

Charnwood Local Plan

BOROUGH OF CHARNWOOD LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Charnwood Borough Council

JULY 2012

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The document provides a structured evaluation of the landscape of the borough including a landscape strategy with guidelines for the protection, conservation and enhancement of the character of the landscape, which will inform development management decisions and development of plans for the future of the Borough. It identifies the distinct landscapes within Charnwood by describing their key characteristics and natural, historical and cultural features and elements.

This Landscape Character Assessment and Charnwood Forest Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment are primary evidence to inform decisions on development.

The overall aim is to achieve high quality, sustainable development proposals, which will protect, conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Borough's landscape, and reinforce local distinctiveness and sense of place, the key objectives to achieve this are set out in [Chapter 3](#).

The method used to produce the Landscape Character Assessment is set out in [Chapter 4](#) which is followed by an outline of the planning policy context to which the document relates, in [Chapter 5](#).

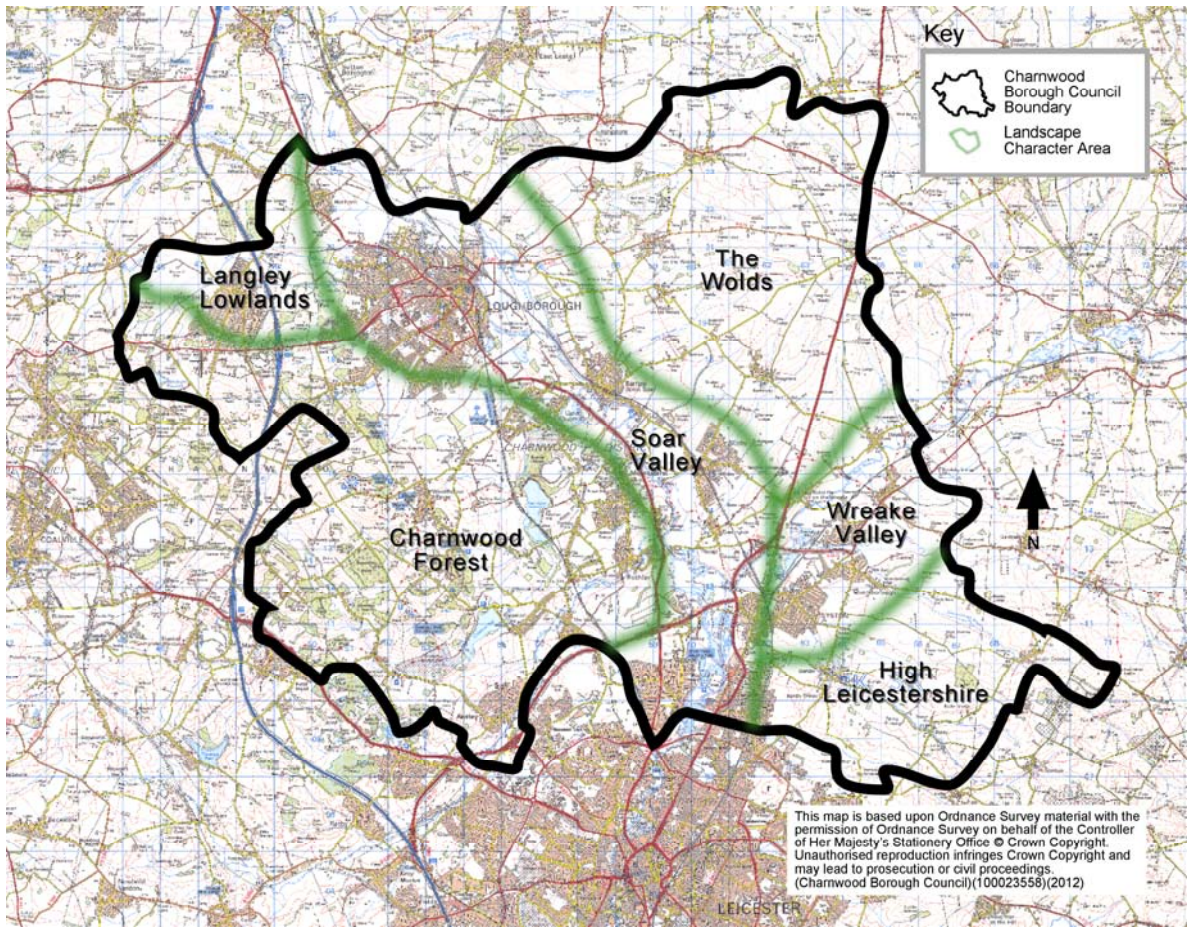
The landscape assessment is in two parts:

Part 1: divides the borough into 6 distinct character areas and deals with these each in turn, describing the key characteristics, geology, topography, land use, farming, industry, recreation, communications, ecology, heritage, boundaries & hedgerows, woodlands & trees, hydrology and buildings & settlements of each area. It then identifies the strength of landscape character and landscape condition of that area which results in a list of guidelines to be followed in order to protect the character of that area.

Finally these elements are brought together in a broad conclusion.

These are that the boundaries need to be shown as broad lines, reflecting the fact that landscape character gradually changes, with zones of transition between landscape character areas, and that the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area is the most distinctive and has the strongest landscape character of the areas within the borough.

Part 2: includes a landscape sensitivity and capacity study for the areas which adjoin the urban edges of Leicester, Loughborough and Shepshed to broadly assess the capacity of these landscapes to accommodate development. This document concludes by placing each study area into one of five categories which are graded according to the landscapes capacity to accommodate new development.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Charnwood Borough Council has undertaken a borough wide Landscape Character Assessment, which identifies the distinct landscapes within the Borough of Charnwood by describing their key characteristics and natural, historical and cultural features and elements. The document provides a structured evaluation of each landscape area including a landscape strategy with policy guidelines for the protection, conservation and enhancement of the character of each area, which will inform the development of plans for the future of the Borough.
- 1.2. Part 2 of this document includes a landscape sensitivity and capacity study for the areas which adjoin the urban edges of Leicester, Loughborough and Shepshed to broadly assess the capacity of these landscapes to accommodate development.

What is Landscape Character Assessment?

- 1.3. Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is the systematic process of identifying and describing variation in the character of landscape and using this information as a decision making tool to assist in managing change in the landscape. LCA seeks to identify and explain the particular combination of elements and features that makes landscapes different and distinctive. Distinctiveness of character arises from the interplay of geology, landform, soils, habitats, vegetation, and both the historical and current influences of human land use and settlement.
- 1.4. Landscape Character Assessment guidance prepared by The Countryside Agency (now Natural England) in 2002 recognises that:

“Landscape Character Assessment is a tool which can make a significant contribution to ‘environmental protection’ and ‘prudent use’ as a cornerstone for sustainable development.”
- 1.5. Natural England, the Government’s statutory adviser on landscapes, believes that:

“An understanding of landscape character, systems and dynamics is essential in resource management and planning and in visioning future landscapes. Landscape character and cultural history are key contributors to regional and local identity, influencing sense of place, shaping the settings for people’s lives, whether at work or play and providing a critical stimulus to their engagement with the natural environment.”

The Scope of the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment

- **Comprehensive:** it will cover the whole of the Borough of Charnwood with the exception of main urban areas.
- **Consistent:** it will use methods and approaches that are consistent with national guidance and which will be compatible with previous landscape assessment work affecting the Borough and with neighbouring Authorities landscape assessment work.
- **Descriptive:** it will identify the key distinctive characteristics of the Borough's landscape using desk based and field survey information.
- **Analytical:** it will seek to understand how the landscape has evolved into its present state, its current condition, its sensitivity to future change and its capacity to adapt.
- **Contextual:** the landscape assessment evidence will be used to inform policy making and to develop guidelines, and will provide a base line for the future monitoring of change.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

Purpose of Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.1. The Landscape Character Assessment provides a framework for the formulation and assessment of planning proposals and will also inform landscape conservation and management strategies within the landscape character areas.
- 2.2. The document identifies the distinct landscapes within Charnwood by describing their key characteristics and natural, historical and cultural features and elements. The document provides a structured evaluation of each landscape area including a landscape strategy with guidelines for the protection, conservation and enhancement of the character of each area, which will inform the development and implementation of plans for the future of the Borough. The guidelines are primarily focussed at those involved in the development management process including planners and those proposing development. Some guidelines are however applicable to other agencies and organisations involved in landscape management including land owners and managers, farmers, wildlife and conservation agencies.
- 2.3. When determining proposals for new development, the Council will treat the document as a material consideration and developers will be expected to take into account the guidance before submitting a planning application.
- 2.4. The LCA will provide better information and guidance to all participants in the development process, and will inform and help to implement policies of the LDF. It will provide a sounder basis for the examination of landscape issues and it will encourage a more integrated and sustainable approach to the consideration of development proposals within the context of the need to protect, conserve and enhance the characteristics that are important to the Borough's landscape.

Relationship to other Landscape Character Assessments

- 2.5. Landscape character assessments have been produced at national, regional and county scale, all of which include an assessment of the borough's landscapes. Adjoining local authorities have also produced landscape character assessments covering their areas, and these different assessments are listed below:

- The Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy
- Natural England: East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment
- Countryside Agency Countryside Character Volume 4: East Midlands
- The National Forest Landscape Character Assessment

- Leicestershire County Council Charnwood Forest Landscape Character
 - Stepping Stones Landscape Character Assessment
 - Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment Report
 - Blaby District Character Assessment
 - Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment
 - Harborough District Landscape Character Assessment
 - Leicestershire County Council Historic Landscape Characterisation
 - Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines
- 2.6. Appendix 1 summarises the main findings of the above documents insofar as they relate to this Landscape Character Assessment. . The Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment uses methods and approaches that are consistent with national guidance and compatible with previous landscape assessment work affecting the Borough and with neighbouring Authorities landscape assessment work.
- 2.7. The Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy identifies six landscape character areas within the Borough of Charnwood (i.e. Charnwood Forest; Soar Valley; Upper Soar; Wreake Valley; The Wolds; High Leicestershire; Langleigh Lowlands). The Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment has re-examined the County level landscape character work in the 'Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy' (2001) and also considered the findings of finer grain landscape character studies undertaken for the National Forest, the Charnwood Forest and the Stepping Stones areas.
- 2.8. The Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment together with the Charnwood Forest Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment therefore represent the primary evidence on landscape character in terms of planning considerations at a local level.

Purpose of Charnwood Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Appraisal

- 2.9. Charnwood Borough Council is preparing a Local Plan which will set out the Council's proposals to guide future development in the Borough. The Local Plan seeks to accommodate approximately 10,000 new dwellings within the borough, together with places of work, shops, community buildings and green spaces between 2012 and 2028.
- 2.10. Part 2 of this document presents a separate, more focussed capacity and sensitivity appraisal for those areas where there are options for major development. The appraisal has been prepared to inform decisions about the location of development, and also to provide information to help manage the landscape impact of any potential development.

3. CHARNWOOD LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The Key Objectives

- 3.1. Under an overall aim “to achieve high quality, sustainable development proposals, which will protect, conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Borough’s landscape, and reinforce local distinctiveness and sense of place”, the key objectives are:
- to provide a comprehensive and systematic assessment of the landscape of the Borough of Charnwood that builds on previous studies, increases understanding and provides a base line against which future changes to the landscape can be monitored;
 - to identify local areas of landscape character within the Borough and describe their key characteristics;
 - to identify the characteristics which should be protected, conserved and enhanced;
 - to assess the landscape sensitivity of the distinctive character areas and their capacity to adapt to change without detrimental effect on their character and integrity;
 - to act as a tool for spatial planning within the Borough of Charnwood and the development and implementation of the Borough’s Local Development Framework;
 - to develop robust guidelines for new development and landscape management which will serve to protect, conserve and enhance the Borough’s landscape character and encourage the reinforcement of its local distinctiveness;
 - to ensure that concern for landscape character, local distinctiveness and sustainability is embodied within the design of new development;
 - to encourage initiatives for landscape improvement and regeneration, positive biodiversity and environmentally sound land management that will protect, conserve and enhance the landscape character of the Borough of Charnwood.

4. METHOD

- 4.1. The Borough Council has prepared the landscape character assessment for the Borough of Charnwood, in line with The Countryside Agency (now Natural England) (2002) guidance. In order to be consistent with this guidance, the assessment will work within the framework of Landscape Character Areas and Landscape Character Types.

The Process

- 4.2. The process has followed five steps:
- Desk study
 - Interpolation of mapping
 - Field study
 - Characterisation, classification and description
 - Landscape strategy and guidelines

Desk Study

- 4.3. The desk study included a review of the National Planning Policy Framework in terms of its implications for Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment. This stage also involved the review of background data, the analysis of published literature and mapping relevant to the borough, including the various other current and emerging assessments and strategies relating to landscape, biodiversity and historic landscape character affecting areas within and immediately surrounding the Borough.

Interpolation of Mapping

- 4.4. Following the collation and review in the desk based research, the trends and patterns evident in the area were identified. This was achieved by identifying a series of maps combining themes and considering patterns and correlations between these themes. These maps were used as broad indicators which enabled the identification of draft character areas. The interpolation maps prepared include:
- Hydrology
 - Cultural Heritage
 - Ecology
 - Communication and Infrastructure
 - Recreation
 - Aerial Photography

Field Survey

- 4.5. The detailed field survey was carried out by survey teams comprising a planning officer accompanying a conservation or landscape officer.
- 4.6. Survey points were initially selected following a desk based review. Survey points were then tested through trial survey by Landscape and Conservation Officers for their accessibility and for their representiveness of their areas. The number of survey points for each area varied between six and nine. The five sub areas identified in the Charnwood Forest Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment were surveyed using a total of 24 survey points. There was a total of 60 for the whole borough.

Characterisation, Classification and Description

- 4.7. Following the field survey and desk study, the information was collated to provide a detailed factual description of each of the landscape character areas.
- 4.8. Information was collated as follows for each survey point:
 - Description and Evaluation
 - Field Survey Results
 - Landscape Guidelines
 - Sketches named and collated by site
 - Photographs numbered and collated by site, and an 180° panoramic photograph created from the series of photographs taken
- 4.9. The text describes the key elements which create a sense of place including, geology, topography, land use, communications, ecology, heritage, hydrology, building and settlement pattern

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

- 4.10. The approach follows the methodology of previous best practice in Exmoor National Park Landscape Character Assessment and Charnwood Forest Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment in evaluating the landscape strategy of each landscape area.
- 4.11. Judgements were made using information from field surveys, desk studies, and professional knowledge of the area by planning and landscape professionals of Charnwood Borough Council, and moderated following stakeholder input. The results were compared to strategies prepared for the character areas in other published regional, county and adjacent district landscape character assessments.

4.12. Each landscape character area was scored on the strength of Landscape Character and its general Landscape Condition.

The following definitions were used:

4.13. **STRENGTH OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER:** - This is an assessment of how distinctive and recognisable are the landscape elements, features and characteristics that combine to create a sense of place of the landscape character area. The character areas were scored as being of Weak, Moderate or Strong Landscape Character.

4.14. **LANDSCAPE CONDITION:** Judgements were made about the general physical state of the overall landscape character area and its intactness from visual, functional and ecological perspectives, and state of repair. The character areas were scored as being of Poor Moderate or Good Landscape Condition.

4.15. Information on landscape strength and character was placed in the matrix below, (which gives a landscape capacity) and suggests an appropriate landscape strategy that can be used to guide landscape management.

4.16. Landscape Quality and Associated Strategy Matrix

Landscape Condition	Good	Moderate Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance	Good Conserve & Manage
	Moderate	Poor-Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Conserve & Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance
		Poor Restore and Create	Poor – Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Enhance
	Poor			
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
	Strength of Landscape Character			

4.17. The landscape strategies guide what change if any is thought desirable for a particular landscape character area. The strategy options are to Maintain, Enhance or Restore an existing landscape or create a new landscape.

Description of Landscape Strategies

- 4.18. **Conserve and Manage** – where the landscape quality is good (due to good condition and strong character), there should be an emphasis on protecting or safeguarding the key features and characteristics of the landscape in their present form.
- 4.19. **Enhance** – emphasis should be on improving existing features which may not be currently well managed or where existing features are of good quality but could be of greater benefit if improved. This may include improvements to landscape management practices and the introduction or removal of elements or features in order to strengthen character and/or to improve perceived condition.
- 4.20. **Restore** – emphasis should be on repairing or re-establishing features that have been lost or are in a state of severe decline.
- 4.21. **Create** - where the landscape quality is poor (due to poor condition and weak character) and/or the original landscape pattern is no longer evident, such as when field pattern and features have been heavily influenced by quarrying or industry, there is a need to form new and different landscapes. New landscapes may offer some recreation or community or woodland benefit and habitat restoration and improvement.
- 4.22. Most landscape character areas will exhibit parts which require the adoption of combination of strategies to ensure the diversity and quality of landscape can be conserved and enhanced for future generations and to plan for effects of climate change.
- 4.23. The method for the Charnwood Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Appraisal is given in section 2.

5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1. National Planning Policy Framework

5.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Key sections of the NPPF as they relate to Landscape Character Assessments are:

- Core Planning Principles
- Supporting a prosperous rural economy
- Requiring good design
- Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Using a proportionate evidence base
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Local Green Space designation

Core Planning Principles (Paragraph 17)

5.3. The NPPF states that within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision taking. In summary these principles are that the planning system should:

- *“proactively drive and support sustainable economic development... Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively for wider opportunities for growth*
- *always seek to ensure high quality design and a good quality of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
- *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas...recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
- *support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);*
- *contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land should prefer land of lesser environmental value, (where consistent with other policies in the NPPF);*
- *promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);*

- *conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations”.*

Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy (Section 3)

5.4. The NPPF states that local and neighbourhood plans should:

“support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres”.

