</p>
<b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b>		ALS-G is deemed to meet the strategic role by providing an important physical separation between Birstall and Wanlip. This is at risk of being compromised as a result of particular identified development pressures.
<b>Is this the area's primary planning function?</b>		<p>The far west of the AoLS also falls under an education designation, whilst the completed Park and Ride facility was designated in the previous Local Plan. Given functionally and visually it forms part of the built area of Birstall, it is questionable whether this site should remain part of the AoLS designation.</p> <p>Similarly, the playing fields to the south are effectively part of the urban area of Birstall and not functionally or visually connected with the wider open area to the north-east.</p>
<b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b>		Although a countryside designation would also be appropriate for the area, the sensitivity of the gap is such that the AoLS designation would be required to ensure that the settlements do not merge.
<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>		ALS-G should be partially retained as an AoLS, with an area in the south-west removed; the primary function of much of this site in planning terms is as transport infrastructure, and as such the primary function of this area is not as part of the gap between settlements. Furthermore, the playing fields to the south may be more appropriately incorporated within the settlement limits as an area of urban open space.



<b>Area of Local Separation</b>	Area of Local Separation I (ALS-I)
<b>Area (ha)</b>	14.4
<b>Location Plan</b>	 <p><b>Legend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential Green Wedges</li> <li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li> <li>Green Wedge</li> <li>Areas of Local Separation</li> </ul> <p><b>ARUP</b>      100 Longwalk Road      Brierley Dale, Brierley Park      Sheffield, S19 4JH      0114 276 2000      0114 276 2001      www.arup.co.uk</p> <p><b>Client</b>      Charnwood Borough Council</p> <p><b>Job Title</b>      Charnwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p> <p><b>Scale of Map</b>      1:7,150</p> <p><b>Job No</b>      247161-00</p> <p><b>Drawing Status</b>      DRAFT</p> <p><b>Drawing No</b>      007</p> <p><b>Scale</b>      1:7,150</p>
<b>Description</b>	ALS-I is located immediately south of East Goscote. The assessment area is a strip of land bound by the A607 along the southern edge and Queniborough Brook and East Goscote to the north. The AoLS extends west up to the Birmingham to Peterborough Rail Line.

Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
	Vernacular	Residential	Other _____
	ALS-I is completely free of built development, consisting of open arable and grazing fields.		
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	While the AoLS is not affected by any developments, its sense of general openness is diminished by its scale. The area is enclosed by the A607 to the south, whose elevated position directly overlooks the area, and the Queniborough Brook to the north which is subject to substantial planting. The area to the east is considerably more open, with strong functional and visual connections to the wider countryside beyond.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	Although ALS-I is in close proximity to the built area of East Goscote to the north, its sense of rurality is not overly impacted as there is little visual link between the two areas (though the A607 to the south is an urbanising influence).		
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded		
	The AoLS falls within the boundaries of The Wreake Valley character area, as outlined within the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. The Wreake Valley is characterised as a flat bottomed valley with gently sloping sides. The landscape consists predominantly of mixed arable and pasture farming however, the areas south of East Goscote are increasingly affected by the urban influences of Syston and Leicester with their significant industry, housing and main roads.		
	ALS-I is located to the South of East Goscote and as result is influenced heavily by the A607 which runs along its southern perimeter. The AoLS is isolated between the A607, elevated on an embankment, and Queniborough Brook to the north. The brook is reinforced as a definitive boundary by the settlement edge of East Goscote that consists of separate residential and industrial estates. As a result of the low lie of the land, views are channelled along the east-west axis. The land is predominantly agricultural pastures, bounded by mature hedges and scrub. There are also remnants of historical land use in the form of ridge and furrow.		
	Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work		
	Evidence of erosion along the banks of Queniborough Brook.		
	Landscape condition		



	Generally in good condition, there are minor breaks in some of the field hedge boundaries.																										
Landscape and other features	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>Large, regular field patterns bounded by established hedgerows and mature deciduous trees along with densely planted embankments along Queniborough Brook are characteristic of the wider countryside. However, the noise and views generated by the A607 impact strongly on the rural character and give the landscape an urban fringe feel.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table><tr><td>Designed parkland</td><td>Scrub</td><td>Marsh</td></tr><tr><td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td>Rough grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Water meadows</td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Orchard</td><td><b>Deciduous woodland</b></td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed woodland</td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td><b>Arable</b></td></tr><tr><td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>Queniborough Brook and mature hedgerow boundaries could help to guide development within the AoLS.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>Mature deciduous trees within established hedgerows give the area a sense of remoteness experienced within the wider countryside. Signs of historic land use remain in the form of ridge and furrow. The proximity to the A607 along with broken views of large industrial buildings are key detractors of the landscape character.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr><tr><td>Pylons</td><td>Communications Masts</td><td>Tumuli</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>Other: <u>Ridge and Furrow</u></p>	Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation	Mixed woodland	Shelterbelt	<b>Arable</b>	Other _____			Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>	Pylons	Communications Masts	Tumuli	
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Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>Despite the gap between East Goscote and Queniborough being of a very small scale (around 200m at its narrowest), the gap feels more substantial as a result of the A607, which breaks up any visual connection between the two settlements. ALS-I further contributes to this perception of distance by providing a coherent, open buffer at the edge of East Goscote. In the eastern part of the AoLS, there is a reduced sense of distance as a result of longer vistas across open land, and Queniborough’s slightly elevated position topographically to the south.</p>																										

	<p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>The A607 is a key separator as a result of its elevated position topographically, whilst the Queniborough Brook further reduces intervisibility and increases the perceived distance between the two settlements.</p>																																													
<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>Aside from the far eastern area (adjacent to the Queniborough Roundabout), direct views between East Goscote and Queniborough are restricted.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>The eastern part of ALS-I at the Queniborough Roundabout is much more open, and there are strong views across this area (which includes ALS-J to the south) from East Goscote towards the prominent edge of Queniborough.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land? Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>There are strong visual links to the wider countryside to the east along the valley of the Gaddesby Brook, but aside from this visual links with the countryside beyond are relatively limited.</p>																																													
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td>Large</td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td>Expansive</td><td>Open</td><td><b>Enclosed</b></td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td>Vacant</td><td><b>Active</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td><b>Unified</b></td><td>Interrupted</td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td>Sweeping</td><td>Spreading</td><td>Dispersed</td><td><b>Channelled</b></td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <p>Due to the passing traffic generated along the A607, the AoLS is particularly noisy and the perimeter is an unappealing place to stay. However, the composition of landscape features within the assessment area are visually attractive.</p> <table><tr><td><b>Security:</b></td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td><b>Comfortable</b></td><td>Safe</td></tr><tr><td><b>Stimulus:</b></td><td>Monotonous</td><td><b>Indifferent</b></td><td><b>Interesting</b></td><td>Inspiring</td></tr><tr><td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td><td><b>Busy</b></td><td><b>Noisy</b></td><td>Still</td><td>Peaceful</td></tr><tr><td><b>Pleasure:</b></td><td><b>Undesirable</b></td><td>Satisfying</td><td>Pleasant</td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	<b>Medium</b>	Large	<b>Enclosure:</b>	Expansive	Open	<b>Enclosed</b>	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	Remote	Vacant	<b>Active</b>	<b>Unity:</b>	<b>Unified</b>	Interrupted	Fragmented	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	Sweeping	Spreading	Dispersed	<b>Channelled</b>	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	<b>Comfortable</b>	Safe	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	<b>Indifferent</b>	<b>Interesting</b>	Inspiring	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	<b>Busy</b>	<b>Noisy</b>	Still	Peaceful	<b>Pleasure:</b>	<b>Undesirable</b>	Satisfying	Pleasant	Delightful
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>ALS-I is strongly bounded by the Queniborough Brook to the north, the A607 to the south, Melton Road to the east and the Melton-Leicester railway line to the west.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p>																																													

	<p>Aside from Craftsman Way, which divides the AoLS, there are few readily recognisable boundary features within the area (which is of an open character).</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>The edge of Queniborough to the south-east is quite prominent, set on a slightly elevated topographical position with limited planting buffers. To the north, the edge of East Goscote is strongly defined by the Queniborough Brook. As a result of dense planting along this watercourse, it is visually separated from the countryside.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>Historically, the area has not tended to come under pressure for development (though wider development pressures around Queniborough and Syston are noted).</p>												
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table><tr><td>PRoW</td><td>Sports pitches</td><td>Playgrounds</td><td>Public Park</td></tr><tr><td>Informal Rec.</td><td>Dog walking</td><td>Picnic site</td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td>Open water</td><td>Watercourse</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>There are no identified recreational opportunities within ALS-I, as the whole of the area is in private ownership and there is no access along the Queniborough Brook.</p>	PRoW	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park	Informal Rec.	Dog walking	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	Watercourse		
PRoW	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park										
Informal Rec.	Dog walking	Picnic site	Camping										
Open water	Watercourse												
<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>Public access is very limited, as the A607 provides no separate footpath and no public footpaths traverse the area. Some views are possible from its edges (including Melton Road).</p>												
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>The A607 to the south has a visual and audible substantial influence on the AoLS, diminishing its sense of remoteness and effectively severing the area from the wider countryside. However, it also restricts views between East Goscote and Queniborough.</p>												
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>Historically, aside from a refused application for an access road in 1987 (P/87/1763/2), no major planning applications have been identified within the AoLS.</p>												
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>No other spatial planning policies have been identified for ALS-I.</p>												

<p><b>Consultation Responses</b></p>	
<p><b>Site Photographs</b></p>	 <p>Photograph 1: View from the junction between Craftsmans Lane and the A607, looking west over the AoLS. The A607 is on an embankment raised above the assessment area, as a consequence the road is a dominant feature in landscape.</p>



Photograph 2: View, from the junction between Craftsmans Lane and the A607, looking east over the AoLS. Dense tree and scrub planting along the banks of Queniborough Brook providing screening of the edge of East Goscote.



Photograph 3: View from the pedestrian footpath at the eastern edge of the AoLS, alongside Melton Road. The view looks west across the assessment area; ridge and furrow landscape features are evident in the grazing pastures.

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment Commentary</b>
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.	<p>ALS-I provides part of the gap between Queniborough and East Goscote. Although the area is visually isolated from the wider countryside, largely as a result of the A607, it does form part of an important physical gap between the two settlements and plays a role in preventing their coalescence. Any development within this area would substantially reduce the sense of separation between them (as this would likely be visible across the A607 and increase the prominence of the East Goscote settlement edge, currently relatively subtle as a result of dense planting along the Queniborough Brook).</p> <p>ALS-I is judged to meet the purpose <b>moderately</b>.</p>
<b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b>		ALS-I is deemed to meet the strategic role by forming part of the physical gap between East Goscote and Queniborough (with ALS-J to the south). As a result of the very small scale of the gap, there is a high risk of compromise if the designation were to be lost.
<b>Is this the area's primary planning function?</b>		Based on planning policy in the area, the key role of ALS-I in planning terms is to provide a buffer between the two settlements.
<b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b>		The sensitivity of the gap is such that the AoLS designation would be required to ensure that the settlements do not merge.
<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>		ALS-I should be maintained in its entirety. The existing boundaries are identified as strong and defensible and no change is proposed.



<b>Area of Local Separation</b>	ALS-J
<b>Area (ha)</b>	120
<b>Location Plan</b>	<p><b>Legend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential Green Wedges</li> <li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li> <li>Green Wedge</li> <li>Areas of Local Separation</li> </ul> <p><b>ARUP</b> The Arup Group Limited Global Centre, Guy's Yard Park, Central, 4/F, 4/F, 4/F SHANGHAI Tel: +86 (0)21 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 Fax: +86 (0)21 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 www.arup.com.cn</p> <p><b>Client:</b> Charmwood Borough Council</p> <p><b>Job Title:</b> Charmwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Environments Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p> <p><b>Assessment Area:</b></p> <p><b>Date of AG:</b> 1-11-2010</p> <p><b>Job No:</b> 267161-00</p> <p><b>Drawing Status:</b> DRAFT</p> <p><b>Drawing No:</b> 007</p> <p><b>Name:</b> PI</p>
<b>Description</b>	ALS-J is located to the north-east of Syston. It encompasses areas of land between Syston and Queniborough, as well as Queniborough and East Goscote. It is bound to the north-west by the Leicester-Melton railway line, to the south-west by field boundaries and the edge of Syston, to the east by Barkby Road and the edge of Queniborough, and to the north in part by the A607.

Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?		
	The north of the AoLS predominantly consists of open, pastoral/grazing fields, with some arable between the A607 and Melton Road. The western area contains more substantial built form, including various farm buildings and structures associated with the commercial growing industry/market gardens, and a substantial new housing development between Melton Road and Millstone Lane (currently under construction). Melton Road has also experienced recent ribbon development, predominantly residential.		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
	Vernacular	Residential	Other _____
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	The level of built form varies throughout the AoLS, but in particular the southern and western areas tend to be more developed, whilst the north and east have a more open character.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	The southern and western parts of ALS-J have an urban fringe feel, characterised by piecemeal built form, including residential and commercial nurseries, and areas of land subject to intense market gardening. The openness of these areas are fragmented, though there is some visual connectivity to the wider countryside. The northern area feels much more open, with a strong visual and functional relationship with the wider countryside and the valley of the Gaddesby Brook.		
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded		
	The AoLS is typical of the landscape in the western areas of the Wreake Valley, identified within the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. The land is predominantly agricultural fields, both arable and pastoral, experiencing urban development pressures as the surrounding settlements expand. As a result of expansion along the north-eastern edge of Syston, the character of new development and ongoing construction has a strong influence on the landscape. Agricultural land has taken on the character of urban farming, with housing and major transport infrastructure visible throughout much of the site. The commercial nursery gives the AoLS a character that is distinct to that of the surrounding countryside due to the large areas of young tree stock, predominately deciduous, arranged in single species tree plantations.		
	Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work		
	Disturbed ground is highly visible in the south of the AoLS due to construction of new housing between Melton Road and Millstone Lane.		

	<p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>The landscape is generally low to medium quality due to the pressures placed upon the land associated with its close proximity to urban settlements. The landscape condition improves to the north of Queniborough where agriculture is prevalent, established hedgerows have been maintained and shelterbelts of mature trees are prominent features within the landscape.</p>																							
<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>The influence of the plant nursery, a highly managed, commercial site, along with the close proximity to settlements either side of the AoLS, characterise the area as an urban fringe landscape experiencing development pressures. There is little diversity in the landscape features which further compounds the diminishing rural character.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table><tr><td>Designed parkland</td><td>Scrub</td><td>Marsh</td></tr><tr><td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td>Rough grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Water meadows</td><td><b>Grassland</b></td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Orchard</td><td>Deciduous woodland</td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed woodland</td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td><b>Arable/Pastoral</b></td></tr></table> <p>Other: <u>Nursery Plantation</u></p> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>Existing mature hedgerows</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>Land to the north of the AoLS is less impacted upon by the expansion of settlements and retains a more rural character, however the A607 is an intrusive feature in the landscape, both visually and through the traffic noise it produces. South of Queniborough, ongoing construction detracts from the landscape’s visual appeal.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td>Trees</td></tr><tr><td>Pylons</td><td>Communications Masts</td><td>Tumuli</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>Other:</p>	Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland	Water meadows	<b>Grassland</b>	Species rich grassland	Orchard	Deciduous woodland	Coniferous plantation	Mixed woodland	Shelterbelt	<b>Arable/Pastoral</b>	Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	Trees	Pylons	Communications Masts	Tumuli	
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<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>The gap between Syston and Queniborough feels almost non-existent. While there is a break in the built form between these two settlements, the perception of separation between the two is reduced as consequence of the enclosed nature of the land and relatively limited linkage to the wider countryside. New housing that was</p>																							

	<p>under construction at the time of the assessment between Melton Road and Millstone Lane will further reduce the gap in physical terms and reduce the perceived distance between the two settlements.</p> <p>In contrast, whilst the gap between Queniborough and East Goscote is physically very narrow (around 400m at its most narrow), it feels like a much more substantial break as a result of the physical and visual severance created by the A607, as well as the stronger functional and landscape relationship between this area and the wider countryside.</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>The A607, which has a dense planting buffer and elevated position for much of its length, increases the perceived distance between Queniborough and East Goscote in the north-west of the AoLS and, to an extent, restricts the settlements from coalescing (though the north-east is much more open and the gap feels narrower). Although the openness of the southern part of ALS-J is relatively fragmented, impeding views locally, the gap between Syston and Queniborough still feels very narrow.</p>																									
Views and Intervisibility	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>There is strong intervisibility between Syston and Queniborough in the southern part of the AoLS, largely as a result of the regular, prominent urban edges of these settlements. Intervisibility between Queniborough and East Goscote is less consistent, though there are strong views southwards around Melton Road.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>Long sightlines are present between Syston and Queniborough, particularly to the east of Melton Road in the southern part of ALS-J.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land? Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>There is a strong visual connection between the AoLS and the wider countryside to the north-west and, to a lesser extent, to the east. In the former case, the topography raises substantially, affording long vistas across this area.</p>																									
Visual Assessment	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td>Large</td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td>Expansive</td><td><b>Open</b></td><td><b>Enclosed</b></td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td>Vacant</td><td><b>Active</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td>Unified</td><td>Interrupted</td><td><b>Fragmented</b></td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td>Sweeping</td><td><b>Spreading</b></td><td><b>Dispersed</b></td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <p>AoLS-J is visually busy as a result of the intensity in land use and the presence of built form that surrounds the area, key examples are ongoing development attached</p>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	<b>Medium</b>	Large	<b>Enclosure:</b>	Expansive	<b>Open</b>	<b>Enclosed</b>	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	Remote	Vacant	<b>Active</b>	<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	Interrupted	<b>Fragmented</b>	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	Sweeping	<b>Spreading</b>	<b>Dispersed</b>	Channelled
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	<p>to Syston and the frequent traffic along Melton Road, along with the activities associated with the plant nursery. There is a sense of fragmentation about the AoLS due to the distinct separation in character between the northern and southern areas. This fragmentation, along with views of disturbed or working land, detracts from the overall pleasure of being within the AoLS.</p> <table> <tr> <td><b>Security:</b></td> <td>Unsafe</td> <td>Unsettling</td> <td><b>Comfortable</b></td> <td>Safe</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Stimulus:</b></td> <td>Monotonous</td> <td>Indifferent</td> <td><b>Interesting</b></td> <td>Inspiring</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td> <td><b>Busy</b></td> <td><b>Noisy</b></td> <td>Still</td> <td>Peaceful</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Pleasure:</b></td> <td>Undesirable</td> <td><b>Satisfying</b></td> <td>Pleasant</td> <td>Delightful</td> </tr> </table>				<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	<b>Comfortable</b>	Safe	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	Indifferent	<b>Interesting</b>	Inspiring	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	<b>Busy</b>	<b>Noisy</b>	Still	Peaceful	<b>Pleasure:</b>	Undesirable	<b>Satisfying</b>	Pleasant	Delightful
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<p><b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b></p>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>ALS-J is predominantly strongly bounded by defensible features, consisting of roads, railway lines, established hedgerows along field boundaries and well defined settlement edges. However, the boundary of the AoLS to the east of Melton Road and north of the A607 is weakly defined and does not appear to follow any readily recognisable features.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>In the north-east of the AoLS, the boundary could be realigned with the prominent and well defined settlement limit of East Goscote, as well as readily recognisable features such as the Gaddesby Brook and the A607. Within the AoLS, there are a number of linear features by which the boundary of the designation might be aligned, for example, strongly defined edges of properties, highways, private roads etc.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>The edges of Queniborough and Syston are generally very prominent with few natural features to soften the visual impact of rectilinear built form on the adjacent countryside. In the case of Syston, two consented residential schemes (P/13/1696/2 and P/14/0393/2) are set to increase this visual prominence further, in the latter case by extending outwards into an area of open land.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>There is significant development pressure in the gap between Syston and Queniborough, with 226 residential dwellings currently consented within the AoLS (from the two identified planning applications identified previously). The gap between Queniborough and East Goscote would appear to be under less substantial pressure.</p>																							
<p><b>Recreational opportunities</b></p>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table> <tr> <td><b>PRoW</b></td> <td>Sports pitches</td> <td>Playgrounds</td> <td>Public Park</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Informal Rec.</td> <td><b>Dog walking</b></td> <td>Picnic site</td> <td>Camping</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Open water</td> <td>Watercourse</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park	Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	Watercourse										
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	Public footpaths are the primary means for recreation within the assessment area.
<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>Access is fairly limited across much of ALS-J. A public footpath runs east-west from Syston to Queniborough across the south-eastern part of the AoLS, which will be partly enhanced as part of the consented residential scheme south of Melton Road (P/14/0393/2).</p>
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>The A607 is a substantial barrier between the AoLS and ALS-I and influences much of the northern part of the area. Melton Road is another significant piece of highway infrastructure, which cuts across the AoLS which has a particular influence on the character of the AoLS.</p>
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>A number of major applications have been made on ALS-J, going back some years.</p> <p>Recently, two substantial residential schemes have been consented: 125 dwellings at Queniborough Lodge following demolition of industrial buildings (P/13/1696/2); and 101 dwellings and creation of a cemetery to the east of Millstone Lane (P/14/0393/2).</p>
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>The majority of the AoLS is not covered by other planning policy designations. The exception is the sports ground between Melton Road and Rearsby Road, which is also designated as recreation land (though it is noted that the specific policy from the Local Plan which relates to this has been deleted).</p>
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	



**Site  
Photographs**



Photograph 1: View, looking west, from the PRoW within the AoLS between Syston and Queniborough. Signs of pressure on the gap between the two settlements are evident in the form of new development along the edge of Syston.



Photograph 2: View, from the entrance to Homestead Farm, looking north-east along Melton Road. The edge of Queniborough is clearly visible. Tall hedges block views to open space either side of Melton Road and diminish the perceived level of separation between the two settlements.



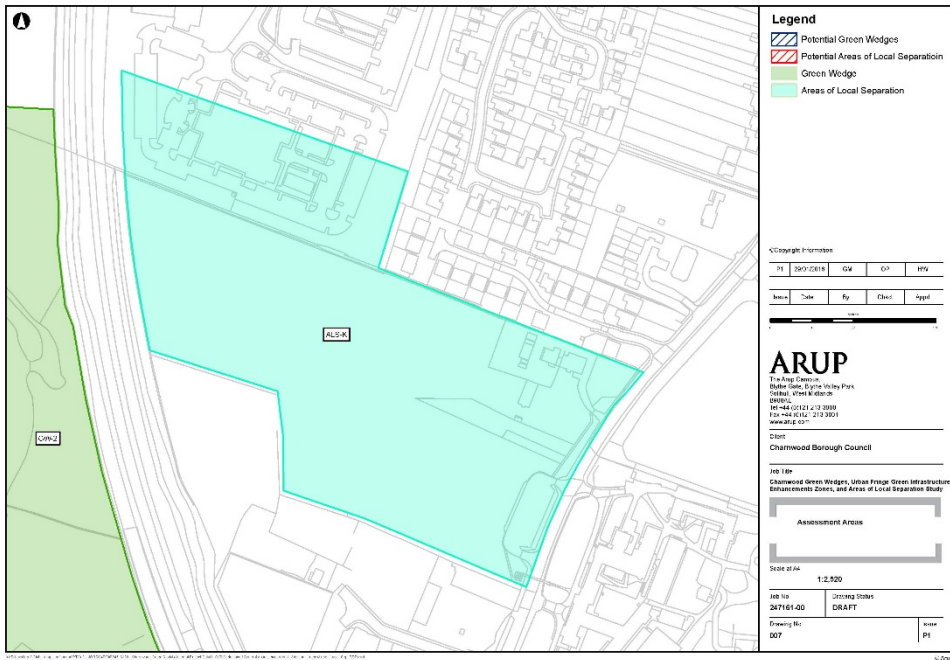
Photograph 3: View from a field gateway, north-west of Queniborough, alongside Melton Road. The view looks north towards East Goscote. The character of the landscape is distinctively more rural in this section of the AoLS and views towards the A607 are contained by a band of mature deciduous trees in the background.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	<p>Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.</p>	<p>ALS-J provides the essential gaps between East Goscote and Queniborough, and Syston and Queniborough, restricting development which would lead to the merging of these settlements.</p> <p>In the former case, the gap is very small in scale (400m wide at the narrowest point), the two settlements are visually and functionally separate, maintaining unique identities. The AoLS maintains an area of relatively unspoilt rurality, with strong links to the wider countryside beyond (along the valley of the Gaddesby Brook). However, any further outward expansion of either settlement would perceptually (and, to an extent physically) erode this separation. Although no present development pressures are identified in this area, the level of pressure in the wider Syston area are noted.</p> <p>In the latter case, the gap is also similarly narrow in physical terms, but under greater development pressure and more at risk of compromise as a result of strong intervisibility between Syston and Queniborough, which further perceptually reduces this gap. Melton Road, which connects the two settlements, is built up for much of its length and there is limited visual connectivity with the wider countryside in this axis. Here, perceptually, there is little break between the two settlements. Whilst the more open areas to the north and south of this are more open, their rurality is becoming increasingly diminished as a result of two substantial consented residential developments at the edge of Syston, which further reduce the scale of the gap. Further development here would likely lead to coalescence.</p> <p>There is an identified Extension Opportunity Area to the north-east of the existing AoLS which, in landscape and functional terms, is strongly linked; this area plays an equal role in maintaining the gap between East Goscote and Queniborough.</p> <p>Two small Zones of Weakness are identified along the south-western edge of ALS-J. These areas, broadly corresponding with the two identified residential planning permission sites (P/13/1696/2 and P/14/0393/2), will make no contribution to separation between Syston and Queniborough once built out.</p> <p>Overall the AoLS is judged to meet the purpose <b>strongly</b>.</p>

<p><b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b></p>	<p>ALS-J partially fulfils the strategic role. The northern part maintains the narrow physical separation between East Goscote and Queniborough, which would be at risk of being compromised as a result of its open character and very small scale. There is an identified Extension Opportunity Area to the north-east of the existing AoLS which also performs this strategic role.</p> <p>Although already compromised, the remaining physical gap between Syston and Queniborough in the south of ALS-J is critical to preventing the coalescence of these settlements. Development pressures around Syston would suggest that this area could be at risk of further compromise. Following build out of two consented residential schemes, two small areas in the south-west will not fulfil the strategic role as they will no longer form part of the gap between Syston and Queniborough.</p>
<p><b>Is this the area's primary planning function?</b></p>	<p>The AoLS maintains separation between settlements. While the majority of the area also functions as agricultural land, pastoral grazing in the north and commercial nurseries in the south, its primary function in planning terms is as a strategic gap between these settlements. A small area between Melton Road and Rearsby Road is also designated as a recreation site, though in a strategic sense it also makes a strong contribution to the narrow gap between East Goscote and Queniborough.</p>
<p><b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b></p>	<p>A countryside designation could provide a degree of protection against development. However, it is questionable whether the area open land between Syston and Queniborough has a truly countryside function, and would seem more closely linked with the edge of the settlement. Furthermore, the sensitivity of the gap is such that only ongoing designation of the area as an AoLS would ensure that the settlements do not merge.</p>
<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>	<p>ALS-J should be largely maintained and extended slightly to encompass a small Extension Opportunity Area to the north-east. The AoLS plays an important role in preventing physical and further perceptual merging between Queniborough, East Goscote and Syston, which would harm the settlement pattern in this area and put the unique identities of these settlements at risk.</p> <p>Although the gap between Queniborough and Syston has been compromised by consented developments and historic patterns of ribbon development along Melton Road, ALS-J provides a critical gap between these settlements which</p>

	<p>continues to separate them physically and provide a definitive break in the built-form.</p> <p>The ongoing designation of two small Zones of Weakness should be excluded from the designated area, as they do not fulfil the strategic role of an AoLS.</p>
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Area of Local Separation	Area of Local Separation K (ALS-K)					
Area (ha)	6.8					
Location Plan	<div><p><b>Legend</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Potential Green Wedges</li><li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li><li>Green Wedge</li><li>Areas of Local Separation</li></ul><p><b>Copyright Information</b></p><table><tr><td>PI</td><td>2017-0818</td><td>GW</td><td>00</td><td>HW</td></tr></table><p><b>ARUP</b> The Arup Group Global Office, 1000 Valley Park Central, 47th Floor New York, NY 10017 Tel: +1 212 512 2100 Fax: +1 212 212 2001 www.arup.com</p><p><b>Client</b> Charnwood Borough Council</p><p><b>Job Title</b> Charnwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Environmental Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p><p><b>Assessment Areas</b></p><p><b>Scale of Map</b> 1:2,500</p><p><b>Job No</b> 267161-00</p><p><b>Drawing Status</b> DRAFT</p><p><b>Drawing No</b> 007</p><p><b>Page</b> 01</p></div>	PI	2017-0818	GW	00	HW
PI	2017-0818	GW	00	HW		
Description	ALS-K is located between the settlements of Syston and Thurmaston. It encompasses playing fields to the west of the Roundhill Academy, and is bounded to the west by the A607, to the east by Melton Road, to the south by a dense planting buffer and by the backs of properties on Simpson Close as well as cutting across buildings at a business park on Granite Way to the north.					




Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
	Vernacular	Residential	Other _____
	The northern fringes of the AoLS encompass part of a business park, as well as a primary school site. These areas are completely built and make no contribution to separation between the two settlements. The remainder of the area consists of playing fields.		
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	While the area is not judged to be punctuated by development, the influence of built form at its immediate fringes increases the sense of enclosure.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	The area has an inherently urban feel. Whilst largely open (in the sense that most is not covered by development), the influence of built form at the edges of the AoLS and just beyond its edges, as well as the very small scale of the area and its severance from the wider countryside (physically and visually), diminishes its sense of rurality.		
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded		
	ALS-K is located within the Soar Valley as characterised in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment, however, the area differs from the character of the wider Soar Valley landscape. The AoLS is bounded along three edges by the settlements of Syston and Thurmaston and by the A607 along the western edge, resulting in a somewhat indistinct landscape character. This lack of unique character is compounded by flat topography and the use of the fields as sports pitches. Mature deciduous trees and scrub along the boundaries of the site provide an indication of its proximity to the wider countryside. A row of mature evergreen pines are a prominent vertical feature within the site, dating back to the early 1900’s, and provide an indication into the age and character of the landscape prior to urbanisation.		
	Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work		
	The row of mature pine trees appear to be in good condition.		
	Landscape condition		
	The landscape is generally in good condition and maintained for recreation and sports uses.		