Requiring Good Design (Section 7)

5.5. The NPPF states:

“The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.

Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*

- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.*

Local planning authorities should consider using design codes where they could help deliver high quality outcomes. However, design policies should avoid unnecessary description or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally.

Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment”.

Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change (Section 10)

- 5.6 Landscape considerations can be major consideration in the determination of some planning proposals for renewable energy installations, and landscape impacts need to be weighed against climate change considerations. In this context the NPPF states:

“To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should (amongst other things):

- *design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts”*

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment (Section 11)

- 5.7. The NPPF states:

“The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*

In preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim should be to minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment. Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework.

5.8. Local planning authorities should:

- *set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure; and*
- *maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast.*

5.9. Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.

Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- *the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated”.*

Using a Proportionate Evidence Base (Paragraph 170)

5.10. The NPPF states:

“Where appropriate, landscape character assessments should also be prepared, integrated with assessment of historic landscape character and for areas where there are major expansion options assessments of landscape sensitivity”.

Neighbourhood Planning

5.11. The NPPF provides a framework within which:

“local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities”. (Paragraph 1)

5.12. The information in the Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment provides important information in preparation of such plans.

Local Green Space Designation (Paragraphs 76-77)

5.13. The NPPF states:

“Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- *where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- *where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- *where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

Charnwood Local Plan

5.14. Charnwood Borough Council is preparing a Local Plan which will set out the Council's proposals to guide future development in the Borough. It will conform to National Planning Policy Framework. The Local Plan seeks to accommodate approximately 10,000 additional dwellings within the borough, together with places of work, shops, community buildings and green spaces between 2012 and 2028. It will include policies on housing, employment, retail, environmental assets, design, transport and other related issues.

River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy

- 5.15. Charnwood Borough Council has been a partner in developing a River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy. The strategy aims to improve and promote a 23 mile long corridor of the River Soar and Grand Union Canal which runs from Kilby Bridge in the south, through the centre of Leicester, and north to Loughborough Meadows. Its significance is that it brings together for the first time a coordinated approach for Waterway development along this corridor that will inform, guide and shape policy, plans and local strategies. The strategy sets out the wider rationale, context, strategic priorities and actions for maximising the positive economic, social and environmental contribution of the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor. Charnwood Borough Council Cabinet endorsed this strategy at its meeting on 9th July 2009.

Charnwood Forest Regional Park

- 5.16. A Charnwood Forest Regional Park was proposed through the East Midlands Regional Plan. Since 2007 a working group of local authorities lying within the Charnwood Forest area have been working with other organisations to produce a vision statement for the Regional Park. Charnwood Borough Council Cabinet endorsed the Vision Statement at its meeting 6th August 2009 and endorsed governance arrangements for the Regional Park at its meeting on 24th November 2011.

6 Cs Green Infrastructure Sub Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy

- 5.17. This draft strategy set out strategic green infrastructure (GI) network for the 3 counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire and for the 3 cities of Nottingham, Derby and Leicester (The 6Cs). The strategy also sets out vision for GI in the area, a set of strategic objectives and also provides recommendations for the content of GI policies within Local Development Frameworks.
- 5.18. Charnwood Borough Council Cabinet endorsed a response to the Draft 6Cs Green Infrastructure Strategy on 26th November 2009, and in so doing supported the proposed strategic Green Infrastructure network that was set out in the consultation document.

Charnwood Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study

- 5.19. Charnwood Borough Council has published an open spaces, sport and recreation study. The study looked at the amount of open spaces across the borough, its quality and also how close it is to peoples' homes. Types of spaces that were looked at included such areas as parks, natural green spaces, allotments, sports pitches, children's play and youth/adult recreation.

Charnwood Green Wedge Review

- 5.20. The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan currently identifies areas of Green Wedge which are areas of land adjoining urban areas in the Borough. A Green Wedge Review assessed the Green wedges identified in the Local Plan against principles set out in the East Midlands Regional Plan. These principles are that green wedges provide a 'green lung' into urban areas, guide development form, are a recreational resource and help prevent the merging of settlements.

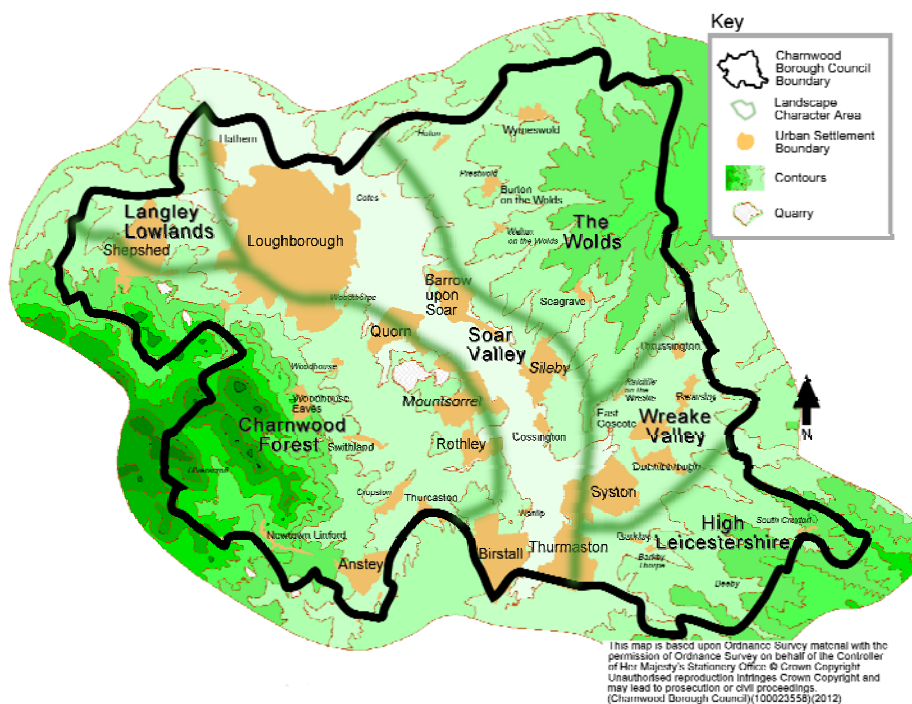
Summary of Context

- 5.21. The Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment provides important evidence for the preparation of the Charnwood Local Plan and for the management of new development.
- 5.22. The Charnwood Forest Regional Park and River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy present opportunities for new recreation, which will have a landscape effect which would need to be managed. The Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment provides important information to support these initiatives in protecting and helping to reinforce the local distinctiveness of these areas.
- 5.23. A thorough understanding of local landscape character is essential to delivering good design; it is also important for managing development in urban fringe areas and rural locations, and helping to ensure development is focussed on areas of lesser environmental value.
- 5.24. The protection of landscape character needs to be understood alongside the wider context of a positive approach to growth and of government policy that all communities should contribute towards renewable and low carbon energy generation.
- 5.25. The Borough of Charnwood does not contain any nationally designated landscapes and as such, they do not have a highest level of recognition within national planning policy. The NPPF does however recognise the need contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. Landscape evidence is also important to plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of green infrastructure.
- 5.26. The Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment is also important evidence for any local communities in the borough preparing Neighbourhood Plans or considering designating Local Green Space.

6. INTERPOLATION OF MAPPING RESEARCH

Topography

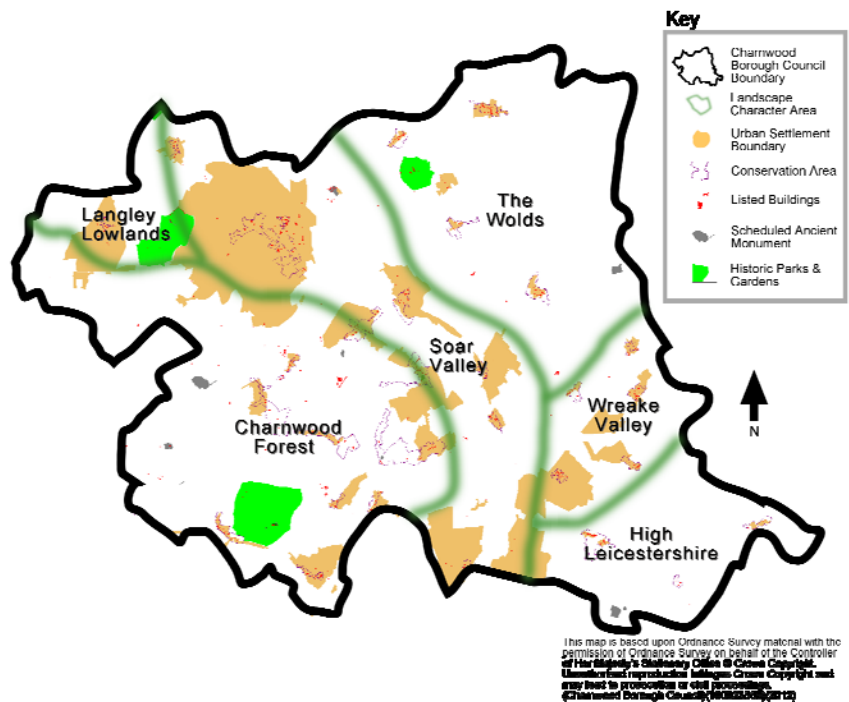
- 6.1. This map shows different contour heights of the landscape within the borough. The topography of Charnwood can be split into four units, the raised area of Charnwood Forest in the west, the central low lying south-north floodplain of the River Soar, and the raised areas of the Wolds and High Leicestershire to the east. Elevations range between 34m AOD on the River Soar floodplain northeast of Hathern, to 248m AOD at Beacon Hill in the west, whilst the topography of the Wolds in the east is more subdued, reaching an elevation of 134m AOD at Six Hills. Slopes of 1 in 7 are characteristic of the Charnwood Forest area while slopes of around 1 in 20 are to be found in the Wolds to the east.
- 6.2. The settlement pattern within Charnwood is strongly influenced by topography with the main settlements located within or close to the valleys of the Soar and the Wreake.



Cultural Heritage

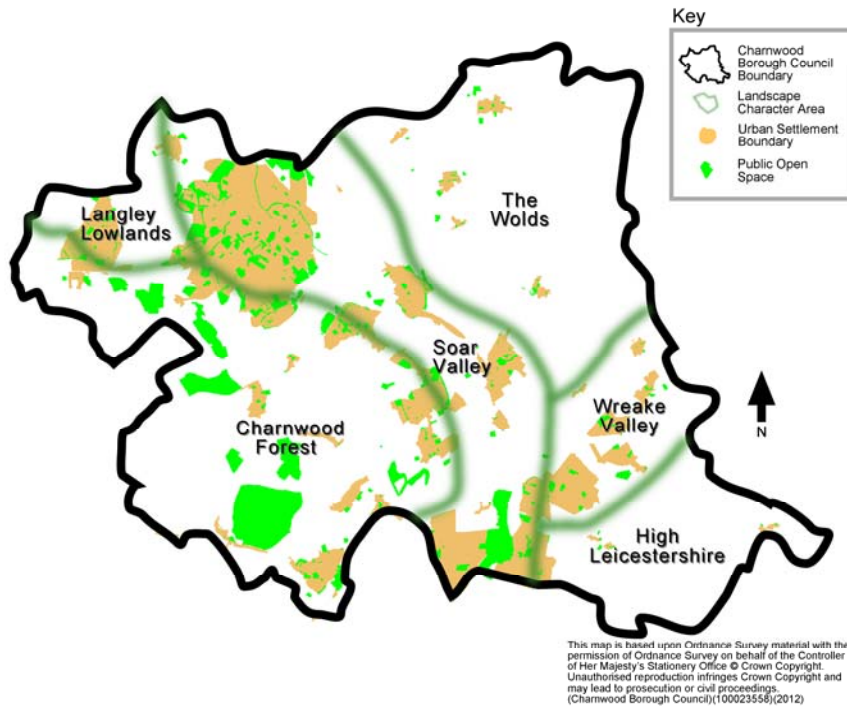
- 6.3. This map shows cultural heritage within the borough. There are designated Historic Park and Gardens at Bradgate Park, Garendon Park, Prestwold and small portion of land at Whatton House in the north of the borough.

- 6.4. There are over 900 listed buildings, 36 designated conservation areas and 20 Scheduled Ancient Monuments.



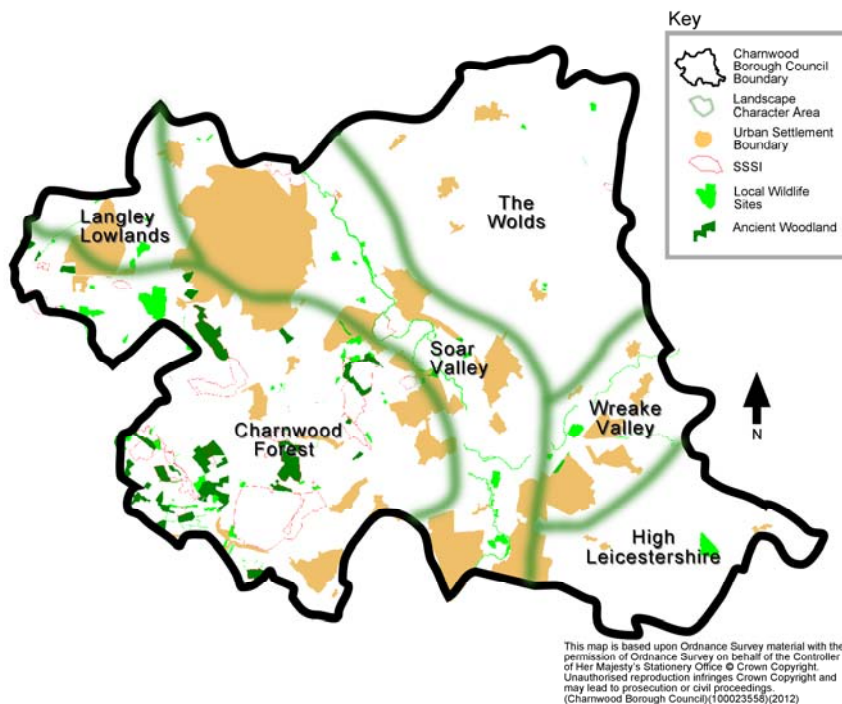
Public Open Space/Recreation

- 6.5. This map shows public open space within the borough. Public open space is focussed within settlements, but there are significant open spaces within Charnwood Forest at Beacon Hill, Swithland Woods, Bradgate Park and the Outwoods. In addition there are more recent open spaces that have come through as part of the National Forest.
- 6.6. There are significant areas of open space associated with the River Soar at Watermead Country Park and access land at Loughborough Meadows.



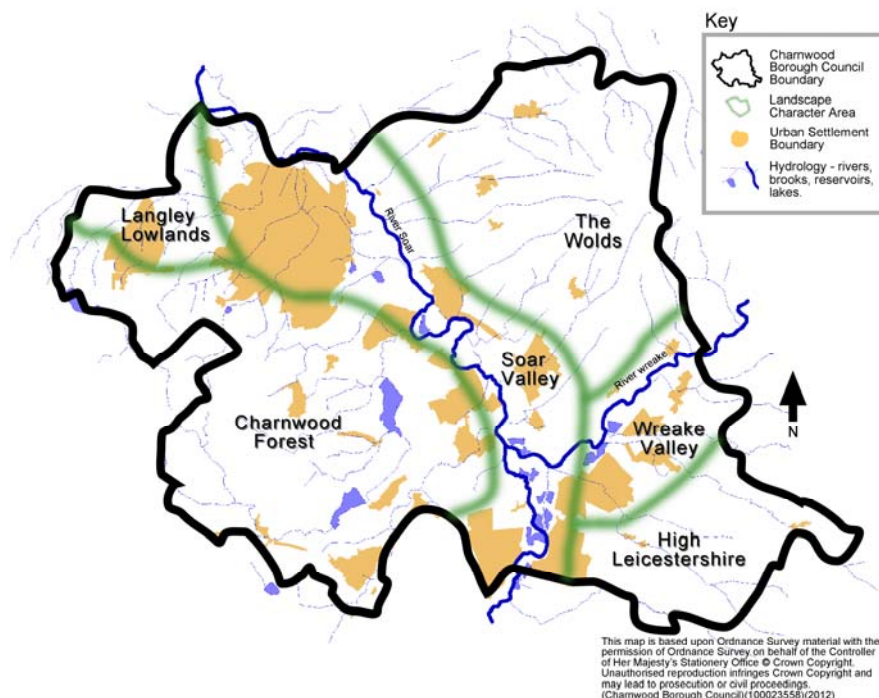
Ecology

- 6.7. This map shows Local Wildlife Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and Ancient Woodlands.
- 6.8. Compared to other parts of Leicestershire and the East Midlands, the borough contains significant areas of ecological interest mainly focussed on the Charnwood Forest and river valleys of the Soar and the Wreake.