Landscape and other features	How do landscape features characterise the area?			
	The mature deciduous woodland and mid-level scrub that bound the AoLS create a sense of enclosure that could be associated with the character of the wider countryside. However, distinct urban influences such as mown sports fields and the palisade fencing along the perimeter of the AoLS detract from the rural qualities and contribute to the impression that the area is isolated within the urban area that surrounds it.			
	What is the dominant landcover?			
	Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh	
	Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland	
	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich grassland	
	Orchard	Deciduous woodland	Coniferous plantation	
	Mixed woodland	Shelterbelt	Arable	
	Other: Sports pitches			
	What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?			
A belt of mature, predominantly evergreen, trees that run through the centre of the AoLS is a prominent feature.				
What are the main attractors / detractors?				
The belt of mature, predominantly evergreen, trees that run through the AoLS are unique to the AoLS and differ in age and quality from those that surround the perimeter. Their distinctness within the wider setting is an attractor in the AoLS.				
Landscape elements:				
Walls	Fences	Hedges	Trees	
Pylons	Communications Masts	Tumuli	Other	
<hr/>				
Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements	What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?			
	As a result of the usage of ALS-K as an urban park, it's very small scale and relative isolation from the wider open space/countryside network, there is little sense of separation between the settlements of Syston and Thurmaston, particularly along Melton Road. The gap is less than 200m wide and the AoLS area feels fully incorporated into the urban fabric; thus, it effectively feels like the settlements have coalesced.			
Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?				

	No established and permanent features have been identified which would contribute to the perceived distance between the settlements. Development is concentrated at the edges of the AoLS, thus reducing the perceived distance.																																																	
Views and Intervisibility	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>Within ALS-K, both settlement edges are immediately present to the north and south.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>There are no long sightlines from publically accessible areas. The AoLS feels highly enclosed by built form.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land? Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>There are very limited visual linkages from publically accessible areas with the wider countryside as a result of severance from dense planting and road infrastructure.</p>																																																	
Visual Assessment	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td><b>Small</b></td><td>Medium</td><td>Large</td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td>Expansive</td><td>Open</td><td><b>Enclosed</b></td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td>Vacant</td><td><b>Active</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td><b>Unified</b></td><td>Interrupted</td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td>Sweeping</td><td><b>Spreading</b></td><td>Dispersed</td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <p>The ALS is bound along every edge, either by urban development or busy roads; the sense of tranquillity and pleasure within the assessment area diminishes as a result. Furthermore, there is little variance in topography and visual diversity within the perimeter as a prerequisite for the lands use for sports and recreation, resulting in a somewhat stale appearance.</p> <table><tr><td><b>Security:</b></td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td>Comfortable</td><td><b>Safe</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Stimulus:</b></td><td>Monotonous</td><td><b>Indifferent</b></td><td>Interesting</td><td>Inspiring</td></tr><tr><td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td><td><b>Busy</b></td><td>Noisy</td><td>Still</td><td>Peaceful</td></tr><tr><td><b>Pleasure:</b></td><td>Undesirable</td><td><b>Satisfying</b></td><td>Pleasant</td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table>					<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	<b>Small</b>	Medium	Large	<b>Enclosure:</b>	Expansive	Open	<b>Enclosed</b>	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	Remote	Vacant	<b>Active</b>	<b>Unity:</b>	<b>Unified</b>	Interrupted	Fragmented	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	Sweeping	<b>Spreading</b>	Dispersed	Channelled	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	Comfortable	<b>Safe</b>	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	<b>Indifferent</b>	Interesting	Inspiring	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	<b>Busy</b>	Noisy	Still	Peaceful	<b>Pleasure:</b>	Undesirable	<b>Satisfying</b>	Pleasant	Delightful
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Nature and Extent of Urban Edges	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>The majority of ALS-K has a defensible boundary, consisting of Melton Road to the east, the A607 to the west, and well defined development edges (rectilinear residential properties to the north, industrial premises bounded by a robust planting buffer to the south). Part of the northern edge of the AoLS cuts through a building at a business park at Granite Way and does not follow a readily recognisable, logical or durable feature.</p>																																																	

	<p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>Within the AoLS, the landscape is open and no other defensible features exist. Along the northern edge, the well-defined edge of the business park at Granite Way may be a more suitable boundary for the designation.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>While ALS-K has very limited visibility from the wider countryside owing to the uses around the AoLS, it is notable that both built edges (to the north and south) are relatively prominent and visible.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>ALS-K falls entirely within the red line boundary of the outline planning permission associated with the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension (P/13/2498/2) for up to 4,500 dwellings, 13ha of employment land and other uses. The consented Indicative Masterplan indicates proposals for a new access road through the AoLS linking Melton Road and the A607. The illustrative masterplan otherwise indicates that the AoLS would be retained as sport pitches.</p>												
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table><tr><td>PRoW</td><td><b>Sports pitches</b></td><td>Playgrounds</td><td><b>Public Park</b></td></tr><tr><td>Informal Rec.</td><td>Dog walking</td><td>Picnic site</td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td>Open water</td><td>Watercourse</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>The primary land use of the AoLS is as sports pitches, mainly associated with the nearby school but publicly accessible during the site visit (02/02/2016). As such, it would appear to function more as an urban park and thus affords some recreation opportunities.</p>	PRoW	<b>Sports pitches</b>	Playgrounds	<b>Public Park</b>	Informal Rec.	Dog walking	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	Watercourse		
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<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>No official PRoWs through the area have been identified, though the sports pitches appear to be publically accessible during the daytime from observations during the site visit.</p>												
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>The A607 has a significant audible effect on the area (despite being visually disconnected) and Melton Road is visually prominent given its elevated position. Melton Road severs linkages to wider green space further west.</p>												

<b>Planning History</b>	ALS-K is falls entirely within the red line boundary for the outline planning permission for the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension (P/13/2498/2) of up to 4500 dwellings, up to 13ha of employment land, two local centres, one district centre, one food store, reserved land for traveller site, school and healthcare facilities, allotments, open space and other associated works. As well as full permission for a new southern link road and associated works.
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	Part of the area is also designated as Education Land and Buildings in the 2004 Local Plan Proposals Maps (though it is noted that the associated policy CF/3 from the 2004 Local Plan has since been deleted).
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	
<b>Site Photographs</b>	 <p>Photograph 1: View looking west across AoLS-K. Recreation is the prevailing land use within the AoLS. Consequently, the flat, open nature of the assessment area results in settlement edges being visible throughout.</p>





Photograph 2: View looking west from the pedestrian gateway on the eastern edge of the AoLS. A row of mature mixed species trees, dating back to the early 1900s, is a prominent feature within the recreational sports fields





	<p>Photograph 3: View looking south along Melton Road, access to the AoLS is via the road on the right hand side of the photo. The area surrounding the AoLS is heavily built up, as a result the perceived level of separation is minimal</p>
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<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment Commentary</b>
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.	<p>ALS-K provides the less critical gap between Thurmaston and Syston. Although the AoLS contributes to the physical separation of these settlements since the gap is physically very narrow, it is unclear how the designation would prevent further coalescence between these settlements (given that there is very little perceived separation between the settlements). The AoLS is very enclosed by built-form and is physically and visually severed from the wider green space/countryside network. It would appear to function as an urban park as opposed to a separator between the two settlements. The separation is vulnerable to compromise associated with outline consent for the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension, since a new access road is proposed east-west through the AoLS.</p> <p>The scale and character of the gap therefore mean that ALS-K is judged to meet the purpose <b>weakly</b>.</p>
<b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b>		<p>Most of ALS-K fulfils the strategic role, albeit weakly, by providing a degree of physical separation between Syston and Thurmaston.</p> <p>The northern area encompassing the business park is built-up and therefore makes no contribution to preventing the merging of the settlements. It has been identified Area of Weakness.</p>
<b>Is this the area's primary planning function?</b>		The perceived gap between Syston and Thurmaston has been effectively lost, although the physical gap is retained. As such, maintaining separation may not be the primary role of the area. It would appear to perform more as an urban park or recreation site (noting its current designation as Education in the Proposals Maps).
<b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b>		Given the role of the land within the AoLS in sport and recreation provision, there may be potential for open space policy to be considered as appropriate.
<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>		It is recommended that ALS-K should not be maintained as an AoLS. A designation which reflects the area's role in recreation provision within the defined settlement limits may be more appropriate. The conclusions for this area should also take into account wider opportunities for linkages to green infrastructure to the east (for example those associated with the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension).

<b>Area of Local Separation</b> <b>Area (ha)</b>	<b>Area of Local Separation L (ALS-L)</b> 42.1
<b>Location Plan</b>	<p><b>Legend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential Green Wedges</li> <li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li> <li>Green Wedge</li> <li>Areas of Local Separation</li> </ul> <p><b>ARUP</b>      The ARUP Group      Global Office, 1000 Valley Park      Central, 1000 Valley Park      1000 Valley Park      1000 Valley Park      1000 Valley Park      1000 Valley Park</p> <p><b>Client</b>      Charnwood Borough Council</p> <p><b>Job No</b>      Charnwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure      Environmental Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p> <p><b>Assessment Areas</b></p> <p><b>Scale of Map</b>      1:5,330</p> <p><b>Job No</b>      267161-00</p> <p><b>Drawing Status</b>      DRAFT</p> <p><b>Drawing No</b>      007</p> <p><b>Page</b>      01</p>
<b>Description</b>	ALS-L is located between Barkby and Syston. It is bounded to the west by Barkby Brook and field boundaries, to the south by Main Street and the edge of the settlement of Barkby, by Queniborough Road to the east, and by a small part of Barkby Brook and field boundaries to the north by the edge of the settlement of Syston.

<b>Site Audit</b>			
<b>Existing Uses and Density of Buildings</b>	<i>What built development exists within the AoLS?</i>		
	<b>Farm buildings</b> Industrial Commercial Vernacular	Hotel Civic <b>Educational</b> Residential	Health Religious Leisure/Sports <b>Other:</b> Cemetery
	<p>Built form is predominantly concentrated directly north of Barkby, consisting predominantly of farm buildings and structures as well as a small number of residential properties. At the northern boundary of the AoLS at the edge of Syston, a residential development (currently under construction) encroaches slightly into the AoLS. The remainder of the area is open and undeveloped, comprised of open fields and vegetation along Barkby Brook and field boundaries with a strongly rural character.</p> <p><i>Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?</i></p> <p>As development is focused at the edges of the settlements of Syston and Barkby, rather than throughout the area, the AoLS retains a high degree of openness.</p> <p><i>Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?</i></p> <p>Although there are a number of existing structure and buildings at the southern edge of the AoLS, these are predominantly associated with countryside use and do not therefore diminish the sense of rurality of the AoLS. At the local level, the rurality of the northern area is reduced slightly by the prominent built edge of Syston, though it is noted that there is a firm shift to unspoilt countryside immediately to the south.</p>		
<b>Landscape Character and Type</b>	<p><i>To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded</i></p> <p>ALS-L is located in an area of transition between the Wreake Valley and High Leicestershire character areas as outlined within the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. As a result, the AoLS shares characteristics of each of the two Charnwood character areas. There are similar urbanising influences impacting on the AoLS as experienced in the wider Wreake Valley, due to the expansion of Syston to the north. However the major transport infrastructure seen elsewhere in the Wreake Valley impacts on this AoLS to a lesser extent.</p> <p>The landscape character is more closely associated with that of the High Leicestershire character area featuring slightly undulating agricultural land with open and expansive views to the wider landscape. The field patterns are large and regular, bounded by hedges frequently interspersed with mature trees and used for crop production. Although there is a strong sense of openness, there are views of the edge of Syston to the north and glimpses of agricultural structures and a church spire belonging to the village of Barkby. The predominant landscape feature is a small watercourse, Barkby Brook, lined with dense tree and scrub cover that winds along the western perimeter of the AoLS and penetrates the southern edge of Syston.</p>		

	<p><i>Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work</i></p> <p>Ground has been worn bare along the PRow that traverses the site diagonally from the south end of Queniborough Road to the southern edge of Syston, indicating regular use of the PRow.</p> <p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>The landscape is generally in good condition, hedge boundaries are established and there are very few areas that require replanting. The land appears to be well maintained.</p>																													
<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>Established hedgerows interspersed with individual trees as well as densely planted banks of Barkby Brook contribute to the semi-rural character of the landscape in this area. The scale of the area reduces the urbanising influence of the settlements to the north and south. Barkby is a historic village and designated as a conservation area adds to the rural character as it is visually well integrated into the landscape.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table><tr><td>Designed parkland</td><td>Scrub</td><td>Marsh</td></tr><tr><td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td>Rough grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Water meadows</td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Orchard</td><td>Deciduous woodland</td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed woodland</td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td><b>Arable</b></td></tr><tr><td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>The predominant land cover in the AoLS is arable farming.</p> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>Barkby Brook is a permanent and durable feature that would act as a defensible boundary. Furthermore, a network of strong hedgerow boundaries provide existing intermittent boundaries.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>The rural character and views towards Barkby from within the AoLS, where mature trees and aged buildings are visible, are both attractors within the AoLS that help to characterise the landscape. Telephone poles that string through the site are the main detractors.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Walls</b></td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Pylons</b></td><td>Communications Masts</td><td>Tumuli</td><td></td></tr></table>				Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	Deciduous woodland	Coniferous plantation	Mixed woodland	Shelterbelt	<b>Arable</b>	Other _____			<b>Walls</b>	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>	<b>Pylons</b>	Communications Masts	Tumuli	
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	Other: <u>Brook</u>																									
<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>At its narrowest point, the gap between Barkby and Syston is 650m wide. From the edge of Barkby facing north, the gap towards Syston feels relatively narrow as a result of the highly open character of the landscape and the prominence of Syston’s urban edge. Facing south, and within the area, the gap feels more substantial as a result of occasional hedgerows (often well established), planting along Barkby Brook and the less prominent settlement edge of Barkby, which is more irregular and characterised by piecemeal, small buildings and planted features, as well as a few more prominent features such as residential properties and Barkby Church.</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>The densely planted riparian corridor along the Barkby Brook acts as a barrier to wider views, looking south between Syston and Barkby. However, the AoLS is predominantly very open and the gap between the settlements feels relatively narrow.</p>																									
<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position? Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>Throughout much of the AoLS, the edges of both settlements can be seen. Views are occasionally obscured by hedgerows and other planted features. The AoLS feels very open with long views to the surrounding countryside to both the south and east.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land? Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>The topography of the wider countryside rises up steadily to the east from the AoLS and can be seen prominently within the AoLS. There are strong visual and functional connections with this area.</p>																									
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td><b>Large</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td>Expansive</td><td><b>Open</b></td><td>Enclosed</td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td><b>Vacant</b></td><td>Active</td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td><b>Unified</b></td><td>Interrupted</td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td>Sweeping</td><td><b>Spreading</b></td><td>Dispersed</td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <p>ALS – L feels somewhat remote, considering its proximity to the urban settlement of Syston, as a result of rolling topography and variation in landscape features. Dense hedgerows and areas of scrub and woodland are dominant features within views throughout the assessment area and combine to form a visually diverse and</p>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Large</b>	<b>Enclosure:</b>	Expansive	<b>Open</b>	Enclosed	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	Remote	<b>Vacant</b>	Active	<b>Unity:</b>	<b>Unified</b>	Interrupted	Fragmented	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	Sweeping	<b>Spreading</b>	Dispersed	Channelled
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>The AoLS is predominantly bounded by defensible and readily recognisable features, in particular, Queniborough Road to the east, the Barkby Brook to the west (as well as one of its tributaries to the north-east) and the strongly defined settlement edge of Syston. In some cases, hedgerows are adopted as boundaries which, although recognisable, are less durable. At the edge of Barkby, there may be scope to realign the boundary of the AoLS to follow recognisable durable features, while the boundary assessment should also take into account the extant planning permission P/13/0925/2 for 149 dwellings, the red line boundary of which covers a small part of the north of the AoLS.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>Readily recognisable features exist at the edge of Barkby which could form a defensible boundary. However, it is likely that the implementation of the permission at the edge of Syston (P/13/0925/2) could create a new defensible boundary. There is a network of well-established hedgerows that cut across the AoLS, as well as more permanent features directly adjacent to the AoLS (e.g. Queniborough Road), which could be adopted as alternative, more robust boundary features.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>The edge of Syston is very prominent in the landscape as a result of the scale and regularity of development, as well as the lack of planting buffers. Barkby is considerably less visible within the landscape.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>Development pressures around the edge of Syston should be a key consideration in defining the extent of ALS-L.</p>																				
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>PRoW</b></td><td>Sports pitches</td><td>Playgrounds</td><td>Public Park</td></tr><tr><td>Informal Rec.</td><td>Dog walking</td><td>Picnic site</td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td>Open water</td><td><b>Watercourse</b></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>An unmaintained public footpath offers access from Barkby to Syston across the AoLS, with some evidence of usage recorded through site visits (02/02/2016). The</p>	<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park	Informal Rec.	Dog walking	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	<b>Watercourse</b>										
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	Barkby Brook is a natural watercourse which acts as an attractor, sheltered by riparian planting, though access is somewhat limited.
<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>Much of the area is not publicly accessible, with just one footpath passing through the AoLS north-west to south-east between Syston to Barkby.</p>
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>Visually and audibly, transport infrastructure has a relatively limited impact upon ALS-L, with the minor Queniborough Road to the east the only recognisable feature. This contributes to the area's sense of remoteness.</p>
<b>Planning History</b>	A major application for 149 dwellings with associated landscaping, public open space, infrastructure and access (P/13/0925/2) was granted conditional permission in January 2014 and encroaches onto the northern part of the AoLS. The permission was under construction at the time of the assessment.
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	The southern part of the AoLS at the edge of Barkby is also part of a Conservation Area, while a small area in the south-east is a designated Cemetery.
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	

**Site  
Photographs**



Photograph 1: Views from the edge of Barkby towards Syston. The edge of Syston is partially screened by established hedgerows lined with mature trees



Photograph 2: View looking North towards Syston from within the AoLS. The edge of Syston becomes increasingly prominent from within the assessment area.

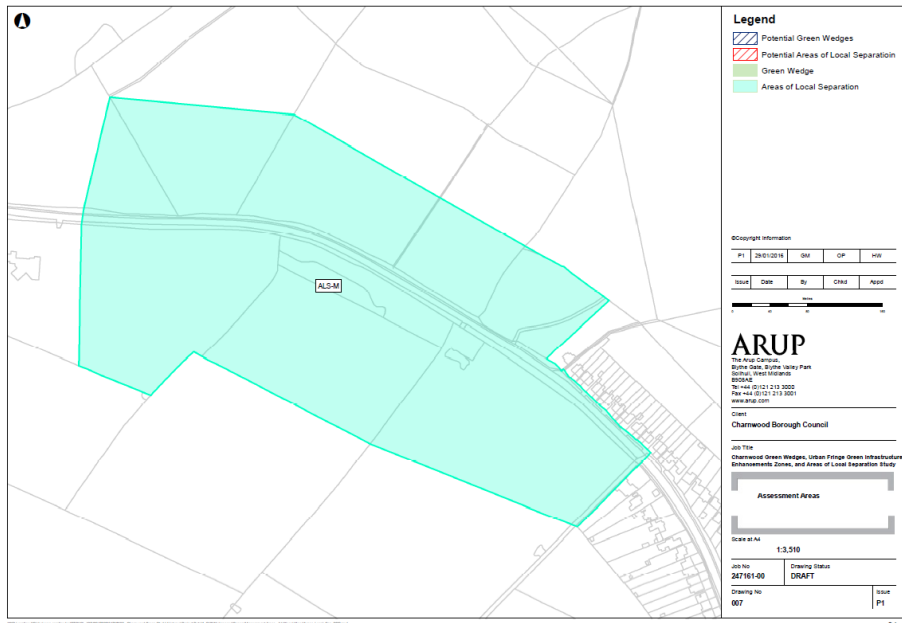


Photograph 3: View looking south towards Barkby from within the AoLS. The settlement edge is well integrated within the landscape.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	<p>Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.</p>	<p>ALS-L provides the gap between Barkby and Syston. The gap is of a very rural and open character, with strong links to the wider countryside. There is strong intervisibility between the two settlements as a result of its general openness, with long vistas across open land. It is noted that the edge of Barkby is more integrated into the landscape as a result of its historic development pattern, whereas the edge of Syston to the north of the AoLS is highly prominent. This edge is likely to become more prominent upon completion of 149 dwellings associated with permission P/13/0925/2. While the gap is of a fairly substantial scale currently, there are particular development pressures on the edge of Syston which make it vulnerable to compromise, both physically and especially visually.</p> <p>A small area in the north of the AoLS has been identified as a Zone of Weakness, as it would be unlikely to contribute to separation following the development of this area for housing. A wider Extension Opportunity Area has also been identified to the north-east of the current designation, which is judged to be crucial to maintaining the current scale and character of the current gap and preserving its links to the wider countryside.</p> <p>Overall, ALS-L is judged to meet the purpose <b>moderately</b>.</p>
<p><b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b></p>		<p>The majority of ALS-L meets the strategic role by providing a physical gap between Barkby and Syston. While the gap is not at immediate risk of compromise, as a result of development pressures along its northern edge and its particularly sensitive character it is deemed that the ongoing integrity of the designation is important to mitigate any future risk.</p> <p>An identified Area of Weakness in the north of the AoLS is deemed not to meet the strategic role as it effectively no longer forms part of the gap but is within the settlement of Syston.</p>
<p><b>Is this the area’s primary planning function?</b></p>		<p>The far southern part of the AoLS is part of the Barkby Conservation Area, and it is judged that this is the primary planning function of this area (given its mixture of built and open land). In itself, this area does not function as part of the gap between the two settlements.</p> <p>While the remainder of the area is strongly integrated into the wider countryside, its primary function in planning terms is to maintain the separation between Barkby and Syston by providing a physical gap between the modern, hard settlement edge of Syston and the fringe of Barkby,</p>

	<p>which has a contrasting character. The identified Extension Opportunity Area in the in the north-east is also deemed to serve this function.</p>
<p><b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b></p>	<p>Aside from the small part of the AoLS within the designated Conservation Area, which restricts the type and scale of development possible, the sensitivity of the gap is such that the AoLS designation would be required to ensure that the settlements do not merge.</p>
<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>	<p>ALS-L should be partially retained, with a possible extension to the north-east. A small Area of Weakness in the north which no longer meets the strategic role should be considered for release, and consideration should be given to the southern area at the edge Barkby which falls within the designated Conservation Area. The primary function of this area is not as part of the gap between settlements. Furthermore, there could be an opportunity to rationalise the existing boundary of the AoLS taking into account the planning permission to the north and existing defensible boundary features.</p>





Area of Local Separation	Area of Local Separation M (ALS-M)
Area (ha)	15.9
Location Plan	<div></div>
Description	Area of Local Separation M (ALS-M) lies between Anstey and Newtown Linford. The parcel is situated on the eastern edge of Newtown Linford and on the north-western edge of Anstey. Bradgate Road cuts across the centre of the area. Ribbon development along Bradgate Road adjoins the eastern and western boundaries. The area is bounded by countryside to the north and south.

Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?		
	Farm buildings are the only built development within ALS-M. Otherwise, the parcel consists of a mix of agricultural farmland, dense woodland and scrubland.		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
Vernacular	Residential	Other _____	
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	The part of ALS-M on the northern side of Bradgate Road feels opens with long vistas of surrounding countryside. However, the part of the area on the southern side of Bradgate Road feels less open. Clusters of deciduous trees, and woodland restricts views across the area and makes this part of ALS-M feel more enclosed. Residential properties immediately to the east and west signal the start of settlements immediately adjacent to the AoLS, though the primary visual linkage is with the wider countryside to the north and south.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	The parcel generally feels open with a strong sense of rurality.		
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded		
	ALS-M lies within the Charnwood Forest Character Area as outlined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. The highly distinctive upland character area contrasts with the lower lying nature of the surrounding landscape character areas. Landscape mosaic of pasture, frequent woodland and exposed hilltops of acidic grassland. Within this parcel, there are impressive north western views towards Bradgate Country Park, a Grade II Historic Park and Garden.		
	Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work		
	Evidence of disturbed ground, within field adjacent to 293 Bradgate Road, Anstey. There is outline planning permission for the use of the land for the erection of three detached houses.		
	Landscape condition: The landscape is generally in good condition, the land appears to be well maintained and hedge boundaries are well established.		
Landscape and other features	How do landscape features characterise the area?		
	Intermittent hedgerows with deciduous trees and an undulating landscape of arable and pastoral land characterise the area. Looking north-west, landscape contours rise up towards a high point with view of coniferous woodland, bracken and heathland within Bradgate Park. What is the dominant landcover?		

	<div>Designed parkland</div> <div>Peat bog</div> <div>Water meadows</div> <div>Orchard</div> <div>Mixed woodland</div> <div>Other _____</div>	<div>Scrub</div> <div>Moor/heath</div> <div>Grassland</div> <div>Deciduous woodland</div> <div>Shelterbelt</div>	<div>Marsh</div> <div>Rough grassland</div> <div>Species rich grassland</div> <div>Coniferous plantation</div> <div>Arable</div>
	<div>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</div> <div>The rising topography towards Bradgate Park is a permanent and durable feature which may help guide development, with PRoW following these sweeping landforms, and areas dense woodland and to the sense of rurality and tranquillity and provide access to Bradgate Park from this area.</div> <div>What are the main attractors / detractors?</div> <div>The main attractor are the long sightlines looking north west towards Bradgate Park. Communication masts and wind turbine are visible looking south west, which detract from the landscape.</div> <div>Landscape elements:</div> <div><div>Walls</div><div>Pylons</div><div>_____</div></div> <div><div>Fences</div><div>Communications Masts</div></div> <div><div>Hedges</div><div>Tumuli</div></div> <div><div>Trees</div><div>Other</div></div>		
Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements	<div>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</div> <div>ALS-M lies between ribbon development on Bradgate Road, between the edges of Anstey and Newtown Linford. This AoLS forms the physical gap between the two settlements. Although this gap is of a relatively small scale, (approximately 500m), there is an increased perception of distance between the two settlements as a result of the landform and lack of intervisibility. There is no immediate awareness of the proximity of both settlements from within the area.</div> <div>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</div> <div>The winding nature of Bradgate Road restricts views of the edge of Newtown Linford and Anstey, increasing the perception of distance between the two settlements.</div>		
Views and Intervisibility	<div>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</div> <div>When viewed from the centre of the AoLS from Bradgate Road, there is limited visibility towards both Newtown Linford andAnstey. Development on Bradgate Road, at the immediate edge of each settlement, moves into view while passing along the road but views between the settlements are very limited (despite the close proximity).</div> <div>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</div>		

	<p>There are some opportunities for long vistas of Cropston to the north from within the parcel but this is limited. Other than these there are no long vistas of neighbouring settlements from Bradgate Road.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>The topography of the wider countryside rises up steadily to the north west from the AoLS and can be seen prominently within the AoLS. There are strong visual and functional connections with this area.</p> <p><i>Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>There are long line views of Bradgate park and Bradgate Chapel north of Bradgate Road, from within the parcel. The elevated position of the chapel within the rising topography further accentuates this important view.</p>																																													
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td>Large</td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td><b>Expansive</b></td><td><b>Open</b></td><td>Enclosed</td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td><b>Wild</b></td><td>Remote</td><td>Vacant</td><td><b>Active</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td><b>Unified</b></td><td>Interrupted</td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td><b>Sweeping</b></td><td><b>Spreading</b></td><td>Dispersed</td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <p>The perception of the landscape differs from the north and south side of Bradgate Road. Looking north west there is a greater sense of wildness and remoteness as a result of the rolling topography and variation in landscape features. Dense hedgerow lining field boundaries, areas of scrub and woodland, with coniferous woodland on the horizon, edging Bradgate Park, forming a visually diverse experience of the landscape from this point. Looking south east, the perception of the ALS at this point, feels more enclosed and constrained, there is greater evidence of urban settlements, with residential housing in view and communication masts. Potential views are obstructer due to a rising landscape typography and areas of woodland impeding long south eastern views. Overall, the assessment area is fragmented composition within the landscape.</p> <table><tr><td><b>Security:</b></td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td><b>Comfortable</b></td><td>Safe</td></tr><tr><td><b>Stimulus:</b></td><td>Monotonous</td><td>Indifferent</td><td><b>Interesting</b></td><td>Inspiring</td></tr><tr><td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td><td>Busy</td><td>Noisy</td><td>Still</td><td><b>Peaceful</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Pleasure:</b></td><td>Undesirable</td><td>Satisfying</td><td><b>Pleasant</b></td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	<b>Medium</b>	Large	<b>Enclosure:</b>	<b>Expansive</b>	<b>Open</b>	Enclosed	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	<b>Wild</b>	Remote	Vacant	<b>Active</b>	<b>Unity:</b>	<b>Unified</b>	Interrupted	Fragmented	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	<b>Sweeping</b>	<b>Spreading</b>	Dispersed	Channelled	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	<b>Comfortable</b>	Safe	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	Indifferent	<b>Interesting</b>	Inspiring	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	Busy	Noisy	Still	<b>Peaceful</b>	<b>Pleasure:</b>	Undesirable	Satisfying	<b>Pleasant</b>	Delightful
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>The parcel has weak boundaries on almost all sides except on part of the south-eastern boundary which is bound by Bradgate Road. The weaker boundaries consists of open fields, vegetation and residential development.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p>																																													

	<p>Field boundaries to the north and south of Bradgate Road provides potential alternative boundaries, but are not inherently defensible.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>The settlement edge is not prominent within the landscape. It is screened by vegetation and the winding landform.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>None</p>												
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table> <tr> <td><b>PRoW</b></td> <td>Sports pitches</td> <td>Playgrounds</td> <td>Public Park</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Informal Rec.</b></td> <td><b>Dog walking</b></td> <td>Picnic site</td> <td>Camping</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Open water</td> <td>Watercourse</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><i>There is a maintained public footbath along the Bradgate Road, which offers access from Anstey to Newtown Linford, which cuts through the AoLS. There is also a PRoW which is accessible outside of the AoLS between two private residents, however this route falls outside of the AoLS.</i></p>	<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park	<b>Informal Rec.</b>	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	Watercourse		
<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park										
<b>Informal Rec.</b>	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping										
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<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>Other than the public path along Bradgate Road, there is no public access to the AoLS itself. There is a public right of way adjacent the eastern side of the parcel. Although this PRoW is not very obvious due to its position between residential developments, it provides access to Bradgate Park.</p>												
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>Bradgate Road straddles the parcel and links Anstey and Newtown Linford. There is a pedestrian path on one side of Bradgate Road providing opportunities to experience the landscape and enjoy important views across the parcel.</p>												
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>No recent major planning applications have been identified within ALS-M as part of this assessment.</p>												
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>ALS-M lies within the Charnwood Forest Character Area.</p>												

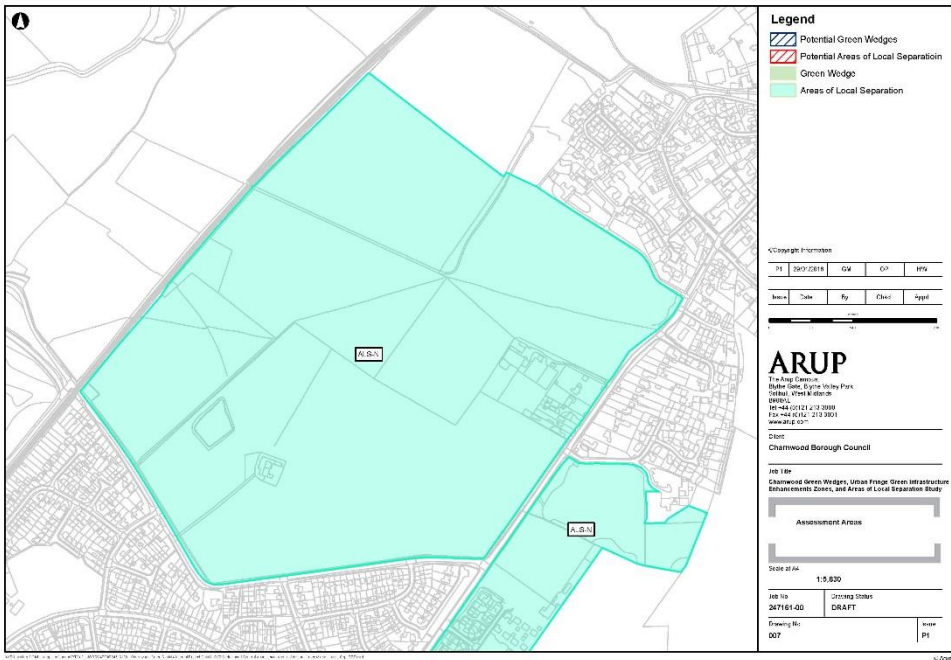
<p><b>Consultation Responses</b></p>	
<p><b>Site Photographs</b></p>	 <p>Photograph 1: Looking south west towards Anstey Settlement</p>  <p>Photograph 2: Looking north east towards Newtown Linford</p>





Photograph 3: Looking east towards Anstey

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	<p>Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.</p>	<p>It is considered that ALS-M makes a <b>moderate</b> contribution to the overall AoLS purposes.</p> <p>ALS-M provides physical separation between Anstey and Newtown Linford, restricting further development which, as a result of the existing development pattern of ribbon development on Bradgate Road may lead to the merging of the settlements. Although there is an increased perception of distance between the two settlements due to the winding landform and the lack of intervisibility, this gap of a small scale and a further reduction in this gap would risk its compromise.</p> <p>Whilst there are identified pressures in the area arising from planning applications, the area may be at risk of compromise from even minor applications as a result of the small scale of the gap.</p>
<p><b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b></p>		<p>ALS-M fulfils the strategic role by maintaining the physical gap between Anstey and Newtown Linford. Furthermore, as a result of its small scale and vulnerability to ribbon development, this gap may be at risk of compromise.</p>
<p><b>Is this the area's primary planning function?</b></p>		<p>The AoLS falls within the Charnwood Forest Character Area and has a rural character, with strong links to the wider countryside in both visual and functional terms; much is in agricultural use. However, a result of the identified risk of ribbon development, it is judged that the primary role of the area in planning terms is to maintain the openness of the gap between the two settlements.</p>
<p><b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b></p>		<p>Policy CS12 (Green Infrastructure) of the adopted Charnwood Core Strategy includes policies to protect the character of Charnwood Forest Character Area. However, this does not preclude development and as such will not prevent coalescence.</p> <p>Furthermore, countryside policies would not specifically restrict development which would impact upon the gap, thus an AoLS designation would seem the most appropriate to prevent coalescence.</p>
<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>		<p>It is considered that ALS-M should be maintained as an Area of Local Separation. The removal of this designation could result in coalescence of Anstey and Newtown Linford along Bradgate Road.</p>

<b>Area of Local Separation</b>	Area of Local Separation N (ALS-N)
<b>Area (ha)</b>	58.6
<b>Location Plan</b>	
<b>Description</b>	<p>ALS-N is located between the settlements of East Goscote and Rearsby. The AoLS is divided into two areas by Melton Road. To the west, the area is also bounded to the west by the Leicester-Melton railway line, to the south by Broome Lane and to the north by field boundaries and the edge of Rearsby. The area east of Melton Road is also bound to the east by field boundaries, to the south by the access road for Rearsby Lodge Farm, and to the north (in part) by Grange Avenue.</p>

Site Audit		
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?	
	There are two small clusters of residential development within the AoLS: one to the west of Melton Road; and the other at the edge of Rearsby, encompassing Rose Drive and Nurseryman Way. Further residential development is currently ongoing east of Nurseryman Way. Aside from a small agricultural dwelling to the north of Broome Lane, the remainder of the ALS is free from development, consisting of large, open agricultural fields.	
	Farm buildings	Hotel
	Industrial	Civic
	Commercial	Educational
Vernacular	Residential	Health
		Religious
		Leisure/Sports
		Other _____
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments? Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?	
	The western part of the area has a strong sense of openness and is characterised by rural land uses (arable fields). This is diminished in the east by residential ribbon development along Melton Road, which reduces the sense of rurality here. Market gardening uses are also present here. This combination of urban and urban fringe land uses reduces the sense of rurality and limits the effectiveness of the AoLS in preventing coalescence, as there is a sense that these places have merged.	
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded	
	The AoLS falls within the boundaries of The Wreake Valley character area, as outlined within the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. The Wreake Valley is characterised as a flat bottomed valley with gently sloping sides. The landscape consists predominantly of mixed arable and pasture farming and retains a rural character.	
	The AoLS site itself is located on the valley slopes south of the River Wreake, as a result views across the Wreake Valley give the site an increased sense of connectivity to the wider countryside. Views south of the area are strongly influenced by the settlement edge of East Goscote. Much of the land is used for the production of arable crops, with large open fields separated by established hedgerows. There is a lack of vertical landscape features, such as woodland, within the extents of the site resulting in a sense of open expansiveness.	
	Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work	
	There are signs of disturbed land where vehicles have access to some of the farmed fields. The area east of Melton Road is showing signs of development pressures as land appears to be in the process of ground works preparation. There are also a few instances of new timber post fencing.	
	Landscape condition	

	Much of the landscape is in working condition and managed for crop production. Some of the hedgerows within the site are degrading with breaks apparent. The area of land to the north of the AoLS, east of Melton Road, appears to be unmanaged, with rough grassland and areas of scrub forming.																										
Landscape and other features	<p>How do landscape features characterise the area?</p> <p>Large, regular field patterns bounded by deciduous hedgerows characterise the area as working farmland.</p> <p>What is the dominant landcover?</p> <table><tr><td>Designed parkland</td><td>Scrub</td><td>Marsh</td></tr><tr><td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td><b>Rough grassland</b></td></tr><tr><td>Water meadows</td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Orchard</td><td>Deciduous woodland</td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed woodland</td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td><b>Arable</b></td></tr><tr><td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</p> <p>What are the main attractors / detractors?</p> <p>One of the main attractors within the AoLS is the sloping landform that affords long distant views across The Wreake Valley to the north of the site. However, the rail line that bounds the north western edge of the AoLS diminishes from the sense of ruralness created by its proximity to open countryside. Telegraph poles running through the site also detract from the landscape’s visual qualities.</p> <p>Landscape elements:</p> <table><tr><td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td>Trees</td></tr><tr><td><b>Pylons</b></td><td>Communications Masts</td><td>Tumuli</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>Other: <u>Pond</u></p>	Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	<b>Rough grassland</b>	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	Deciduous woodland	Coniferous plantation	Mixed woodland	Shelterbelt	<b>Arable</b>	Other _____			Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	Trees	<b>Pylons</b>	Communications Masts	Tumuli	
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Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	Trees																								
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Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements	<p>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</p> <p>Distance ranges from 200-800m between settlements. While the western part of ALS-N has a sense of remoteness and separation from the two settlements, the gap feels very narrow around Melton Road, with strong visual links which diminish the perceptual and physical gap between the two settlements. There is a sense of continuity in the built form along this road and no sense of a complete break, largely due to the limited views to the countryside to the east.</p> <p>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</p> <p>Whilst some established hedgerows and shallow ridges disrupt views between the settlements locally, the landscape is highly open and there is strong intervisibility</p>																										

	between East Goscote and Rearsby.																																													
<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position? Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>Throughout much of ALS-N, both East Goscote and Rearsby are visible. In particular, the former has a very prominent edge with little screening from the wider countryside.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land? Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>There is a strong sense of intervisibility between ALS-N and the wider countryside to the north-west, which slopes upwards to the west of the River Wreake, whereas the area east of Melton Road is visually severed from the countryside beyond.</p>																																													
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td><b>Large</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td><b>Expansive</b></td><td><b>Open</b></td><td>Enclosed</td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td><b>Vacant</b></td><td>Active</td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td>Unified</td><td><b>Interrupted</b></td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td><b>Sweeping</b></td><td>Spreading</td><td>Dispersed</td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <p>As a consequence of large areas of identical agricultural land use, there is little visual diversity within the AoLS. However, the assessment area provides a high vantage point in relation to the wider landscape and affords distant views to the north, over the Wreake Valley. Due to the size of AoLS, and relative isolation from surrounding roads, there is a perceived level of calm with the area.</p> <table><tr><td><b>Security:</b></td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td><b>Comfortable</b></td><td>Safe</td></tr><tr><td><b>Stimulus:</b></td><td>Monotonous</td><td>Indifferent</td><td><b>Interesting</b></td><td>Inspiring</td></tr><tr><td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td><td>Busy</td><td>Noisy</td><td><b>Still</b></td><td>Peaceful</td></tr><tr><td><b>Pleasure:</b></td><td>Undesirable</td><td>Satisfying</td><td><b>Pleasant</b></td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Large</b>	<b>Enclosure:</b>	<b>Expansive</b>	<b>Open</b>	Enclosed	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	Remote	<b>Vacant</b>	Active	<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	<b>Interrupted</b>	Fragmented	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	<b>Sweeping</b>	Spreading	Dispersed	Channelled	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	<b>Comfortable</b>	Safe	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	Indifferent	<b>Interesting</b>	Inspiring	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	Busy	Noisy	<b>Still</b>	Peaceful	<b>Pleasure:</b>	Undesirable	Satisfying	<b>Pleasant</b>	Delightful
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>The AoLS has a relatively strong defensible boundary, largely consisting of durable linear features (roads, railway lines). There may be potential scope to strengthen boundary to the north (track further north) and to the far east (A607). While the Rearsby Lodge Farm access route constitutes a reasonably durable feature at the southern edge of the designation, the northern edge of the Rearsby Roses development site may constitute a more logical boundary.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>The Rearsby Roses site has a strong, rectilinear edge to the north and would constitute a strong alternative boundary. Within the AoLS, there are few defensible boundary features, the only distinguishable features being field</p>																																													



	<p>boundaries (often intermittent).</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>The edge of East Goscote is highly prominent in the landscape, with little visual screening from planting buffers and a consistent, rectilinear development pattern which faces outwards across the AoLS. In contrast, Rearsby is considerably more subtle, set back behind a ridgeline and screened by planting.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>Development pressures around Melton Road (see planning applications), which may result in coalescence between the settlements.</p>												
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>PRoW</b></td><td>Sports pitches</td><td>Playgrounds</td><td>Public Park</td></tr><tr><td>Informal Rec.</td><td><b>Dog walking</b></td><td>Picnic site</td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td>Open water</td><td>Watercourse</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>One public footpath traverses the western area of the ALS (east-west). Dog walkers were observed utilising the footpaths and fields during the site visit (Feb 2016). No formal opportunities were identified.</p>	<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park	Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	Watercourse		
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Open water	Watercourse												
<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>Limited access, in particular the eastern part of the site. The western area of the AoLS is traversed by a public footpath.</p>												
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>Although the fringes of the AoLS are influenced to an extent by minor roads and the railway line, within the more central area there is a sense of remoteness from these features.</p>												
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>Historically, the area has been subject to development pressure. In 1990, outline permission for 31 dwellings between Melton Road and Grange Avenue within the ALS was refused (P/90/1692/2). More recently, an outline application for 4 bungalows west of Melton Road (to the rear of existing properties) was refused and subsequently dismissed on appeal (P/11/1277/2). However, outline permission was granted on appeal for 60 dwellings in the ALS following demolition of a nursery at the former Rearsby Roses site (P/12/1709/2), following which reserved matters were granted in 2013 (P/13/1369/2).</p>												
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>The northern part of the AoLS is also designated as an <i>Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside</i> (though it is noted that the specific policy related to this in the 2004 Local Plan has now been deleted).</p>												

<p><b>Consultation Responses</b></p>	
<p><b>Site Photographs</b></p>	 <p>Photograph 1: View, looking south towards East Goscote, from the PRow crossing the north eastern field within the AoLS. The settlement edge of East Goscote is a definitive feature within the landscape.</p>



Photograph 2: View from the edge of Rearsby, looking south-west along Melton Road, towards East Goscote. The edge of East Goscote is clearly visible, diminishing the sense of separation at this point.



Photograph 3: View from Melton Road looking north-west across the AoLS towards East Goscote. The assessment area is expansive and open, resulting clear views between settlements.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised ?</b></p>	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.	<p>ALS-N provides the gap between East Goscote and Rearsby. There is strong intervisibility between the two settlements, particularly facing south-westwards towards East Goscote as a result of the highly prominent settlement edge and the highly open landscape. The gap is relatively small in scale, but particularly as a result of the openness any development within this area would result in a visual and perceptual reduction in the separation between the two settlements.</p> <p>Overall, ALS-N is judged to meet the purpose <b>moderately</b>. There is an identified zone of weakness to the east of Melton Road which is judged to play a lesser role in relation to preventing coalescence. As a result of the consented residential scheme at the Rearsby Roses site, the separation between the two settlements along Melton Road has effectively been lost, as the length of the road now has an urbanised character. There is also little functional or visual relationship between this area and the wider countryside to the west. As the settlements have effectively merged here, it is deemed that this area does not meet the AoLS purpose.</p>
<p><b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b></p>		<p>The AoLS is judged to partially meet the strategic role. The area to the west of Melton Road provides an important physical gap between the settlements of East Goscote and Rearsby, and although this area is not subject to any specific pressures which would threaten this separation, wider development pressures in the area may lead this being placed at risk.</p> <p>The identified zone of weakness to the east of Melton Road is not judged to meet the strategic role. The area has suffered encroachment as a result of the Rearsby Roses site and the remaining open areas have an urban fringe character and a sense of enclosure and separation from the wider countryside. It does not contribute to the wider physical gap between the two settlements.</p>
<p><b>Is this the area’s primary planning function?</b></p>		<p>The area to the west of Melton Road is strongly integrated into the wider countryside and is functionally linked to this, though its primary function in planning terms is to maintain the gap between East Goscote and Rearsby.</p>
<p><b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b></p>		<p>While the existing countryside designation would provide a degree of protection against development, the sensitivity of the gap is such that only the AoLS designation can ensure that the settlements do not merge.</p>

<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>	<p>The ALS-N should be partially maintained, with the ongoing designation of the identified Zone of Weakness subject to review.</p>
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<b>Area of Local Separation</b>	Potential Area of Local Separation 1 (PALS-1)
<b>Area (ha)</b>	271.4
<b>Location Plan</b>	<p><b>Legend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential Green Wedges</li> <li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li> <li>Green Wedge</li> <li>Areas of Local Separation</li> </ul> <p><b>ARUP</b>    115-500 11-200    Data Date: 01/06/2016    Data User: ARUP    000000    H:\44\CH\215\500    11/06/2016 10:10:00    www.arup.com</p> <p><b>Client</b>    Charnwood Borough Council</p> <p><b>Job Title</b>    Charnwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe, Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p> <p><b>Assessment Areas</b></p> <p><b>Scale 1:16,770</b></p> <p><b>Job ID</b>    247161-00</p> <p><b>Drawing Status</b>    DRAFT</p> <p><b>Drawing No</b>    001</p> <p><b>Rev</b>    P1</p>
<b>Description</b>	<p>The Potential Area of Local Separation 1 (PALS-1) comprises a relatively expansive area located between Loughborough and Quorn. The area lies south-east of Loughborough and north-west of Quorn.</p> <p>PALS-1 comprises land previously designated as the Loughborough/Quorn Green Wedge in the 2004 Charnwood Local Plan. The area partly adjoins the hamlet of Woodthorpe to the west. It is bounded to the east by Farley Way and Woodhouse Road and is partly bounded on the west by Main Street. The area straddles the A6004, the A6 and Loughborough Road. One Ash Roundabout sits within the central part of the area. Part of the western boundary adjoins the Loughborough/Woodthorpe Area of Local Separation (ALS-A).</p>




Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	<i>What built development exists within the AoLS?</i>		
	PALS-1 is mostly made up of a combination of active farmland areas, scrubland and areas of dense woodland. Built development within the parcel consists of residential development within Quorndon Gate on the south-east and other sporadic residential development scattered across the area, particularly towards the north adjacent to A6 Loughborough Road, and also around the edge of Woodthorpe. There are leisure/sports facilities within the parcel in the form of Quorn Football Club, and Loughborough Grammar School playing fields. There is also a Hotel located within the parcel and some commercial development.		
	<b>Farm buildings</b>	<b>Hotel</b>	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	<b>Commercial</b>	<b>Educational</b>	<b>Leisure/Sports</b>
Vernacular	<b>Residential</b>	Other _____	
	<i>Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?</i>		
	The area is mostly open and free of development. The A6 corridor, which passes roughly east-west through the centre of the potential AoLS, is more punctuated by occasional built form, and is broken up into smaller, more enclosed areas of open land by planting, hedgerows and deciduous trees. This is particularly observed within the area to the south-east, west of Loughborough Road. There are also clusters of dense woodland on parts of the northern and eastern boundaries. There is piecemeal development scattered across the landscape but this does not generally impact on the openness of the area. There are, however, some points within the potential AoLS that feel slightly enclosed by surrounding development and patches of wild scrubland.		
	<i>Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?</i>		
	The surrounding dense development along Farley Way and Woodhouse Road impacts on the sense of rurality on the south-eastern part of the parcel by interrupting views across the potential AoLS. This surrounding development adds a sense of semi-urban character to the wider countryside. The busy A6004 road and Loughborough Road also impacts on the sense of rurality, both visually and audibly. There is a stronger sense of rurality and openness in the south-western parts of the area		
Landscape Character and Type	<i>To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded</i>		
	The PALS lies within the Soar Valley Character area as outlined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment, which is a flat wide floodplain which experiences regular flooding. The major engineering features are the raised landscaped embankments of the A6 and mainline railway and electricity pylons.		
	<i>Landscape condition</i>		
	There is no visible evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground,		

	condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work. The landscape condition appears to be good and well maintained.																														
Landscape and other features	<p>How do landscape features characterise the area?</p> <p>Large undulating arable fields edged with intact hedging and punctuated with medium to large deciduous trees, with views towards the edges of urban settlements combine to form a semi-rural / urban fringe character.</p> <p>What is the dominant landcover?</p> <table><tr><td>Designed parkland</td><td>Scrub</td><td>Marsh</td></tr><tr><td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td>Rough grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Water meadows</td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr><tr><td>Orchard</td><td>Deciduous woodland</td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed woodland</td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td>Arable</td></tr><tr><td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</p> <p>There is a brook which runs from the River Soar through the settlement of Quorn and around the boundary of Loughborough Playing Fields.</p> <p>What are the main attractors / detractors?</p> <p>Undulating arable fields, lined with dense hedgerows and clusters of trees and woodland combine to form an attractive visual composition. Mucklin Wood, an ancient replanted woodland, sits just beyond the south-western edge of the PALS-1 and is visible from various locations, adding to the sense of rurality.</p> <p>The A6 and Loughborough Road, which traverse PALS-1, are the main detractors within the area. These, fragment the continuity of the wider countryside, diminishing the sense of rurality visually and due to the increased noise levels from traffic. These are also urbanising influences, serving as a visual reminder of the proximity to urban settlements.</p> <p>Landscape elements:</p> <table><tr><td>Walls</td><td>Fences</td><td>Hedges</td><td>Trees</td></tr><tr><td>Pylons</td><td>Communications Masts</td><td>Tumuli</td><td>Other</td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">_____</td></tr></table>	Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	Deciduous woodland	Coniferous plantation	Mixed woodland	Shelterbelt	Arable	Other _____			Walls	Fences	Hedges	Trees	Pylons	Communications Masts	Tumuli	Other	_____			
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Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements	<p>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</p> <p>The physical separation between Quorn and Loughborough, as well as between Woodthorpe and Quorn is relatively extensive, measuring roughly 1km at its shortest point. Additionally, the limited intervisibility between Loughborough and Quorn as a result of the pattern of landscape features increases the perception of distance between these settlements.</p> <p>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</p>																														

	Arable fields lined with dense hedging, and deciduous woodland disrupt views particularly on the south-eastern part of PALS-1. To the north east the A6, Loughborough Rd and A6004 provide a permanent physical feature, fragmenting the parcel in two and disrupting views between settlements due to buffer planting along the infrastructure links, increasing. I the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements.																																													
Views and Intervisibility	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>Generally, as a result of the area’s landscape pattern, there are limited views between settlements. Furthermore, dense planting at the edge of settlements restricts visual linkage between urban and rural areas. From the centre of the area, (from the PRoW accessed from Woodhouse Road in the south), there are no views of surrounding settlements. From Farley Way (in the south of the area) there are no views of Loughborough.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>There are long vistas across rural fields and woodland, particularly in the south-west and north of the area, but limited views to settlements when viewed from the PRoW west of Loughborough Road and accessed from Woodhouse Road.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>There are no key views</p> <p><i>Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>Views across rolling farmland looking out from the site are limited due to the rising topography of the landscape.</p>																																													
Visual Assessment	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td><b>Intimate</b></td><td><b>Small</b></td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td>Large</td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td><b>Expansive</b></td><td>Open</td><td><b>Enclosed</b></td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td><b>Wild</b></td><td>Remote</td><td>Vacant</td><td>Active</td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td>Unified</td><td><b>Interrupted</b></td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td>Sweeping</td><td>Spreading</td><td><b>Dispersed</b></td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Security:</b></td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td><b>Comfortable</b></td><td>Safe</td></tr><tr><td><b>Stimulus:</b></td><td>Monotonous</td><td><b>Indifferent</b></td><td>Interesting</td><td>Inspiring</td></tr><tr><td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td><td>Busy</td><td>Noisy</td><td><b>Still</b></td><td>Peaceful</td></tr><tr><td><b>Pleasure:</b></td><td>Undesirable</td><td>Satisfying</td><td><b>Pleasant</b></td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table> <p>The parcel begins to feel more tranquil as you move further away from the A6 and Loughborough Road.</p>	<b>Scale:</b>	<b>Intimate</b>	<b>Small</b>	<b>Medium</b>	Large	<b>Enclosure:</b>	<b>Expansive</b>	Open	<b>Enclosed</b>	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	<b>Wild</b>	Remote	Vacant	Active	<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	<b>Interrupted</b>	Fragmented	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	Sweeping	Spreading	<b>Dispersed</b>	Channelled	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	<b>Comfortable</b>	Safe	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	<b>Indifferent</b>	Interesting	Inspiring	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	Busy	Noisy	<b>Still</b>	Peaceful	<b>Pleasure:</b>	Undesirable	Satisfying	<b>Pleasant</b>	Delightful
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<p><b>Extent of Urban Edges</b></p>	<p>PALS-1 has a strong south-eastern boundary in the form of Farley Way and Woodhouse Road. Main Street provides a strong defensible western boundary. The rail line on part of the north-western and south-western boundaries and the dense woodland areas on parts of the north-eastern and southern boundaries provide strong defensible boundaries. The remaining boundaries are made up of weaker boundaries consisting of field boundaries, the rear of residential development, and a PRow along part of the western boundary. The boundaries of the PALS appear to follow a logical and consistent form.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>Loughborough Road, the A6, A6004 and the rail line that goes through the area provides potential alternative strong defensible boundaries.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>Woodland areas, shelterbelt planting and boundary treatments screen the settlement edge.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>The western part of the area, west of the rail line and north of the A6004 forms part of the application site for the extant planning permission under planning ref: P/14/1843/2 for the erection of 200 dwellings. Immediately opposite this, the area west of the A6 Loughborough Road and east of the rail line is subject to outline planning permission for large scale residential development (1.61ha).</p> <p>In addition, the recent Quordon Gate residential development - on the southern part of the PALS, north of Farley Way represents development pressures on that side. The estate is on the application site granted planning permission under planning ref: P/12/2569/2 for 44 dwellings in January 2013.</p> <p>On the western side the PALS, on Main Road, the area sits immediately opposite the application site for development of 102 dwellings approved under planning ref: P/07/1524/2. Although this area is outside the PALS boundaries it indicates development pressures in the surrounding area that might impact the character of the PALS.</p>												
<p><b>Recreational opportunities</b></p>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways /bridle paths)</i></p> <table> <tr> <td><b>PRow</b></td> <td>Sports pitches</td> <td>Playgrounds</td> <td>Public Park</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Informal Rec.</b></td> <td><b>Dog walking</b></td> <td>Picnic site</td> <td>Camping</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Open water</b></td> <td><b>Watercourse</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>There are various PRow through the PALS, one traverses the southern area of the PALS (south-west). In the northern area, moving north west from woodhouse road towards Woodthorpe and another from the A6 taking walkers north east towards the Grand Union Canal. Dog walkers were observed utilising the footpaths and fields during the site visit (Feb 2016).</p> <p>Other recreational opportunities within PALS-1 include Quorn Football Club north of Farley Way, Loughborough Grammar School playing fields and Quorn Lawn</p>	<b>PRow</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park	<b>Informal Rec.</b>	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping	<b>Open water</b>	<b>Watercourse</b>		
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	Tennis Club north-west of Woodhouse Road and a sports field to the north of the PALS, south of the A6 Leicester Road. Charnwood Water is situated on the northern part of the PALS.
<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>There are 4 PRoWs which traverse PALS-1. These provide links: from Woodhouse Road to Woodthorpe; from Farley Way to A6 Loughborough Road in the eastern part of the area; along the western boundary of PALS-1 from the Woodthorpe Roundabout; and between Loughborough Road and the Grand Union Canal.</p>
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>Several pieces of major transport infrastructure traverse the area, including the A6 and A6004. Locally, these roads reduce the sense of rurality both visually and audibly.</p> <p>The Great Central Railway also cuts north/south through the area. The transport infrastructures connects the PALS with Quorn, Woodthorpe and Loughborough.</p>
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>Historically, PALS-1 has been subject to a number of major planning applications for a range of different types of development. Recent major planning proposals identified as part of this assessment are described below.</p> <p>Planning permission was granted in October 2013 (P/12/2569/2) for the erection of up to 44 dwellings with access and associated works on land north of Farley Way. The western part of the area, north of A6004 (Terry Yardley Way) and west of the Great Central Railway forms parts of the application site that was granted outline planning permission in August 2013 (P/12/2641/2) for the erection of up to 200 dwellings. In addition, the area east of the railway and west of the A6 is subject to outline planning permission (P/14/0242/2) for the development of 1.61 hectares of residential development. Consent was given in November 2015.</p> <p>The number and scale of proposed developments illustrate the extent of development pressure within PALS-1, particularly in the western area at the edge of Loughborough.</p>
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>Of relevance is Policy TR/12 (Safeguarding the Great Central Railway Corridor) a saved policy from the 2004 Charnwood Local Plan. The policy states that planning permission will not be granted for development on land along the Great Central Railway corridor where this would prejudice its operation as a railway, or its ability to provide additional transport routes and facilities in the future.</p> <p>Saved policy CT/1 (General Principles for Areas of Countryside, Green Wedge and Local Separation) of the 2004 Local Plan also applies to the PALS. This area was previously designated as a Green Wedge in the 2004 Local Plan but this was superseded by the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy in paragraph 7.16 highlights the Council's intention to explore opportunities for new Areas of Local Separation in those areas previously designated as Green Wedge in the 2004 Local Plan.</p>

<p><b>Consultation Responses</b></p>	
<p><b>Site Photographs</b></p>	 <p>Photograph 1: View from Farley Way Rd, looking east towards the roundabout from the PRow walking along the footpath parallel with the PALS. The settlement edge of Quorn which abuts Farley Way is a definitive feature within the landscape.</p>





Photograph 2: View from the PRoW within the PALS accessed via Woodhouse Road, looking north west towards Woodthorpe. The proximity to the Loughborough Rd and communication lines detract from the sense of rurality at this point.