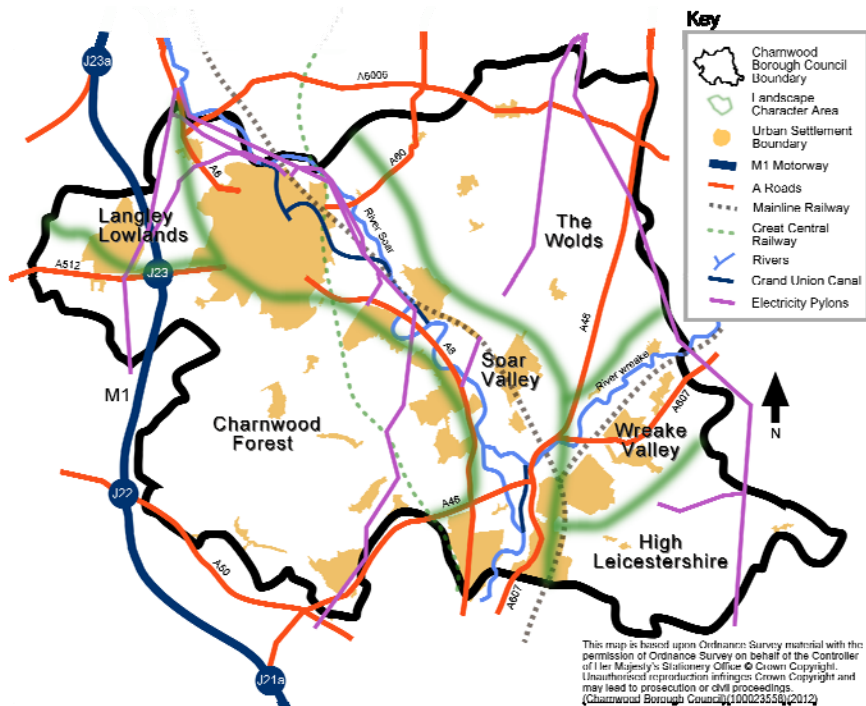
Hydrology

- 6.9. This map shows rivers, brooks reservoirs and lakes within the borough and their relationship with the main settlements. Charnwood Borough receives between 750mm and 625 mm of rain on average per year. Rainfall is highest over the hills of Charnwood Forest in the west, and decreases eastwards towards the Wolds.
- 6.10. Watercourses draining Charnwood Forest tend to be faster responding than watercourses draining the Wolds. Watercourses in the Wolds radiate outwards and drain the dome shaped topography. In the south of the borough the River Soar is joined by the River Wreake and the Rothley Brook. Flood levels in the lower Soar, north of this confluence are strongly influenced by the coincidence of peaks on the three watercourses, water levels rising most rapidly if the flood peaks from all three watercourses coincide.
- 6.11. Nanpantan, Swithland, Cropston and Black Brook Reservoirs are located with the Charnwood Forest area to the west.
- 6.12. The Soar and Wreake Valleys have been locations for the extraction of sand and gravel. Many former working in these areas have been restored to wetlands for recreational and wildlife benefits.



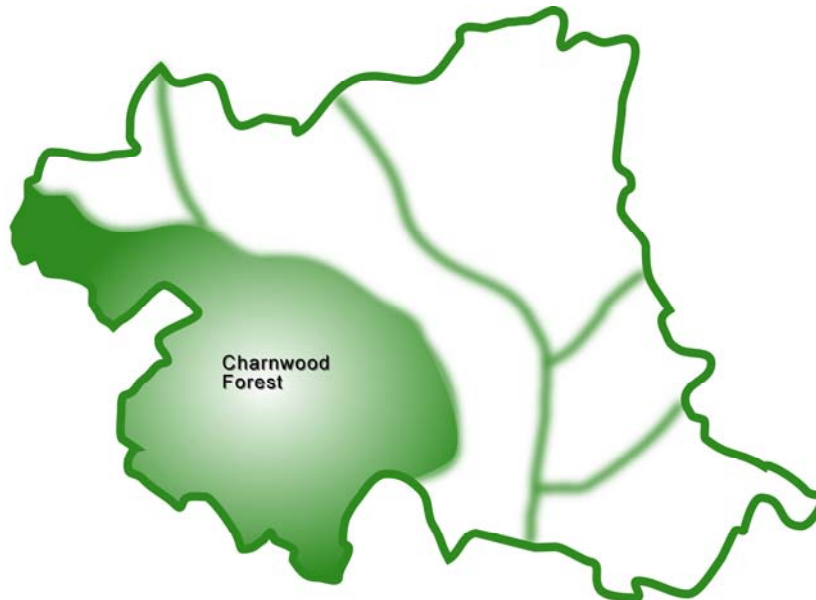
Communication

- 6.13. This map shows the main communications routes within the borough. The River Soar is a key communication route with the A6, Grand Union Canal and mainline railways running along it.
- 6.14. The M1 motorway runs on the western edge of the borough with the junction 23 lying between Loughborough and Shepshed.
- 6.15. There are numerous electricity pylons running through the borough, with major lines running through the west of Loughborough, over the Wolds, Soar, Rothley Brook and through the south-east corner of the borough.



7. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

CHARNWOOD FOREST CHARNWOOD FOREST LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA



7.1. Key Characteristics

- Charnwood Forest is the most complex of the landscape character areas and five sub-areas were identified within the Borough in the 2008 Charnwood Forest Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment
- The highly distinctive upland character contrasts with the lower lying nature of the surrounding landscape character areas. It contains the highest land in the borough of Charnwood, rising to 248m (814ft) at Beacon Hill
- Landscape mosaic of pasture, frequent woodland and exposed hilltops of acidic grassland with rocky outcrops of ancient Precambrian volcanic and plutonic rocks with bracken and heathland
- Most densely wooded area of Charnwood Borough with coniferous and mixed deciduous woods
- Includes many wildlife areas and ancient semi-natural woodlands
- Field boundaries of stone walls and large free growing hedges
- Strongly rectilinear pattern of parliamentary enclosure fields and straight roads
- Historic quarrying of granite and slates and still active quarrying of granite
- Historic houses and ruins - Bradgate Country Park (Grade II Historic Park and Garden), Ulverscroft Priory and Beaumanor Hall
- Scattered settlements often of local stone with steeply angled slate roofs

- Settlements are Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves, Swithland, Cropston, Thurcaston, Anstey, Newtown Linford, western edges of Rothley and Mountsorrel, and the fringes of west Loughborough and south Shepshed
- M1 motorway passes through this character area
- Much of the area is in the National Forest.

7.2 General Description

The upland nature of Charnwood Forest, due to the underlying ancient rock, is very different from other landscape character areas within the Borough. The geology has strongly influenced both the natural vegetation cover and agricultural land use. It has the highest percentage of woodland cover and wildlife sites in Leicestershire. Small villages have a strong sense of identity through the use of local stone. The area is very popular for recreation and visitor pressure is increasing.

7.3. Geology

- The Precambrian rocks of Charnwood Forest are amongst the oldest in England and Wales. They include important fossils that are the earliest evidence of life in Britain, and are of particular conservation importance. There are six Sites of Special Scientific Interest for Geology.
- The Precambrian rocks, overlain in places by Keuper Marls form an isolated and distinctive area of high relief to the west of the River Soar. The tilting, folding and erosion of these ancient volcanic and sedimentary rocks has created distinctive outcrops.
- Around the edges of Charnwood Forest younger igneous rock deposits occur which have been extensively quarried for roadstone at Shepshed at Newhurst and Longcliffe Quarries. The distinctive red Mountsorrel granite, which is exposed through quarrying at Buddon Hill, is part of this complex of igneous rocks. The built fabric of Charnwood Forest often features locally quarried stone, such as field walls and houses of Mountsorrel granite with Swithland slate roofs.
- Superficial cover is varied with boulder clays, some with underlying sands and gravels, marls and sandstones. The granite is prevalent, some occurring as outcrops and crags as at Beacon Hill Country Park and visible at disused pits and quarries such as Morley Quarry at Shepshed.
- The acidic soil has developed many rich ecological features particularly acidic grassland.

7.4. Topography

- The hilly landform and distinctive rugged upland character of Charnwood Forest is a contrast to the generally more gentle landscape elsewhere in the Midlands.

- The topography of this area has been strongly influenced by its complex geology, which includes ancient Precambrian rocks, volcanic intrusions, metamorphosed and later sedimentary layers.
- Charnwood Forest is the highest part of the Borough. The peak at Beacon Hill (248m/814ft) is the second highest point in Leicestershire.
- The topography of Charnwood Forest allows long distance and panoramic views over the surrounding countryside from high vantage points. This upland area provides a prominent backdrop and distinctive skyline when seen from other parts of the Borough and well beyond.

7.5. Land Use

- Charnwood Forest, despite its name, is a farmed landscape, albeit very wooded. It is a mosaic of fields and woodland with exposed crags and rocky knolls in grassland. Lower lying land is often gentle and pastoral. Quarrying has been and remains the dominant industry. The area is now a local and regional recreational destination valued for its scenery, country parks and golf courses.

7.6. Farming

- Farming is mixed with arable, meadows and pastures. There is a close patchwork of woodland and farmland. Pastures are predominantly cattle-grazed and to a lesser extent sheep-grazed.
- The recent trend for large sheds for housing cattle is altering the appearance of traditional farmyard complexes and these new buildings can be prominent in the landscape.
- Some farms are diversifying, including forestry planting and offering visitor experiences of farm animals or woodland trails. In the National Forest, this is encouraged by the National Forest Company.
- Horse culture is widespread throughout. Horse-grazed pastures, where subdivided into smaller paddocks, often with timber stables and manages, detract from the general character of the Charnwood Forest landscape.

7.7. Industry

- Quarrying is the most important industry, which had and continues to have great impact on the landscape. The underlying rock of Charnwood Forest has enabled a prosperous quarrying industry to operate at least since Roman times, through the middle ages until the present day.
- Swithland slate formed the basis for a local quarrying industry until the late 19th century. The slate was used locally, principally for roofing, wall stone and gravestones, but was also transported throughout the country using the River Soar and later the Grand Union Canal. However, the opening up of the railway network permitted the movement of cheaper Welsh slates which brought about the demise of the Swithland slate industry.

- Since the 1970s, the quarry at Mountsorrel has been the principal source in the UK of crushed hard-rock aggregates used in road building. Quarrying activity has resulted in the loss of much of Buddon Wood, once the largest semi-natural ancient woodland in Leicestershire. Only a narrow fringe of the wood has been retained and this, supplemented with mounding and new planting, provides some screening for the deep quarry.
- Other major quarries within Charnwood Forest are located outside the Borough but can impinge on its visual character: the quarry at Stanton-under-Bardon, for instance, is particularly visible from parts of Newtown Linford.
- There is a small brick clay extraction at Shepshed, where working is combined with gradual restoration to grassland with wooded copses.

7.8. Recreation

- The health giving qualities of Charnwood Forest were promoted by the Victorians and the building of the railways brought people from as far afield as London to visit and stay in the area. Recreational use increased with the popularity of motoring, rambling and cycling in the early 20th century. The area is now popular for leisure and draws in residents from the city of Leicester as well as surrounding towns and settlements.
- There are a number of country parks and other major open spaces, such as Beacon Hill Country Park, Broombriggs Farm Country Park, Bradgate Park, Swithland Wood and The Outwoods. The Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust also owns or manages a range of large nature reserves within the area, such as Ulverscroft Nature Reserve and Lea Meadows.
- The Great Central Railway is a popular tourist attraction, linking Loughborough to Leicester via the eastern part of Charnwood Forest. Views from the steam trains include the rolling farmland and Swithland Reservoir and the sight and sound of the passing steam trains adds interest in the landscape.
- Popular golf courses (Charnwood Forest Golf Club at Hangingstone near Beacon Hill, Lingdale Golf Club off Joe Moore's Lane, near Woodhouse Eaves, and Longcliffe Golf Club at Nanpantan) are set within attractive sites of high nature conservation interest.
- Horse-riding is popular with a number of stables and maneges.
- Other outdoor activities include climbing, cycling, running and orienteering.
- The popularity of the area for outdoor recreation brings increased pressures to formalise access and to provide more public facilities, such as controlled car parks at Beacon Hill and hard surfacing some paths within woodland, and outdoor lighting. Parking on roadside verges is a local problem at popular sites.

7.9. Communications

- Built in the 1960s, the M1 motorway has cut through the Charnwood Forest landscape character area. Locally it is visually and audibly intrusive.
- The A46 crosses the south-west corner of the Rothley Brook valley and is highly conspicuous within the flatter landscape. The A512 cuts across the northern limit of the area, but is less obtrusive. Night time street lights affect the general tranquillity of the surrounding countryside.
- The landscape is criss-crossed by a network of often very straight minor roads. Road traffic on these roads impacts on the otherwise tranquil nature of the area.
- The area is not well served by public transport. Reliance on cars to reach popular destinations can lead to localised congestion and parking on roadside verges.
- Public footpaths and bridleways radiate from the edges of the villages and provide good access to the surrounding countryside. However, the County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Leicestershire 2006-2011 identified Charnwood Forest as an area of low footpath density with gaps in the network, possibly due to the area being largely open moor and heath prior to enclosure.
- The Great Central Railway runs through Charnwood Forest, with stations at Quorn and Rothley. Its route, often on embankments, is marked by an intermittent tree line.
- Telecoms masts at the elevated Copt Oak are intrusive elements on the skyline and dominate the local landscape near the M1.
- A network of high tension pylons and power lines along the Rothley Brook valley is locally prominent in the south-west corner of Charnwood Forest.

7.10. Ecology

- The area contains 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, over one hundred Local Wildlife Sites and a high number of Regionally Important Geological Sites and over twenty five Ancient Woodlands.
- Thin acidic soils support pockets of heath grassland, particularly around rock outcrops, whilst a large heath grassland site still remains at Bradgate Park. Pastures and meadows are found on the more fertile soils of the valleys, but many have lost their floristic diversity through agricultural intensification. Natural England has lately encouraged landowners to bring woodland back into positive management through clear felling and selective thinning of non-native species.
- Disused and active quarries are a valuable geodiversity resource and offer potential for nature conservation, informal recreation and education. Man-made Cropston and Blackbrook Reservoirs represent another important resource, but are affected by nutrient-enrichment from sewage effluent and agricultural run-off.

- Key species include the adder, slow worm, common lizard and palmate newt. Several fast-flowing streams support restricted fauna, such as the white-clawed crayfish. The area is a stronghold for bat species which benefit from the varied biodiversity network and high-quality habitat connectivity. There are large numbers of species listed in The Flora of Leicestershire and Rutland Rare Plant Register.
- The high level of public use is causing some disturbance and damage to vulnerable habitats.

7.11. Heritage

- Fossils associated with the Precambrian rock outcrops of Charnwood Forest are of international importance. They contain soft-body traces of some of the earliest creatures to have evolved on earth.
- There are ten Ancient Monuments in this landscape character area. (Sites of a hill fort at Beacon Hill, Roman villa at Rothley Ridgeway, priory, fishponds and two moats at Ulverscroft, house, chapel, lodge and garden at Bradgate Park, moats and fishponds at Quorn, with two bridges at Anstey and the remains of churchyard crosses at Rothley and Anstey).
- Historic parks and large country houses are particular features of the area. Bradgate Park, a large deer park enclosed by high stone walls, was the ancestral seat of Lady Jane Grey, famous for becoming Queen of England for nine days in 1553. It encompasses 325ha and is a Grade II Historic Park and Garden. Old John, a tower and arch folly built in 1784, is the most familiar landmark of the area. It stands on the ridge of high land in Bradgate Park, commanding panoramic views across Leicestershire.
- The Herrick family of Beaumanor have had a major influence over part of the area, and were largely responsible for creating the villages of Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves. Remnants of Beaumanor parkland and its avenue remain. Part is now occupied by the Sixth Form Defence College and its playing fields. The house and gardens are a local authority education and event venue.
- Other parklands include the grounds of Rothley Temple, part of which is now cricket grounds and golf course, and those around Quorndon House in Quorn. Many parkland trees remain in these open parkland settings, including mature oaks.
- The historic cores of most Forest villages are conservation areas: Anstey, Cropston, Newtown Linford and Thurgate. The conservation areas of Swithland, Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves, extend to include buildings and settings beyond the village envelope. Some adjoining Soar Valley settlements have conservation areas which extend into the fringes of this character area; Loughborough Shelthorpe and Cemetery, Quorn House off Meeting Street in Quorn, Castle Hill at Mountsorrel and Rothley Plain and Ridgeway.
- The Great Central Railway, opened in 1899 and active until the 1960s, has been reopened as a heritage and tourist attraction using steam locomotives.

- A definitive footpath at Nanpantan and Longcliffe Golf Course follows the route of the disused Charnwood Forest Canal.

7.12. **Boundaries & Hedges**

- The majority of field boundaries date from the 1808 and 1829 Inclosure Acts with most fields having a regular outline and geometric pattern. Where arable production prevails, fields have been greatly enlarged.
- The extensive network of species-rich hedgerows includes many mature trees, mainly pedunculate oak. Particular to this area, holly is one of the common components of Charnwood Forest hedgerows.
- Dry-stone walls are a unique feature of higher parts of the area, although many walls are in a poor state of repair. The walls have a distinctive form made by the local irregular-shaped heavy stones with larger stones placed at the base and flat coping stones straddling across the top. In recent times, coping stones have tended to be set in mortar to prevent theft.