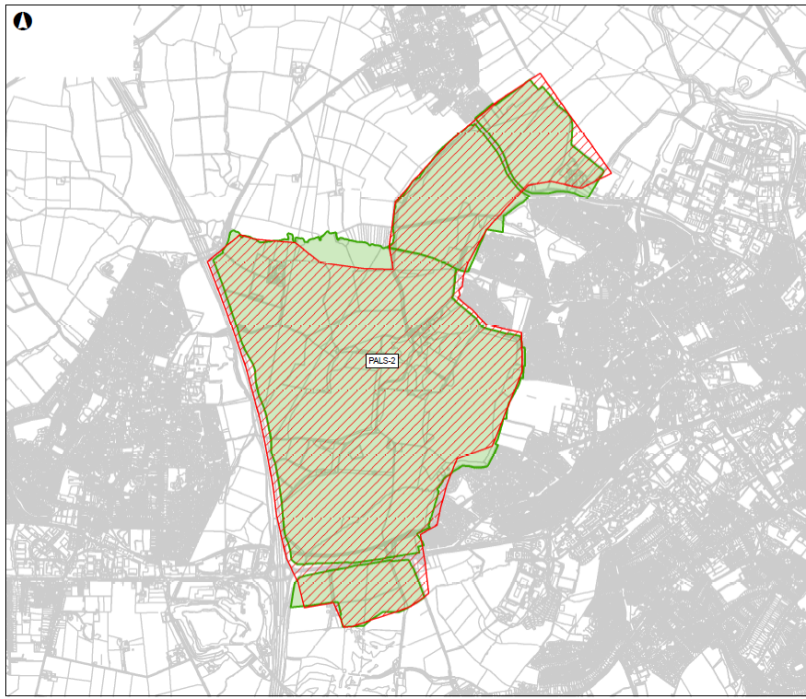


Photograph 3: View from the PRoW within the PALS accessed via Woodhouse Road, looking north west towards Woodthorpe. The railway line which cuts through the PALS is a definitive feature within the landscape

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	<p>Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.</p>	<p>Due to its extensive scale, it is considered that PALS-1 would provide a less critical gap between Loughborough and Quorn, and between Quorn and Woodthorpe. As a result of the area's extensive scale, and the lack of intervisibility between settlements, some development may be possible which would not result in coalescence between the settlements.</p> <p>While identified large scale development pressures identified within the area, (particularly at the edge of Loughborough/Woodthorpe), would not in themselves impinge on the role of the area as a physical separator, the central part of gap may be a risk of compromise as the gap is diminished in both physical and perceptual terms. Following anticipated build-out of the existing consented major developments, the gap between Quorn and Loughborough/Woodthorpe will largely remain intact but will be of a smaller scale. There is a risk that ribbon development in the key transport corridor between these settlements (A6 and A6004) may lead to their merging in perceptual terms.</p> <p>Several areas which are subject to consented permissions for residential development will play no role with respect to maintaining the physical gap between Loughborough and Quorn and should be considered as Zones of Weakness. It is also noted that the south-western part of PALS-1 has limited visual and functional connectivity with surrounding settlements and greater linkage with the wider countryside. Although this area effectively forms part of the physical gap between Loughborough and Quorn, it plays a lesser role in preventing coalescence between the settlements.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that PALS-1 would make a <b>weak</b> contribution to the overall ALS purposes, though it is noted that the central part of the gap between Quorn and Loughborough/Woodhouse (around the A6/A6004 axis) would be more at risk of compromise.</p>
<p><b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b></p>		<p>The extent to which PALS-1 meets the strategic AoLS role varies. As highlighted previously, although the south-western area forms part of the wider physical gap between the settlements of Loughborough/Woodhouse and Quorn, it plays a lesser role in preventing the compromise of this gap. In contrast, as a result of development pressures identified as part of this assessment, emerging patterns of development as well as the smaller scale of the gap, the central and south-eastern areas meet this strategic role.</p>

<b>Is this the area's primary planning function?</b>	<p>PALS-1 was previously designated as the Loughborough/Quorn Green Wedge in the 2004 Charnwood Local Plan, but was not retained in the 2015 Core Strategy following the 2011 Green Wedge Review. Part of the western boundary adjoins the Loughborough/Woodthorpe AoLS (ALS-A) and PALS-1 interacts with this area. Much of this area functions as agricultural land, though there are also leisure and education uses within the PALS at the edge of Quorn. The wider area also has key function in planning terms as a physical gap between settlements.</p> <p>The primary role of areas subject to consent for development is as residential use and it is suggested that these areas would be brought within the settlement limits of Loughborough and Quorn.</p>
<b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b>	<p>The area was previously designated as a Green Wedge in the 2004 Local Plan. This designation has not been retained in the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Aside from countryside policies, which afford a certain degree of protection against unsuitable development, the area currently has no designation to ensure that the settlements of Loughborough and Quorn coalesce. Ultimately, the sensitivity of the gap is such that an AoLS designation should be considered to ensure that the settlements do not merge.</p>
<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>	<p>It is recommended that part of PALS-1 is designated as an AoLS to maintain the integrity of the physical gap between Loughborough and Quorn. Specifically, the corridor along the A6 is more vulnerable to compromise and plays an important role strategically. The broader area to the south-west is judged less important to preventing coalescence and as such is identified as a Zone of Weakness. Additionally, the designation of the area should take into account the consented major developments at the edge of Quorn and Loughborough.</p>



Area of Local Separation	Potential Area of Local Separation 2 (PALS-2)														
Area (ha)	51.8														
Location Plan	<div><div><p><b>Legend</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Potential Green Wedges</li><li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li><li>Green Wedge</li><li>Areas of Local Separation</li></ul><p>© Copyright information</p><table><tr><td>PI</td><td>28/01/2016</td><td>GM</td><td>GP</td><td>HR</td></tr></table><table><tr><td>Issue</td><td>Date</td><td>By</td><td>Check</td><td>Appd</td></tr></table><p>Scale 1:27,570</p><p><b>ARUP</b> The Arup Group Bentley Drive, Bentley Park Salford, West Midlands B20 4JG Tel: +44 (0)121 213 3000 Fax: +44 (0)121 213 3001 www.arup.com</p><p>Client: Charnwood Borough Council</p><p>Job Title: Charnwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancements Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p><p>ASSESSMENT AREAS</p><table><tr><td>Job No. 247161-00</td><td>Drawing Status DRAFT</td></tr></table><table><tr><td>Drawing No. 001</td><td>Issue P1</td></tr></table><p>© Arup</p></div></div>	PI	28/01/2016	GM	GP	HR	Issue	Date	By	Check	Appd	Job No. 247161-00	Drawing Status DRAFT	Drawing No. 001	Issue P1
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Description	<p>The Potential Area of Local Separation 2 (PALS-2) lies between Loughborough and Shepshed. The area is located west of Loughborough and to the east of Shepshed. The area also extends between Hathern and Loughborough. It is bounded by the M1 on the west and by Black Brook to the north. The A512 road bisects the area to the south and the A6 Derby Road bisects it to the north. This area was previously designated in the 2004 Charnwood Local Plan as the Charnwood/Shepshed Green Wedge.</p>														

Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?		
	There is very limited built development within this area. The area predominantly consists of open fields, arable land, scrubland and dense areas of woodlands.		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
Vernacular	Residential	Other _____	
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	The parcel is generally open with sweeping rolling views of the landscape and surrounding countryside when viewed from the Garendon Trail PRow that cuts across the area from east to west and also when viewed from the footpath bridge across the M1 to the west. The openness of the area is punctuated by clusters of dense woodland areas and patches of scrubland in some sections. This makes parts of the parcel feel enclosed.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	Overall, the parcel is open especially when viewed from the footpath bridge across the M1. Traffic noise from the M1 impacts on the sense of rurality of the area but this diminishes as you walk further away from the M1.		
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded		
	<p>This area falls within the Lowlands Character Area as outlined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. The key characteristics of this are rolling landform with gentle slopes, large arable fields, low hedges with hedgerow trees. Open views from ridgeline roads, (Oakley Rd, Tickow Lane, Hathern/Shepshed Rd) and the M1 Motorway which divides the area. Settlements are the western areas of Loughborough and northern Shepshed.</p> <p>The principal settlement of Shepshed dominates this relatively small character area with other smaller villages located outside Charnwood Borough boundary. Most of the land is for agricultural use with small areas of woodland. There are areas of industrial estates located between the A512 and the disused railway line. The historic parkland of Garendon Park in the south-east of this area is a Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden, and site of the abbey and mansion are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The Park contains a range of garden monuments and features that are listed buildings, the most noticeable being the Grade I Triumphal Arch, Grade II* Temple of Venus, and the White Lodge. Also listed are the Obelisk, cottages, barns, dovecote, walls and entrance arches and the Stone bow bridge over the Black Brook. The grounds of Garendon Park were landscape from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards and elements such as small woodlands, treed avenues, man-made lake and red beds survive to this day. All these features give a distinctive character to much of the area.</p>		


	<p><i>Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work</i></p> <p>No apparent evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground</p> <p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>The landscape condition is good and appears to be well maintained with undulating pastoral landscape lined with dense hedgerows and mature deciduous trees.</p>																														
<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>A rolling landscape with intact hedging and deciduous woodland edge the field boundaries. The Black Brook runs through the landscape forming a boundary and can be identified as it has a strong edge of vegetation. However, the M1 motorway is a dominant presence in the area, splitting the area in two and creating a permanent barrier across the landscape.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Designed parkland</td><td><b>Scrub</b></td><td>Marsh</td></tr> <tr> <td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td><b>Rough grassland</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Water meadows</td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr> <tr> <td>Orchard</td><td><b>Deciduous woodland</b></td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Mixed woodland</b></td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td>Arable</td></tr> <tr> <td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>Black Brook which runs through the north west boundary of the PALS and Shortcliff Brook which runs through the southern boundary, coupled with the woodlands which surround most of Garendon Park, may help to guide development form.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>The main attractor is the rolling landscape with long sightlines. The main detractor is due to the visual and noise from the M1 motorway and the pylons.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Pylons</b></td><td>Communications Masts</td><td>Tumuli</td><td>Other</td></tr> <tr> <td>_____</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	Designed parkland	<b>Scrub</b>	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	<b>Rough grassland</b>	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation	<b>Mixed woodland</b>	Shelterbelt	Arable	Other _____			Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>	<b>Pylons</b>	Communications Masts	Tumuli	Other	_____			
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<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>The area forms a gap between Loughborough and Shepshed. The area is fairly extensive in scale, measuring about 2km at its widest point. The PALS generally feels isolated, from within the area, there is no awareness of neighbouring</p>																														



	<p>settlements. This is as a result of its substantial scale of the area and the limited intervisibility between settlements.</p> <p>The north-eastern section of the parcel comprises the gap between Hathern and Loughborough. This gap is of a smaller scale, measuring approximately 600 metres. However there is an increased perception of distance due to limited intervisibility between the settlements as a result of the nature of the road network and clusters of dense vegetation which restrict views.</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>The strong boundary of the M1 and the gap west of the M1, between the M1 and the edge of Shepshed increases the perception of distance between Shepshed and Loughborough. In addition, the gently undulating landform and clusters of woodland impedes views of neighbouring settlements increasing the perception of distance.</p> <p>The winding nature of the A6 Derby Road increases the perception of distance between Loughborough and Hathern.</p>																									
Views and Intervisibility	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>There are no views of surrounding settlements. From the A6 Derby Road there are limited views of Hathern and Loughborough available.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>There are no vistas of neighbouring settlement. The rolling landform and woodlands impedes views of adjacent settlements.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>There are no key views across the site from neighbouring land as views are interrupted by the natural features such as planting and the rolling typography of the land.</p> <p><i>Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>There are key views from the south west edge of the PALS looking south east towards the woodlands that surround Garendon Park.</p>																									
Visual Assessment	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td>Medium</td><td><b>Large</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td><b>Expansive</b></td><td><b>Open</b></td><td><b>Enclosed*</b></td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td><b>Remote</b></td><td>Vacant</td><td>Active</td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td>Unified</td><td>Interrupted</td><td>Fragmented</td><td><b>Chaotic</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td><b>Sweeping</b></td><td>Spreading</td><td>Dispersed</td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>*from narrow footpaths to a more expansive views</i></p> <p><i>Perception:</i></p>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	Medium	<b>Large</b>	<b>Enclosure:</b>	<b>Expansive</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Enclosed*</b>	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	<b>Remote</b>	Vacant	Active	<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	Interrupted	Fragmented	<b>Chaotic</b>	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	<b>Sweeping</b>	Spreading	Dispersed	Channelled
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	<p> <b>Security:</b> Unsafe      Unsettling      <b>Comfortable</b> Safe  <b>Stimulus:</b> Monotonous      Indifferent      <b>Interesting</b> Inspiring  <b>Tranquillity:</b> <b>Busy</b> Noisy      Still Peaceful  <b>Pleasure:</b> Undesirable      Satisfying      <b>Pleasant</b> Delightful </p> <p>The perception of security and stimulus is linked to the proximity to the M1 motorway. Crossing the footbridge over the motorway and following the PRow, it feels unsafe, noisy and undesirable. However as you move further away from the M1 the more tranquil and peaceful it feels and provides a more enjoyable experience.</p>
<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>The parcel predominantly has strong defensible boundaries on almost all sides. The M1 provides a strong defensible boundary to the west. Hathern Road, Black Brook and dense woodland along Hathern Drive provides strong defensible boundaries to the north. Established dense woodland, Pear Tree Lane, Derby Road and Shell's Nook Lane provides strong boundaries along the eastern boundary. Burleigh Brook along the southern boundary provides a strong defensible boundary on that side. The PALS have a weaker boundary on parts of the northern boundary in the form of field boundary vegetation.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>The A512 road to the south, and Derby Road to the north provides potential alternative strong defensible boundaries. Shortcliff Brook towards the southern part of the parcel provides an alternative strong boundary on that side.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>From within the PALS, on Garendon Trail PRow, the edge of Loughborough and Shepshed is not visible within the landscape. Shelterbelt planting restricts views of the settlement edge.</p> <p>From Derby Road to the north, dense woodland areas, shelterbelt planting and the gently undulating landform limits views of the edge of Hathern but there are opportunities for glimpses of the settlement edge although this is not prominent in the landscape.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>This area is subject to a number of development pressures. The northern part of the PALS north of Derby Road forms part of the application site for large scale employment development under planning ref: P/08/2048/2.</p> <p>A significant part of the PALS west of the derby road, east of the M1 and north of the A512 forms the strategic area designated in the adopted Core Strategy as the West of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE). An outline planning application was submitted in September 2014 under planning ref: P/14/1833/2 for residential development of up to 3200 dwellings and up to 16ha employment land. This application is currently pending a decision.</p> <p>The southern part of the PALS south of the A512, includes land designated in the Core Strategy as the Loughborough Science &amp; Enterprise Park extension.</p>

	Overall there is significant development pressures identified within all parts of the PALS.												
	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <p>Garendon Trail PRoW passes through the area from east to west. This links the parcel with Shepshed and provides an important gateway/ link to recreational facilities within the area. This ProW is also a designated national cycle network.</p> <table><tr><td><b>PRoW</b></td><td>Sports pitches</td><td>Playgrounds</td><td>Public Park</td></tr><tr><td>Informal Rec.</td><td><b>Dog walking</b></td><td>Picnic site</td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td><b>Open water</b></td><td><b>Watercourse</b></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park	Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping	<b>Open water</b>	<b>Watercourse</b>		
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<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>There is public access to some of the area. Garendon Trail which cuts across the area from east to west, provides public access from Shepshed. There is also a PRoW adjacent the western boundary leading to Hathern Road which links the PALS with Hathern.</p>												
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>There is prominent noise impacts from the M1 and this impacts on the tranquillity and sense of rurality of the area. The parcel straddles the A512 on the south and the A6 Derby Road on the north. Hathern Road on part of the northern boundary links Shepshed and Hathern. The A6 Derby road provides links between Hathern and Loughborough.</p>												
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>The recent major planning proposals within the area includes an outline planning application under planning reference P/14/1833/2 for residential development of up to 3,200 dwellings; up to 16 ha of employment land of B1/B2 and B8 uses; a mixed-use Community Hub of up to 4 ha comprising a local convenience retail unit (2,000 sqm); up to 1,000 sqm of other A1 retail, A2 financial and professional services, A3 food and drink, B1 business and D1 uses, sites for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople provision totalling 1 ha; 2 primary schools up to 2 ha each; strategic open space including allotments; access roads and new Strategic Link Road; open space/landscaping and associated works; principal means of access; restoration of Garendon Park and assets. This application was submitted September 2014 and is currently pending decision. The application site comprises almost all of PALS-2.</p> <p>In addition, the northern part of the PALS includes land that forms part of the planning application (planning ref: P/08/2048/2) for employment development (Use Classes B1 &amp; B8), with roundabout access to A6, associated engineering works and relocation of recreation uses. Planning permission was granted June 2012.</p> <p>Overall there are substantial development pressures planned within the PALS which will likely adversely impact on the effectiveness of the area as a separator.</p>												
<b>Other Local Planning</b>	A significant part of PALS-2 comprises the area designated in the adopted Core Strategy as the west of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension. This is												

<p><b>Policies</b></p>	<p>defined in the Core Strategy as planned extensions to the existing urban areas which are large enough developments to support new businesses, schools, shops, health care facilities, open space and leisure facilities. Policy CS 22 of the Core Strategy sets out that this area is allocated to deliver approx. 3000 homes and to provide about 16ha employment land.</p> <p>The southern part of PALS-2, south of the A512 comprises part of the strategic Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park extension as designated in policy CS 23 of the Core Strategy.</p>
<p><b>Consultation Responses</b></p>	
<p><b>Site Photographs</b></p>	 <p>Photograph 1: View looking north west from the bridge over the M1 via the PRow which runs close to Hind Leys Community College. Oakley Wood an ancient and semi-ancient woodland can be seen in the background.</p>



Photograph 2: View south from a large arable field within the PALS. Woodland within Garendon Park can be seen in the background.

Photograph 3: View looking north west towards Bailey's Plantation, a deciduous woodland provides a boundary around the settlement of Loughborough.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	<p>Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.</p>	<p>Currently, PALS-2 would form part of the gap between Shepshed and Loughborough, and would also maintain the essential gap between Loughborough and Hathern. However, it is noted that emerging large scale developments proposals in the area, especially the designated Sustainable Urban Extension encompassing 3,000 homes and up to 16 ha. employment land, would dramatically alter the character of the area and its configuration.</p> <p>An outline planning application (P/14/1833/2) associated with this strategic allocation was submitted in September 2014 and is currently pending a decision. An indicative masterplan, submitted as part of this application, illustrates that the built-area of Loughborough would extend eastwards as far as the M1. It is already judged that the gap between Loughborough and Shepshed is less critical as a result of the motorway, which serves as a substantial physical buffer between the settlements to prevent coalescence (though it is noted that some perceptual merging as a result of the SUE is inevitable as the gap is reduced in scale so substantially). While it is proposed that fingers of open land will permeate the proposed SUE, including the historic parkland of Garendon Park which will be retained, these areas will make no contribution to separation between settlements as they will be contained within the built area of Loughborough and have no interaction with Shepshed to the west. The area south of the A512 also plays no role in preventing coalescence between these settlements. This broad area, covering much of the former Loughborough/Shepshed Green Wedge, is identified as a Zone of Weakness.</p> <p>Following anticipated build-out of the SUE, the gap between Loughborough and Hathern (particularly in the area around Derby Road) would also be reduced substantially. Furthermore, the area is also subject to additional development pressures. Planning consent was granted in 2012 for employment development to the north of Derby Road (P/08/2048/2). The combination of these developments would substantially reduce the scale of this gap and put it at greater risk of compromise.</p> <p>A slightly enlarged area to the north-west, between the northern extent of the SUE and the edge of Hathern, would also form part of this narrow gap. It is functionally and, in landscape terms, linked with PALS-2 and could be considered as an Extension Opportunity Zone.</p> <p>Overall, PALS-2 would meet the purpose <b>strongly</b> by maintaining the narrow physical gap between</p>



		<p>Loughborough and Hathern, which is also at risk of compromise as a result of identified development pressures and the risk of ribbon development along Derby Road. However, it should be noted that the majority of the area does not meet the AoLS purpose as it would not maintain the gap between settlements (in particular, Loughborough and Shepshed).</p>
<b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b>		<p>The area provides a gap between Shepshed, Loughborough and Hathern. The designation of the parcel in the Core Strategy and the outline planning application indicates development pressures that will likely adversely compromise this gap. Given the development pressures identified within the area, it is considered that this area would not fulfil the strategic role of the AoLS between Shepshed and Loughborough. However, on the northern side, part of the PALS has the potential to fulfil the strategic role of preventing coalescence between Hathern and Loughborough.</p>
<b>Is this the area's primary planning function?</b>		<p>This area was previously designated as a Green Wedge in the 2004 Charnwood Local Plan, but was not retained in the 2015 Core Strategy (following analysis undertaken in the Council's 2011 Green Wedge Review).</p> <p>As articulated previously, the majority of the PALS, those areas identified as Zones of Weakness, is designated for strategic development in the Core Strategy. As highlighted above, the area comprises part of the West Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension as set out in policy CS 22 of the Core Strategy. The southern part of the PALS includes the Loughborough Science and Enterprise extension as indicated in policy CS 23 of the Core Strategy. These designations are the primary planning functions for this area.</p> <p>A small area in the north-east, as well as the identified Extension Opportunity Area to the north, serves countryside functions. However, this area also provides a strategically important buffer between Loughborough and Hathern, which is small in scale and at risk of compromise. As such, it is judge that the primary function of this area in planning terms is to maintain separation.</p>

<p><b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b></p>	<p>PALS-2 was previously designated as a Green Wedge in the 2004 Local Plan. Following the recommendations of the 2011 Green Wedge Review, this designation has not been maintained in the Core Strategy and much of the area is now allocated for strategic development. Whilst countryside policies (saved from the Local Plan) may provide a degree of protection from development for the area in the north-east, no criteria based policy currently exists which would ensure that the narrow gap between Loughborough and Hathern is maintained.</p>
<p><b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b></p> <p><b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b></p>	<p>Designation of this area as an ALS will be contrary to its designation in the adopted Core Strategy.</p> <p>It is recommended that the boundaries of PALS-2 is amended to exclude the southern part of the PALS south of the A512, and the extent of the west Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension area.</p> <p>It is recommended that the remaining essential gap between Hathern and Loughborough is maintained through an AoLS designation and that PALS-2 is extended to include the Extension Opportunity Area identified previously, at the southern edge of Hathern.</p>

Area of Local Separation	Potential Area of Local Separation 3 (PALS-3)														
Area (ha)	246.7														
Location Plan	<div><div><p><b>Legend</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Potential Green Wedges</li><li>Potential Areas of Local Separation</li><li>Green Wedge</li><li>Areas of Local Separation</li></ul><p>©Copyright Information</p><table><tr><td>PI</td><td>29/01/2016</td><td>GM</td><td>OP</td><td>HW</td></tr></table><table><tr><td>Issue</td><td>Date</td><td>By</td><td>CRD</td><td>Appd</td></tr></table><p>Scale 1:13,250</p><p><b>ARUP</b> The Wood Centre, Bryn Coed, Bryn Mawr Park Golf Rd, West Midlands B69 4AE Tel: +44 (0) 121 213 3000 Fax: +44 (0) 121 213 3001 www.arup.com</p><p>Client: Charnwood Borough Council</p><p>Job Title: Charnwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</p><p>ASSESSMENT AREAS</p><p>Scale at A4: 1:13,250</p><table><tr><td>Job No: 247161-00</td><td>Drawing Status: DRAFT</td></tr></table><table><tr><td>Drawing No: 001</td><td>Issue: P1</td></tr></table></div></div>	PI	29/01/2016	GM	OP	HW	Issue	Date	By	CRD	Appd	Job No: 247161-00	Drawing Status: DRAFT	Drawing No: 001	Issue: P1
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Issue	Date	By	CRD	Appd											
Job No: 247161-00	Drawing Status: DRAFT														
Drawing No: 001	Issue: P1														
Description	PALS-3 is located between the settlements of Birstall to the south and Rothley to the north. It encompasses agricultural fields and is bounded by the A46 to the south, the A6 Loughborough Road to the east, the Great Central Railway line to the west and the settlement of Rothley and the Rothley Brook to the north.														

Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?		
	There is limited built development within the potential AoLS. The area predominantly consists of agricultural fields, pasture land, scrubland and clusters of dense woodland. Built development within the potential AoLS consists of residential properties, a school and playing pitches off Hallfields Lane in the north-east of the potential AoLS and some commercial uses to the west of the A6. Rothley Park Golf Club is located to the north of the potential AoLS.		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
Vernacular	Residential	Other _____	
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	There are also some sporadic farm buildings across the potential AoLS, however, these do not detract from the sense of openness. The presence of built-form in the north-east of the potential AoLS and along Hallfields Lane provides a sense of enclosure in this part of the area. The presence of built-form in the north-east of the potential AoLS and along Hallfields Lane provides a sense of enclosure in this part of the area.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	The scale of the potential AoLS means that there are different levels of openness within the area. The potential AoLS generally feels open and has connections to the wider countryside punctuated by lines of dense woodland, scrub land and shelterbelt planting along the A6 Loughborough Road and the A46. This contributes to a stronger sense of rurality particularly within the western and central parts of the potential AoLS. The sense of rurality diminishes northward owing to the busy A6 Loughborough trunk road, the built form in the north-east of the potential AoLS and a prominent wind turbine to the east of the eastern boundary. However, the potential AoLS still feels distinct from the urban area.		
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded		
	PALS-3 lies within the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area as outlined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. The landform is low and flat in the east and rises and becomes more rolling to the west. The foothills are visible rising from the floodplain landscape west of the settlement of Rothley. The inner section of the village around Rothley Brook is designated as a Conservation Area and there are numerous listed buildings in the settlement.		
	Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work		
	No evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work		

	<p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>The landscape is characterised by gentle rolling pastoral and arable landscape framed by hedging and mature deciduous trees.</p>																														
<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p><i>Gently sweeping pastoral and arable fields framed by established hedgerows interspersed with mature individual trees contribute to the semi-rural character of the landscape in this area.</i></p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Designed parkland</td><td><b>Scrub</b></td><td>Marsh</td></tr> <tr> <td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td><b>Rough grassland</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Water meadows</td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr> <tr> <td>Orchard</td><td><b>Deciduous woodland</b></td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Mixed woodland</b></td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td><b>Arable</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>Gently rolling pastoral and arable fields, framed by mature hedgerows and interspersed with mature deciduous trees, could help to guide the form of development within this area. A long plantation of woodland spreading from east to west is a prominent landscape feature within the potential AoLS that could also guide development.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>The main attractor of the areas is the undulating topography that allows open and expansive views in places. Views towards a wind turbine from Loughborough Road is a dominant visual detractor to the perceived rurality, along with the noise and visual impact experienced as a result of Loughborough Road.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Pylons</td><td>Communications Masts</td><td>Tumuli</td><td>Other _ <b>Wind</b></td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Turbine</b> _____</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	Designed parkland	<b>Scrub</b>	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	<b>Rough grassland</b>	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation	<b>Mixed woodland</b>	Shelterbelt	<b>Arable</b>	Other _____			Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>	Pylons	Communications Masts	Tumuli	Other _ <b>Wind</b>	<b>Turbine</b> _____			
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<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>The potential AoLS forms the gap between Rothley and Birstall to the south. The parcel is of a fairly large scale which contributes to the increased perception of distance between the two settlements. In addition there are limited restricted views of neighbouring settlements reducing the perception of closeness.</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>The A46 along the southern boundary provides a strong separation between</p>																														

	Rothley and Birstall. The A46 and the shelterbelt planting along the road network disrupts views between the settlements and increases the perception of distance. In addition, clusters of dense woodland across the central part of the PALS and on the northern side disrupts views preventing intervisibility between settlements.																																													
Views and Intervisibility	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>When viewed from the A6 road to the east and from within the central part of the PALS from PRoW’s there are no views of more than one settlement available. This is impeded by the gently rising landform and woodland areas.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>Long sightlines to the next settlement are impeded by woodland areas.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>No key views across the site from neighbouring land were observed during the site visit.</p> <p><i>Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>No important views looking out of the site across the wider landscape were observed during the site visit.</p>																																													
Visual Assessment	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td>Large</td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td>Expansive</td><td><b>Open*</b></td><td><b>Enclosed</b></td><td><b>Constrained</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td><b>Remote</b></td><td>Vacant</td><td>Active</td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td>Unified</td><td>Interrupted</td><td><b>Fragmented</b></td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td>Sweeping</td><td>Spreading</td><td><b>Dispersed</b></td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p>*becomes more open as you walk along the Bridleway</p> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Security:</b></td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td><b>Comfortable</b></td><td>Safe</td></tr><tr><td><b>Stimulus:</b></td><td>Monotonous</td><td><b>Indifferent</b></td><td>Interesting</td><td>Inspiring</td></tr><tr><td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td><td>Busy</td><td>Noisy</td><td><b>Still</b></td><td>Peaceful</td></tr><tr><td><b>Pleasure:</b></td><td><b>Undesirable</b></td><td>Satisfying</td><td>Pleasant</td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table> <p>It is difficult to gain a full understanding of the PALS, in terms of perception due to the lack of accessibility. There are no public rights of way through the parcel, there is a bridleway route to the south west close to the Rothley Park Golf Club and a PRoW to the north via Hallfields Lane and terminates beside the A6. However following the bridleway along the boundary of the gold course, there is a greater sense of comfort and peace, using the PRoW the area is noisier due to its proximity to the road, a nearby primary school housing estates within the settlement of Rothley, therefore the perception is this area is less pleasant.</p>	<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	<b>Medium</b>	Large	<b>Enclosure:</b>	Expansive	<b>Open*</b>	<b>Enclosed</b>	<b>Constrained</b>	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	<b>Remote</b>	Vacant	Active	<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	Interrupted	<b>Fragmented</b>	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	Sweeping	Spreading	<b>Dispersed</b>	Channelled	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	<b>Comfortable</b>	Safe	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	<b>Indifferent</b>	Interesting	Inspiring	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	Busy	Noisy	<b>Still</b>	Peaceful	<b>Pleasure:</b>	<b>Undesirable</b>	Satisfying	Pleasant	Delightful
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Nature and	<i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i>																																													



<b>Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p>The Great Central Rail Way line provides a strong defensible boundary to the west. On the southern and eastern sides, the A6 Loughborough Corridor provides strong defensible boundaries on that side.</p> <p>Town Green Street and the bridleway accessed from Leicester Road provides strong boundaries on part of the northern boundary.</p> <p>The rear of development on Saxon Drive and Hallfields Lane and continuous field boundaries provide moderate boundaries to the north.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>The cluster of dense woodland that goes across the PALS from the A6 to the centre of the area provides a potential alternative strong boundary. Further north of the PALS, Rothley Brook and the rear of development along Westfield Lane are potential alternative boundaries with consistent and regular form.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>Shelterbelt planting and dense woodland areas mostly screens the edge of settlements. Therefore the settlement edge is not prominent within the landscape.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>At the time of the site visit, there appeared to be ongoing construction towards the northern part of the PALS adjacent residential development on Saxon Drive indicating development pressures in that area. This ongoing construction sits on part of the application site for planning permission granted July 2013, under planning reference P/12/1741/2 for the erection of 180 dwellings and erection of school with creation of associated sports pitches, changing facilities and access roads.</p> <p>In addition a significant part of PALS-3 including the eastern and southern parts forms land designated in the adopted Charnwood Core Strategy as the North of Birstall Direction of Growth, allocated to deliver approx. 1500 new homes and up to 15 ha employment land as set out in policy CS 20.</p>												
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>PRoW</b></td><td><b>Sports pitches</b></td><td>Playgrounds</td><td>Public Park</td></tr><tr><td>Informal Rec.</td><td><b>Dog walking</b></td><td>Picnic site</td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td>Open water</td><td><b>Watercourse</b></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>A small part of the PALS to the north accommodates part of the Rothley Park Golf Club. A bridleway cuts across the north-western part of the PALS from Leicester Road. This PRoW provides links from Thurstaston to Rothley. A second PRoW cuts across the north-eastern part of the PALS from the A6. Rothley Brook abuts a small part of the northern boundary.</p> <p>Also, a small part of the northern side of the area accommodates part of the sports pitches used in association with the school to the north.</p>	<b>PRoW</b>	<b>Sports pitches</b>	Playgrounds	Public Park	Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	<b>Watercourse</b>		
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Open water	<b>Watercourse</b>												

<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>There is limited public access to the parcel. There is a bridle way off Leicester Road in Thurcaston leading to Town Green Street in Rothley. This provides links between Thurcaston and Rothley. There is also a PRoW to the east from the A6 slip road leading to the residential development to the north on Hallfields Lane.</p>
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>The potential ALS is bounded on the south by the A46. The A6 Loughborough Road cuts across the eastern part of the PALS. Both of these major road networks have significant noise impacts on that side. This recedes towards the centre of the area. In addition the Great Central Rail Line cuts across the western part of the area and this also have noise impacts.noise impact from the A46 and the A6 Loughborough Road.</p>
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>The northern part of the parcel includes land that was granted planning permission January 2013, under planning ref: P/12/1741/2 for 180 dwellings plus a replacement primary school with associated sports pitches, changing facilities and access road. At the time of the site visit it appeared that some of the application has been implemented. There appeared to be ongoing construction on part of the site.</p>
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	<p>A significant part of the southern section of the PALS forms the North of Birstall Direction of Growth as indicated in policy CS 20 of the adopted Charnwood Core Strategy. This area is allocated to deliver 1500 homes and up to 15 ha employment land.</p> <p>The Great Central Rail Line cuts across the western part of the PALS. Saved policy TR/12 (Safeguarding the Great Central Railway Corridor) of the 2004 Charnwood Local Plan sets out policy protecting the Railway corridor from development that would prejudice its operation.</p>
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	

**Site  
Photographs**



Photograph 1: View looking south west towards the settlement of Thurcaston, though you are in close proximity to a settlement it doesn't detract from the sense of rurality in this area.