7.13. **Woodland & Trees**

- Charnwood Forest is the most densely wooded part of Leicestershire with both semi-natural deciduous woodland and mixed or coniferous plantations. It is supplemented by a significant hedgerow network and mature hedgerow trees, as well as tree-lined water-courses, giving an extremely well wooded appearance.
- Most semi-natural ancient woodland sites have retained their extensive carpets of bluebells and typical native tree species. Sessile oak, birch and small-leaved lime are dominant on the thin acidic soils, whilst pedunculate oak and ash are found on the richer clay soils of the vales.
- Between 1914 and 1950 large areas of predominantly oak woodland were clear felled and re-stocked with conifers for timber production or with a range of deciduous trees including non-native species such as beech, sweet chestnut and horse chestnut.
- Some woods have deteriorated through inappropriate management and the spread of invasive species, particularly sycamore. Where rhododendron was introduced to beautify woods, extensive invasion has often occurred, threatening the natural ground flora and making woods dark and impenetrable.
- Some woods, such as Benscliffe Wood, are managed as commercial timber plantations and go through a cycle of clear felling and re-stocking. Forestry operations can have a dramatic, although localised, visual impact and open up or close vistas in the landscape.
- There are substantial areas of parkland and estate landscape with veteran specimen trees, for instance at Rocliffe Manor, Swithland Hall, Rothley Temple Park and Beaumanor Hall. Of particular note are the ancient oak pollards at Bradgate Park.
- The Victorian water treatment works at Swithland and Cropston were formally landscaped in the style of a substantial country house with tall pines particularly noticeable.

- The three golf courses retained many original trees and have been enhanced with substantial new tree planting to complement the landscape and also created other areas of beneficial wildlife habitats.
- Part of the area is within the National Forest boundaries and woodland planting has been grant-aided by The National Forest Company within the last 15 years creating young plantations.
- Acute Oak Decline is a particular threat to the oaks in this area, and is currently being monitored by the Forestry Commission. Rhododendron clearance of the oak woodlands carried out to help prevent the spread of Sudden Oak Death disease is changing the appearance of the woodlands by opening up the forest floor to new herbaceous woodland plants.

7.14. **Hydrology**

- The south-eastern edge of Charnwood Forest is formed by the valley of the Rothley Brook which runs eastwards and links to the River Soar landscape character area.
- A number of streams drain eastwards from the high ground of Charnwood Forest, including the Wood Brook, Black Brook and River Lin, adding to the pastoral quality of the landscape. These streams have high ecological value.
- Three large man-made reservoirs, Cropston, Blackbrook and Swithland Reservoirs, were created in the 19th century. They can be highly prominent from some vantage points such as Bradgate Park and along certain sections of minor roads, although they are generally well integrated and secluded within the landscape.
- Steep sided, water-filled disused quarries, which are often extremely deep, are a legacy of the area's industrial heritage.
- There are also several large fish ponds of medieval origin, for example at Ulverscroft Priory.

7.15. **Buildings & Settlements**

- This area contains the southern edges of Loughborough and Shepshed. The large village of Anstey lies in the south with other large villages of Quorn, Rothley and Mountsorrel at the transition between Charnwood Forest and the Soar Valley landscape character areas.
- There are a number of small linear settlements. Newtown Linford, Swithland, and Woodhouse are still principally organised along a single main street, but Cropston, Woodhouse Eaves and Anstey have all expanded.
- Isolated, traditional farmsteads are scattered across the landscape. The majority have been enlarged into substantial dwellings in recent years. There are many large isolated properties set back from the rural lanes with large well-treed frontages and gardens. Some which are located on open higher elevations are locally visible landscape features. Night time illumination of elevated houses and driveways can detract from the otherwise dark surroundings.

- Formal treatments of entrance gates and domestication of frontage boundaries and grounds, particularly where screening from native hedgerows has been removed, can detract from with the natural setting of the area.
- Other major buildings in Charnwood Forest are early to mid-19th century additions. Country houses such as The Brand, Roecliffe Manor, Beaumanor Hall, Swithland Hall and Nanpantan Hall sit in landscaped parkland settings. They are mostly secluded from view by both landform and tree cover.
- The Ministry of Defence Sixth Form College near Woodhouse, built in 2005 on the site of a military establishment is a complex of modern buildings and sports fields sited in a treed setting.
- The use of local stones in buildings and dry-stone walls gives the area a unique identity. The blue-grey Swithland slate, Mountsorrel pink granite and Charnian field stone are particularly characteristic and allow buildings to blend harmoniously in the landscape.

7.16. The Charnwood Forest Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment, produced in 2008 by Leicestershire County Council, sub-divided the Charnwood Forest landscape character area in Charnwood Borough into five sub areas:

- Bradgate and Beacon
- Ulverscroft
- Charley
- Swithland
- Rothley Brook.

Landscape Strategy for the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area is to Conserve, Manage and Enhance

7.17. The five sub-areas were combined as two parts that share broadly similar landscape characters: Bradgate and Beacon/Ulverscroft/Charley combine as the Charnwood Forest Core with a landscape strategy to conserve and manage. Swithland and Rothley Brook combine as the Charnwood Fringe and have a landscape strategy to conserve and enhance.

Charnwood Forest Core (Bradgate and Beacon/Ulverscroft/Charley)

7.18. **Strength of Landscape Character**

Charnwood Forest Core has a strong sense of place created by its hilly landform and mosaic of farmland, small villages and woodland, heathland and grassland with wooded valleys. The relationship of domestic elements and woodland gives a distinctive and attractive character, and the current planting of new woodlands and management of existing woods will strengthen the character further.

7.19. **Landscape Condition**

Wooded landscape features are generally in good condition, with ancient trees respected and retained where possible. Field boundaries are generally intact and create a strong landscape feature. Hedges and hedgerow trees are well tended, although some dry stone boundary walls are neglected and there is some evidence of localised hedge reduction. The two country parks are well tended.

The strength of landscape character of the Charnwood Forest Core is considered strong and the landscape condition is strong.

7.20. **Landscape Strategy Matrix**

Landscape Condition	Good	Moderate Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance	Good Conserve & Manage
	Moderate	Poor-Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Conserve & Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance
		Poor Restore & Create	Poor – Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Enhance
	Poor	Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of Landscape Character				

Charnwood Forest Fringe (Swithland and Rothley Brook)

7.21. Strength of Landscape Character

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.

7.22. Landscape Condition

This area shows greater impact of the larger settlements than the Charnwood Forest Core with greater fragmentation of landscape features and urbanising elements interrupt its unity, particularly at settlement fringes. There is some neglect of hedges and hedgerow trees.

The strength of landscape character of the Charnwood Forest Fringe is considered strong and the landscape condition moderate.

7.23. Landscape Strategy Matrix

Landscape Condition	Good	Moderate Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance	Good Conserve & Manage
	Moderate	Poor-Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Conserve & Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance
		Poor Restore & Create	Poor – Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Enhance
	Poor			
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of Landscape Character				

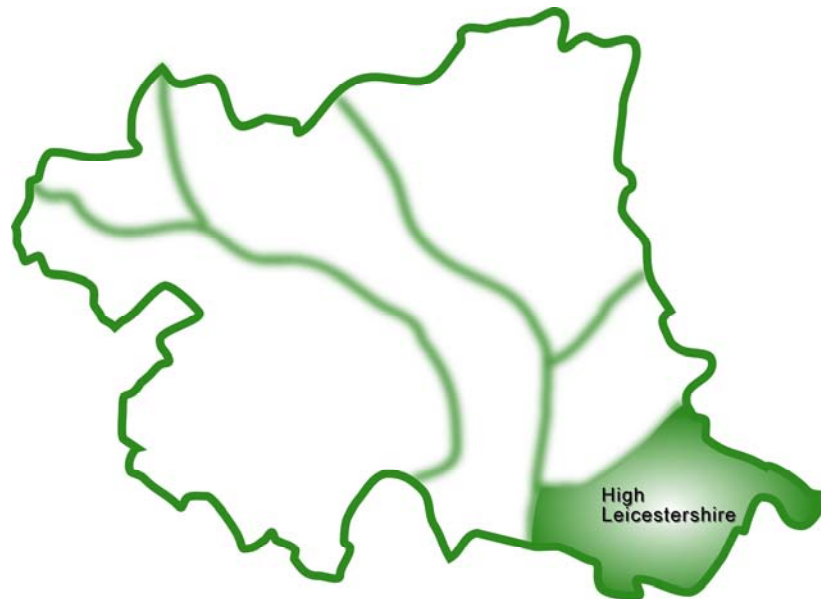
7.24. Guidelines For Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area

To be read in conjunction with General Guidelines

- Conserve the outline of wooded hills, rocky outcrops and ridgelines by avoiding locating large buildings and other structures in visually prominent locations
- Conserve the open views of the countryside from vantage points such as Beacon Hill and Bradgate Park
- Conserve the character of Charnwood Forest villages by respecting the distinctive style and using local materials of the Charnwood Forest
- Carefully manage built form development in rural locations so that it is compatible with the intimate scale and character of the Charnwood Forest landscape
- Conserve and enhance village and field boundaries by using the distinctive surrounding Charnwood Forest style and materials such as granite and slate dry stone walls. Restore neglected dry stone field boundaries
- Conserve and manage sites of geological importance particularly through the restoration of active mineral extraction sites
- Manage access to prevent damage to the landscape, vulnerable ecological areas and the verges of narrow country lanes, especially at popular visitor sites
- Conserve the tranquil night time character of Charnwood Forest by minimising light pollution
- Support the enhancement of the network of existing public rights of way particularly where it allows movement across the Forest, where it is compatible with the tranquil character and its ecological sensitivity
- Support the conservation of the rural character of roads. Where possible retain the lack of defined road edges along country lanes, and manage roadside verges to maintain the old meadow flora. Keep road markings and signs minimal and avoid unnecessary widening of roads and junctions
- Enhance the existing woodland resource through improved woodland management and restoration. Continue to target the removal of non-native invasive species such as rhododendron and sycamore
- Preference will be given to the use of trees and hedgerow plants locally native to the Charnwood Forest character area in planting schemes
- Conserve and protect the valuable biodiversity resource that is found in the Charnwood Forest and seek opportunities for the creation and enhancement of the following habitat types, especially where these support the mosaic of the Charnwood Forest landscape:
 - Heath grassland
 - Hay meadow and pasture
 - Freshwater habitats: streams and open water
 - Deciduous woodland particularly achieving connectivity between ancient semi-natural woodland
 - Field boundaries: hedgerows and dry stone walls.



HIGH LEICESTERSHIRE
HIGH LEICESTERSHIRE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA



7.25. Key Characteristics

- Undulating ridge and valley landscape with open and extensive views
- Remote tranquil character
- Urbanising influences of Thurmaston and Leicester City are affecting the western and southern areas
- Productively farmed with pasture mainly in valleys and arable on ridges
- Large regular shaped fields with hedgerows
- Isolated farmhouses and scattered small settlements of Barkby, Barkby Thorpe, Beeby and South Croxton.

7.26. General Description

The area has a remote character and is essentially undulating rural countryside of mixed farming with a sparse settlement pattern of small villages and isolated farmsteads scattered along minor roads. There are working farms within the villages of Barkby, South Croxton and Barkby Thorpe. The small villages often sit on the top of ridges and have little modern expansion.

The area has a well wooded appearance with a number of regular shaped copses and spinneys, hedgerows with many mature hedgerow trees, and wooded watercourses.

The western and southern edges of the area are subject to influences of Leicester City.

7.27. **Geology**

- The bedrock is Jurassic Lower Lias Limestones, which has eroded to a ridge and valley landscape of clay valley floors with harder limestones and ironstones forming the tops of hills and valley sides. The surface geology is boulder clay, with some alluvium in the valleys.

7.28. **Topography**

- Undulating landscape with broad ridges and varied valleys, giving extensive views over the countryside.
- East to west flowing streams in narrow valleys with gentle slopes dividing the broad ridges whose heights reach 120m (394ft).

7.29. **Land Use**

- This area is dominated by agricultural fields enclosed with hedgerows. There are small scattered settlements. Recent developments include coarse fishing ponds at Beeby and a natural burial ground at South Croxton.

7.30. **Farming**

- Farming is mixed, often with arable cultivation on the ridges and pastures in the valleys, although recently there has been a degree of conversion of grassland in favour of arable crops. The fields tend to be large to very large with a regular and geometric form.
- Pastures are principally grazed by cattle, and sheep to a lesser degree.
- There has been some farm diversification with storage within farmyards, and horse grazing, stabling and maneges particularly to the west and around settlements.

7.31. **Industrial**

- Industrial estate buildings adjoin the mainline railway at Thurmaston.
- Outside the villages there is little visual evidence of industry.

7.32. **Leisure & Recreation**

- The cricket ground at Barkby is a distinctive feature on the southern parkland of Barkby Hall. With retained mature trees it appears an intrinsic part of a traditional village setting.
- Fishing takes place at recently created ponds at Beeby.
- Although not promoted as long-distance routes, a well signed network of definitive footpaths connects settlements. Stables and a

number of maneges show the increasing popularity of horse riding using the less frequented roads, lanes and bridleways.

7.33. **Communication**

- South Croxton Road and Queniborough Road cut across the landscape in straight lines. Hamilton Lane winds its way from the sprawling edge of Leicester City to Barkby Thorpe. The volume and speed of traffic on these roads detracts from the quiet character of the area, particularly for residents and pedestrians.
- Some of the lesser countryside roads also tend to run in straight lines, sometimes on top of ridges (Ridgemere Lane) or lower down in valleys (Beeby Road). Others wind their way, such as Croxton Road between Beeby and South Croxton, and Three Turns Lane north of South Croxton.
- Quiet ancient green lanes, such as Kings Lane in South Croxton add to the treed character of the area.
- Telephone and electricity supply lines form a more or less constant component across the landscape.

7.34. **Ecology**

- The area does not contain any statutorily designated sites, although about 15 Local Wildlife Sites are present. Key habitats are lowland meadows, hedgerows, mature trees, field ponds and lowland mixed deciduous woodland.
- Key species recorded in High Leicestershire include the great crested newt for which the area is a stronghold, and species associated with farmland such as the brown hare, skylark and barn owl.
- In some areas the landscape still looks traditional and intact with a patchwork of mixed farming, wooded valleys and hedgerows with frequent mature trees that provide a high level of habitat connectivity. However, there is a degree of habitat fragmentation due to the increasing dereliction of hedgerows, the isolation of field ponds within arable fields, the ageing and senescence of mature trees, and the decline of old grassland plant communities through agricultural intensification.

7.35. **Heritage**

- The conservation area of Barkby and Barkby Thorpe contains most of both villages and the parkland between. The majority of South Croxton and Beeby are also conservation areas. Although most listed buildings of the area are within these conservation areas, some isolated farmhouses are listed, such as Barkby Grange and Little Beeby Farmhouse.
- There are two Ancient Monuments in the south east: the site of a Roman villa and the deserted mediaeval village at Hamilton which

adjoins the Melton Brook just north of the new housing of Leicester City. This is a local landscape feature of earthworks, house platforms and hollow ways set in grazed grassland.

- The parish churches of Barkby and South Croxton are quite prominent in the local landscape. Their honey coloured natural ironstone is distinctive.
- Some of the original field patterns have survived, although some field boundaries have been removed in the process of field enlargement. This has occurred in Barkby, Barkby Thorpe and Beeby, to facilitate arable production and has had a dramatic visual effect.
- Some fields have retained their ridge and furrow pattern such as at Barkby. The pattern of the ridge and furrow to the east of South Croxton indicates that it may have been part of an earlier open field system.
- Some old field ponds have survived the switch from grazing to arable production, notably at Barkby and South Croxton.
- Charnwood Borough boundary is adjacent to Baggrave Hall, which nestles in a well treed parkland setting visible from surrounding lanes and the village of South Croxton. A parkland setting is also evident around Barkby Hall but set behind an estate wall, it is much less visible within the landscape.
- There are some historic lanes, such as Ridgemere Lane between Syston and South Croxton, and some ancient green lanes such as Kings Lane in South Croxton.

7.36. **Boundaries & Hedges**

- The field pattern outside the villages is of rectilinear shape typical of late enclosure of the 18th and 19th century.
- Hedgerows are often prevalent in the landscape and, in parts of the area the hedgerow network is healthy and gives strong definition to a patchwork of fields. Where agriculture has been intensified, there has been some loss of hedgerows and deterioration through lack of management, with gaps developing. The hedgerows are either free growing or clipped, sometimes quite severely, where arable farming is dominant.
- Hedgerow trees are frequent, predominantly ash and some pedunculate oak. Ash die-back is prevalent in some of the arable dominated farmland, and there is little evidence that hedgerow trees are being replaced.
- The tree line at the top of ridges can sometimes look sparse and uneven and reflect the agricultural deterioration of the landscape.
- The lack of field boundary hedgerows beside Syston Road, west of South Croxton gives an exposed character to the locality.
- Walls are a minor component of the landscape. Brick and stone can be seen in the perimeter boundary walls of Barkby Hall. Parkland metal railings are a feature of the cricket ground and the

cattle grazed wood pasture at Barkby, and are also evident in Beeby.