Photograph 2: View looking north west towards the settlement of Mountsorrel from the Loughborough Road.



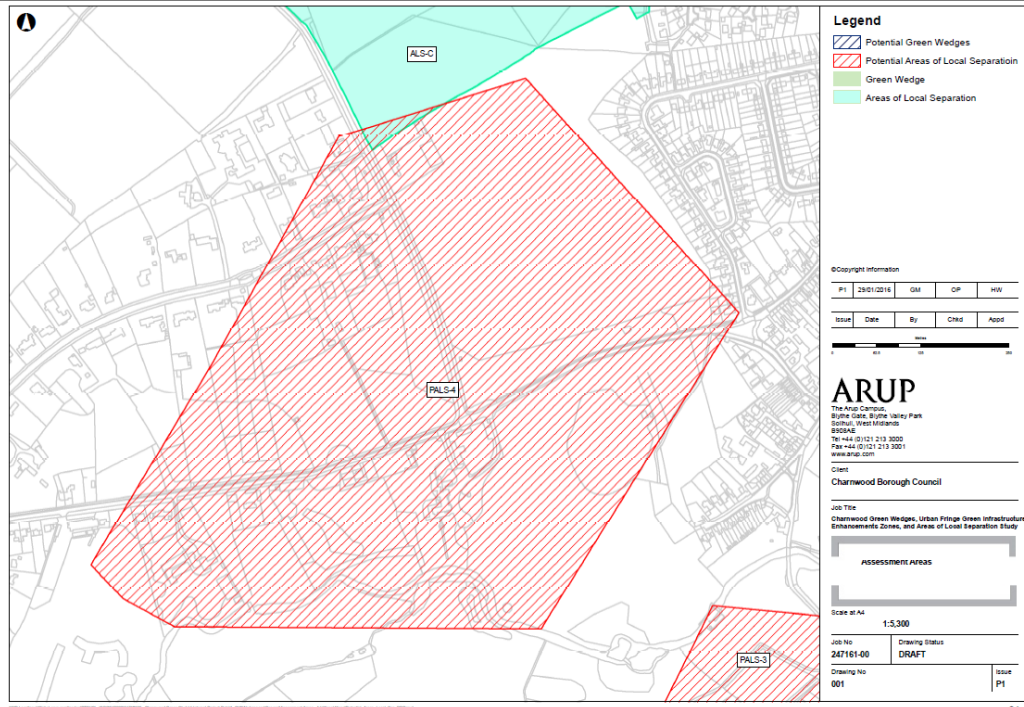
Photograph 3: View looking north east towards the Loughborough road from the PRow, walking through pastoral fields with grazing horses.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised ?</b></p>	<p>Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.</p>	<p>If designated as an Area of Local Separation, PALS-3 will provide a physical gap between Rothley and Birstall restricting further development that may lead to potential merging of these settlements. There is no perception of closeness between the settlements. This is as a result of the considerable size of the gap and the lack of intervisibility between the two settlements. In addition the A46 Road along the southern boundary provides a strong separation on that side further increasing the perception of distance.</p> <p>The southern part of the PALS is identified in the Core Strategy as the North of Birstall Direction of Growth, set to deliver 1500 new homes and up to 15ha employment land. If delivered as per the illustrative masterplan, this planned growth would significantly reduce the gap between Rothley and Birstall compromising the effectiveness of the area as a separator. This southern area is identified as a Zone of Weakness. A second Zone of Weakness is identified in the northern part of the PALS that forms part of the application site for planning permission P/12/1741/2 for the erection of 180 dwellings and erection of school. Although most of the application has been built-out, the area within the PALS has not been implemented. When built out, the development will further compromise the gap between Rothley and Birstall.</p> <p>The identified development pressures in the area will risk the compromise of the gap between the settlements. However, it is considered that coalescence will not result and the northern part of the PALS would play an important role as a strategic separator between the settlements (albeit much smaller in scale than the current gap).</p> <p>The area north of the PALS, south of Westfield Lane and east of the Great Central Railway is identified as an Extension Opportunity Area. This area is linked visually and in landscape terms with PALS-3. Extending the boundaries of PALS-3 to include this area would ensure the robustness and effectiveness of the designation in maintaining separation between the future northern extent of Birstall and Rothley.</p> <p>Overall it is considered that, if designated, PALS-3 would make a <b>moderate</b> contribution to the overall AoLS purposes.</p>
<p><b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b></p>		<p>It is considered that this area would partially fulfil the strategic role of maintaining a physical gap between settlements. While the southern half of the PALS will effectively no longer function as gap, in line with the Birstall North Direction of Growth strategic allocation in the</p>



	Core Strategy, the remaining gap in the northern area will still provide important physical separation that, as a result of its reduced scale and openness, would be at risk of compromise if not designated.
<b>Is this the area's primary planning function?</b>	<p>The southern section of the PALS forms the North of Birstall Direction of Growth as indicated in policy CS 20 of the adopted Charnwood Core Strategy. This area will deliver 1500 homes and up to 15 ha employment land. In planning terms, the primary function of the designated area is to deliver strategic growth.</p> <p>PALS-3 was previously designated as the Rothley/Birstall Green Wedge in the 2004 Local Plan. This was not maintained in the Core Strategy, following the recommendations of the 2011 Green Wedge Review. Paragraph 7.16 of the Core Strategy highlights the Council's intention to explore opportunities for Areas of Local Separation in those areas previously designated as Green Wedge, and it is judged that much of the former Green Wedge continues to play an important function in maintaining separation between settlements.</p>
<b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b>	Other than the saved policy TR/12 of the 2004 Local Plan which seeks to safeguard the Great Central Railway corridor, there are no other policies that would protect PALS-3 from further encroachment.
<b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b>  <b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b>	<p>It is considered that part of PALS-3 should be designated as an Area of Local Separation between Rothley and Birstall. It is suggested that the extent of the North of Birstall Direction of Growth allocation should be excluded from the PALS given its status as a current development plan policy. In addition, it is recommended that the Zone of Weakness identified on the northern side should also be excluded from the final designation.</p> <p>The designation of the remaining gap south of Rothley would provide the relevant protection to prevent further encroachment and potential merging between the settlements. It is deemed that the Extension Opportunity Area identified south of Westfield Lane and east of the Great Central Railway should be included within the designation as this will ensure the robustness and integrity of the gap.</p>




Area of Local Separation	Potential Area of Local Separation 4 (PALS-4)
Area (ha)	45.0
Location Plan	<div><div></div><div><div><b>Legend</b></div><div><div><div><div></div></div><div>Potential Green Wedges</div></div><div><div></div></div><div>Potential Areas of Local Separation</div></div><div><div></div></div><div>Green Wedge</div></div><div><div></div></div><div>Areas of Local Separation</div></div> <div><div>©Copyright information</div><div><div>P1</div><div>23/01/2016</div><div>GM</div><div>GP</div><div>HW</div></div><div><div>Issue</div><div>Date</div><div>By</div><div>Chkd</div><div>Appd</div></div><div><div>0</div><div>100</div><div>200</div></div><div><div><b>ARUP</b></div><div>The Arup Group, 5th Floor, 100, Broad Street, Birmingham, B1 2HT, UK</div><div>Tel: +44 (0)121 213 3000</div><div>Fax: +44 (0)121 213 3001</div><div>www.arup.com</div></div><div><div>Client</div><div>Charnwood Borough Council</div></div><div><div>Job Title</div><div>Charnwood Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancements Zones, and Areas of Local Separation Study</div></div><div><div>ASSESSMENT AREAS</div></div><div><div>Scale at A4</div><div>1:5,300</div></div><div><div><div>Job No</div><div>247161-00</div></div><div><div>Drawing Status</div><div>DRAFT</div></div></div><div><div><div>Drawing No</div><div>001</div></div><div><div>Issue</div><div>P1</div></div></div></div> <div><div>© Arup</div></div>
Description	<p>This potential area of local separation (PALS-4) lies on the western part of Rothley. The ALS straddles Westfield Lane, the Ridings and part of the Ridgeway. It is situated in close proximity to the rear of ribbon residential development along Templar Way and the northern boundary abuts the Mountsorrel/Rothley Area of Local Separation.</p>

Site Audit		
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the AoLS?	
	Built development within the parcel consists of residential development on both sides of The Ridgeway, and sporadic residential development along Westfield Lane and The Ridings. Rothley Court hotel and its grounds sits within the centre of the parcel. Rothley Park Cricket Club is situated on the eastern part of the parcel. The remaining parts of the parcel consists of agricultural land, pastoral land, clusters of dense woodland areas and scrubland.	
	Farm buildings	Hotel
	Industrial	Civic
	Commercial	Educational
Vernacular	Residential	
	Health	Religious
	Leisure/Sports	Other _____
	Does the parcel feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?	
	The openness of the area is punctuated by piecemeal development dispersed across the area and by dense areas of woodland. Dense planting along Westfield Lane and the Ridings screens the area and restrict the openness of the area. However, there are some opportunities for longline views across and patches of open fields.	
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?	
	The area generally feels rural although it is not very open. The character of the surrounding development, the surrounding land uses and the nature of the road networks adds to the sense of rurality of the area.	
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded	
	The PALS-4 lies within the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area as outlined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. The landform is low and flat rising becoming more rolling in the west. Foothills are visible rising from the floodplain landscape west of the settlement of Rothley. The inner section of the village around Rothley Brook is designated as a Conservation Area and there are numerous listed buildings in the settlement. Most of the PALS lies within the Rothley Ridgeway Conservation Area (Rothley Ridgeway Conservation Area Character Appraisal- January 2010), which includes Rothley Court Hotel, the Chapel and the curtilage of these Listed Buildings, the cricket pitch and paddocks, Westfield Lane, The Ridings, fields between Westfield Lane and the Ridgeway and the whole of the parkland associated with the Hotel.	
	Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work	
	There is no apparent evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground within the PALS. Historic features within the parcel include a Grade II listed Lodge, Turret, Gate Piers and Gates at Rothley Court Hotel, the Rothley Court Hotel and the chapel within the grounds are Grade 1 listed. There is no evidence of new planting or landscape restoration work within the parcel.	

	<p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>Generally the land is in good condition, the area is well planted with a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs.</p>																																	
<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>This PALS sits in the outer fringes of the settlement, the topography has a gentle slope towards the Rothley Brook and the centre of the village. Vegetation is characteristic of the floodplain landscape, being dense and scrubby with wetland species. The landscape is low and flat to the west, however, the higher points of Charnwood Forest can be seen in the distance.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Designed parkland</td><td><b>Scrub</b></td><td><b>Marsh</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td><b>Rough grassland</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Water meadows</td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr> <tr> <td>Orchard</td><td><b>Deciduous woodland</b></td><td><b>Coniferous</b></td></tr> <tr> <td><b>plantation</b></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Mixed woodland</b></td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td>Arable</td></tr> <tr> <td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the AoLS which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>Landscape features include the listed buildings within Rothley Court, including the parkland of Rothley Court and the cricket pitch there is a pleasant stretch of open grassland, some of it used for grazing. It is bounded by park-style railing and planted with mix of mature deciduous and coniferous trees. There is a broad PRow running through it from Westfield Lane to Town Green Street. The parkland spreads across to the north side of Westfield Lane. The resulting strip is ungrazed and bordering the road with areas of scrub and overgrown hedging in places.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>Two main roads cut through the PALS the Westfield Lane and the Ridings. However, Westfield Lane sweeps gently towards the settlement of Rothley and so the view of the settlement is impeded and it does not detract from the sense of rurality.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><b>Walls</b></td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Pylons</td><td>Communications Masts</td><td>Tumuli</td><td>Other</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">_____</td></tr> </table>	Designed parkland	<b>Scrub</b>	<b>Marsh</b>	Peat bog	Moor/heath	<b>Rough grassland</b>	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	<b>Coniferous</b>	<b>plantation</b>			<b>Mixed woodland</b>	Shelterbelt	Arable	Other _____			<b>Walls</b>	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>	Pylons	Communications Masts	Tumuli	Other	_____			
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<b>Proximity to Neighbouring Settlements</b>	<p><i>What is the perception of distance to neighbouring settlements?</i></p> <p>From within the PALS there is no perception of closeness with neighbouring settlements. PALS-4 is situated within Rothley and is not in close proximity to</p>																																	

	<p>adjacent settlements. Mountsorrel to the north, and Cropston to the west are at a considerable distance away from the boundaries of the PALS for there to be any perception of closeness. Part of ALS-C lies between the PALS and the settlement of Mountsorrel.</p> <p>In terms of the relationship with Cropston to the west, established development along Westfield Lane and the Ridgeway and part of ALS-F lies between PALS-4 and Cropston.</p> <p>This area generally feels to be a part of Rothley. There is no physical or perceived closeness with neighbouring settlements.</p> <p><i>Are there established and permanent physical features which disrupt views between settlements and increase the perceived distance between them?</i></p> <p>The area is well planted with mature trees and shrubs which are established and permanent physical features which disrupt views. From the Westfield Lane there are partial views between the trees across the fields to the rear of some the house on The Ridgeway</p>																																																	
Views and Intervisibility	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>No</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the parcel to the next settlement?</i></p> <p>There are no long sightlines either into or out of the area, due to woodland impeding views, instead there are partial views and glimpses of the residential housing.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>Leaving Rothley village along Westfield Lane there are vistas across the parkland of the cricket pitch and Rothley Court down to the valley of Rothley Brook.</p> <p><i>Are there any important views looking out from the site across the wider landscape/urban areas?</i></p> <p>Views within the area, looking out across the wider landscape/urban areas are impeded by mature trees and shrubs.</p>																																																	
Visual Assessment	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Scale:</b></td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td>Large</td></tr><tr><td><b>Enclosure:</b></td><td>Expansive</td><td>Open</td><td><b>Enclosed</b></td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td><b>Remoteness:</b></td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td>Vacant</td><td><b>Active</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Unity:</b></td><td>Unified</td><td><b>Interrupted</b></td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td><b>Visual Dynamic:</b></td><td>Sweeping</td><td>Spreading</td><td><b>Dispersed</b></td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>Security:</b></td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td>Comfortable</td><td><b>Safe</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Stimulus:</b></td><td>Monotonous</td><td>Indifferent</td><td>Interesting</td><td><b>Inspiring</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Tranquillity:</b></td><td>Busy</td><td>Noisy</td><td><b>Still</b></td><td>Peaceful</td></tr><tr><td><b>Pleasure:</b></td><td>Undesirable</td><td>Satisfying</td><td>Pleasant</td><td><b>Delightful</b></td></tr></table>					<b>Scale:</b>	Intimate	Small	<b>Medium</b>	Large	<b>Enclosure:</b>	Expansive	Open	<b>Enclosed</b>	Constrained	<b>Remoteness:</b>	Wild	Remote	Vacant	<b>Active</b>	<b>Unity:</b>	Unified	<b>Interrupted</b>	Fragmented	Chaotic	<b>Visual Dynamic:</b>	Sweeping	Spreading	<b>Dispersed</b>	Channelled	<b>Security:</b>	Unsafe	Unsettling	Comfortable	<b>Safe</b>	<b>Stimulus:</b>	Monotonous	Indifferent	Interesting	<b>Inspiring</b>	<b>Tranquillity:</b>	Busy	Noisy	<b>Still</b>	Peaceful	<b>Pleasure:</b>	Undesirable	Satisfying	Pleasant	<b>Delightful</b>
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the current AoLS have a strong defensible boundary?</i></p> <p>PALS-4 has weak undefined arbitrary boundaries on all sides.</p> <p><i>Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?</i></p> <p>The Ridings Road, the rear of housing on Templar Way to the east, The Ridgeway Road or the back garden of development on the Ridgeway are potential alternative consistent defensible boundaries. Rothely Brook to the south of the area provides an alternative strong boundary on that side.</p> <p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>Clusters of woodland and shelterbelt planting mostly screen the settlement edge.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>The eastern part of PALS-4 includes land that forms part of the application site for the outline planning application (ref: P/14/2083/2) for residential development of up to 175 dwellings. This application was submitted October 2014 and at time of writing this report, is pending a decision.</p>												
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this AoLS provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <p>Recreational opportunities within this area includes Rothley Brook to the south, and part of Rothley Park Golf Club on the west. There is a cricket ground on the eastern side and a PRow from Westfield Road leading to Town Green Street. The PRow provides opportunities for dog walking.</p> <table><tr><td><b>PRow</b></td><td><b>Sports pitches</b></td><td>Playgrounds</td><td>Public Park</td></tr><tr><td>Informal Rec.</td><td><b>Dog walking</b></td><td>Picnic site</td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td>Open water</td><td><b>Watercourse</b></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	<b>PRow</b>	<b>Sports pitches</b>	Playgrounds	Public Park	Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	<b>Watercourse</b>		
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Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping										
Open water	<b>Watercourse</b>												
<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>Other than the PRow south of Westfield Lane on the eastern part of the parcel towards Town Green Street there is no other public access to PALS-4. The pedestrian paths along road networks that cuts across the area including Westfield Lane, The Ridings Road, and the Ridgeway, provides some public access through the area. Overall there is limited public access.</p>												
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	<p><i>How is the area influenced by surrounding transport infrastructure?</i></p> <p>Westfield Lane, The Ridings and The Ridgeway cuts across the parcel. There are public footpaths along Westfield Lane, The Ridings and The Ridgeway. Westfield Lane and the Ridgeway links to Cropston and Thurscaston. The Ridings Road links the area with Mountsorrel.</p>												
<b>Planning</b>	A significant part of PALS-4 (north of Westfield Lane and west of development on												

<b>History</b>	Templar Way) includes the application site for the outline planning application for residential development of up to 175 dwellings with associated works including vehicular/pedestrian/cycle access, public open space, landscaping, parking and drainage. This application is currently pending a decision.
<b>Other Local Planning Policies</b>	The eastern part of the parcel lies within the Rothley Ridgeway Conservation Area. There are a number of Listed Buildings within the parcel.
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	
<b>Site Photographs</b>	 <p>Photograph 1: View from the entrance to Rothley Court Hotel looking south west on Westfield Lane.</p>





Photograph 2: View looking south east from Westfield Lane towards grassland within Rothley Court Park with the cricket pitch visible in the background.



Photograph 3: View looking north on Westfield Lane towards The Ridings.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary
<p><b>Does the area physically separate settlements?</b></p> <p><b>To what extent is the separation at risk of being compromised?</b></p>	<p>Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, taking consideration of landscape scale/pattern, topography, development patterns and views.</p>	<p>It is judged that PALS-4 plays no role in preventing the merging of settlements and as such there is no case for its designation as an AoLS.</p> <p>PALS-4 lies wholly within the settlement of Rothley and plays no role is the gap between Rothley and neighbouring settlements. Although it is noted that the character of the areas to the east and west are contrasting, they all fall within the defined settlement area of Rothley.</p> <p>The area feels connected, functionally and visually, with Rothley, with little perceptual connection to any wider gap to neighbouring settlements. In addition there is existing piecemeal development scattered across the area particularly along the Ridgeway and Westfield Lane, which diminishes the areas openness and function as a separator. There is no physical connection between PALS-4 and the gap with Cropston further to the east, and similarly to the north, while the land has an open character, it feels enclosed within Rothley and there is little connection with the already significant gap to the north between Rothley and the edge of Mountsorrel (part of ALS-C).</p> <p>In summary, due to its position within Rothley, the character of the area, the development pressures and the sufficient scale of separation between settlements outside the PALS boundaries, it is considered that PALS-4 <b>does not meet the purpose</b> of an AoLS.</p>
<p><b>Judgement of fulfilment against the strategic role</b></p>		<p>This parcel is not adjudged to fulfil the strategic role as it does not provide a physical gap between distinct settlements.</p>
<p><b>Is this the area's primary planning function?</b></p>		<p>Part of the area (south of Westfield Lane) was previously designated in the 2004 Charnwood Local Plan as a Green Wedge but this was not retained in the Core Strategy, following the 2011 Green Wedge Review. Paragraph 7.16 of the adopted Core Strategy highlights the Councils intention to explore opportunities for new Areas of Separation in those areas previously designated in the 2004 Local Plan. However, it is judged that this area has no functional relationship with the area to the north of Westfield Lane (though further consideration is given to its role in maintaining separation through the separate analysis of PGW-3).</p> <p>The land to the north of Westfield Lane, in planning terms, currently functions partly as agricultural land at the urban</p>

	fringe, and partly as residential development within the defined settlement limits of Rothley.
<b>Could current criteria based policy provide the necessary protection?</b>	<p>This area falls within the Rothley Ridgeway Conservation Area which protects the character and appearance of the area. The key principles of Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation require that planning policies and decisions not only avoid, mitigate or compensate for harm but also seek ways to enhance, restore and add to biodiversity and geodiversity.</p> <p>It is not judged that any additional protection is required with respect to maintaining separation.</p>
<b>Should the area be designated as an Area of Local Separation?</b>  <b>Should area be considered for another designation?</b>	<p>It is judged that PALS-4 meets neither the purpose nor strategic role of an AoLS and, as such, it is not recommended that it is designated. It is noted that the area falls within the Rothley Ridgeway Conservation Area, which should maintain the unique character of the immediate area (which contrasts with the wider settlement to the east).</p>

# Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones

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<b>Green Infrastructure Area</b>	Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zone 1 (GIEZ-1)
<b>Location Plan</b>	<p><b>Legend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones</li> <li>Local Authority Boundaries</li> </ul> <p>© Crown Copyright and Ordnance Survey 2016. All rights reserved.</p> <p>Project: Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones</p> <p>Client: Harborough District Council</p> <p>Job Title: Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones</p> <p>Scale: 1:25,000</p> <p>Job No: 247761-00</p> <p>Drawing No: 010</p> <p>Sheet: 1 of 1</p> <p>ARUP</p> <p>100 Leicester, Harborough District Council, 100 Leicester, Harborough District Council, 100 Leicester, Harborough District Council</p>
<b>Description</b>	GIEZ-1 covers a tract of countryside between Syston, Barkby, Thurmaston and Hamilton. It encompasses the North East Leicester Urban Extension area.



<b>Site Audit</b>			
<b>Existing Uses and Density of Buildings</b>	<i>What built development exists within the Urban Fringe GI Enhancement Zone?</i>		
	<b>Farm buildings</b> Industrial <b>Commercial</b> Vernacular	Hotel Civic Educational <b>Residential</b>	Health Religious Leisure/Sports Other
	<p>GIEZ-1 contains very little built development. Where present, this tends to be at the edges of settlements. For example, directly north of Barkby, there are several farm buildings and structures as well as a small number of residential properties, whilst at the edge of Syston, a residential development (currently under construction) encroaches slightly into the countryside.</p> <p>The vast majority of the area consists of expansive, open agricultural fields and small wooded plantations, which have a strong rural character. There are occasional built structures, predominantly in the form of agricultural sheds and buildings, as well as small clusters of residential dwellings (e.g. Barkby Thorpe Road).</p> <p><i>Does the area feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?</i></p> <p>The area is highly open and rural, interrupted only occasionally by small scale buildings. Developments at the edge of Barkby and Syston have little impact on overall openness.</p> <p><i>Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?</i></p> <p>Although there are a number of existing structure and buildings in the north east of GIEZ-1, these are predominantly associated with countryside use and do not therefore diminish the sense of rurality. The primary urbanising influences are the Midland Mainline, which cuts through the western part of the GIEZ, and the prominent built edge of Syston, as well as vistas to the edges of urban areas to the south and west. The area in the extreme west of GIEZ-1 is more influenced by surrounding urban areas to the north and south.</p>		
<b>Landscape Character and Type</b>	<p><i>To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded</i></p> <p>Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zone 1 is located within the High Leicestershire character area as defined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. The assessment characterises the landscape as an undulating ridge and valley landscape with open and extensive views over productive farmland.</p> <p>GIEZ-1 is typical of the High Leicestershire area, with a remote and tranquil character experiencing little influence of urbanisation other than distant views towards the expanding settlements of Leicester and Thurmaston. Mixed farming is the predominant land use within the area, with farmsteads isolated and sheltered by deciduous tree belts, often with arable cultivation on the ridges and pastures in the valleys. The fields are often large and regular, bounded by</p>		



mature hedgerows with frequent mature deciduous trees. Small copses of woodland, along with the tree and scrub lined watercourse of Melton Brook, which runs east to west along the landscape valley, give the area a highly wooded appearance. Historical features are retained within the landscape in the form of two ancient monuments in the south east corner of the enhancement zone, a Roman Villa and the deserted mediaeval village at Hamilton; The remnants of earthworks and ridge and furrow patterning are still strong features within the landscape.

*Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work*

Historic earthworks around the mediaeval village of Hamilton remain as definitive features within the landscape. There is little evidence of pollution or excessive erosion along Melton Brook. New areas of woodland have been planted around some of the farmsteads and alongside Barkby Thorpe Road.

*Landscape condition*

The hedgerow network is healthy and provides strong definition to field boundaries.

**Landscape and other features**

*How do landscape features characterise the area?*

Large, regular agricultural fields bounded by mature hedgerows and frequent hedgerow trees characterise the area as a distinctively rural working landscape.

*What is the dominant landcover?*

Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh
Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland
Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich
grassland	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>
Coniferous plantation	Mixed woodland	Shelterbelt
<b>Arable</b>		

Other: Grazing Pastures

*What landscape features or other features exist within the area which may help to guide development form?*

Established, well defined field hedgerows are defining features within the landscape. Melton Brook and the adjacent land will help to guide development due to the flood risks associated with the land.

*What are the main attractors / detractors?*

The sense of remoteness is a key attractor. The landscape is well established and the areas of mature woodland, established hedgerows along with frequent mature individual hedgerow trees combine with the undulating landform to create a visually diverse and interesting landscape. The increasing dominance of new development in views towards Hamilton is beginning to detract from the landscape character.

*Landscape elements:*

Walls	Fences	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>
Pylons	Communications Masts	Tumuli	

Other: Brook, Historical Earthworks

<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>Topography, as well as the character of the landscape, has a significant influence on vistas and views across this area, with the landscape sloping upwards to the north from the bottom of the Melton Brook valley.</p> <p>As such, Barkby Thorpe in the north has limited intervisibility with Hamilton and Thurmaston to the south and feels quite removed from the urban area. Moving southwards, long vistas open up towards Hamilton and Thurmaston, as well as the wider Leicester urban area to the south, particularly from Barkbythorpe Road and Hamilton Grounds Farm. The substantial outward extension of Thurmaston proposed in the Core Strategy will increase visual linkages between these settlements (as the gaps between them will be reduced in scale).</p> <p>There are is also strong intervisibility between Barkby and Syston in the north-eastern part of the GIEZ, as a result of the relatively flat topography and very open, expansive landscape, and long east-west views along the axis of the Melton Brook in the extreme south.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the area from the urban area to the countryside? Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>The topography of the wider countryside rises steadily to the east and can be seen prominently. There are strong visual and functional connections with this area with distant hills of the countryside to the east, which is highly open and sparsely populated.</p>																																													
<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Scale:</td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td>Medium</td><td><b>Large</b></td></tr><tr><td>Enclosure:</td><td><b>Expansive</b></td><td>Open</td><td>Enclosed</td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td>Remoteness:</td><td>Wild</td><td><b>Remote</b></td><td>Vacant</td><td>Active</td></tr><tr><td>Unity:</td><td><b>Unified</b></td><td>Interrupted</td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td>Visual Dynamic:</td><td><b>Sweeping</b></td><td>Spreading</td><td>Dispersed</td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <p>When viewed from the valley slopes within the assessment area, there is a sense of vastness within GIEZ that inspires and delights. Rolling topography and visual diversity combine to form an attractive setting and although there is a perceived remoteness within the enhancement zone, there is nothing to unsettle or threaten the delight.</p> <table><tr><td>Security:</td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td>Comfortable</td><td><b>Safe</b></td></tr><tr><td>Stimulus:</td><td>Monotonous</td><td>Indifferent</td><td>Interesting</td><td><b>Inspiring</b></td></tr><tr><td>Tranquillity:</td><td>Busy</td><td>Noisy</td><td>Still</td><td><b>Peaceful</b></td></tr><tr><td>Pleasure:</td><td>Undesirable</td><td>Satisfying</td><td>Pleasant</td><td><b>Delightful</b></td></tr></table>	Scale:	Intimate	Small	Medium	<b>Large</b>	Enclosure:	<b>Expansive</b>	Open	Enclosed	Constrained	Remoteness:	Wild	<b>Remote</b>	Vacant	Active	Unity:	<b>Unified</b>	Interrupted	Fragmented	Chaotic	Visual Dynamic:	<b>Sweeping</b>	Spreading	Dispersed	Channelled	Security:	Unsafe	Unsettling	Comfortable	<b>Safe</b>	Stimulus:	Monotonous	Indifferent	Interesting	<b>Inspiring</b>	Tranquillity:	Busy	Noisy	Still	<b>Peaceful</b>	Pleasure:	Undesirable	Satisfying	Pleasant	<b>Delightful</b>
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<b>Nature and</b>	<p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the</i></p>																																													

<b>Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>The edge of Syston is very prominent in the landscape as a result of the scale and regularity of development, as well as the lack of planting buffers. Barkby and Barkby Thorpe are considerably less visible within the landscape from both the north and south. The edge of the Leicester urban area to the south (encompassing Hamilton and Thurmaston) is relatively prominent and visible from some distance; in particular, the newly completed housing at <i>The Oaks</i>, Barkbythorpe Road. This development has little screening from the wider countryside.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>The Thurmaston Settlement Extension, encompassing up to 4,500 new homes, will profoundly change the landscape in the area, and there are additional development pressures at the edge of Syston.</p>												
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this urban fringe area provide formal and/or informal recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>PRoW</b></td><td>Sports pitches</td><td>Playgrounds</td><td>Public Park</td></tr><tr><td>Informal Rec.</td><td><b>Dog walking</b></td><td>Picnic site</td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td>Open water</td><td><b>Watercourse</b></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>Recreation opportunities are currently limited to countryside walks over public footpaths, or horse riding on the designated bridleway in the south (though there was limited evidence of its active usage during a site visit on 02/02/2016). The Melton Brook is an attractive watercourse but is currently underutilised as a recreational resource, with limited public access.</p>	<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park	Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	<b>Watercourse</b>		
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Informal Rec.	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping										
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<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>The majority of the area is relatively well linked by public footpaths and PRoWs, with paths linking Hamilton, the Hamilton medieval village site, Thurmaston, Barkby, Barkby Thorpe and Syston. However, significant tracts of land, particularly in the far north-west, are relatively inaccessible.</p> <p><i>What is the quality of access? Is there evidence of the level of use?</i></p> <p>Predominantly, access routes consist of unmade footpaths or PRoWs through open fields, some of which are of a poor quality (though it is noted that the area had been subject to substantial rainfall in the days leading up to the site visit on 02/02/2016). Evidence of usage was visible on most footpaths, though it was noted that there appeared to be little usage of the bridleway in the south of the area.</p>												

**Consultation  
Responses**

**Site  
Photographs**



Photograph 1: View looking across the former site of the Medieval Village of Hamilton towards Thurmaston. Remnants of the village earthworks are visible within the landscape.