7.37. **Woodland & Trees**

- The landscape appears well-treed due to the small copses, spinneys, tall free growing hedgerows, mature hedgerow trees (mainly ash and pedunculate oak), tree-lined watercourses and areas of parkland present.
- Barkby Holt is the largest block of plantation woodland and contains many mature trees of native species such as ash, pedunculate oak and hazel as well as non-native trees such as sycamore, lime and poplar.
- Small spinneys and coverts are dotted in the landscape, a legacy of game rearing and fox hunting. Many are of recent origin and remain unnamed. Young plantations occur in places, eg Barkby and Beeby as a result of farm diversification. These plantations generally have geometric, regular outlines which reveal their man-made origin, and they are often isolated in the landscape.
- The parkland at Baggrave Hall and Barkby Hall contains even-aged mature specimen trees such as pedunculate oak, lime and horse chestnut. Young trees have recently been planted at Barkby Hall to provide the next generation of parkland trees.
- The meandering watercourses are often fringed by trees, dominated by species such as ash and willow some of which are still pollarded (Queniborough Brook south-east of South Croxton). Elsewhere, the landscape is interrupted where substantial sections of the stream valley are devoid of any tree cover (along sections of Queniborough Brook south-west of South Croxton).
- Occasionally, clumps of conifers have been planted next to isolated farmsteads, presumably to provide some element of evergreen screening (New York Farm). They do not blend in the rural landscape, particularly on prominent ridges.

7.38. **Hydrology**

- Three small watercourses, the Queniborough, Barkby and Melton Brooks run across this character area from east to west descending from High Leicestershire to the River Wreake. They meander across the pastoral landscape of their valleys and are often fringed with a narrow belt of woodland or pollarded willow trees, giving a tranquil quality to the area.
- There are numerous smaller tributaries and some springs.
- In places old field ponds, which are of importance for biodiversity, have survived the conversion to arable production (Barkby, South Croxton), but have become isolated in the landscape.

7.39. Buildings & Settlements

- The area has a remote character and is essentially rural with a sparse settlement pattern of small villages and isolated farmsteads scattered along minor roads, and sometimes along secluded gated roads.
- The villages are small and quiet, with few facilities, and are fairly remote. There has been very little expansion in modern times. Farming is integrated into the villages, with working farms within the villages of Barkby, South Croxton and Barkby Thorpe.
- Village edges can often be seen from the surrounding countryside. Buildings that use traditional roofing materials such as slate and clay tile, together with mellow red brick and occasionally stone for walling, tend to fit harmoniously with the landscape. Where white render or white barge-boards have been used, dwellings are highly visible and do not blend in.
- The western and southern edges of the area are subject to suburban and urban influences of Thurmaston and Leicester City. The south of the area is on the fringe of the expanding City of Leicester, and houses built within the last ten years on the north facing valley side are highly intrusive in long distance views. The hard edge of the new houses presents a dense and regular urban form which is not softened by any diversity in building types or use of locally occurring materials. Tree planting and additional hedgerow trees have yet to soften the views of the houses seen on these elevated slopes
- Traditional farm buildings, predominantly with red brick walls and tiled roofs are often close to large modern barns with timber or metal clad walls and corrugated metal roofs, and, occasionally, tall silos. The colour and size of the modern farm buildings can be intrusive, but the use of muted greys and weathering helps to blend them into the landscape.
- Some of the dispersed farmsteads have been dissociated from agriculture and become purely residential. Where this has occurred, particularly in prominent locations, the conversion or replacement of traditional buildings and the addition of 'urbanised' facilities such as tennis courts has sometimes resulted in buildings which no longer sit well in the landscape.

The Landscape Strategy for High Leicestershire Landscape Character Area is to Conserve and Enhance

7.40. Strength of Landscape Character

High Leicestershire has a strong countryside and landscape character created by its variety of topography, well treed landscape with mixed farming, wooded valleys, country lanes, parkland and small villages.

7.41. Landscape Condition

Although many of the landscape features in the more remote rural areas are in good condition, the neglect and loss of some hedges and trees from the landscape and urban influences in the western part and near Leicester City alters the overall landscape condition of the whole area to moderate.

The strength of landscape character is considered strong and the landscape condition is moderate.

7.42. Landscape Strategy Matrix

Landscape Condition	Good	Moderate Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance	Good Conserve & Manage
	Moderate	Poor-Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Conserve & Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance
	Poor	Poor Restore & Create	Poor – Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Enhance
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of Landscape Character				

7.43. Guidelines For High Leicestershire Landscape Character Area

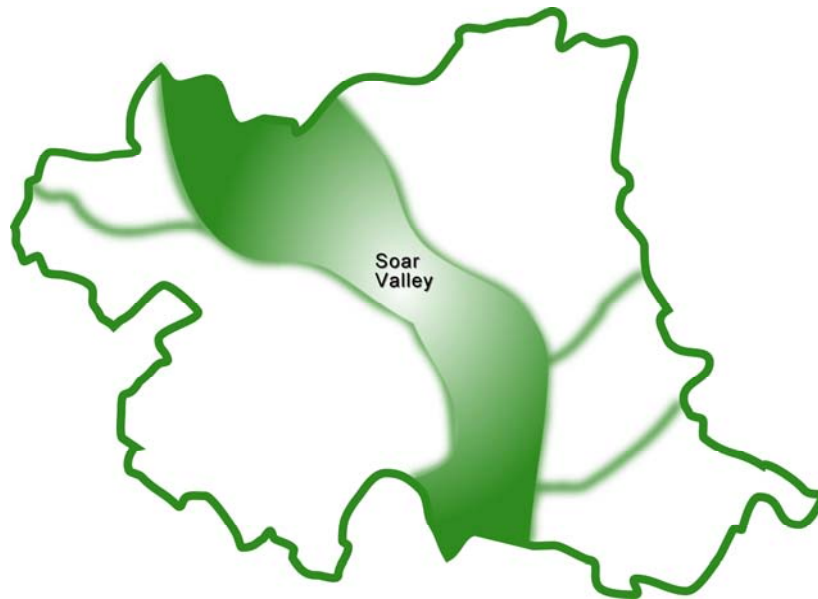
To be read in conjunction with General Guidelines

- Conserve the remote and tranquil character of the agricultural landscape
- Conserve the views across the undulating landscape.
- Seek to mitigate the harsh urban edge of Thurmaston and Leicester City. Carefully manage development in prominent locations to minimise the impact on the undulating character of high Leicestershire.
- Conserve and enhance features of the historical landscape such as ridge and furrow, Barkby Hall parkland and its setting
- Respect the setting of village churches in development proposals
- Conserve traditional farm houses and their associated buildings and integrate new farm buildings within existing groups
- Conserve the built character of villages by using materials and colours that complement the surroundings, such as ironstone and red brickwork
- Conserve the character of the remote rural roads by retaining the undefined carriageway edge, with their grassy verges and roadside hedges with trees, whilst keeping minimal any street lighting and signs and avoiding unnecessary widening of roads and junctions
- Encourage the conservation of existing fields hedgerows and discourage any further hedgerow removal to enlarge fields
- Seek to conserve existing tree cover in woodlands, hedges and along stream valleys and around settlements and enhance with similar planting in open sections
- Seek to include tree planting and small woodlands in and around new development
- Enhance tree cover by planting copses on ridgelines and upper slopes
- Conserve and enhance the well-treed character with new spinney planning that has informal flowing edges following the landform
- Preference will be given to the use of trees and hedgerow plants that are locally native to High Leicestershire character area in planting schemes and avoids the use of ornamental trees in prominent locations in the open countryside
- Restore the hedgerow network through planting a new generation of hedgerow trees, planting up of gaps in hedges and relaxing the management regime
- Reconnect isolated woodland sites and field ponds to the local biodiversity network
- Seek opportunities for the creation of the following habitat types where they serve to strengthen the countryside character of the High Leicestershire landscape:
 - Field ponds
 - Flower rich grasslands

- Hedgerows
- Trees to grow on as standards within hedgerows and in parkland.



SOAR VALLEY SOAR VALLEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA



7.44. Key Characteristics

- Flat wide river floodplain which experiences regular flooding
- Navigable River Soar and Grand Union Canal
- Major engineering features are the raised landscaped embankments of A6 and mainline railway and electricity pylons
- Visible built development on well-defined rising valley slopes
- Restored gravel worked landscapes for recreation, farmland and wildlife benefit
- Settlements are Hathern, Loughborough, Quorn, Birstall, Barrow upon Soar, Sileby, Cossington and much of Mountsorrel and Rothley, Syston and Thurmaston.

7.45. General Description

The landscape of the Soar Valley is essentially a flat floodplain with rising valley sides. The landscape is essentially rural in the floodplain where grassland was naturally enriched from silt carried by flood waters. Once active sand and gravel workings are now largely restored as agricultural grazing and wildlife wetlands or recreational water bodies. The width between the built development on opposite banks narrows in locations: between Loughborough and Cotes, and between Quorn and Barrow upon Soar.

The valley has been a major transport corridor for a long time, with canalised navigation, railway and road network and electricity pylons. On higher ground, localised industries enabled the expansion of the larger villages. Twentieth century settlement growth and recreational activities along the river and canal has had a substantial visual impact

on the area. There is increasing pressure for greater recreational provision with caravan sites and marinas associated with the Canal and riverside.

It is the most urbanised area of Charnwood Borough, with Loughborough in the north, substantial settlements to both east and west sides of the river corridor, and the influence of Leicester City to the south.

7.46. Geology

- The majority of the Soar Valley is alluvium with river gravel terraces rising to each side. The Soar Valley villages are located on these higher better drained terraces.
- There are superficial deposits of sands and gravels and the working of these has had a significant effect upon the present day landscape.

7.47. Topography

- The area is characterised by a broad, flat valley floor and rising valley sides.

7.48. Land Use

- This landscape character area is the most urbanised area of Charnwood Borough with many towns and villages. It is one of the more varied of the Charnwood landscape character areas, showing post-war changes resulting from pressures of urbanization. Whilst farming dominates the floodplain, there are also water bodies managed for recreation and wildlife. There are a number of sports grounds near the settlements. Extensive sewage treatment works occupy land north of Loughborough and at Wanlip. Although there are few buildings in the floodplain, there are extensive and large industrial uses on the sides of the valley adjoining settlements.

7.49. Farming

- 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. There is a minor component of arable farming.
- Hay meadows are still part of the landscape although they have declined, often to be replaced by silage production. Large areas of traditional hay meadow are present to the north of Loughborough (Loughborough Meadow and Bishop Meadow), and between Mountsorrel and Sileby. Some of these are managed by Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

7.50. Industry

- Industry has been a major vehicle for the growth of settlements. There has been a steady decline of traditional industries located within the villages, from which most of the shoe-making, textiles, and engineering manufacturing has disappeared. Some of the factory sites have been redeveloped in the late 20th century for small housing estates.
- In north Loughborough there is a very high density of employment sites. Large manufacturing industries have survived and diversified such as The Brush Falcon Works and Morris Cranes. The 20th century pharmaceutical industry of Astra-Zeneca created an extensive office and works complex alongside the canal at the Bishop Meadow Industrial Estate.
- In the southern part of the valley at Syston and Thurmaston, there are large industrial estates, predominately for manufacturing and distribution. Development and redevelopment of earlier industrial sites is currently taking place there for mixed commercial uses and offices close to Watermead County Park and the canal.
- There is a trend now for larger industrial development to be located outside the villages. Hayhill Industrial Estate is a low but extensive group of 20th century industrial estate buildings screened by trees on the slopes between Barrow upon Soar and Sileby. The large and distinctively coloured British Gypsum works at Barrow upon Soar is prominent in the long distant views along and across the valley. The expansive Leicester Paper factory was built in the early 21st century on a river bluff at Rothley. It is set into the contours with landscaped mounding and native planting.
- The area has seen major sand and gravel extraction. Restoration following mineral workings has, in the past, reverted sites to low grade agricultural land or recreational usage, such as Watermead Country Park. More recently, quarrying companies have taken opportunities to work with nature conservation organisations to deliver extensive habitat creation projects.

7.51. Leisure & Recreation

- The landscape is intensively used for leisure and recreation with a wide range of provision for formal use.
- Sports and football grounds, often located or relocated on the outskirts of the villages, can be visually intrusive in the longer distance views. Those at Quorn, Barrow upon Soar and the Soar Valley Centre in Mountsorrel are particularly noticeable at night when their floodlights can be the source of high levels of light pollution.
- The cricket ground in Sileby has recently been extended into adjacent agricultural fields.
- Watermead Country Park is a popular location for public recreation in the south of the area and serves residents from north of

Leicester, Birstall, Syston and Thurmaston. Besides the wide network of surfaced footpaths and cycleways, there are provisions for sailing, boating and fishing.

- Fishing is a widespread recreational activity in the area, occurring all along the river/canal and at the many water bodies which have been created post sand and gravel extraction.
- There are many accessible areas and routes in the Soar Valley: definitive footpaths (including sections of the Midshires Way), the canal towing path, public parks and wildlife areas. National cycle route 6 is on roads on the western side of the valley and an increasing number of off-road routes are being made suitable for cyclists including the Sustrans bridges over the canal at Watermead and Wanlip.
- The Grand Union Canal with its bridges, canalside cottages, pubs, marinas, boatyards and locks and towing paths are a popular and accessible leisure attraction for boating, fishing and walking.
- The demand for water-based recreational activity and tourism has led to marinas, caravan parks, sailing and boating lakes. Some of these can be visually intrusive, viewed from a long distance, and clutter the landscape. Caravan parks, with their white caravans dotted on the rising valley sides away from flood water, are particularly visible across the floodplain.

7.52. **Communication**

- The valley has been a major transport corridor since Roman times and probably before. Through the years, improvements in communications have altered its character and the need to build on raised embankments to cope with the regular flooding of the valley has compounded the visual impact in the landscape.
- Roads have long been the principal means of communication in the Borough and the north-south route between Loughborough and Leicester along the west bank of the Soar became increasingly important from the medieval period onwards. The road was turnpiked in 1726, became the A6 and continued to be the major north-south route, passing through the villages of Quorn, Mountsorrel and Rothley, until the 1990s.
- The current A6 major road corridor, which bypasses the villages, was constructed in the early 1990s. It is built on embankments and stilts, and dominates the flat landscape in terms of visibility, traffic movement and noise. Although the A6 bypass has offered great relief to the villages in reducing the through traffic, it splits the valley down the middle and has created a major barrier across the landscape.
- Ancient green lanes cross the valley but have largely become redundant and now suffer from misuse such as fly-tipping. In particular Betty Henser's Lane at Mountsorrel has been severed by the A6 road construction.

- The River Soar was made navigable for commerce and industry from the Trent to Loughborough in 1778 and navigation was extended to Leicester in 1794. Historically the canalisation of the Soar was an important factor in the growth of Loughborough and other valley settlements. However, commercial traffic ceased in 1963 and the navigation is nowadays almost exclusively limited to recreation. The waterway is part of a through route in the inland network and attracts an ever-increasing number of pleasure craft.
- Bridges over the river and canal are a frequent feature of the landscape: besides the bridges at Loughborough Meadow Lane, Cotes, Barrow upon Soar, Mountsorrel and Cossington, a large number of smaller red brick bridges were constructed in the late eighteenth century when the Grand Union Canal was constructed.
- The Midland Mainline is a prominent feature in the Soar Valley landscape and in places is on embankments. The northern section of the Great Central Railway passes through the Soar Valley and terminates at Loughborough.
- High-tension electricity pylons run across the flat valley bottom for miles and are visually intrusive.

7.53. **Ecology**

- The area contains several large Sites of Special Scientific Interest and over 50 Local Wildlife Sites. The whole stretch of the River Soar within Charnwood has been notified as a Local Wildlife Site and functions as a major wildlife corridor across the landscape; it supports key species, such as the otter, and rare aquatic plants such as the grass-wracked pondweed.
- The river floodplain contains wetland habitats which are of great conservation value although they may appear unsightly. Ditches, old oxbows, small pockets of wet woodland, marshland and ponds sustain a wide range of declining plant and invertebrates species, many of which are highly localised in their distribution and vulnerable to changes in hydrology and management regime.
- The non-native invasive floating pennywort has spread along the River Soar within the Borough and beyond, and has been subject to control programmes by statutory agencies.
- In recent times, opportunities to deliver nature conservation objectives have arisen following sand and gravel extraction. The Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust now owns several nature reserves in the area.

7.54. **Heritage**

- The historic cores of Syston, Sileby, Rothley, Mountsorrel, Quorn and Hathern are all conservation areas, similarly the village core and canalside at Barrow upon Soar, and there are six conservation areas within Loughborough Town. Apart from listed buildings within these conservation areas many of the canalside mills,

cottages, bridges and locks are Grade II or locally listed. There are Ancient Monuments in this area: a mediaeval village at Cotes, and castle mound at Mountsorrel, remains of church and earthworks at Dishley Grange, and within the villages a cross at Hathern and the Butter Cross at Mountsorrel.

- There are parklands around Wanlip Hall and Quorn House, Quorn. A horse chestnut avenue to Quorn Hall on Meynell Road is now severed by the A6. There are remnants of an oak avenue marking the now disused carriage drive to Rothley Temple at Rothley.
- Medieval open field systems remain at Loughborough Meadow and Bishop Meadow. Loughborough Meadow is one of the few surviving examples of Lammas meadows, where the meadows were cut for hay after 15 June and animals allowed to graze the aftermath from 1 August (Lammas Day).
- Elsewhere in the Soar Valley, the enclosure field systems have often survived.
- Robert Bakewell, who was instrumental in 18th century livestock breeding, was based at Dishley Farm, between Loughborough and Hathern where much of this experimental breeding and land management took place.
- Sections of the River Soar were canalised in the late 18th century as the Leicester Navigation, later becoming part of the Grand Union Canal, linking London to the Trent and Mersey Canal. Although now a recreational waterway, characteristic canalside features can be seen in the locks, stone bridges, such as at Barrow upon Soar and Mountsorrel, and waterside pubs at Barrow upon Soar, Mountsorrel and Wanlip.
- Notable canalside buildings include Towles Mill in Loughborough, now converted to residential use, and Sileby Mill, now part of a marina and boatyard.
- Traditional narrow boats using the canal and marinas provide local interest to the Soar Valley landscape.

7.55. Boundaries & Hedges

- Most fields are small to medium size with a regular outline. Where arable production has replaced meadows and pastures, fields have been enlarged and are substantially larger (Cossington, Rothley and parts of Quorn).
- Boundaries and field pattern vary from very open areas devoid of hedgerows, typical of the old Lammas meadows, to smaller pastures defined by thorn hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees that are predominantly ash.
- Many hedgerows are now neglected, overgrown and no longer stock-proof.
- Ditches alongside boundary hedgerows or on open ground, are a feature of the landscape in the floodplain and form an essential element of the drainage system.

7.56. **Woodland & Trees**

- The area is sparsely wooded with only small pockets of wet woodland and a few remaining osier beds, probably remnants of a former commercial use.
- Pollarded willows reflect the traditional management practices, although the condition of some willows has deteriorated badly through neglect.

7.57. **Hydrology**

- The landscape is dominated by the slow-moving River Soar, which flows northwards through the floodplain from Leicester City to the River Trent.
- The River Wreake joins the flow of the River Soar at Junction Lock, near Syston.
- The river spills widely across the floodplain following heavy rainfall.
- The River Soar is navigable: sections are canalised and have been straightened in places but most of the river, including its bypassed backwaters, gently meanders across the landscape.
- A distinctive feature of the river valley 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, Barrow upon Soar, Mountsorrel, Thurmaston, and Birstall, leaving the River Soar to meander through the fields nearby in a parallel course, joining up into navigable sections.
- There are only ten locks between Birstall Lock at Birstall and Bishop Meadow Lock at Loughborough, a distance of over 25km (15 miles), due to having only a 15 metre (50ft) difference in height.
- Many streams and brooks flow across the floodplain bringing run-off from the Wolds and the hills of Charnwood Forest. Their banks are often tree lined.
- A system of ditches, old oxbows, marshes, fens, wet meadows, and field ponds form part of a network of wetland habitats which bring variety to the landscape and support biodiversity.
- There are many man-made water bodies of recent origin where gravel extraction has been restored as lakes, fishing ponds, marinas and wet wildlife areas.
- Watermead Country Park in the south of the Soar Valley is a water-based landscape of lakes, canal and river with fringes of wet woodland. It is a popular recreational destination.
- Other lakes in the Soar Valley include former brick pits and borrow pits.

7.58. **Buildings & Settlements**

- Active farmsteads within the valley have declined and are now few and dispersed. Some small farms are located within the villages of Sileby, and Mountsorrel.
- Villages are large and stretch along the higher ground either side of the valley. More recently, sprawling development has led some villages, such as Mountsorrel, tending to extend into the valley. Some three storey houses built at Mountsorrel within the last ten years are proving difficult to assimilate in the flood plain landscape.
- Planted earth bunds screen the recent housing of Mountsorrel and Rothley from the adjacent A6 and in views across the valley. However, close proximity of trees to housing causes concern to some residents, suggesting insufficient space has been provided.

The Landscape Strategy for the Soar Valley Landscape Character Area is to Conserve and Enhance

7.59. Strength Of Landscape Character

The river floodplain creates the recognisable character of the Soar Valley; a pastoral landscape of fields and wetlands with recreational facilities and areas to benefit wildlife. The valley slopes enclose it and add diversity with their variety of vegetation and land use of settlements and industry.

7.60. Landscape Condition

Although some areas are well managed, or being actively created or in the process of re-naturalising, many hedgerows are fragmented and some areas and waterside trees are neglected. Close to settlements some urbanising influences add to the air of neglect, and a balance between nature conservation, recreation, farming and urban pressures is needed.

The strength of landscape character is moderate and the landscape condition is moderate.

7.61. Landscape Strategy Matrix

Landscape Condition	Good	Moderate Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance	Good Conserve & Manage
	Moderate	Poor-Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Conserve & Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance
		Poor Restore & Create	Poor – Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Enhance
	Poor			
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
	Strength of Landscape Character			

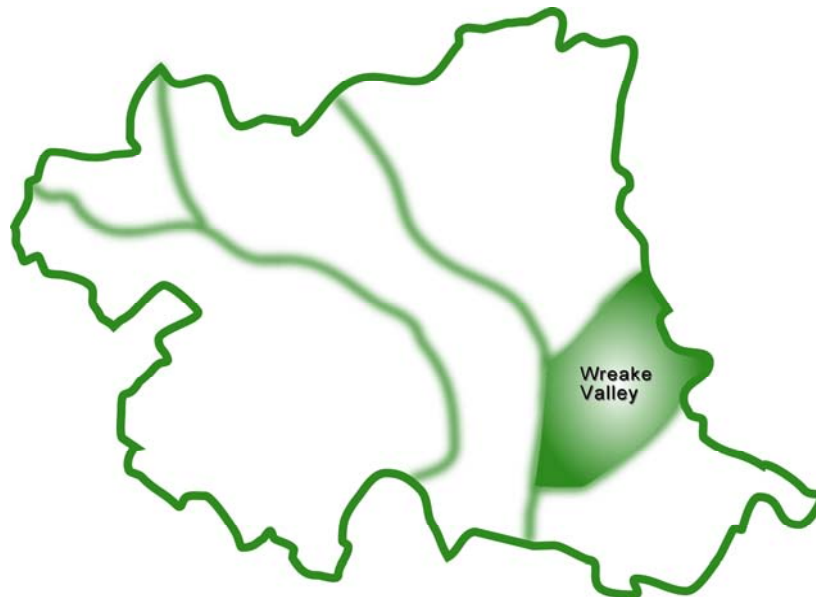
7.62. Guidelines For Soar Valley Landscape Character Area

To be read in conjunction with General Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the pastoral landscape of the floodplain
- Maintain the current balance between the urban and rural character of the Soar Valley
- Direct development away from prominent locations on the valley slopes. Any new built form on the valley slopes should be assimilated into its surroundings by careful scale, layout, siting, and design, and the use of materials and associated landscaping
- The restoration of sand and gravel extraction pits to provide opportunities to deliver recreation will be supported where landscape and biodiversity objectives can be achieved
- Encourage public access along the length and across the width of the river corridor where it is compatible with the tranquil and pastoral quality of the Soar Valley landscape
- Carefully manage new leisure developments and recreational facilities to minimise the impact on the landscape in terms of built development and infrastructure such as lighting
- Seek opportunities for natural water management storage within the floodplain particularly where this accords with the character of the Soar Valley and can also benefit biodiversity
- Conserve existing hedgerows and restore fragmented and poorly managed hedges. Encourage the planting of new hedgerows and hedgerow trees
- Promote the good management of trees such as the pollarding of riverside willows and replace aging trees for the next generation of trees to provide continuity of habitat resource
- Remove conifers that are incongruous in the waterside landscape
- Preference will be given to the use of tree and shrub species locally native to the Soar Valley landscape area in planting schemes
- Where safely allows, retain dead wood for invertebrates
- Seek opportunities for the creation and enhancement of the following habitat types, particularly where they strengthen the floodplain character of the Soar Valley landscape:
 - All wetland habitats (wet woodland, marsh, fen, ponds, shallow scrapes, etc)
 - Riverside trees
 - Hedgerows.



WREAKE VALLEY WREAKE VALLEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA



7.63. Key Characteristics

- River Wreake meanders in a flat bottomed river valley with gently sloping sides. The valley experiences flooding
- Rural character to east of Broome Lane, East Goscote
- Leicester City and Syston have an urbanising influences in the west
- Limited valley crossings, with the A46 and A607 roads on engineered embankments
- Area of mixed arable and pasture farming
- Some neglected and lost hedgerows and hedgerow trees
- Restored mineral workings
- Settlements are on the valley slopes, with churches marking villages
- Main settlements are Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Thrussington, Rearsby, East Goscote, Queniborough and Syston.

7.64. General Description

The River Wreake lies in a broad valley of two contrasting parts: the area east of Broome Lane, East Goscote has a rural quality, and the area to the west, where the Wreake joins the Soar, is affected by the urban influences of Syston and Leicester with their significant industry, housing and engineered roads.

The eastern area is still predominately rural in character retaining a remote countryside appearance and agricultural character. Settlements are sited on the gravel terraces on either side of the valley. The A46 and A607 are mostly elevated on embankments in

the floodplain. The Rearsby by-pass is a busy element on the southern fringe, but it has removed through traffic from the village roads and has created a more peaceful feel to Rearsby and East Goscote.

The Wreake Valley has a network of wetland habitats. Much of the western area has been worked for sand and gravels and subsequently restored, and is now returning to grazing or recreational use with lakes, ponds and a golf course in well wooded settings created by naturalisation and landscaping.

7.65. **Geology**

- The majority of the valley floor is alluvium with river gravel terraces and superficial deposits of sands and gravels. On the rising ground a thick covering of boulder clay overlies the Keuper Marl bedrock.

7.66. **Topography**

- The landscape is dominated by the slow-moving River Wreake, which flows eastwards along a flat valley bottom with gently sloping sides.

7.67. **Land Use**

- The eastern area is predominately farmed. The western area contains the larger settlements, industrial areas, and gravel workings. The working of the sands and gravels has had a significant effect upon the present day landscape, with some past workings now restored for agriculture or recreation.

7.68. **Farming**

- The more rural eastern area is characterised by mixed agriculture.
- Intensification of agriculture in the latter part of the 20th century has caused a loss of hedgerows due to field enlargement and in the last twenty years there has been a change from grassland management to the production of arable crops.
- Pastures are predominantly cattle grazed. However some conversion to horse paddocks has extended across the area, e.g. along Ratcliffe Road between Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake and Thrussington.
- A number of horticultural nurseries were established in the later part of the twentieth century near East Goscote and Syston. Although some smaller nurseries have recently been redeveloped for housing or horse grazing, there has been expansion of tree and shrub growing nurseries between Syston and Queniborough.

- Following mineral extraction at Syston the restored agricultural grazing land has an open parkland quality due to its large fields and lack of hedges.

7.69. **Industry**

- Syston and the surrounding area has a long tradition of manufacturing. Recent times have seen a decline in traditional industries of textiles and boot and shoe production and associated machinery manufacture. Some older industrial sites within the town have been redeveloped for housing.
- Currently the major industries of the area are distribution warehouses, engineering workshops and food manufacturing. There are a number of headquarter offices for local businesses, such as textiles and aggregates.
- More recent large industrial estates have tended to be concentrated either on the outskirts of the settlements, such as western Syston, south-west of Queniborough, and west of East Goscote, or some distance away, for instance on the former airfield to the south-east of Rearsby. The industrial buildings and associated areas are often very prominent in the valley landscape.

7.70. **Leisure & Recreation**

- The area includes formal recreational facilities following sand and gravel extraction in the floodplain:
 - private fishing lakes
 - a sailing club located north of Syston
 - a golf course at East Goscote, between the railway line and the A46.
- The Leicestershire Round footpath skirts the village of Ratcliffe on the Wreake, crosses Rearsby and joins the Midshires Way to the east beyond the Borough boundary to the south of Hoby.
- The quiet country lanes of the north and east are used for horse riding.
- There are proposals to re-open the River Wreake to navigation.

7.71. **Communication**

- A network of late 20th century roads has been constructed to link the major A6, A46 (Fosse Way) and urban centres and to bypass the villages in the valley. The roads, which are constructed on embankments above the floodplain, are highly intrusive on the flat landscape, particularly as the tree screening has yet to mature.
- A railway line between Syston and Melton runs parallel to the valley floor, with vehicle crossings at East Goscote and Rearsby, and pedestrian crossings in East Goscote and Syston. The lines connect at Syston Triangle where they are on embankments with mature trees, which screen parts of the settlement from the west.

- Two minor roads run on the river terraces parallel to the River Wreake through the villages; Melton Road along the southern edge of the valley through East Goscote and Rearsby, with the northern road passing through Ratcliffe on the Wreake and Thrussington.
- There are a few cross-links connecting the villages across the valley. These roads can become flooded. A long-established raised causeway runs by the side of the road between Rearsby and Thrussington to allow pedestrian access at times of flooding. Broome Lane from East Goscote to Ratcliffe on the Wreake has an engineered alignment.
- Overhead power lines coincide with the Borough boundary at Thrussington.

7.72. Ecology

- There are ten Local Wildlife Sites in the area, including a stretch of the River Wreake within the Borough. The River Wreake also functions as the major wildlife corridor across the area, forming a link with the Soar Valley landscape character area. Its tributaries provide local habitat connectivity.
- Key habitats are wet woodlands, marshes, ponds and hedgerows.
- Key species include the brown long eared bat, common pipistrelle bat, noctule bat, grass snake, great crested newt and barn owl. Important maternity bat roosts have been recorded in the area and bats are thought to use the river corridor as a feeding ground and commuting route.
- The otter returned to the River Wreake in the late 1990s.

7.73. Heritage

- The historic cores of Syston, Queniborough, Rearsby, Ratcliffe on the Wreake and Thrussington are conservation areas with many listed buildings. Notable amongst these are Queniborough Old Hall, and Queniborough Hall and, outside the villages, Rearsby Mill, Wreake House and Priory Farmhouses are listed. The packhorse bridge in Rearsby is an Ancient Monument, as are the earthworks of a mediaeval grange north of Thrussington.
- The River Wreake, the major tributary of the River Soar, was made navigable to Melton Mowbray in the 1790s with the navigation eventually extended to Oakham. It closed in 1877 and its route remains marked by converted canalside mill buildings, and the remains of disused wharfs and locks. Isolated in a field by the river at Ratcliffe on the Wreake is an old building known as “the boathouse”.
- Churches and their towers and spires often draw the view towards the villages from some distance across the landscape. The church at Ratcliffe on the Wreake is located on high ground and can clearly be seen from East Goscote.

- The church spire in Queniborough, at 49m (162 ft), is the second highest in Leicestershire and is clearly visible from the surrounding countryside.
- Traces of parkland remain around Ratcliffe Hall, Queniborough Old Hall and Queniborough Hall.

7.74. **Boundaries & Hedges**

- Some smaller hedged fields with ridge and furrow are evident on rising ground near Thrussington and Queniborough. These contrast with the larger fields of later dates; the regular shaped fields of parliamentary enclosure, fields enlarged in the twentieth century by hedgerow removal for arable production, and more recently, the large fields created for agricultural restoration following gravel extraction.
- Generally, cattle grazed pastures are enclosed by hedgerows with mature trees. Hedges are often in a poor state of management and where no longer stock-proof are frequently supplemented by wire fences.
- Fields under arable production tend to be productive, large to very large and regular in shape.
- Where arable production is more dominant, many hedgerows have been removed and field boundaries are characterised by mechanically trimmed, very low, sometimes gappy, hedgerows.
- Where equestrian uses have become established, fields tend to be subdivided into smaller paddocks by timber post and rail fencing which interrupts the sweep of the pastoral landscape.

7.75. **Woodland & Trees**

- Woodland is a minor component of the landscape, consisting mainly of small areas of semi-natural broad-leaved wet woodland dotted along the River Wreake. Ash, common alder, crack willow, white willow and goat willow are the dominant trees. The ground flora is species-poor and typical of this wet-woodland habitat.
- Riverside willow and ash trees grow along the river banks; mature willow pollards are frequent, although some are deteriorating through lack of regular management.
- Occasional trees are present where hedgerows remain in association with pastures. Ash tends to be the most abundant tree but, close to the watercourses, willow species and common alder dominate.
- .At Rearsby, mature trees in extensive grounds of Westfield and the Convent (Church Leys) create a distinctive approach to both south and north entrances of the village.
- Immediately to the east of the Borough boundary, there are views of Brooksby College in its treed parkland landscape.

7.76. Hydrology

- The valley is dominated by the east-west flowing River Wreake that joins the River Soar at Junction Lock, just north of Syston. The river and its tributaries are in the floodplain and are susceptible to flooding.
- The river is associated with a network of wetland habitats with a system of ditches, old oxbows and backwaters, marshes, fens, wet meadows, and small areas of wet woodland.
- The Gaddesby Brook, which meanders across the widest part of the flood plain, is the most visible of the several tributaries to the River Wreake.
- Nutrient enrichment through agricultural run-off can impact on the water quality of the river and minor watercourses. Stretches of the river can be choked with an abundance of aquatic vegetation.
- South of East Goscote the area has been intensively worked for sand and gravel extraction. Flooded gravel pits remain and provide water features for recreation, such as sailing and angling, and can be valuable for biodiversity.