Photograph 2: View towards Thurmaston from a ford crossing Melton Brook. The ford is part of a key PRow providing access to the wider countryside from Thurmaston.



Photograph 3: View north from Hamilton Grounds Farm. Barkby Thorpe Spinney can be seen along a ridgeline in the background with a strong network of hedgerow boundaries to the fore, characteristic of the wider GIEZ.



Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary	Potential for Enhancement
<b>(A) The area acts as a bridge to the country</b>	A bridge to the country is formed by linking housing, schools, health centres and hospitals, bus and train stations in urban centres to the existing access network to connect with accessible green spaces in the wider countryside.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is currently a network of bridleways and public footpaths through the GIEZ, however in places this network is poorly defined or broken.</li> <li>- The Syston railway station is located to the north of the GIEZ although bares little relationship or connectivity to the wider settlements, especially those of Barkby and Barkby Thorpe.</li> <li>- There are a number of schools and colleges towards the edges of Thurmaston, Hamilton and Syston however the level of connectivity these provide to the wider countryside appears to be minimal.</li> <li>- The area is identified as an existing GI asset in the 6C's report.</li> </ul> <p>The settlements along the edges of the GIEZ appear to contain a number of potential assets which could function as 'bridges' to the country, such as a number of colleges and schools. However, their potential role as a bridge to the country is not being fully realised. The lack of diversity in land use along the edges of these settlements could be a factor in this.</p> <p>(WEAK to MODERATE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential for a number of schools, colleges, sports facilities and community centres located towards the edges of Thurmaston and Hamilton to integrate better with the adjacent rural landscape, these public services could act as key bridges to the wider countryside.</li> <li>- The relationship between the urban settlements and rural landscape is abrupt and there is potential to improve the transition between the two at points along the settlement edges. This could be achieved by increasing the land available for recreation within these areas.</li> <li>- Accessibility to the countryside along the edges of settlements is restricted to certain areas, often along roads. There is potential to increase the number of points where pedestrian access coincides with the centres of residential estates.</li> <li>- There is also potential to improve the PRow network through linking up the areas which are currently weakly defined/broken, tying these in with local farm shops and the attractive settlements of Barkby and Barkby Thorpe will serve to strengthen the network.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE to STRONG)</p>

<b>(B) The area provides a gateway to the city/town</b>	The area provides an improved image, experience and sense of place by encouraging investment in an improved environmental quality for public rights of way and spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is currently a network of bridleways and public footpaths through the GIEZ, however in places this network is poorly defined or broken.</li> <li>- Key gateways, or points where rights of way meet settlements are poorly celebrated or the transition from one to the other is often abrupt.</li> </ul> <p>(WEAK to MODERATE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential to enhance the sense of arrival between the town and country at key access points along the edges of the GIEZ.</li> <li>- GI assets such as Melton Brook and Barkby Brook could be enhanced as green corridors and serve as strong gateways to the countryside.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>
<b>(C) The area functions as a 'health centre'</b>	The area contributes to health and well-being through promoting access to green spaces for exercise for schools, hospitals and health centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elizabeth Park Sports and Community Centre is located within Thurmaston, just west of the GIEZ. There are also a number of schools and colleges along its perimeter. However, there appears to be little connectivity between them and the GIEZ.</li> <li>- A report produced as part of the Charnwood South Priority Neighbourhood Profile for Thurmaston, adjacent to GIEZ-1, identifies 'living environment deprivation' as one of the most prominent forms of deprivation in the area.</li> </ul> <p>(WEAK)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential for the enhancement area to serve as a 'health centre' due to its proximity to the surrounding communities and important community facilities, however, access is currently limited.</li> <li>- Land use along the edges of settlements could be diversified to be more inclusive of recreational opportunities. This could help to address the lack of provision for young people in the south of Thurmaston, identified as an issue for the area in the Charnwood Open Spaces Sport Recreation Study (2010).</li> <li>- There is the potential for GIEZ-1 to contribute to a wider improvement in the quality of living environment, to help to address the deprivation identified in Thurmaston.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>

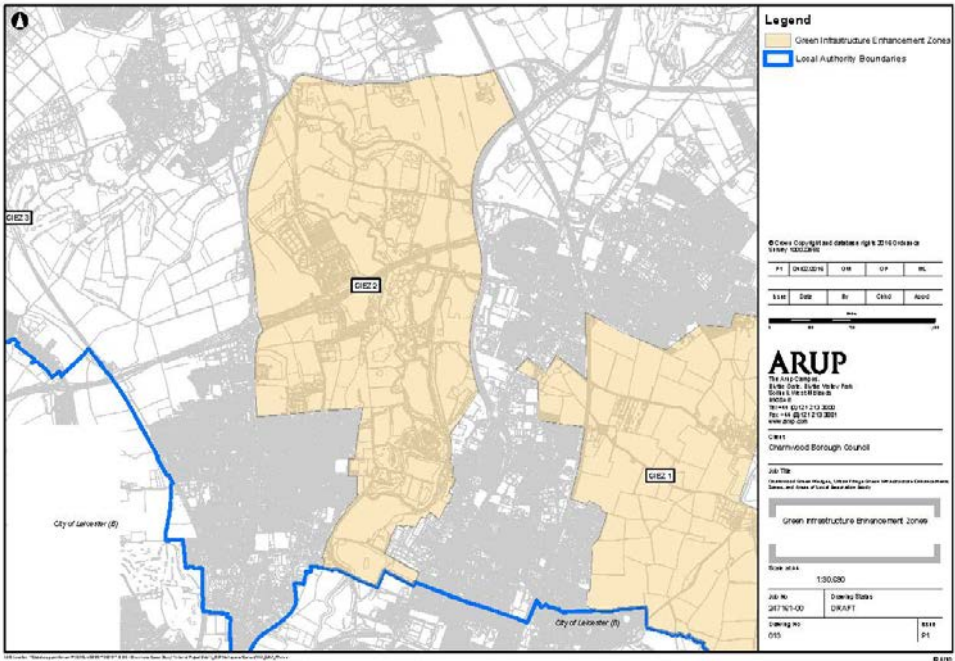
<b>(D) The area performs as an outdoor classroom</b>	The area provides opportunities for environmental education through parks, nature reserves and farm-based activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The GIEZ is in close proximity to a number of schools and colleges.</li> <li>- There are no nature reserves within the enhancement zone, however, landscape features such as Melton Brook and Barkby Brook could act as educational assets.</li> <li>- A number of farmsteads are located close to the settlement edges of Hamilton, Thurmaston and Syston although there appears to be not educational programs with the surrounding communities.</li> <li>- The remaining earthworks of the historic village of Hamilton located to the south east corner of the GIEZ are prominent within the landscape, however, there is little sign that these are well celebrated.</li> </ul> <p>(WEAK)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The proximity of a number of surrounding schools and colleges to the GIEZ indicates there is potential for the area to function as an outdoor classroom. There is also the potential for local farms to form ties with the surrounding communities as agriculture is the prevailing land use within the area.</li> <li>- There is potential to improve awareness of the historical village of Hamilton as a local feature within the landscape, through improved signage, for example. There is already good public access to the site via an existing PROW, however there is little recognition as to the historical nature of the land.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE to STRONG)</p>
<b>(E) The area acts as a recycling and renewable energy centre</b>	The area is helping to address climate change through sustainable management of waste, water and pollution, production of energy crops and creation of woodland to act as carbon sinks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The strip of land between Melton Brook and Hamilton serves as a floodplain for water storage, presumably for when Melton Brook overflows.</li> <li>- The land between Syston and Barkby, adjacent to Barkby Brook is within the flood risk zone.</li> <li>- There are signs of woodland creation adjacent to some of the farmsteads in the area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential to increase the storage capacity of the land adjacent to Barkby and Melton Brook. This land could be enhanced in order to provide planned and controlled flood risk alleviation for the surrounding settlements while also improving the ecological value of the land.</li> <li>- There is potential to connect a number of spinneys and small woodland plantations within the GIEZ. There is a strong, established network of hedgerows that could be further enhanced by planting new hedgerow trees.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>

		(WEAK)	
<b>(F) The area is a productive landscape</b>	The urban fringe farmland is used for food production, processing of local produce and retail (farm shops) for urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entry level steward areas. Grade 3a and 3B agriculture land.</li> <li>- Grazing and arable farmland are prominent land uses within the urban fringe. There are also signs of diversification in the form of a small number of farms with attached farm shops selling local produce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential to improve the ties between the farm shops and local communities.</li> </ul>
		(MODERATE)	(MODERATE)
<b>(G) The area clearly displays its cultural legacy</b>	The area promotes an awareness of the presence of historic features in the urban fringe landscape and how they contribute to sense of place for local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The villages of Barkby and Barkby Thorpe are both conservation areas. They retain much of their heritage and exude a unique character as a result.</li> <li>- Two scheduled monuments exist within the GIEZ, these are the medieval village of Hamilton and the grounds of a roman villa next to the medieval village. The remains are in the form of still present earthworks and ridge and furrow. There is however little sign of acknowledgement of these features other than to those qualified to interpret their remaining characteristics in the landscape.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The opportunity exists to make a feature of what remains of the medieval village of Hamilton and improve its acknowledgement within the landscape. The village is located alongside a PRow so there may be potential to improve the right of way as to highlight the presence of these historic features.</li> </ul>
		(WEAK)	(MODERATE)
<b>(H) The area is promoted as a place for sustainable</b>	There are opportunities for future sustainable urban extensions and developments to link with the urban area and address issues such as indistinct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land has been allocated within the boundaries of GIEZ-1 for the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential for future development within the area to improve the landscape within the GIEZ, especially as there are very few restrictions within the assessment</li> </ul>

<b>living</b>	boundaries, poor accessibility, fragmented landscapes, etc.	(WEAK)	area in terms of existing built form. (MODERATE to STRONG)
<b>(I) The area functions as an engine for regeneration</b>	The area benefits from opportunities for community involvement through volunteering or gaining new skills in environmental improvement work, particularly within areas of multiple deprivation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is little sign of active community involvement within the GIEZ</li> </ul> (DOES NOT MEET PURPOSE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The level of community involvement could be improved through the formation of ties between schools and community groups and local farms.</li> <li>- Community groups could be approached to undertake GI enhancement projects in line with the LLR LBAP, such as planting new woodland, restoring existing hedgerows, forming new PRow etc.</li> </ul> (WEAK to MODERATE)
<b>(J) The area performs as a nature reserve</b>	The area performs as a nature reserve by strengthening biodiversity, geological and geomorphological conservation management for sites in and around the urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Biodiversity within the area appears to have been limited by the wide spread impact of agriculture on the land. However, established mixed species hedgerows, localised areas of woodland, small Brooks and several ponds form areas of improved diversity.</li> <li>- The area is identified within the 6 C's report as a GI asset.</li> <li>- The settlements of Barkby and Barkby Thorpe are designated conservation areas and contain valuable mixed species woodland.</li> </ul> (WEAK to MODERATE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthen the network of existing GI by connecting areas of isolated woodland.</li> <li>- Enhance/promote diversification of agricultural land.</li> <li>- Optimise the ecological value of sites within the GIEZ that demonstrate good levels of biodiversity through improvement works and encouraging their spread to adjacent areas.</li> </ul> (MODERATE)

<p><b>Assessment of strength; identification of <i>zones of weakness and extension opportunity zones</i></b></p>	<p>Currently, there are assets which could contribute to a good network of accessible GI however they are too fragmented to function effectively. The edges of settlements surrounding the GIEZ terminate too abruptly and the land immediately adjacent to these settlements is currently unsuitable for recreation. The formation of new pedestrian gateways to the country at key points along the settlement edges, while converting land at these points for recreation, will improve the transition from urban to rural and the accessibility to the existing GI assets. With the presence of a proposed masterplan for the site in development, there is however, potential to implement the points highlighted above to create a strong network of GI that is well integrated into the neighbouring settlements, but that also unlocks the potential of existing landscape features.</p>	<p><b>Overall Assessment of strength:</b></p> <p><b>Existing – (WEAK)</b></p> <p><b>Potential – (MODERATE to STRONG)</b></p>
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<b>Green Infrastructure Area</b>	Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zone 2 (GIEZ-2)
<b>Location Plan</b>	 <p>The map displays the Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zone 2 (GIEZ-2) in orange, located north of Leicester. It is bounded by the River Soar and Grand Union Canal. The map includes local authority boundaries and labels for GIEZ-1, GIEZ-2, and GIEZ-3. A legend, scale bar, and ARUP project information are also present.</p>
<b>Description</b>	<p>GIEZ-2 forms part of the River Soar valley corridor, with the River Soar running through the heart of the enhancement zone. The Grand Union Canal also runs through the area. GIEZ-2 is located north of Leicester, bound by the settlements of Thurmaston and Birstall to the east and west respectively. The GIEZ is bound to the north by the A46, with the A607 partially enclosing the north-eastern perimeter. The valley corridor continues south into the heart of Leicester.</p>

Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the Urban Fringe GI Enhancement Zone?		
	The GIEZ is almost completely free from built development. Aside from a small cluster of residential properties on Unicorn Street in the east, Birstall FC clubhouse, some small structures associated with the Watermead County Park and the canal, as well as car parks, the majority of GIEZ-2 comprises open land. This includes a mixture of agricultural land, wooded areas, wetlands and watercourses, as well as a small area of sports pitches in the west. The Watermead Country Park, which makes up the majority of the area, has been created in former mineral extraction areas.		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
Vernacular	Residential	Other	
<hr/>			
	Does the area feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?		
	The area has a very open feel, with built developments small in scale and very widely distributed. Although distant views to built form in the settlements of Thurmaston to the east and Birstall to the west of the area provide some sense of enclosure, the area still retains a remote and open character.		
	Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?		
	Although the openness of the area is not diminished, visual reminders of nearby built-form reduce the sense of rurality; furthermore, the managed nature of the country park provides more of a semi-urban feel.		
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded		
	GIEZ-2 is located towards the southern extents of the Soar Valley character area, as defined in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. Major transport infrastructure is a prominent feature within the landscape, characteristic of the wider Soar Valley.		
	The GIEZ is located at the bottom of the valley, where much of the area is a floodplain. As a result the land is essentially rural and there is a rich diversity in habitat types unique to the River Soar corridor, these include floodplain grazing marshes, lowland fens, deciduous woodland and several large water bodies. Much of the area within the GIEZ is part of Watermead Country Park, which contains three Local Nature Reserves (Reedbed, Birstall and Watermead Country Park).		

	<p>The valley is well used as a recreation destination with towpaths alongside the Grand Union Canal that runs parallel to the River Soar and National Cycle Routes 6 and 48 following pathways within the country park. The enhancement zone is bound on both the eastern and western edges by the settlements of Thurmaston and Birstall respectively, which climb up the valley slopes. Both settlements feature strongly in views out of the valley, with industrial and business parks prominent in views towards Thurmaston. This gives the areas towards the perimeter of the site an urban fringe character, however the site feels increasingly rural towards the centre.</p> <p><i>Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work</i></p> <p>There are signs of vandalism and graffiti at the perimeters of the site, in particular along the eastern edge where Watermead Country Park abuts Thurmaston.</p> <p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>The condition of the landscape is generally good, public footpaths and waterways appear to be maintained well.</p>
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<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>Water courses, canals, waterbodies, areas of deciduous woodland, marsh and grassland habitats characterise the area as diverse and somewhat wild. The landscape feels closer to nature than the working agricultural landscapes found in the wider countryside.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Designed parkland</td><td><b>Scrub</b></td><td><b>Marsh</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td><b>Rough grassland</b></td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Water meadows</b></td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr> <tr> <td>Orchard</td><td><b>Deciduous woodland</b></td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr> <tr> <td>Mixed woodland</td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td>Arable</td></tr> <tr> <td>Other _____</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the area which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>The landscape is a designated country park with three local nature reserves which will guide future development in this area.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>The variety of habitats and the resultant diversity in flora and fauna are unique character givers for the site. Manmade features such as the Grand Union Canal and locks are attractive features synonymous with this type of landscape. Poorly defined gateways along the eastern boundary, along with large industrial estates on the edge of Thurmaston detract from the character of the country park in these areas.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Pylons</td><td>Communications Masts</td><td>Tumuli</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>Other: <u>Bridges, Locks</u></p>	Designed parkland	<b>Scrub</b>	<b>Marsh</b>	Peat bog	Moor/heath	<b>Rough grassland</b>	<b>Water meadows</b>	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation	Mixed woodland	Shelterbelt	Arable	Other _____			Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>	Pylons	Communications Masts	Tumuli	
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<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>Generally, as a result of dense planted coverage through the centre of the area in the River Soar corridor, the primary views in the western part of GIEZ-2 tend to be associated with Thurmaston, with views towards Birstall in the east. However, there are fleeting glimpses of both settlements in some areas, particularly in the south of the area across open waterbodies.</p>																										

*Are there long sightlines or vistas across the area from the urban area to the countryside?*


The majority of longer views are towards urban areas, particularly Birstall which is set on a prominent hillside. Views towards the open countryside to the north are very limited, interrupted by highway features.

*Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?*

Within the valley bottom there are limited views north/south, but there are some long vistas across GIEZ-2 from elevated positions to the east and west, particularly from the A607 across the northern part of the area.

<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Scale:</td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td>Medium</td><td><b>Large</b></td></tr><tr><td>Enclosure:</td><td>Expansive</td><td><b>Open</b></td><td><b>Enclosed</b></td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td>Remoteness:</td><td>Wild</td><td><b>Remote</b></td><td><b>Vacant</b></td><td>Active</td></tr><tr><td>Unity:</td><td>Unified</td><td><b>Interrupted</b></td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td>Visual Dynamic:</td><td>Sweeping</td><td>Spreading</td><td><b>Dispersed</b></td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <p>The visual diversity and distinct character within the GIEZ, in relation to its wider context, make the assessment area an interesting and immersive environment to be in. Although it is closely bound by major infrastructure and built up urban settlements, the GIEZ feels peaceful and somewhat distant from the surrounding intensity.</p> <table><tr><td>Security:</td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td>Comfortable</td><td><b>Safe</b></td></tr><tr><td>Stimulus:</td><td>Monotonous</td><td>Indifferent</td><td><b>Interesting</b></td><td>Inspiring</td></tr><tr><td>Tranquillity:</td><td>Busy</td><td>Noisy</td><td><b>Still</b></td><td><b>Peaceful</b></td></tr><tr><td>Pleasure:</td><td>Undesirable</td><td>Satisfying</td><td><b>Pleasant</b></td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table>	Scale:	Intimate	Small	Medium	<b>Large</b>	Enclosure:	Expansive	<b>Open</b>	<b>Enclosed</b>	Constrained	Remoteness:	Wild	<b>Remote</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	Active	Unity:	Unified	<b>Interrupted</b>	Fragmented	Chaotic	Visual Dynamic:	Sweeping	Spreading	<b>Dispersed</b>	Channelled	Security:	Unsafe	Unsettling	Comfortable	<b>Safe</b>	Stimulus:	Monotonous	Indifferent	<b>Interesting</b>	Inspiring	Tranquillity:	Busy	Noisy	<b>Still</b>	<b>Peaceful</b>	Pleasure:	Undesirable	Satisfying	<b>Pleasant</b>	Delightful
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>For the most part, the boundaries of GIEZ-2 are aligned with logical and defensible features. Along the eastern and western edges, the boundaries tend to be aligned with the well-defined backs of properties at the edges of Birstall, Wanlip and Thurmaston (though it is noted that there are a small number of minor anomalies e.g. around Unicorn Street in Thurmaston where a number of residential properties are included within the boundary).</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>On-going commercial development associated with the Watermead Regeneration Corridor policies in the Core Strategy are likely to diminish the rurality of the northern part of GIEZ-2, particularly on its eastern edge.</p>																																													
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this urban fringe area provide formal and/or informal recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>PRoW</b></td><td>Sports pitches</td><td><b>Playgrounds</b></td><td><b>Public Park</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Informal Rec.</b></td><td><b>Dog walking</b></td><td><b>Picnic site</b></td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td><b>Open water</b></td><td><b>Watercourse</b></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>The provision for recreation within the GIEZ is varied due to the presence of Watermead Country Park.</p>	<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	<b>Playgrounds</b>	<b>Public Park</b>	<b>Informal Rec.</b>	<b>Dog walking</b>	<b>Picnic site</b>	Camping	<b>Open water</b>	<b>Watercourse</b>																																			
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<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>The majority of GIEZ-2 is highly accessible to the public, with a dense network of footpaths linking different areas of the Watermead Country Park. It is also</p>																																													



	<p>notable that the long distance National Cycle Network Route 6 passes through the GIEZ. This route also serves as an important strategic cycle route within the sub-region, linking Leicester and Loughborough.</p> <p><i>What is the quality of access? Is there evidence of the level of use?</i></p> <p>Links between the GIEZ and surrounding settlements and other areas of open land are slightly more sporadic than within the country park, though access is, for the most part, possible via public footpaths. However, access points, particularly along the eastern edge are frequently poorly acknowledged.</p>
<p><b>Site Photographs</b></p>	 <p>Photograph 1: View looking into Watermead Country Park along an access road off of Melton Road. Access to the country park from Melton Road is generally indistinct.</p>



Photograph 2: View looking west towards Birstall from the eastern edge of Watermead Country Park. The park is host to a diverse range of habitats including deciduous woodland, grassland, marshland and large water bodies. The park also provides opportunities for recreation through a network of designated footpaths.





Photograph 3: View east across Wanlip Meadows at the northern end of Watermead Country Park. The meadows are an example of the important roles the areas within the GIEZ play in enhancing biodiversity and storing flood water from the River Soar.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary	Potential for Enhancement
<b>(A) The area acts as a bridge to the country</b>	A bridge to the country is formed by linking housing, schools, health centres and hospitals, bus and train stations in urban centres to the existing access network to connect with accessible green spaces in the wider countryside.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessibility to the GIEZ is good. The area contains numerous public footpaths, towpaths, two national cycle routes, a park and ride facility along with several car parks either within the perimeter or adjacent to it.</li> <li>- The footpaths within the GIEZ extend beyond its boundary, south into Leicester and north along the River Soar Valley.</li> </ul> <p>The GIEZ serves the purpose of providing a bridge to the countryside well. It is in close proximity to large settlements and provides publicly accessible links to the wider countryside. The GIEZ also caters well for visitors from the wider area looking to gain easy access to the countryside through provision of parking facilities and good transport links into the area.</p> <p>(STRONG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential to enhance pedestrian access to the GIEZ from the immediate settlements bounding the site to the east and west.</li> <li>- Parking facilities within the GIEZ provide little sense of arrival to what is a diverse and interesting landscape. These could be enhanced to make the process of arrival feel more significant and improve visitors' perception of these car parks as a gateway to the countryside.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>
<b>(B) The area provides a gateway to the city/town</b>	The area provides an improved image, experience and sense of place by encouraging investment in an improved environmental quality for public rights of way and spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public rights of way are generally formalised within the country park and along the Grand Union Canal.</li> <li>- Access gateways are better defined to the west, eastern gateways are poorly highlighted and don't suggest where they might lead.</li> <li>- There are a couple of car parks within the GIEZ for visitors to the area, however these do not provide an improved image or sense of place.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access points to the country park along its eastern edge require improvement. The existing access is discrete and unattractive in places, these have potential to be better defined and their character improved to highlight their significance. Reference to these gateways could be picked up deeper within the surrounding residential settlements to improve the parks' wider impact. This could also help to address the deprivation in living environment</li> </ul>

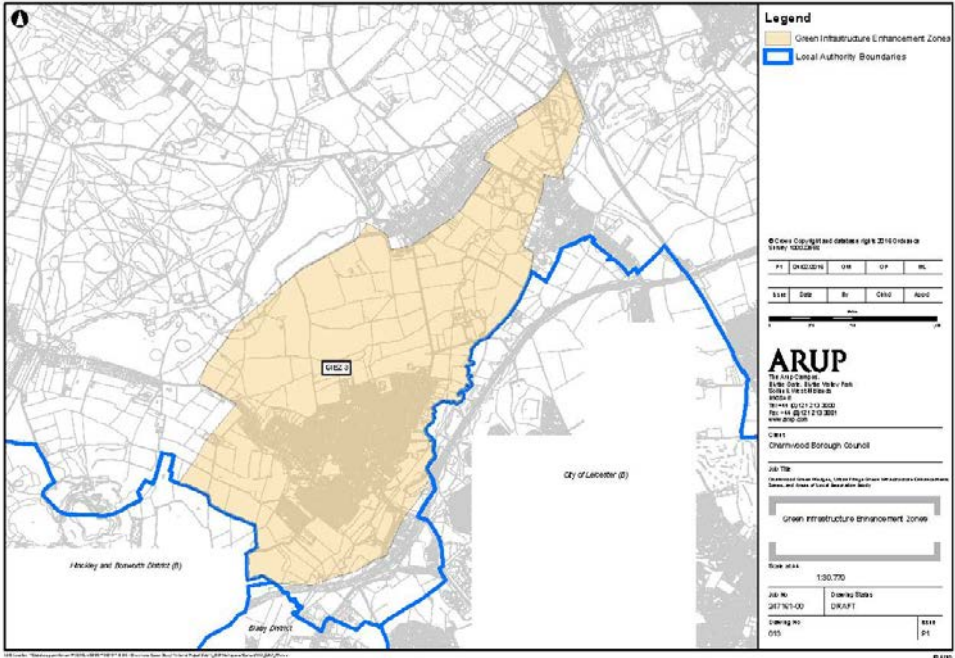
			<p>within Thurmaston, identified within the Charnwood South Priority Neighbourhood Profile report.</p> <p>(MODERATE to STRONG)</p>
<p><b>(C) The area functions as a 'health centre'</b></p>	<p>The area contributes to health and well-being through promoting access to green spaces for exercise for schools, hospitals and health centres.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Links into wider communities are poor, the assets contained within the GIEZ have little impact beyond the boundary of the Watermead Country Park.</li> <li>- There are several surrounding schools and health centres which could benefit from better links to the park.</li> <li>- Well-defined footpaths and maps showing routes within Watermead Country Park promote walking/running within the park.</li> <li>- Sustrans National Cycle Route 48 runs through the GIEZ</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE to STRONG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential to form links between recreational green spaces within the residential settlements and the country park through the formation of 'green corridors'.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>
<p><b>(D) The area performs as an outdoor classroom</b></p>	<p>The area provides opportunities for environmental education through parks, nature reserves and farm-based activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are several local schools within the immediate vicinity of the GIEZ, although more research would need to be undertaken to determine whether these schools made regular use of the three nature reserves contained within the GIEZ.</li> <li>- Opportunities for informal education are provided through the use of signage throughout the park highlighting plant and animal species of interest.</li> </ul> <p>(WEAK to MODERATE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is evidence that the nature reserves within the country park already serve as 'outdoor classrooms', in the form of informative signage. Educational opportunities could be formalised through the creation of designated educational facilities and official ties with schools, if these don't already exist.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE to STRONG)</p>

<b>(E) The area acts as a recycling and renewable energy centre</b>	The area is helping to address climate change through sustainable management of waste, water and pollution, production of energy crops and creation of woodland to act as carbon sinks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Much of the GIEZ is located within flood risk zone 3, whereas the adjacent settlements of Birstall and Thurmaston appear to be clear of any flood zones. This indicates that the area within the GIEZ is providing effective flood alleviation for the surrounding urban developments.</li> </ul> <p>(STRONG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is outlined within the Charnwood Local Plan 2011 to 2028 that development within this area is designed to be resilient to climate change, manage areas at risk of flooding and protects and enhances water quality.</li> </ul> <p>(STRONG)</p>
<b>(F) The area is a productive landscape</b>	The urban fringe farmland is used for food production, processing of local produce and retail (farm shops) for urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The land is not being used for agriculture, however, there are small areas of allotments for use by some of the surrounding communities.</li> </ul> <p>(WEAK)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There could be the potential to introduce further community food growing opportunities, these could be linked to education, health and lifestyle programs. This would also help to address the issue of residents in the northwest of Thurmaston being outside of the recommended distance of allotment provision, identified as an issue for the area within the Charnwood Open Spaces Sport Recreation Study (2010).</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>
<b>(G) The area clearly displays its cultural legacy</b>	The area promotes an awareness of the presence of historic features in the urban fringe landscape and how they contribute to sense of place for local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are some information boards located within Watermead Country Park that explain a brief history of the park.</li> </ul> <p>(WEAK)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential for a new visitor hub, as supported within the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy, to promote an awareness of historic features within the area as part of a wider provision of visitor attractions.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>



<b>(H) The area is promoted as a place for sustainable living</b>	There are opportunities for future sustainable urban extensions and developments to link with the urban area and address issues such as indistinct boundaries, poor accessibility, fragmented landscapes, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The area contained within GIEZ-2 corresponds with the Watermead Regeneration Corridor Direction of Growth, as outlined within the Charnwood Local Plan 2011 to 2028 which outlines key principles for supporting development. The River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy also outlines more detail on key considerations for development within the area of GIEZ-2.</li> </ul> <p>(STRONG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are a number of key opportunities highlighted within the Charnwood Local Plan 2011 to 2028 and the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy including connectivity and accessibility with the wider community, the provision of sensitive development that protects the area's tranquillity and ecology and the expectation that new development is designed with climate change resilience in mind</li> </ul> <p>(STRONG)</p>
<b>(I) The area functions as an engine for regeneration</b>	The area benefits from opportunities for community involvement through volunteering or gaining new skills in environmental improvement work, particularly within areas of multiple deprivation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are signs of community involvement in the form of a community woodland within the Watermead Country Park Local Nature Reserve.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Due to the GIEZ's proximity to urban settlements there is the potential to introduce community management initiatives as part of the parks ongoing care.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>
<b>(J) The area performs as a nature reserve</b>	The area performs as a nature reserve by strengthening biodiversity, geological and geomorphological conservation management for sites in and around the urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are three nature reserves located within the GIEZ however their influence does not extend further than the edges of Birstall and Thurmaston. Watermead Country Park has also been identified as a Prime GI Site by the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.</li> </ul> <p>(STRONG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential to take advantage of the ecological value and unique character of the landscape within the GIEZ and extend its influence deeper into the surrounding settlements through improved access, green corridors and 'stepping stone' green spaces set within the residential areas.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>

<b>Assessment of strength; identification of <i>zones of weakness and extension opportunity zones</i></b>	<p>Overall, GIEZ – 2 provides a strong network of GI that serves both ecological and recreational purposes well. However, these purposes appear to have little influence on the edges of the settlements to the east and west of the site, particularly to the east where entrances to Watermead Country Park are poorly highlighted and demonstrate little of the park’s natural character.</p> <p>Improvement of the relationship between the GIEZ and the settlements either side will help to unlock the GI assets contained within the enhancement zone and the role they could play in the lives of the adjacent communities.</p>	<b>Overall assessment of strength:</b>  <b>Existing – (MODERATE to STRONG)</b>  <b>Potential – (MODERATE to STRONG)</b>
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<b>Green Infrastructure Area</b>	Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zone 3 (GIEZ-3)
<b>Location Plan</b>	
<b>Description</b>	GIEZ-3 is located in the area south of Cropston Reservoir, encompassing the village of Anstey and extending north-east towards Cropston and Thurmaston. The GIEZ is bound along its southern perimeter by the A46 and by the edge of Cropston Reservoir to the north.

Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the Urban Fringe GI Enhancement Zone?		
	The area predominantly consists of open fields and agricultural land. There is little dispersed built form within the area, consisting of some detached residential dwellings, an allotment north of Anstey Lane, industrial uses and leisure/sports uses in the form of Anstey Nomads Football club and Gynsill Lawn Tennis Club.		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
Vernacular	Residential	Other	
<hr/>			
Does the area feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?			
The parcel is punctuated by piecemeal developments such as areas of residential housing, pylons which are situated across the GIEZ and also the A46 which is visible through patchy areas of woodland and hedging.			
Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?			
The sense of openness is impeded by the proximity of the A46- you can hear and see the traffic from the road through patchy areas of the deciduous woodland.			
Landscape Character and Type	To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded		
	GIEZ-3 is located within the Charnwood Forest Fringe (Swithland and Rothley Brook) sub-area of Charnwood Forest character areas. Charnwood Forest Fringe landscape is of greater variety with expansive rolling agricultural fields and the broad Rothley Valley. It is generally less wooded than the Charnwood Forest Core. The character is influenced by some detracting urban fringe elements such as major transport infrastructure running adjacent to the area. The land use within the GIEZ is predominantly agricultural with large open field patterns, however, urbanizing elements such as the A46 and high tension power cables interrupt its unity and create greater fragmentation of landscape features.		
	Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work		
	Noise from the A46 and the visual impact of seeing passing vehicles through areas of patchy woodland on the eastern edge of the GIEZ.		


	<p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>Generally the land is in good condition. There are breaks in some of the hedge boundaries between fields within the enhancement zone, there are denser areas of deciduous woodland stretching across the wider landscape.</p>
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<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>Undulating topography edged with intact hedges and deciduous woodland create a strong sense of rurality, this is especially true to areas in between settlements. However, this perceived ruralness is compromised towards the edges of settlements where their urban character is prominent.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Designed parkland</td><td><b>Scrub</b></td><td>Marsh</td></tr> <tr> <td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td><b>Rough grassland</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Water meadows</td><td>Grassland</td><td>Species rich grassland</td></tr> <tr> <td>Orchard</td><td><b>Deciduous woodland</b></td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Mixed woodland</b></td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td><b>Arable</b></td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Other _____</td></tr> </table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the area which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>Landscape features such as existing allotments, proximity to Castle Hill Country Park and Park View Equestrian centre located on the eastern edge of the GIEZ.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>The condition and quality of area of the landscape close to urban settlements detract from the landscape quality. Impacts on views and noise from the A46 also detract from the character of the surrounding landscape. Views of high tension power cables cut through areas of the GIEZ have a domineering impact on aspects of the landscape. The main attractor is from a high point looking towards Thurstaston with views of rolling landscape with bands of mixed woodland that enhance the sense of ruralness.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Pylons</b></td><td><b>Communications Masts</b></td><td>Tumuli</td><td>Other</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">_____</td></tr> </table>	Designed parkland	<b>Scrub</b>	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	<b>Rough grassland</b>	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich grassland	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation	<b>Mixed woodland</b>	Shelterbelt	<b>Arable</b>	Other _____			Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>	<b>Pylons</b>	<b>Communications Masts</b>	Tumuli	Other	_____			
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<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>There is a high perception due to the proximity to the A46 in a visual sense and also due to the noise from the traffic.</p>																														



	<p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the area from the urban area to the countryside?</i></p> <p>Established deciduous trees close to urban boundaries impact on the perceived distance to surrounding settlements, Anstey feels further away as there is no direct view from main access routes.</p> <p><i>Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?</i></p> <p>There are also views at this point of mixed woodland nestled within undulating landscape.</p>
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Visual Assessment	Assessment criteria:				
	Scale:	Intimate	Small	Medium	Large
	Enclosure:	Expansive	Open	Enclosed	Constrained
	Remoteness:	Wild	Remote	Vacant	Active
	Unity:	Unified	Interrupted	Fragmented	Chaotic
	Visual Dynamic:	Sweeping	Spreading	Dispersed	Channelled
	Perception:				
	The sense of tranquillity increases as you move further away from urban settlements and can no longer view or hear the A46. The rolling nature of topography and variation in landscape features within the enhancement zone combine to form a visually diverse and stimulating environment.				
	Security:	Unsafe	Unsettling	Comfortable	Safe
	Stimulus:	Monotonous	Indifferent	Interesting	Inspiring
Tranquillity:	Busy	Noisy	Still	Peaceful	
Pleasure:	Undesirable	Satisfying	Pleasant	Delightful	
Nature and Extent of Urban Edges	Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?				
	The settlement of Anstey has prominent edges created by the Bradgate Road and the Cropston Road, however these roads are winding and the topography of the landscape is rolling so these roads become less visible from the surrounding countryside.				
	Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?				
	The section of this enhancement zone which is the closet in proximity to the settlement of Anstey and Leicester is more fragmented and disconnected to the wider countryside, the impact of the A46 in terms of the noise and visual impact of traffic means the sense of rurality is slowly being eroded and becoming more urban.				
Recreational opportunities	Does this urban fringe area provide formal and/or informal recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)				
	Recreational opportunities in the area comprise of an allotment located north of Anstey Lane, a football pitch (Anstey Nomads Football Club) east of Cropston Road, and a tennis club (Gynsill Lawn Tennis Club) situated east of Gynsill Close. In addition, there are a number of public right of ways (PRoW) across the area.				
	PRoW	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park	
	Informal Rec.	Dog walking	Picnic site	Camping	
	Open water	Watercourse			

<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>Given the scale and sprawling nature of this enhancement zone, there is public access to only some of the area. Parts of the site can be accessed from a number of public rights of way and bridle ways including access from a PRoW to the north from Waterfield Road, bridle way access from east to west from Cropston Road to Anstey Lane, and PRoW off Groby Road, Leicester Road and the A46. A PRoW north of Anstey also connects the settlement with Cropston.</p> <p>There are a number of public roads from which the area can be accessed including Anstey lane which cuts across the centre of the enhancement zone.</p> <p><i>What is the quality of access? Is there evidence of the level of use?</i></p> <p>Generally, access to public footpaths are relatively hidden, they often intersect with settlements at quiet dead-end streets and are difficult to locate without local knowledge. Where no physical footpath exists across fields, the ground cover is worn bare indicating a frequent level of use.</p>
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	
<b>Site Photographs</b>	 <p>Photograph 1: View from Anstey Lane looking north across community allotments.</p>





Photograph 2: View from Anstey Lane at the access point to the public bridleway looking north towards the edge of the settlement of Cropston.



Photograph 3: View looking south east along a footpath parallel to the Leicester Road.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary	Potential for Enhancement
<b>(A) The area acts as a bridge to the country</b>	A bridge to the country is formed by linking housing, schools, health centres and hospitals, bus and train stations in urban centres to the existing access network to connect with accessible green spaces in the wider countryside.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PRoW exists between Anstey and Cropston and along Rothley Brook, however there are no strong links towards Cropston Reservoir to the north.</li> <li>- Football club south of Anstey, cricket club south of Cropston.</li> <li>- Two schools along northern edge, one along southern edge of Anstey.</li> </ul> <p>While there are a number of schools and sports groups located along the outer edges of Anstey, there is little evidence of these performing any 'bridging' functions.</p> <p>(WEAK)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The provision of public footpaths between Anstey and Cropston Reservoir/Bradgate and Swithland Woods would enhance connectivity out to the wider country.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>
<b>(B) The area provides a gateway to the city/town</b>	The area provides an improved image, experience and sense of place by encouraging investment in an improved environmental quality for public rights of way and spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Castle Hill Park, provides a gateway to areas of countryside via various PRoW, with signage highlighting the history of the area and local wildlife.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The gateways to these PRoW could be improved in terms of the quality of the access, could potentially be used as wayfinding that ties in with the wider area of Charnwood.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>
<b>(C) The area functions as a 'health centre'</b>	The area contributes to health and well-being through promoting access to green spaces for exercise for schools, hospitals and health centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PRoW exists between Anstey and Cropston and along Rothley Brook, however there are no strong links towards Cropston Reservoir to the north.</li> <li>- Two schools along northern edge, one along southern edge of Anstey.</li> <li>- Football club south of Anstey, cricket club south of Cropston.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential for the three schools along the edges of Anstey to make further use of the green spaces surrounding the village of Anstey, however there would need to diversification of land use to make this appropriate.</li> <li>- Improved links between Anstey and Cropston Reservoir could be a</li> </ul>

		<p>While there are a number of schools and sports groups located along the outer edges of Anstey, there is little evidence of these performing any wider 'health centre' functions other than those intended on a site specific scale.</p> <p>(WEAK)</p>	<p>catalyst to providing improved access to the GI assets surrounding the village.</p> <p>(MODERATE)</p>
<b>(D) The area performs as an outdoor classroom</b>	The area provides opportunities for environmental education through parks, nature reserves and farm-based activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bradgate Park and Swithland Woods Country Park along north western edge of GIEZ.</li> <li>- Bradgate Park and Cropston Reservoir SSSI along the north western edge of GIEZ</li> <li>- Numerous farms within the GIEZ</li> <li>- Castle Hill Park provides signage within the park to the history of the area and community information.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE to STRONG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are some important local environmental designations surrounding the GIEZ, however links between these and nearby settlements are weak in places. There is potential to enhance the influence these environmental assets have on the landscape within the GIEZ through strengthening connections to these assets. Focusing these improved connections around schools/community groups could encourage the use of these links for educational purposes.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>
<b>(E) The area acts as a recycling and renewable energy centre</b>	The area is helping to address climate change through sustainable management of waste, water and pollution, production of energy crops and creation of woodland to act as carbon sinks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is no evidence of the area currently helping to address climate change through sustainable management of waste, water and pollution of energy crops and creation of woodland to act as carbon sinks.</li> </ul> <p>(WEAK)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As the land within the GIEZ is predominantly agricultural there is potential for areas of land to be identified for production of energy crops and creation of woodland to act as carbon sinks.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>

<b>(F) The area is a productive landscape</b>	The urban fringe farmland is used for food production, processing of local produce and retail (farm shops) for urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arable farmland is a prevailing land use within the GIEZ, however, there were no signs of local initiatives, involving the farms, present during the site visit.</li> </ul> <p>(WEAK)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is the potential to encourage more local farmers within the GIEZ to become involved in processing produce and retail within the surrounding villages of Thurcaston, Cropston and Anstey.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>
<b>(G) The area clearly displays its cultural legacy</b>	The area promotes an awareness of the presence of historic features in the urban fringe landscape and how they contribute to sense of place for local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At both access point to Castle Hill Country Park, there was information boards promoting the historic features of the Park and how it contributes to the sense of place for the area. The surrounding settlements of Cropston, Thurcaston and Anstey are all conservation areas with each settlement containing a number of listed buildings. The villages retain much of its heritage and exudes a unique character as a result.</li> </ul> <p>(STRONG)</p>	<p>Within GIEZ3 there is little opportunity for potential enhancement.</p> <p>(WEAK)</p>
<b>(H) The area is promoted as a place for sustainable living</b>	There are opportunities for future sustainable urban extensions and developments to link with the urban area and address issues such as indistinct boundaries, poor accessibility, fragmented landscapes, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are currently several previously submitted planning applications for medium-scale residential developments both to the north (P/14/0428/2 &amp; P/13/2340/2) and south-west (P/14/0624/2 &amp; P/13/1519/2) of Anstey. These appear to address issues of indistinct boundaries and show signs of integration into the wider network of pedestrian access to the countryside.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities exist for any future development along the south-western or northern edge to improve pedestrian access towards Bradgate Park and Cropston Reservoir, in particular access needs to be celebrated more and penetrate deeper into the settlement.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>



<b>(I) The area functions as an engine for regeneration</b>	<p>The area benefits from opportunities for community involvement through volunteering or gaining new skills in environmental improvement work, particularly within areas of multiple deprivation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is unclear what community involvement takes place in the area.</li> </ul> <p>(WEAK)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential for new volunteering opportunities linked to local schools and community groups. Local initiatives could be put in place to encourage communities to be more involved in the upkeep linked to Castle Hill Country Park, existing allotments urban farming, nutrition etc</li> <li>- Wider initiatives could encourage local groups to be closely involved with the management of Bradgate Park and Swithland Woods, just north of Anstey. There is potential for these to combine skills development, environmental improvement and education.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE to STRONG)</p>
<b>(J) The area performs as a nature reserve</b>	<p>The area performs as a nature reserve by strengthening biodiversity, geological and geomorphological conservation management for sites in and around the urban areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bradgate Park and Swithland Woods Country Park along north western edge of GIEZ.</li> <li>- Bradgate Park and Cropston Reservoir SSSI along the north western edge of GIEZ</li> <li>- Numerous farms within the GIEZ</li> <li>- Castle Hill Park provides signage within the park to the history of the area and community information.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE to STRONG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are some important local environmental designations surrounding the GIEZ, however links between these and nearby settlements are weak in places. There is potential to enhance the influence these environmental assets have on the landscape within the GIEZ through strengthening connections to these assets.</li> </ul> <p>(MODERATE)</p>

<b>Assessment of strength; identification of <i>zones of weakness and extension opportunity zones</i></b>	<p>Currently, there is a moderate provision of GI assets within the assessment area and its immediate context. This is predominantly as a result of the area's close proximity to valuable greenspaces such as Bradgate Park and Swithland Woods Country Park, Bradgate Park and Cropston Reservoir SSSI, Castle Hill Park and the wider Charnwood Forest Regional Park. Strengthening connections between these assets and the settlements within the assessment area could act as a catalyst to GI improvement and could help to encourage further community and educational initiatives within the fringe landscape. A number of proposed applications for development around Anstey have the potential to be key drivers in improving the accessibility and recreational value of the landscape within the assessment area.</p>	<b>Overall Assessment of strength:</b>  <b>Existing – (MODERATE)</b>  <b>Potential – (MODERATE to STRONG)</b>
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<b>Site Audit</b>			
<b>Existing Uses and Density of Buildings</b>	<i>What built development exists within the Urban Fringe GI Enhancement Zone?</i>		
	<b>Farm buildings</b> Industrial Commercial Vernacular	Hotel Civic <b>Educational</b> <b>Residential</b>	<b>Health</b> Religious Leisure/Sports Other
	<hr/> <i>Does the area feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?</i>  The area feels open and expansive when viewed from with clear views and no obvious settlements in site.  <i>Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?</i>  There is a strong sense of rurality and openness, however, the strong experience of entering the countryside is impacted by having to cross the bridge across the M1 motorway.		
<b>Landscape Character and Type</b>	<i>To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded</i>  Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zone 4 is located within the Langley Lowlands Character Area. The Key Characteristics of this area comprises rolling landform with gentle slopes, large arable fields lined with hedgerows and interspersed with deciduous trees. Open views from ridgeline roads, (Oakley Rd, Tickow Lane, Hathern/Shepshed Rd) and the M1 Motorway which divides the area. Settlements are the western areas of Loughborough and northern Shepshed.  The principal settlement of Shepshed dominates this relatively small character area with other smaller villages located outside Charnwood Borough boundary. Most of the land is for agricultural use with small areas of woodland. There are areas of industrial estates along the southern border of Shepshed, located between the A512 and the disused Charnwood Forest Railway line that once ran through the town. The historic parkland of Garendon Park with its woodland tree belts and prominent garden buildings are a particular feature on the approach to Loughborough.  <i>Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work.</i>  There is some evidence of litter along the PRow along Butthole Lane walking towards the bridge across the M1. But there was no apparent evidence of erosion, bare or disturbed ground, new planting and landscape restoration work. It was not possible to judge the condition of historic features.		

	<p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>The condition of the landscape is good with established hedgerows interspersed with trees lining the rolling landform of arable and pastoral fields.</p>
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Landscape and other features	<i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i>			
	A rolling landscape with intact hedging and deciduous woodland edge the field boundaries. The Black Brook runs through the landscape forming a boundary and can be identified as it has a strong edge of vegetation. However, the M1 motorway has a dominant presence in the area, splitting the area in two and creating a permanent barrier across the landscape.			
	<i>What is the dominant landcover?</i>			
	Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh	
	Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland	
	Water meadows	Grassland	Species rich	
	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation	
	Mixed woodland	<b>Shelterbelt</b>	<b>Arable</b>	
	Other _____			
	<i>What landscape features or other features exist within the area which may help to guide development form?</i>			
	The Black Brook is the main feature to guide development forward as it provides a potential Green Corridor for recreational routes, it provides a bridge through Shephed across the M1 and to the northern edge of Loughborough. It also provides the opportunity to wildlife to enhance and strengthen biodiversity and creation of new woodlands/ancient replanted woodlands.			
	<i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i>			
	The main attractors are the expansive views across the rolling landforms with gentle slopes, the woodlands surrounding most of Garendon Park, separating it from the nearby modern housing of western Loughborough. The obvious detractor is the M1 motorway which severs the landscape.			
	<i>Landscape elements:</i>			
	Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>
	Pylons	Communications Masts	Tumuli	Other <b><u>Motorway</u></b>
Views and Intervisibility	<i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i>			
	From Tickow Lane looking west you can see evidence of Belton settlement as the steeple of a church is visible, but no residential areas can be seen clearly. There are no clear views towards Hathern to the north east or looking east towards Loughborough.			
	<i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the area from the urban area to the countryside?</i>			


From the western edge of the settlement of Shepshed looking west from Tickow Lane, there are long sightlines across areas of countryside, the rolling landscape of pastoral and arable fields and the dense area of vegetation which edges the Black Brook, impact on the perceived distance of the surrounding settlements.

*Are there any key views across the site from neighbouring land?*

There are no significant views across the site from neighbouring land.



<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Scale:</td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td>Medium</td><td><b>Large</b></td></tr><tr><td>Enclosure:</td><td><b>Expansive</b></td><td><b>Open</b></td><td>Enclosed</td><td>Constrained</td></tr><tr><td>Remoteness:</td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td>Vacant</td><td><b>Active</b></td></tr><tr><td>Unity:</td><td>Unified</td><td>Interrupted</td><td><b>Fragmented</b></td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td>Visual Dynamic:</td><td><b>Sweeping</b></td><td>Spreading</td><td>Dispersed</td><td>Channelled</td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <p>The sense of tranquillity is interrupted by the M1, impacting on the sense of pleasure due to noise and visual impact of traffic, as you move further away, the sense of tranquillity increases and the also the sense of ruralness.</p> <table><tr><td>Security:</td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td><b>Comfortable</b></td><td>Safe</td></tr><tr><td>Stimulus:</td><td>Monotonous</td><td>Indifferent</td><td>Interesting</td><td><b>Inspiring</b></td></tr><tr><td>Tranquillity:</td><td>Busy</td><td><b>Noisy</b></td><td>Still</td><td>Peaceful</td></tr><tr><td>Pleasure:</td><td>Undesirable</td><td><b>Satisfying</b></td><td>Pleasant</td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table>	Scale:	Intimate	Small	Medium	<b>Large</b>	Enclosure:	<b>Expansive</b>	<b>Open</b>	Enclosed	Constrained	Remoteness:	Wild	Remote	Vacant	<b>Active</b>	Unity:	Unified	Interrupted	<b>Fragmented</b>	Chaotic	Visual Dynamic:	<b>Sweeping</b>	Spreading	Dispersed	Channelled	Security:	Unsafe	Unsettling	<b>Comfortable</b>	Safe	Stimulus:	Monotonous	Indifferent	Interesting	<b>Inspiring</b>	Tranquillity:	Busy	<b>Noisy</b>	Still	Peaceful	Pleasure:	Undesirable	<b>Satisfying</b>	Pleasant	Delightful
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>The settlement of Shepshed has a prominent edge on both sides. On the western edge created by the Black Brook is highly visible and on the eastern edge created by the M1 Motorway. The western edge of Loughborough has a prominent edge as it abuts Garendon Park.</p>																																													
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this urban fringe area provide formal and/or informal recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>PRoW</b></td><td>Sports pitches</td><td>Playgrounds</td><td>Public Park</td></tr><tr><td><b>Informal Rec.</b></td><td><b>Dog walking</b></td><td>Picnic site</td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td>Open water</td><td><b>Watercourse</b></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	Public Park	<b>Informal Rec.</b>	<b>Dog walking</b>	Picnic site	Camping	Open water	<b>Watercourse</b>																																			
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<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>Public access is possible, you can access PRoW taking you across the M1 and enabling you to walk close to the edge of Garendon Park, however there is no public access through the Park. You also have access via Coach Rd however public access seems to stop as you come close to the park which seems to be private.</p> <p><i>What is the quality of access? Is there evidence of the level of use?</i></p> <p>There is evidence of a good level of use by dog walkers, and for informal recreation however it is not well signposted.</p>																																													

<p><b>Consultation Responses</b></p>	
<p><b>Site Photographs</b></p>	 <p>Photograph 1: View looking north west from Tickow Lane in the direction of the settlement of Belton, the view is obstructed due to rolling landforms lined with hedgerows and interspersed with tree planting.</p>



Photograph 2: View looking south west from Tickow Lane. Westroyd House Care Home is visible in the foreground to the right, with residential housing to the left.



Photograph 3: View from Tickow Lane from the edge of a residential house looking north west towards Black Brook edged with deciduous woodland.

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment Commentary</b>	<b>Potential for Enhancement</b>
<b>(A) The area acts as a bridge to the country</b>	A bridge to the country is formed by linking housing, schools, health centres and hospitals, bus and train stations in urban centres to the existing access network to connect with accessible green spaces in the wider countryside.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bridleways, footpaths, fragmented PRoW, road networks via M1 and A512, Traffic free and On-road routes on the National Cycle Network. Oxley Primary School, St Botolphs CE Primary School, Hind Leys Pre-School, Shepshed High School and Newcroft Primary School in Shepshed, several schools on the western edge of Loughborough abutting Garendon Park.</li> </ul> <p><b>(WEAK)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is significant potential to create a more direct connection to accessible green spaces along Black Brook leading towards the western side of Loughborough and the wider countryside with potential for better PRoW/Sustran network around and potentially through Garendon Park.</li> <li>- Improvements to the network of walking and cycling routes is outlined in the Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy.</li> </ul> <p><b>(STRONG)</b></p>
<b>(B) The area provides a gateway to the city/town</b>	The area provides an improved image, experience and sense of place by encouraging investment in an improved environmental quality for public rights of way and spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bridleways, footpaths, road network, and cycle routes, GI assets in the 6 C's rights of way that penetrate surrounding settlements. The area itself is disconnected due to the M1 motorway and has impacted on the environmental quality of the area. Public rights of way are fragmented across the settlement.</li> </ul> <p><b>(WEAK)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential to enhance the sense of arrival between the town and country at key access points along the edges of the GIEZ, this has been outlined in the Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy:</li> <li>- Black Brook is a key GI asset which could be enhanced as a green corridor and serve as strong gateways to the countryside, refer to Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy and Charnwood Forest: A Living Landscape (2009)</li> </ul> <p><b>(STRONG)</b></p>
<b>(C) The area functions as a 'health centre'</b>	The area contributes to health and well-being through promoting access to green spaces for exercise for schools, hospitals and health centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Surrounded by schools with a number along the western edge of Loughborough, along with community centres and various sports centres. Connection routes from these to the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential to improve the PRoW in order to better access areas of countryside and to access walkways along the Black Brook, see Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028</li> </ul>

		<p>GIEZ is impeded by the lack of public rights of way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The area is outlined in the Charnwood Priority Neighbourhood Profile Loughborough West (2007) as reasonably equipped in terms of access to health facilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>(WEAK)</b></p>	<p>Core Strategy:</p> <p><b>(STRONG)</b></p>
<b>(D) The area performs as an outdoor classroom</b>	The area provides opportunities for environmental education through parks, nature reserves and farm-based activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Several schools are in close proximity, farms not too distant from settlements, historic features within Garendon Park, variety of habitats, also a number of allotments close to schools and residential areas of.</li> <li>- There are some connections directly to landscape from some schools at the northern edge of the settlement of Shepshed.</li> <li>- The area is outlined in the Charnwood Priority Neighbourhood Profile Loughborough West (2007) as reasonably equipped in terms of access to education. However, deprivation in education skills and training and income deprivation affecting children are the most prominent forms of deprivation in the area.</li> </ul> <p><b>(MODERATE)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The proximity of a number of surrounding schools and colleges to the GIEZ indicates there is potential for the area to function as an outdoor classroom with the benefit of better access links to semi-natural and natural green space and the provision of educational resources with the support of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust in order to enable children and young people to gain a better understanding of the habitats and wildlife within the areas they live.</li> <li>- There is also the potential for local farms to form ties with the surrounding communities as agriculture is the prevailing land use within the area.</li> <li>- The proximity of allotments to primary schools and secondary schools, provides the potential for education opportunities in food growth, urban farming and food/nutrition education.</li> <li>- There is potential to improve awareness of the Garendon Park as a local feature within the landscape.</li> <li>- There is public access to the site</li> </ul>

			<p>close to schools, via an existing PRoW, however you must cross the motorway to access it and can only walk the boundary of Garendon Park presently, this could be strengthened with better access and improved recognition as to the historical nature of the land. Refer to Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy and 6 C's Green Infrastructure Strategy.</p> <p><b>(STRONG)</b></p>
<p><b>(E) The area acts as a recycling and renewable energy centre</b></p>	<p>The area is helping to address climate change through sustainable management of waste, water and pollution, production of energy crops and creation of woodland to act as carbon sinks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land along the Black Brook is floodplain with farmland surrounding it.</li> <li>- Fields are used for both pastoral and arable farming but it is unclear if any fields are currently used to grow energy crops. There is no apparent signs of woodland creation.</li> </ul> <p><b>(WEAK)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential to connect a number of spinneys and small woodland plantations within the GIEZ.</li> <li>- Potential for introducing new replanted ancient woodland.</li> <li>- Priority issues to be tackled in the catchment include diffusing pollution from agricultural and urban areas, modify river and wetland habitats and promotion of a better understanding of the multiple benefits of rivers, wetlands and sustainable urban drainage (SuDs).</li> <li>- Opportunities to reduce flood risk, run-off management are outlined within the Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy.</li> <li>- Please refer to River Basin Management Plan Humber River Basin District.</li> </ul> <p><b>(STRONG)</b></p>



<b>(F) The area is a productive landscape</b>	The urban fringe farmland is used for food production, processing of local produce and retail (farm shops) for urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entry Level plus Higher Level Stewardship schemes. Grade 2, Grade 3a, Grade 3b Agricultural Land Classification Grade is located with the grounds of and the surrounding area of Garendon Park. Most of the land is used for arable crop productions or as grazing pastures.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>(MODERATE)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is the potential to encourage more local farmers within the GIEZ to become involved in processing produce and retail at farm shops and the markets in Shepshed and Loughborough.</li> <li>- Shepshed has been identified as a Service Centre in the Charnwood Local Plan, by introducing new farm shops this will support the regeneration of Shepshed Town Centre as outlined in the Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>(STRONG)</b></p>
<b>(G) The area clearly displays its cultural legacy</b>	The area promotes an awareness of the presence of historic features in the urban fringe landscape and how they contribute to sense of place for local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The historic core of Shepshed is a conservation area and contains a number of listed buildings. It retains much of its heritage and exudes a unique character as a result. Garendon Park in the south-east of the area, is a Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden, and site of the abbey and mansion are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Although Garendon Hall was demolished in the 1960s and the western section of the Park cut off by the M1 motorway. The Park contains a range of garden monuments and features that are listed buildings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is an opportunity to make a feature of the garden monuments which remain at Garendon Park, as well as the Park itself. The PRoW to the park could be improved, as to highlight the presence of these historic features.</li> <li>- There is currently no public access whatsoever into the Registered Park and Garden, within the Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy the restoration of Garendon Registered Park has been outlined to provide public access to it for the first time with an appropriate balance</li> </ul>