7.77. Buildings & Settlements

- The area comprises two distinctive and contrasting parts:
 - East of Broome Lane, East Goscote, the area has a rural character, with small, nucleated villages often located on higher ground on valley sides with views across the landscape (e.g. Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake, Thrussington and Rearsby).
 - The town of Syston, the suburban development of East Goscote and large village of Queniborough dominate the western part where the flat valley floodplain of the Wreake merges into the Soar Valley.
- Villages are generally of nucleated form. Village edges with red brick dwellings often blend well in the landscape. However, the demarcation is harsher where buildings have been refurbished with white window frames or white rendered walls.
- Often the use of standardised materials in newer housing can present a harsh appearance at the countryside edge, such as at Syston and East Goscote.
- Farm buildings are either dispersed or located within the small villages. These traditional buildings have red brick walls with clay tile or slate roofs. Auxiliary farm buildings can be large with tall silos highly prominent in the landscape (e.g. Manor Farm in Thrussington).
- Where agricultural use has switched to horse grazed pastures, timber stables have become common features in the fields.

Landscape Strategy for the Wreake Valley Landscape Character Area is to Conserve and Enhance

7.78. Strength of Landscape Character

Around the larger settlements of the western part of the Wreake Valley there is an urbanising influence and greater variety in land use and tree cover. The recreational uses and naturalising landscape of restored gravel workings also provides a contrast to the pastoral countryside. However, in general and particularly in the eastern valley there is a distinct well defined strong tranquil and rural character of the river valley landscape contained by the surrounding landform of rising slopes.

7.79. Landscape Condition

There is fragmentation of landscape features around the larger western settlements although planting around the restored gravel workings is now establishing and creating new cohesive, localised features. Although without substantial woods, there is a feeling of being in a well treed landscape, created by the hedgerow trees, waterside copses and tree fringed river. Neglect of some hedgerows and lack of management of waterside trees is leading to fragmentation and potential loss.

Overall the strength of landscape character is considered moderate and the landscape condition is moderate.

7.80. Landscape Strategy Matrix

Landscape Condition	Good	Moderate Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance	Good Conserve & Manage
	Moderate	Poor-Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Conserve & Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance
	Poor	Poor Restore & Create	Poor – Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Enhance
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of Landscape Character				

7.81. Guidelines For Wreake Valley Landscape Character Area

To be read in conjunction with General Guidelines.

- Conserve and enhance the tranquil and self-contained character of the rural part of the Wreake Valley with its well-treed landscape and relaxed management regime of hedges and roadside verges. Seek to include tree planting and small woodlands in and around any new development
- New development should preserve the open character of the Wreake valley, and have regard for the views across the valley
- Enhance the Wreake Valley landscape character around the fringes of the existing larger settlements by increasing tree cover
- Seek to mitigate the harsh urban edge of East Goscote
- Support the restoration of sand and gravel extraction pits to provide opportunities to deliver recreation where landscape and biodiversity objectives can be achieved
- Seek opportunities for natural water management storage within the floodplain particularly where this can benefit biodiversity
- Conserve the integrity of features of historic interest typical of the Wreake Valley such as the packhorse bridge at and the causeway to Rearsby, the boathouse at Ratcliffe on the Wreake and retain views of the village churches. Protect the setting of these features in the landscape
- Encourage the conservation and management of meadows and waterside pastures
- Preference will be given to the use of tree and shrub species locally native to the Wreake Valley character area in planting schemes
- Where safety allows retain dead wood to benefit invertebrates
- Seek to increase wet woodlands through natural colonisation and the use of local origin stock
- Seek opportunities for the creation and enhancement of the following habitat types typical of the Wreake Valley:
 - All wetland habitats (wet woodland, marsh, fen, ponds, shallow scrapes, etc.)
 - Riverside trees
 - Hedgerows and hedgerow trees.



THE WOLDS

THE WOLDS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA



7.82. Key Characteristics

- Large scale rolling landscape with exposed ridges
- Open countryside with mixed farming
- Sheltered valleys
- Extensive views from ridgeline roads
- Tranquil remote atmosphere of the eastern area
- New housing at the east of Barrow upon Soar and Sileby is extending the influence of these Soar Valley villages into the Wolds.
- Low woodland cover
- Wide grass verges to minor roads
- Prestwold Hall: Grade II Historic Park and Garden
- Villages largely contained within the landscape setting (Wymeswold, Hoton, Burton on the Wolds, Walton on the Wolds, Seagrave).

7.83. General Description

The Wolds is an elevated gently rolling countryside of mixed farmland with small villages and isolated farms scattered across the landscape. There are long reaching views from the straight roads that run between villages on the crests of ridges. Changes in agriculture have led the conversion of old grassland fields to arable crops. This has caused substantial impact on the landscape, resulting in a loss of ridge and furrow, disruption of the field pattern by field enlargement and loss of hedgerows, the reduced management of the traditional

wide grassy roadside verges and infilling of field ponds. The lack of woodland and tree cover and the neglect or severe pruning of hedgerows reinforces the landscape's expansive quality.

7.84. **Geology**

- The bedrock of The Wolds is Jurassic clays, mudstones and limestones overlain with thick boulder clay. This forms the broad dome from which radiate stream valleys with clay floors and marlstone slopes.

7.85. **Topography**

- Gently rolling landscape with exposed ridge tops and small sheltered narrow valleys. The area rises to a broad dome in the east with the stream valleys radiating to the Soar Valley in the west and to the Wreake Valley to the south.

7.86. **Land Use**

- This area is predominately productive mixed farming, with some agricultural diversification. There are some scattered industrial and warehouse buildings and offices in the countryside, and increasingly the area is being used for recreation. Underground mining for gypsum takes place in the Wolds. Near Prestwold a natural burial site is gradually establishing as woodland.

7.87. **Farming**

- This is an area of mixed agriculture, predominantly under arable cultivation on the ridges and pasture in the valleys. The grassland is either grazed by cattle or sheep, although recent times have seen an increase in horse grazing. Very few fields still retain old ponds which were once valuable to water stock.
- A very small proportion of meadows are still managed as hay meadows, but the majority have been agriculturally improved for silage production.
- There has been a local expansion of agro-industrial poultry and egg production with the construction of large sheds and highway accesses. These can be highly visible in the landscape whilst its associated planting of trees and shrubs are establishing.

7.88. **Industry**

- Industry is a minor component of the area but there is an isolated concentration of businesses at the Wymeswold Industrial Estate and at the nearby former Hawker Siddeley Works at Burton on the Wolds.

- Gypsum mining takes place underground and is not visible in views within the Wolds. However, it generates road transport and the access road at Paudy Lane has an urban character.

7.89. **Leisure & Recreation**

- There are several organised facilities for recreation in the area: a golf course and driving range at Seagrave, man-made fishing lakes in Wymeswold and Walton on the Wolds and a range of other recreational pursuits, such as karting and motor sports at Prestwold Hall and Wymeswold airfield.
- These activities can affect the tranquillity of the area with noise and intrusive lights, particularly the floodlights of the driving range, which are visible over large distances in the otherwise generally dark night-time view of the Wolds across the Soar Valley. Landscape mounding and tree planting cannot always ameliorate the impact of these, particularly in the short term whilst planting establishes.
- There is an extensive network of public footpaths and bridleways, particularly in the east and radiating from settlements.
- The school playing fields and recreation grounds of Burton on the Wolds, Wymeswold and Seagrave lie outside the village envelope and contrast with the grazing fields alongside due to differing management, car parking and buildings.

7.90. **Communication**

- The A46 is the most prominent man-made feature of the character area and runs in a straight line over the top of the Wolds, following the old Roman Fosse Way, at the eastern edge of the Borough of Charnwood. It is highly intrusive in the surrounding countryside, both visually and from the noise it generates.
- The other major road across the area is the A60 which passes through Cotes and Hoton and disturbs landscape tranquillity locally.
- Other roads, such as the A6006 and B676 which cut across the landscape linking Loughborough/M1 to the A46, also tend to run in straight lines, often at the top of ridges, and carry a substantial volume of traffic. Quieter lesser roads and lanes link the villages or the major road network.
- The major gypsum works on the fringe of the area generates a large volume of heavy lorry traffic across the area along Paudy Lane to the A46.
- Many roads have traditional wide grassland verges, which are commonly assumed to have provided space for droving sheep and other livestock. Some appear neglected now they no longer perform this role, and are scrubbing over. In other areas the wide grassy verges are a distinctive feature contributing to the expansive character of the Wolds.

- In the last five years some single wind turbines have been erected in the northern Wolds and are a feature on the horizon.

7.91. **Ecology**

- There is one Site of Special Scientific Interest at Twenty Acre Piece and about thirty Local Wildlife Sites in the area. General agricultural intensification has led to a high level of habitat fragmentation and isolation within a biodiversity-impoverished landscape. The last remaining complex of old unimproved grassland fields at Burton on the Wolds was lost to arable farming as recently as 2008.
- Key habitats now mainly encompass hedgerows, and mature trees, whilst a few relict field ponds, lowland meadows and mixed deciduous woodland still remain. Small watercourses - tributaries to the River Soar - constitute the main wildlife corridors across the landscape.
- Key species include those traditionally associated with farmland, such as bats, great crested newt, brown hare, barn owl and skylark. The water vole has been recorded along the River Mantle in Wymeswold, one of the few locations where it is still present in the Borough.
- Where no management is taking place, the wide grassland roadside verges typical of the Wolds are invaded by scrub through the process of natural succession, reducing their previous floristic diversity.

7.92. **Heritage**

- The whole of the villages of Seagrave and Walton on the Wolds are conservation areas, as are most of Hoton and the older core of Wymeswold. Notable listed buildings are Ratcliffe College, Prestwold Hall and many of its estate buildings, Quorn Park (previously the Quorn Hunt Kennels) and some older isolated farmhouses such as Burton Bandalls Farm and Quebec House.
- Towers of the village churches in the Wolds are locally visible.
- Prestwold Hall sits in extensive wooded parkland and is partly enclosed by brick estate walls. The Grade II Historic Park and Garden extend to about 80 hectares. It is one of three historic parks and gardens located in the Borough which are included on the national register compiled by English Heritage.
- This area was traditionally famed for the Quorn Hunt, and its evidence remains in the small fox and game coverts dotted across the landscape. In the 1990s its kennel complex on Paudy Lane, Barrow upon Soar was converted to residential use.
- Some small and medium-sized field patterns have survived, generally close to villages. However, large tracts of land have seen substantial field enlargement, mainly as a result of the

intensification of arable agriculture. Large fields are found at Hoton, Prestwold, parts of Wymeswold and Seagrave.

- Only a few grassland fields have retained a distinctive ridge and furrow pattern, a legacy from medieval times, for instance in Wymeswold and Walton on the Wolds. There are traces of other earthworks in fields at Wymeswold and Seagrave.
- Fields east of Barrow upon Soar and Sileby show evidence of lime working and lime kilns.
- The airfield at Wymeswold dates from World War II, and continued to be active until 1970, after which the associated buildings converted to industrial and recreational uses.

7.93. **Boundaries & Hedges**

- The fields often have a medium to large, regular, geometric shape.
- Field boundaries are almost exclusively hedgerows, consisting predominantly of hawthorn, many of which are an integral part of a field system pre-dating the Inclosure Acts (under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 this is taken to mean before 1845).
- There has, however, been a marked loss of hedgerows to create large-sized fields geared to arable production, particularly in some areas of Prestwold, Hoton and Wymeswold. Hedgerows associated with arable fields tend to be managed at a much reduced height and often lack hedgerow trees. Where mature trees are still present, shallow rooted species, such as ash, frequently show acute signs of die-back, possibly due to cultivation close to boundaries.
- Elsewhere, on pastures, there is still a strong presence of hedgerows with mature trees, mainly ash and to a lesser extent pedunculate oak. Mostly these hedgerows are mechanically trimmed, though not so intensively as with arable fields. Others are free growing, but very few are still laid in the traditional manner.
- Some neglect occurs and gaps are evident in places in hedges around both pasture and arable fields.

7.94. **Woodland & Trees**

- The area has low woodland cover. Small fox and game coverts are dotted across the landscape and there are trees along most watercourses.
- Spinneys and coverts often comprise mixed deciduous tree species of native ash and pedunculate oak with some non-natives, such as sycamore. They are even-aged plantations, usually with regular geometric outlines, in prominent locations but rather isolated within the landscape.
- Larger woodland plantations enclose the parkland of Prestwold Hall.

7.95. **Hydrology**

- Small watercourses, such as the River Mantle/King's Brook, Walton Brook and Fishpool Brook, flow through the landscape draining the dome eastwards to the Soar and southwards to the Wreake valleys. They are often fringed by narrow belts of woodland or willow pollards. They tend to receive high level of silt and nutrients from water run off from adjacent fields.
- Old field ponds now form a lesser component of the landscape. Several larger water bodies in Wymeswold and Walton on the Wolds have been created in the last twenty years for recreational angling and have altered the local landscape.

7.96. **Buildings & Settlements**

- The area is essentially rural in character with small to medium-sized villages dispersed across the landscape and individual isolated farmsteads. The villages appear to form a ring about 3 miles from the centre at the Six Hills/Fosse Way junction, and are nestled within valleys around the 75m contour.
- The village envelopes have remained fairly unchanged in size with limited expansion since the 1960s. However, even relatively small-scale development can have a significant impact on villages. There have been additions on the fringes of Wymeswold and Burton on the Wolds in the last few years, and these new dwellings, particularly those on higher valley slopes currently with little tree cover, are visible in the long distance views.
- The red brick Victorian Quorn Hunt kennels have been converted and enlarged to create a residential group in the countryside in a treed setting.
- Traditional farm buildings, sometimes rendered, but often of red brick walls with clay tile, pantile or slate roofs, are still prevalent and often blend fairly well in the landscape.
- Modern farm buildings generally have metal or timber cladding with corrugated roofs. The colour of the materials used can sometimes make them highly visible from a long distance.
- Some parts of the landscape have been disturbed by buildings and other works associated with recent leisure activities such as the Lakeside fishing lakes at Wymeswold, Seagrave Golf Club, and the Dogs Trust re-homing centre at Wide Lane, Wymeswold.

Landscape Strategy for the Wolds Landscape Character Area is to Conserve and Enhance

7.97. Strength of Landscape Character

The elevated landform of the Wolds dominates the landscape character with its large agricultural fields with hedgerows and some isolated woodland. The area has a remote atmosphere with few isolated settlements, and although older settlements are generally well shielded by landform, views of more recent developments on the rising valley slopes create a discordant element, as do recent large agricultural and other buildings whilst their associated landscaping is establishing. Views of recreation facilities and sports fields on village approaches affect the unity of the agricultural landscape.

7.98. Landscape Condition

Although many landscape features are well managed, the general landscape condition is affected by agricultural intensification. This coupled with poor management of and neglect or loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees reduces the landscape condition to moderate. Local scrubbing over of some wide grassy verges to the country roads near Seagrave and dilapidation of the brick Prestwold estate wall at Burton on the Wolds gives concern that these locally historic features of the Wolds could become lost.

The strength of landscape character is considered moderate and the landscape condition is moderate.

7.99. Landscape Strategy Matrix

Landscape Condition	Good	Moderate Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance	Good Conserve & Manage
	Moderate	Poor-Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Conserve & Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance
		Poor Restore & Create	Poor – Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Enhance
	Poor	Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of Landscape Character				

7.100. Guidelines For Wolds Landscape Character Area

To be read in conjunction with General Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the rural character of the rolling Wolds landscape
- Conserve long distance views across the landscape, particularly of the crest of ridges
- Focus built development within valleys and lower slopes to avoid breaking of horizon lines
- Carefully manage development in prominent locations to minimise the impact on the open rolling landscape character of the Wolds
- Encourage the conservation of the historical landscape features in particular the field pattern, coverts and spinneys, wide grassy verges alongside some minor roads, field and roadside hedges and ridge and furrow
- Protect the setting and roadside glimpses of Prestwold Hall and church
- Conserve and manage the existing woodlands that help assimilate the British Gypsum works and Wymeswold Industrial Park and Airfield into the landscape
- Retain the level of existing woodland cover by encouraging good management practices and the replacement of aging plantations with native woodland
- Enhance tree cover by encouraging the planting of trees within field hedgerows
- Take opportunities to increase tree cover around farmsteads, large farm buildings and rural dwellings to provide shelter and assimilate into the rolling landform
- Strengthen the distinctive rural character of the Wolds by encouraging the removal of particularly tall non-native trees from prominent locations in the open countryside, and replacing with native trees where possible
- Preference will be given to the use of trees and shrubs that are locally native to the Wolds character area in planting schemes
- Reverse the isolation of remaining field ponds by seeking to retain and enhance old ponds and create new ponds, and connect these to the habitat network
- Strengthen the function of small watercourses as wildlife corridors across the landscape
- Secure opportunities for the creation and enhancement of the following habitat types, especially where they can improve connectivity:
 - Ponds
 - Flower-rich grasslands
 - Hedgerows and hedgerow trees to grow on as standards
 - Small woodland planting.



LANGLEY LOWLANDS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA LANGLEY LOWLANDS



7.101. Key Characteristics

- Rolling landform with gentle slopes
- Large arable fields
- Low hedges with few hedgerow trees
- Open views from ridgeline roads, (Oakley Road/Tickow Lane, Hathern/Shepshed Road) and the M1 Motorway
- Wooded fringes to streams in broad valleys
- Garendon Park: Grade II Historic Park and Garden
- M1 motorway divides the area
- Settlements are the western areas of Loughborough and northern Shepshed.