		<p>Church spires from neighbouring villages are visible from some distance across the rolling landscape.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Temple of Venus, The Triumphal Arch Garendon Park, and the Garendon Registered Park and Garden are currently identified as 'at risk' on the Heritage English register. These assets will be repaired / restored as part of the West Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension (planning application P/14/1833/2).</li> </ul> <p><b>(STRONG)</b></p>	<p>between public access and protection of the heritage assets. The</p> <p><b>(STRONG)</b></p>
<b>(H) The area is promoted as a place for sustainable living</b>	There are opportunities for future sustainable urban extensions and developments to link with the urban area and address issues such as indistinct boundaries, poor accessibility, fragmented landscapes, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land in between Shepshed and Loughborough has been allocated for the West of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension, (planning application P/14/1833/2).</li> </ul> <p><b>(STRONG)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential for the proposed sustainable urban extension to have a positive impact on GI within the assessment area, principles of which are outlined within the Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy</li> </ul> <p><b>(STRONG)</b></p>
<b>(I) The area functions as an engine for regeneration</b>	The area benefits from opportunities for community involvement through volunteering or gaining new skills in environmental improvement work, particularly within areas of multiple deprivation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The level of active community involvement in this zone is unclear, however there are several community allotments within the settlement of Shepshed.</li> <li>- Within the West of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension a number of environmental improvement works are highlighted such as protecting and mitigating impacts on historic and archaeological features including Garendon Registered Park and Garden and to protect and enhance exiting wildlife corridors and where appropriate, provide new corridors. Refer to the Charnwood Local Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The level of community involvement could be improved through the formation of ties between schools and community groups, allotments and local farms.</li> <li>- Community groups could be approached to undertake GI enhancement projects in partnership with Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, such as planting new woodland, maintaining Black Brook, restoring existing hedgerows, protecting local wildlife sites forming new PRoW etc.</li> <li>- Refer to Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy.</li> </ul>

		2011-2028 Core Strategy:  <b>(WEAK)</b>	<b>(STRONG)</b>
<b>(J) The area performs as a nature reserve</b>	The area performs as a nature reserve by strengthening biodiversity, geological and geomorphological conservation management for sites in and around the urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identified as a G1 asset in 6 C's. The wooded valleys of the Black Brook and Grace Dieu Brook and to a lesser extent Oxley Gutter, form the principal wildlife corridors across the landscape and link the area with both Charnwood Forest and Soar Valley.</li> <li>- Various improvements have been outlined within the Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy regarding the introductions of new and enhancement of existing wildlife corridors.</li> <li>- There is scope to upgrade the amenity green space within the GIEZ in order to address the lack of park provision. Glenmore Park is the only park and is rated average. (Charnwood Borough Council Executive Summary-Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study)</li> <li>- There are significant quantity and access deficiencies in the quantity, quality and accessibility of natural and semi natural green space in central, eastern and west parts of Shepshed.</li> </ul> <p><b>(MODERATE)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are opportunities to strengthen existing, and create new, biodiversity networks using the remains of the Charnwood Forest Railway and the Charnwood Forest Canal.</li> <li>- Strengthen the network of existing GI by connecting areas of isolated woodland. Enhancing areas of woodland and hedge planting along Black brook.</li> <li>- Promote diversification of agricultural land.</li> <li>- Optimise the ecological value of sites within the GIEZ that demonstrate good levels of biodiversity through improvement works and encouraging their spread to adjacent areas.</li> <li>- It is outlined in the West Loughborough Growth Area that Garendon Registered Park and Gardens will be restored and opened for public access for the first time, providing recreation resource for the people of Loughborough and Shepshed, Hathern and other communities. Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy.</li> </ul>

			(STRONG)
Assessment of strength; identification of zones of weakness and extension opportunity zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Several assets which could contribute to a good network of accessible GI, by relinking fragmented areas.</li><li>- New pedestrian gateways at key point’s along settlement edges.</li><li>- Strengthening potential green corridors for wildlife habitats and biodiversity along Black Brook and creating new opportunities using existing networks using remnants of Charnwood Forest Railway and Charnwood Forest Canal.</li><li>- Reconnecting Shepshed with the western edge of Loughborough through improvements to PRow, and access across the M1.</li><li>- Highlighting the presence of historical feature located within Garendon Park and the park itself which is a registered Park and Garden.</li><li>- Improving accessibility links for residents, children and young people to areas of natural and semi natural green space can then enable opportunities for educational and volunteer programmes with the support of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and other groups linked to the Heritage of the area.</li></ul>	Overall Assessment of strength:  Existing – (MODERATE)  Potential – (STRONG)	



Site Audit			
Existing Uses and Density of Buildings	What built development exists within the Urban Fringe GI Enhancement Zone?		
	Farm buildings	Hotel	Health
	Industrial	Civic	Religious
	Commercial	Educational	Leisure/Sports
	Vernacular	Residential	Other
	<hr/>		
	<p>GIEZ 5 contains very little built development. The majority of the area consists of expansive, open pastoral and arable fields, wetland and small areas of woodland. There are occasional built structures, predominantly in the form of agricultural buildings and some residential housing within the settlement of Cotes to the east of the boundary and residential housing and agricultural buildings in the south of the GIEZ.</p>		
	<p><i>Does the area feel open or is it punctuated by piecemeal developments?</i> The area is occasionally punctuated by piecemeal developments, however overall the area is highly open and rural.</p>		
	<p><i>Do these reduce openness/sense of rurality?</i></p> <p>These occasional buildings have little impact on the sense of openness or rurality of the area. There are some urbanising influences, which include the railway line; that cuts through the southern part of the GIEZ and areas of the GIEZ which are in close proximity to the eastern edge of Loughborough, which impact on the sense of rurality within the parcel.</p>		
Landscape Character and Type	<p><i>To be initially guided by existing Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment but local scale of landscape character to be recorded</i></p> <p>GIEZ 5 is located within the Soar Valley Landscape Character Area. The key characteristics of this area are flat wide river floodplains which experience regular flooding. Navigable River Soar and the Grand Union Canal, engineering features such as the A6, the mainline railway and electricity pylons. The landscape is essentially rural in the floodplain where grassland was naturally enriched from silt carried by flood waters. Much of the area is still farmed, predominantly as grassland, either as hay meadows or as permanent pastures that are cattle- or to a lesser extent horse-grazed. A distinctive feature of the landscape is the twin waterway where the River Soar divides to take boating traffic via the Grand Union Canal into the built up areas of Loughborough. Historical features are retained within the landscape in the form of a number of Grade II listed bridges along the Nottingham Road on the approach to the settlement of Cotes. The settlement of Cotes has a deserted medieval village</p>		

	<p>which has been categorised as a Scheduled monument and also has two Grade II listed farmhouses.</p> <p><i>Note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting and landscape restoration work.</i></p> <p>There is some evidence of pollution within this area due to the proximity to the settlement of Loughborough (litter along the main road).In GIEZ, historic earthworks around the deserted medieval village of Cotes remain as definitive features within the landscape. It was not possible to judge if there was excessive erosion along the River Soar or evidence of new planting and landscape restoration work.</p> <p><i>Landscape condition</i></p> <p>The landscape condition is good with an established hedgerow network interspersed with deciduous trees which provides strong definition to field boundaries.</p>
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<b>Landscape and other features</b>	<p><i>How do landscape features characterise the area?</i></p> <p>A range of small, medium and large agricultural fields bounded by mature hedgerows and frequent hedgerow trees characterise the central area and southern aspect of the GIEZ-5 as a distinctively rural working landscape. Within the northern edge of the GIEZ sits Loughborough Big Meadows, a nature reserve which forms part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is managed as a flood meadow.</p> <p><i>What is the dominant landcover?</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Designed parkland</td><td>Scrub</td><td>Marsh</td></tr> <tr> <td>Peat bog</td><td>Moor/heath</td><td>Rough grassland</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Water meadows</b></td><td><b>Grassland</b></td><td><b>Species rich</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>Orchard</td><td><b>Deciduous woodland</b></td><td>Coniferous plantation</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Mixed woodland</b></td><td>Shelterbelt</td><td>Arable</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Other <u>    <b>Grazing Pastures</b>    </u></td></tr> </table> <p><i>What landscape features or other features exist within the area which may help to guide development form?</i></p> <p>Established, well defined field hedgerows are prominent features within the landscape. The River Soar and the Grand Union Canal and the adjacent land will help to guide development due to the flood risks associated with the land.</p> <p><i>What are the main attractors / detractors?</i></p> <p>Access to the River Soar, the Grand Union Canal and Loughborough Big Meadows are key attractors, providing opportunities for a network of wetland habitats which bring variety to the landscape and support biodiversity. Pastoral fields with undulating landform edged with established hedgerows and punctuated with areas of mature woodland, offer attractive views over distance countryside across the GIEZ. The main detracting feature is the scale and dominance of the pylons and to a lesser extent the communication masts, which run through the landscape. The Midland Main Line also dissects the site, forming a visual and physical barrier within the landscape.</p> <p><i>Landscape elements:</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Walls</td><td><b>Fences</b></td><td><b>Hedges</b></td><td><b>Trees</b></td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Pylons</b></td><td><b>Communications Masts</b></td><td>Tumuli</td><td>Other <b>River Soar,</b></td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="4"><b>Historical Earthworks</b>__</td></tr> </table>	Designed parkland	Scrub	Marsh	Peat bog	Moor/heath	Rough grassland	<b>Water meadows</b>	<b>Grassland</b>	<b>Species rich</b>	Orchard	<b>Deciduous woodland</b>	Coniferous plantation	<b>Mixed woodland</b>	Shelterbelt	Arable	Other <u>    <b>Grazing Pastures</b>    </u>			Walls	<b>Fences</b>	<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Trees</b>	<b>Pylons</b>	<b>Communications Masts</b>	Tumuli	Other <b>River Soar,</b>	<b>Historical Earthworks</b> __			
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<b>Views and Intervisibility</b>	<p><i>Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?</i></p> <p>No settlements can be seen from the current position.</p> <p><i>Are there long sightlines or vistas across the area from the urban area to the countryside?</i></p>																														



	<p>There are no opportunities for long sightlines across the area or vistas from the south of GIEZ 5, views are impeded by well-established hedgerows and mature trees which line field boundaries. From the A60 opportunities for long sightlines across areas of countryside, however there were no apparent vistas across the area from the urban area to the countryside.</p>
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<b>Visual Assessment</b>	<p><i>Assessment criteria:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Scale:</td><td>Intimate</td><td>Small</td><td><b>Medium</b></td><td>Large</td></tr><tr><td>Enclosure:</td><td>Expansive</td><td>Open</td><td>Enclosed</td><td><b>Constrained</b></td></tr><tr><td>Remoteness:</td><td>Wild</td><td>Remote</td><td>Vacant</td><td><b>Active</b></td></tr><tr><td>Unity:</td><td>Unified</td><td><b>Interrupted</b></td><td>Fragmented</td><td>Chaotic</td></tr><tr><td>Visual Dynamic:</td><td>Sweeping</td><td>Spreading</td><td>Dispersed</td><td><b>Channelled</b></td></tr></table> <p><i>Perception:</i></p> <table><tr><td>Security:</td><td>Unsafe</td><td>Unsettling</td><td><b>Comfortable</b></td><td>Safe</td></tr><tr><td>Stimulus:</td><td>Monotonous</td><td>Indifferent</td><td>Interesting</td><td><b>Inspiring</b></td></tr><tr><td>Tranquillity:</td><td>Busy</td><td>Noisy</td><td>Still</td><td><b>Peaceful</b></td></tr><tr><td>Pleasure:</td><td>Undesirable</td><td><b>Satisfying</b></td><td>Pleasant</td><td>Delightful</td></tr></table>	Scale:	Intimate	Small	<b>Medium</b>	Large	Enclosure:	Expansive	Open	Enclosed	<b>Constrained</b>	Remoteness:	Wild	Remote	Vacant	<b>Active</b>	Unity:	Unified	<b>Interrupted</b>	Fragmented	Chaotic	Visual Dynamic:	Sweeping	Spreading	Dispersed	<b>Channelled</b>	Security:	Unsafe	Unsettling	<b>Comfortable</b>	Safe	Stimulus:	Monotonous	Indifferent	Interesting	<b>Inspiring</b>	Tranquillity:	Busy	Noisy	Still	<b>Peaceful</b>	Pleasure:	Undesirable	<b>Satisfying</b>	Pleasant	Delightful
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<b>Nature and Extent of Urban Edges</b>	<p><i>Does the settlement have a prominent edge which is highly visible from the surrounding countryside?</i></p> <p>The edge of the settlement is not prominent within the landscape. Shelterbelt planting along the railway line and established field boundaries mostly screens the edge of the settlement on that side when facing southwards from Stanford Lane.</p> <p><i>Are there any obvious forces for change/pressures on the landscape?</i></p> <p>The Loughborough Industrial Heritage Quarter as identified in Appendix 2(iv) of the Regeneration Strategy for Charnwood sits immediately adjacent GIEZ-5. Policy CS7 of the adopted Charnwood Core Strategy sets out policy to guide development in the regeneration area. This area is subject to outline planning permission (under planning ref: P/13/1842/2) for residential development of up to 975 dwellings with associated retail centre, primary school, 5.5ha of employment land, sewage treatment facility, surface water balancing, landscaping, open space and highway works. Whilst this application site sits outside the boundaries of GIEZ-5, implementation of this permission is likely to have an impact.</p> <p>Within the eastern side of GIEZ-5, on land at Mill Farm, there is a planning application for the installation of solar farm and associated infrastructure under planning ref: P/15/1054/2. This application is currently pending a decision.</p> <p>On the western edge of GIEZ-5, there is planning permission (planning ref: P/12/2130/2) on land adjacent Windmill Road for the erection of 38 dwellings on phase one, and outline permission for residential development and community building.</p>																																													
<b>Recreational opportunities</b>	<p><i>Does this urban fringe area provide formal and/or informal recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)</i></p> <table><tr><td><b>PRoW</b></td><td>Sports pitches</td><td>Playgrounds</td><td><b>Public Park</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Informal Rec.</b></td><td>Dog walking</td><td>Picnic site</td><td>Camping</td></tr><tr><td><b>Open water</b></td><td><b>Watercourse</b></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	<b>PRoW</b>	Sports pitches	Playgrounds	<b>Public Park</b>	<b>Informal Rec.</b>	Dog walking	Picnic site	Camping	<b>Open water</b>	<b>Watercourse</b>																																			
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	<p>Recreation opportunities area currently limited to countryside walks over public footpaths, or horse riding on the designated bridleway in the south of the PGW (though there was limited evidence of its active usage during the site visit). The River Soar is an attractive watercourse but appears to be underutilised as a recreational resource within the GIEZ 5, with limited public access, there does appear to be better public access to the Grand Union Canal however this also appears underutilised in terms of opportunities as a recreational resource.</p>
<b>Public access</b>	<p><i>To what extent is public access possible (ie. all or some of the area)?</i></p> <p>Public access is possible within the GIEZ, you can access PRow within the urban settlement of Loughborough which enable you to travel along the Grand Union Canal tow path leading you towards the settlement of Barrow-upon-Soar to the east. There are bridle ways providing access to areas of the rural landscape east of Loughborough, which then reconnect with PRow along the canal tow path. However it is disconnected in areas around the settlement of Cotes, with breaks in the PRow which limits the opportunity to walk along the bank of the River Soar.</p> <p><i>What is the quality of access? Is there evidence of the level of use?</i></p> <p>There is evidence of high levels of use where there is pedestrian access to the waterways, which is well signposted from the settlement of Loughborough. The quality of access to areas of the countryside and the River footpaths/PRow between the Grand Canal and the River Soar are of poorer quality in terms of access, they involve finding access from remote urban areas or passing through busy road junctions in order to access areas of countryside. There is no access for cycleway to the Grand Union Canal or the River Soar.</p>

**Site  
Photographs**



Photograph 1: View looking south east along the Grand Union Canal bank pathway accessed via the Nottingham Road.



Photograph 2: View looking east towards the Nottingham Road with the Midland Main Line railway bridge visible in the foreground. During the site visit this junction between the A60 (Nottingham Rd) and the entrance/exit of

	the nearby business park. It was not possible to cross the road at this point and therefore we were unable to access views across the wider countryside.
	Photograph 3: Due to a lack of safe PRow there are no further photographs relating GIEZ 5.

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment Commentary	Potential for Enhancement
<b>(A) The area acts as a bridge to the country</b>	A bridge to the country is formed by linking housing, schools, health centres and hospitals, bus and train stations in urban centres to the existing access network to connect with accessible green spaces in the wider countryside.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The area is reasonably equipped in terms of access to education and health facilities however links via housing, schools and health centres. However accessibility to green space is currently limited due to fragmented links within the network of PRoW and limited cycle networks to the countryside.</li> <li>- Access to green spaces and waterways from the urban centre of Loughborough is fragmented as the A6 and the inner ringroad act as a physical barrier.</li> <li>- There is access to the countryside from the urban centres via a bridge at Little Moor Lane via Empress Road and footpaths and by ways via a bridge from Moor Lane.</li> </ul> <p><b>(Weak)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The relationship between the urban settlements and rural landscape is abrupt, though there is potential to improve the transition between the two at points along the settlement edges. This could be achieved by increasing the land available for recreation within these areas.</li> <li>- Accessibility to the countryside along the edges of settlement are restricted to certain areas, often along roads. There is potential to increase the number of points where pedestrian access coincides with the centres of residential estates.</li> <li>- There is also potential to improve the PRoW network through linking up the areas which are currently weakly defined/broken and to provide a strong cycle network giving access to the countryside and enabling access to the canal at certain points.</li> <li>- There is potential to enable car parking off Moor Lane to improve access for visitors to the waterway and related assets within the proposed Loughborough Industrial Heritage Quarter as outlined in the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Partnership Action Plan 2016/2019.</li> </ul> <p>Please refer to River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy. <b>(Strong)</b></p>

<p><b>(B) The area provides a gateway to the city/town</b></p>	<p>The area provides an improved image, experience and sense of place by encouraging investment in an improved environmental quality for public rights of way and spaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bridleways, footpaths, road network, GI asset in 6 C's rights of way that penetrate surrounding settlements, however in places this network is poorly defined or broken.</li> <li>- Key gateways, or points where rights of way meet the settlement of Loughborough are poorly celebrated or the transition from one to the other is abrupt.</li> </ul> <p><b>(Weak)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential to enhance the sense of arrival between the town and country at key access points along the western edge of the GIEZ.</li> <li>- GI assets such as the River Soar, the Grand Union Canal, Summerpool Brook, Wood Brook, King's Brook and Hermitage Brook could be enhanced as green corridors and serve as strong gateways to the countryside.</li> <li>- Priority actions for Loughborough Hub have been outlined within the River Soar &amp; Grand Union Canal- The Strategy (2009) and Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy.</li> </ul> <p><b>(Strong)</b></p>
<p><b>(C) The area functions as a 'health centre'</b></p>	<p>The area contributes to health and well-being through promoting access to green spaces for exercise for schools, hospitals and health centres.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loughborough Carillon Cricket Club and an indoor bouldering and rock climbing centre are located along the canal bank within the settlement of Loughborough. There are also a number of schools and the University campus within the settlement. However, there appears to be little connectivity between them and the GIEZ.</li> <li>- Within the Charnwood Executive Summary it was identified there is a lack of access to natural and semi natural open space, despite the provision being above 2ha per 1000 population.</li> <li>- Currently the GIEZ sits within an area which experiences deprivation in all domains, including health with parts of the Priority Neighbourhood amongst</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential for the enhancement area to serve as a 'health centre' due to the proximity to the Grand Union Canal and the River Soar, and the recreational opportunities these afford.</li> <li>- Land use along the river and canal banks could be diversified to be more inclusive to recreational activities.</li> <li>- Create new green corridors and improve existing links between Loughborough and the GIEZ.</li> <li>- Ensure that proposed parks provide appropriate infrastructure to encourage cycling and use of public transport such as cycle racks and areas for storage.</li> <li>- There is a lack of access to facilities for children and young people in the west of Loughborough. Provision of</li> </ul>



		<p>the unhealthiest wards in Charnwood in terms of unhealthy lifestyle behaviours. (Loughborough East Neighbourhood Profile (2007))</p> <p><b>(Moderate)</b></p>	<p>various facilities as part of a new development may help address this need. Refer to Charnwood Borough Executive Summary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Please refer to the River Soar &amp; Grand Union Canal- the Strategy (2009), the Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy and Humber river basin district River basin management plan (updated December 2015). <p><b>(Strong)</b></p> </li></ul>
<p><b>(D) The area performs as an outdoor classroom</b></p>	<p>The area provides opportunities for environmental education through parks, nature reserves and farm-based activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The GIEZ is in close proximity to a number of schools, colleges and the university. Rendall Primary school in particular is located just off the Grand Union Canal bank and adjacent to Meadow Lane which provides access to Loughborough Big Meadows a SSSI site located north east of Loughborough, both of these features could act as potential educational assets.</li> <li>- Based on information outlined in the Charnwood Priority Neighbourhood Profile- East Loughborough (2007), the notable findings highlight that parts of the Priority Neighbourhood are ranked amongst the 2% most deprived LSOAs nationally for education, skills and training deprivation. The area experiences deprivation in all domains (except barriers to housing and services) with parts of the Priority Neighbourhood amongst the unhealthiest wards in Charnwood in terms of unhealthy lifestyle behaviours.</li> <li>- A number of farmsteads are located close to the settlement edges of Cotes,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The proximity of a number of surrounding schools and colleges to the GIEZ coupled with findings indicated in the Charnwood Priority Neighbourhood Profile for West Loughborough, indicates there is potential for the area to function as an outdoor classroom.</li> <li>- There is also the potential for local farms to form ties with the surrounding communities as agriculture is the prevailing land use within the area.</li> <li>- Steps could be taken with Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and the Reserve Manager to create educational/volunteer programs for children and young adults to learn about the wildlife and habitats of Loughborough Big Meadow and the management of the nature reserve. This not only offers children and young people the opportunity to gain new skills, explore their surroundings and get closer to the wildlife they share it with but also ensures future</li> </ul>

		<p>and Stanford on Soar although there appears to be no educational programs with the surrounding communities.</p> <p><b>(Moderate)</b></p>	<p>generations will be custodians for the nature reserve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Please refer to Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy.</li> </ul> <p><b>(Strong)</b></p>
<p><b>(E) The area acts as a recycling and renewable energy centre</b></p>	<p>The area is helping to address climate change through sustainable management of waste, water and pollution, production of energy crops and creation of woodland to act as carbon sinks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adjacent to the proposed GIEZ is the Loughborough recycling centre.</li> <li>- A former refuge tip within the area has become neglected.</li> <li>- All land between the River Soar and the Grand Union Canal, including areas of the settlement of Loughborough, are within floodplains.</li> <li>- There are a number of SSSI Impact risk zones identified within the flood plains.</li> <li>- River Soar pollution is an issue which has been raised by Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust but there is a lack of specific monitoring.</li> </ul> <p><b>(Weak)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is potential to connect a number of spinneys and small woodland plantations within the GIEZ.</li> <li>- Within the Humber RBD Part 1 River basin management Plan (Dec 2015), priority issues to be tackled such as diffuse pollution from agriculture and urban areas. The Environment Agency are keen to promote the River Soar as a nature and biodiversity corridor and to reconnect the river to the floodplain.</li> <li>- Please refer to Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy and Regeneration Strategy for Charnwood Appendix 2 (VI): Loughborough's industrial heritage quarter.</li> <li>- An 18ha landscaped, publicly accessible woodland with enhanced biodiversity will be created as part of The Loughborough Industrial Heritage Quarter deliverables.</li> </ul> <p><b>(Strong)</b></p>
<p><b>(F) The area is a productive landscape</b></p>	<p>The urban fringe farmland is used for food production, processing of local produce and retail (farm shops) for urban areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most of the land surrounding the north eastern edge of the settlement of Loughborough is grassland used as grazing pastures or arable farmland. There is a farmers market, which takes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is the potential to encourage more local farmers within the GIEZ to become involved in processing produce and retail at farm shops and the farmers market.</li> </ul>

		place in Loughborough every 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday. <b>(Weak)</b>	<b>(Moderate)</b>
<b>(G) The area clearly displays its cultural legacy</b>	The area promotes an awareness of the presence of historic features in the urban fringe landscape and how they contribute to sense of place for local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The settlement of Loughborough and the nearby villages of Cotes and Stanford on Soar have a number of listed buildings. The settlements surrounding Loughborough retain much of their heritage and exude a unique character as a result, however, there is little sign that these are well celebrated.</li> <li>- A scheduled monument exists within the GIEZ, the medieval village of Cotes.</li> <li>- Within Stanford on Soar evidence of ridge and furrow can still be seen. There is however little sign of acknowledgement of these features other than to those qualified to interpret their remaining characteristics in the landscape.</li> </ul> <p><b>(Moderate)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The opportunity exists to make a feature of what remains of the medieval village of Cotes and improve its acknowledgement within the landscape.</li> <li>- The village is located alongside a PRow so there may be potential to improve PRow and cycleways in order to highlight the presence of these historic features.</li> <li>- Within the Regeneration Strategy for Charnwood Appendix 2 (iv) Loughborough Industrial Heritage Quarter, a neglected refuge tip on Allsopps Lane, will be reclaimed as an 18ha of landscaped publicly accessible woodland with enhanced biodiversity, providing informal leisure and recreation opportunities for the local community.</li> <li>- Please refer to the River Soar &amp; Grand Union Canal- The Strategy (2009) and Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy</li> </ul> <p><b>(Moderate)</b></p>
<b>(H) The area is promoted as a place for sustainable living</b>	There are opportunities for future sustainable urban extensions and developments to link with the urban area and address issues such as indistinct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities for future sustainable urban extensions are outlined within the Regeneration Strategy for Charnwood which outlines various priority areas including Loughborough's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The level of community involvement could be improved through the formation of ties between schools, community groups and local farms.</li> <li>- Community groups could be approached to undertake GI</li> </ul>

	boundaries, poor accessibility, fragmented landscapes, etc.	Industrial Heritage Quarter outlining opportunities to develop and integrate approach linked to the wider social and economic regeneration of the old industrial quarter of the town with better access to the canal corridor and a new publicly accessible woodland.  <b>(Moderate)</b>	enhancement projects such as planting enhancement along the canal/river soar to encourage wildlife habitats and biodiversity, planting new woodland, restoring existing hedgerows, forming new PRoW etc. - Please refer to the Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy  <b>(Strong)</b>
<b>(I) The area functions as an engine for regeneration</b>	The area benefits from opportunities for community involvement through volunteering or gaining new skills in environmental improvement work, particularly within areas of multiple deprivation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is little sign of active community involvement within the GIEZ.</li> <li>- Deprivation in education skills and training and income deprivation affecting children are the most prominent forms of deprivation in the area, as outlined in Charnwood Priority Neighbourhood Profile Loughborough (West)</li> </ul> <b>(Weak)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The level of community involvement could be improved through the formation of ties between schools and community groups and local farms.</li> <li>- Community groups could be approached to undertake GI enhancement projects such as planting new woodland, restoring existing hedgerows, forming new PRoW etc.</li> <li>- There could also be opportunities to promote the work of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust through work with local schools and the provision of volunteering opportunities in the area.</li> <li>- Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust outlined a lack of site surveys and area mapping as a constraint in terms of identifying areas biodiversity opportunity areas, the need for volunteers to provide this survey work could provide a potential educational programme or skills training opportunity.</li> <li>- Please refer to the River Soar &amp; Grand Union Canal- The Strategy</li> </ul>

			(2009) and Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy - <b>(Strong)</b>
<b>(J) The area performs as a nature reserve</b>	The area performs as a nature reserve by strengthening biodiversity, geological and geomorphological conservation management for sites in and around the urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identified as a GI asset in 6 C's, The River Soar, the Grand Union Canal, areas of woodland, established hedgerows, Summerpool Brook and Hermitage Brook and King's Brook. The existing nature reserve and SSSI site Loughborough Big Meadows</li> <li>- Biodiversity within the area has been limited by the proximity to the urban settlement of Loughborough. However, established mixed species hedgerows, localised areas of woodland, small Brooks and the River Soar and area of the canal form areas of improved biodiversity.</li> <li>- There is currently a lack of access to natural and semi natural open space, , despite provision being above 2ha per 1000 population</li> <li>- A lack of young people's provision in west and south west of the town.</li> </ul> <b>(Moderate)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthen the network of existing Green Infrastructure by connecting areas of isolated woodland.</li> <li>- Enhance/promote diversification of agricultural land.</li> <li>- Optimise the ecological value of sites within the GIEZ that demonstrate good levels of biodiversity through improvement works and encouraging their spread to adjacent areas.</li> <li>- The Council has already outlined in their core strategy a proposal to transform a neglected refuge tip into a new nature reserve.</li> <li>- Reconnect the River Soar to the floodplain and create more opportunities for increased biodiversity, better access for improving health and well-being and introduce educational programmes exist.</li> <li>- Please refer to River Basin Management Plan Humber River Basin District (December 2015), The River Soar &amp; Grand Union Canal- The Strategy (2009) and Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028 Core Strategy, Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust - Rewilding the Soar Valley</li> </ul> <b>(Strong)</b>

<p><b>Assessment of strength; identification of <i>zones of weakness and extension opportunity zones</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are a number of assets which could contribute to a strong network of accessible GI, however they are currently disconnected and unable to function effectively.</li> <li>- The edges of settlements surrounding the GIEZ terminates abruptly and the land immediately adjacent to these settlements is currently unsuitable for recreation.</li> <li>- The formation of new pedestrian gateways to the countryside and also to the canal bank at key points along the settlement edges, while converting land at these points for recreation, will improve the transition from urban to rural and the accessibility to the existing GI assets.</li> <li>- Enhancing areas of the River Soar and the Grand Union Canal to improve biodiversity and wildlife. Introducing plants that improve water quality and encourage bird breeding and wildlife habitats.</li> <li>- Provide better access to the River Soar and the Grand Canal not only for recreation but also education, encouraging schools to learn about the history, ecology, flood plains etc, therefore gaining a sense of ownership of where they live and guardianship for future generations, this could be tied with the work of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife trust at Loughborough Big meadows.</li> <li>- With the presence of a proposed Masterplan for the site in development, there is however, potential to implement the points highlighted above to create a strong network of GI that is well integrated into the neighbouring settlements, but that also unlocks the potential of existing landscape features.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Overall Assessment of strength:</b></p> <p><b>Existing – (Weak/ Moderate)</b></p> <p><b>Potential – (Strong)</b></p>
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