7.102. General Description

Only a small part of the Langley Lowlands landscape character area lies in Charnwood Borough, and it has some local variations to the Langley Lowlands landscape character as described in Leicestershire Landscape and Woodland Strategy. Being on the cusp of three landscape character areas, the Langley Lowlands in Charnwood Borough show transitional features of its neighbours - the Soar Valley to its east, Charnwood Forest to its south and those of the Melbourne Parklands national landscape character area to its north and west.

The landform is rolling with gentle slopes and broad valleys in intensive arable cultivation with wooded fringes. Garendon Park is within this area. The principal settlement of Shepshed dominates this relatively small landscape character area with other smaller villages located outside Charnwood Borough boundary.

7.103. **Geology**

- The bedrock is Keuper marl and sandstones, overlain with boulder clays on the higher land and alluvium over the brook valleys. Shepshed is built partially on a sand and gravel river terrace.

7.104. **Topography**

The area is characterised by rolling landform with gentle slopes and the broad valleys of small watercourses.

7.105. **Land Use**

- This area is predominately farmed, with small areas of woodland. The M1 motorway splits the area. The eastern and southern fringes of Langley Lowlands are transition zones to the towns of Loughborough and Shepshed. Shepshed's industrial buildings and estates are located between the A512 and the disused railway line. The historic parkland of Garendon Park with its woodland tree belts and prominent garden buildings are a particular feature on the approach to Loughborough.

7.106. **Farming**

- Most of the land is in intensive agricultural use, principally arable with large to very large fields. There is a minor element of horse-grazed paddocks and hay meadows.
- Farm buildings are grouped, with these groups scattered across the landscape. The traditional farmsteads often have grey rendered walls and roofs of concrete tiles. Frequently the farmyards have been enlarged by substantial modern barns with metal cladding and corrugated roofs.

7.107. **Industry**

- Shepshed has been associated with textile manufacture since monastic times. In the later part of the twentieth century this has declined, and some factory sites within the town have been redeveloped, mainly for housing.
- There is a variety of industrial distribution and storage warehouses and factories on industrial estates alongside the A512 at Shepshed. These are generally integrated by woodland and tree planting alongside the roads and the disused railway line.
- Outside the urban limits of Shepshed there is little evidence of industry other than civic amenity sites and a sewage works. Their lights and fencing are locally intrusive in the countryside setting. There are long distance views of the tall cooling towers at

Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station and the clouds of steam are a common feature in the sky.

7.108. **Leisure & Recreation**

- Shepshed Town Football Club grounds are contained within the settlement envelope, although the playing fields of Shepshed schools abut the motorway. The motorway corridor tree planting provides a fringe and mature hedges divide and surround the pitches. Outside the settlements there are no formal recreation facilities.
- A network of footpaths and lanes offers opportunities for informal recreation. Butthole Lane provides a well used short-cut route between Shepshed and Loughborough, and is part of the National Cycle Network Route 6 which continues through Shepshed to Belton.

7.109. **Communication**

- The presence of the M1 motorway has greatly affected the area, splitting it through the middle, cutting across the western corner of Garendon Park, eroding Piper Wood Ancient Woodland (outside the Borough boundary) and creating a permanent barrier across the landscape. The M1 is locally highly intrusive both visually and through the constant traffic noise it generates. Tall light columns over the motorway are visible even when the motorway itself is screened by bunds or trees; they create a substantial level of light pollution at night time.
- The remaining rural road network consists of straight minor roads linking Shepshed with neighbouring villages to the north and west.
- The redundant Charnwood Forest Railway, which linked Loughborough with the west of the county, skirts the southern boundary of the area. Its countryside sections are marked by trees.
- A network of high-voltage electricity pylons runs across this landscape area.
- Air traffic of the East Midlands Airport is evident on the skyline to the north.

7.110. **Ecology**

- The area contains ten non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites, principally the Black Brook, small water meadows, roadside verges and The Hermitage. The Grace Dieu Brook, which forms the northern Borough boundary, is highly likely to qualify as a Local Wildlife Site.
- Located just outside the Borough, Piper Wood and Oakley Wood are both listed on Natural England's Inventory of Ancient

Woodland. Oakley Wood is also a statutory Site of Special Scientific Interest.

- Ancient woodlands and semi-natural woodlands adjoining this character area and plantation woodlands within form part of the biodiversity network. Although the major ancient woodlands are somewhat isolated, the plantation woodlands associated with Garendon Park and the de Lisle Estate are mostly well connected across the landscape.
- 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 the Soar Valley.
- Key species include the white-clawed crayfish, otter, noctule bat, pipistrelle bat and barn owl.

7.111. Heritage

- The historic core of Shepshed is a conservation area and contains a number of listed buildings, including St Botolph's church. There are limited local glimpses of the church tower.
- 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. 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. 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 Stonebow bridge over the Black Brook. Possibly of mediaeval date, this bridge is on the route to Dishley Grange which was a grange farm of Garendon Abbey. Garendon Park grounds were landscaped from the 18th century onwards and elements such as small woodlands, treed avenues, man-made lake and reed bed survive to this day, whilst the granite wall is a remnant of a much larger deer park of earlier date. All these features give Garendon a distinctive parkland character, despite much of the land being currently arable.
- Woodlands surround most of Garendon Park, separating it from the nearby modern housing of western Loughborough.
- Church spires from neighbouring villages of Belton and Long Whatton are visible from some distance across the rolling landscape.

7.112. Boundaries & Hedges

- Where the land is under arable cultivation, there are few hedgerows and they are generally trimmed to a low level. There are very few mature hedgerow trees, particularly to the east of the

motorway and on the higher land north-west of Shepshed. Where hedgerows are less intensively managed, some mature ash and oak trees are retained. Large open arable fields are, in some cases, partly bounded by woodland rather than hedgerows.

7.113. Woodland & Trees

- Although much of the arable farmland has few large hedgerow trees, the area gains a more wooded character by its proximity to woodlands outside the character area and Borough boundary. Nearby woodlands in the Charnwood Forest landscape character area (Blackbrook and Hookhill and White Horse Woods) and Piper Wood and Oakley Wood, just beyond the Borough boundary to the north, are prominent features in the view and create a substantial backdrop of trees. Piper Wood has been fragmented by Ashby Road and the M1 motorway.
- Large sections of the Grace Dieu Brook and Black Brook, and to a lesser extent, the Oxley Gutter, form the principal wooded corridors across the landscape, although some sections are very open. Trees associated with these watercourses are predominantly willows and common alder with some ash.
- The south-east of the area is seen as a well wooded landscape with mature plantation woodlands, shelter belts and treed avenues of the existing and former de Lisle Estate. The Hermitage, Home Covert, Shepherd's Hill at Garendon Park, together with Hathern Drive, Bailey's Plantation, Gorse Covert and Booth Wood form an extensive and well connected woodland scene in an otherwise arable landscape.
- Garendon Park comprises well-ordered lime avenues and specimen trees at The Hermitage, including non-native trees and conifers, which convey a formal parkland setting.
- A particular local feature is the avenue of alternating oak and conifers on the ridgeline with the Temple of Venus of Garendon Park.
- Trees now mark the route of the redundant Charnwood Forest railway.

7.114. Hydrology

- The minor watercourses of the Black Brook and Grace Dieu Brook, which form the Borough boundary, meander across the landscape flowing east to the River Soar. Water runoff from the adjacent intensively managed agricultural land is a source of nutrient enrichment which affects water quality.
- There are very few ponds remaining in the landscape, a likely legacy of the extensive conversion of the farmland to arable production. A man-made lake and reed bed form part of the landscaped grounds of Garendon Park at The Hermitage.

7.115. **Buildings & Settlements**

- The main settlement is Shepshed. The neighbouring villages of Belton and Long Whatton lie within the landscape character area but just outside the Borough boundary.
- The open and rolling nature of the landscape means that buildings can be highly visible from some viewpoints.
- The edge of Shepshed has a well defined linear demarcation along Tickow Lane and Oakley Road. Recent development off Tickow Lane has been screened from view through the retention of the mature hedgerow and trees along the lane. However, views of north Shepshed are visible from the surrounding rolling countryside, from Hallamford Road and Ashby Road just outside the Borough boundary.
- Linear tree screens define and screen the eastern built edge of Shepshed from the M1.
- Some taller late-twentieth century houses on the high land of west Loughborough are visible, although they are fairly well screened by existing small mature woodlands and tree belts.

Landscape Strategy for the Langley Lowlands Landscape Character Area is to Conserve and Enhance

7.116. Strength of Landscape Character

The combination of rolling valley slopes of the Grace Dieu and Blackbrook watercourses with mature woodlands and wooded fringes of streams and new and old transport corridors, hedged large, mainly arable fields gives a varied and distinct landscape character. The visual unity is distracted by glimpses of the town of Shepshed, the electricity pylons and M1 motorway. Most of the Langley Lowlands landscape character area within the Borough of Charnwood is in the transition zone between the Charnwood Forest and the Soar Valley landscape character areas and contains elements typical of both areas.

7.117. Landscape Condition

Although some landscape features, particularly mature woodlands and tree fringed watercourses, are in good condition, some hedges are fragmented and there are generally few hedgerow trees around fields. The Temple of Venus and Triumphant Arch are both recorded as being on the Heritage at Risk Register by English Heritage.

The strength of landscape character of the Langley Lowlands is considered moderate, and the landscape condition is moderate.

7.118. Landscape Strategy Matrix

Landscape Condition	Good	Moderate Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance	Good Conserve & Manage
	Moderate	Poor-Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Conserve & Enhance	Moderate-Good Conserve & Enhance
	Poor	Poor Restore & Create	Poor – Moderate Enhance & Restore	Moderate Enhance
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of Landscape Character				

7.119. Guidelines for Langley Lowlands Landscape Character Area

To be read in conjunction with General Guidelines

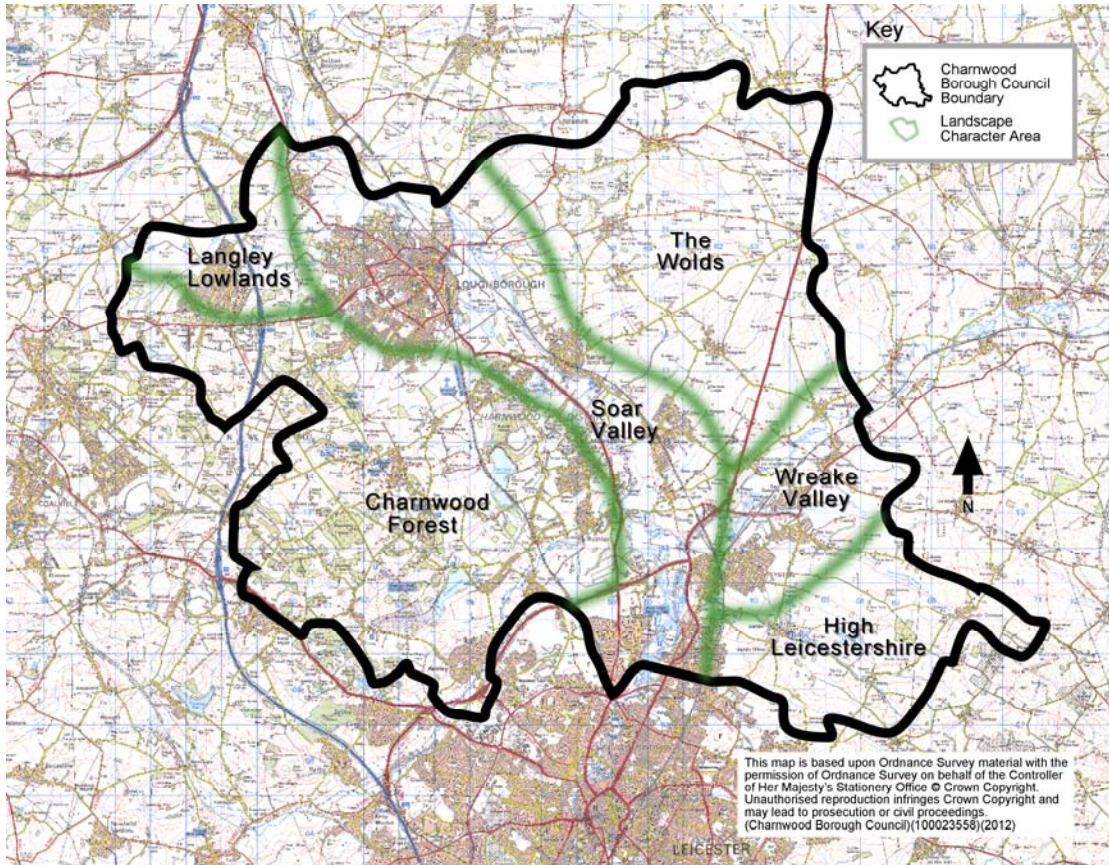
- Conserve key views to the south and south west of Shepshed towards the higher ground of Charnwood Forest
- Conserve existing vegetation and tree cover at settlement edges, with management of wooded buffer planting to provide continued assimilation of development with a variety of heights and varied woodland species
- Conserve and enhance the historical structures and landscape features of Garendon Park in keeping with its tranquil setting
- Integrate new development and provide a setting by planting woodland edges and trees within and around the built form to break up roof line horizons and soften urban edges
- Take opportunities to strengthen gateway features along the A512 at entrances to the towns of Loughborough and Shepshed
- Take opportunities to improve off-road walking and cycling routes along the disused Charnwood Forest railway line, keeping its tree cover and wildlife corridor value
- Encourage the retention and restoration of the hedgerow network, thorough planting a new generation of hedgerow trees, planting up gaps in hedges and relaxing the management regime
- Where possible secure the conservation and management as appropriate of existing woodlands, eg those enclosing Garendon Park. Replace maturing woodlands with natural regeneration, and replanting with native species
- Protect and secure the wildlife value of the Black Brook, Grace Dieu Brook, Shortcliffe Brook, Oxley Gutter and other small water courses as wildlife corridors
- Preference will be given to the use of trees and hedgerow plants that are locally native to the Langley Lowlands character area in planting schemes
- Secure opportunities for the creation and enhancement of the following habitat types, particularly where they strengthen the countryside character near the towns:
 - Wetland habitats within floodplains (flower rich grassland, wet woodland, ponds etc)
 - Hedgerows and trees to grow on as standards within hedgerows



9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1. The landscape character assessment of Charnwood has resulted in the definition and mapping of 6 broad landscape character areas within the borough. The assessment sought to refine the regional and county level assessments; the boundaries of each of the landscape character areas are shown on the following map.
- 9.2. The boundaries of High Leicestershire, Wreake Valley and The Wolds are broadly similar to the Leicestershire Landscape Character Areas; however the boundaries of the remainder of the character areas have been amended slightly. The boundaries are shown as broad lines, reflecting the fact that landscape character gradually changes, with zones of transition between landscape character areas.
- 9.3. The table below shows the landscape condition, landscape strength and associated landscape strategies for each character area.
- 9.4. Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area is the most distinctive and has the strongest landscape character of the areas within the borough

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA	Strength of Landscape Character	Landscape Condition	Landscape Strategy
Charnwood Forest Core <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bradgate & Beacon ▪ Ulverscroft ▪ Charley 	Strong	Good	Conserve & Manage
Charnwood Forest Fringe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Swithland ▪ Rothley Brook 	Strong	Moderate	Conserve & Enhance
High Leicestershire	Strong	Moderate	Conserve & Enhance
Langley Lowlands	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve & Enhance
Soar Valley	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve & Enhance
Wreake Valley	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve & Enhance
The Wolds	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve & Enhance



10. PART 2: CHARNWOOD LANDSCAPE CAPACITY AND SENSITIVITY APPRAISAL

Methodology

10.1. The methodology to assess the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development, while respecting its character, is based on the guidance in Topic Paper 6 – ‘Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity’. This paper forms part of the Countryside Agency (Natural England) and Scottish Heritage ‘Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland’. Topic Paper 6 also reflects the thinking in the publication, ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ 2002.

10.2. The methodology developed for this study adopts the following premise that:

“existing landscape features+ visual sensitivity = Overall Landscape Sensitivity”

10.3. A number of criteria have been selected to identify both existing landscape features and visual sensitivities. These criteria reflect both the national guidance in Topic Paper 6 and the particular circumstances for the landscape around Loughborough, Shepshed and the Leicester urban fringe.

10.4. The following criteria have been selected to reflect existing landscape features:

- slope analysis
- vegetation enclosure
- the complexity and scale of the landscape
- the condition of the landscape

10.5. The following criteria have been selected to reflect visual sensitivity:

- openness to public view
- openness to private views
- relationship with existing urban built form
- prevention of coalescence
- scope to mitigate the development

10.6. The Overall Landscape Sensitivity provides an evaluation of the sensitivity of a land parcel in broad strategic terms. In order to assess the Overall Landscape Capacity of a land parcel, landscape value was added to the equation, as follows.

“Overall Landscape Sensitivity + Landscape Value = Overall Landscape Capacity”

- 10.7. In the absence of any specific stakeholder consultation and specific landscape designations, the landscape value of the land parcels was assessed by assessing and making a judgment of the degree of tranquillity, remoteness, wildness and scenic beauty. These criteria have been identified by The Countryside Agency (Natural England) as a way to assess landscape value. The CPRE’s have plotted levels of tranquillity within Leicestershire and this information was used to aid the final judgment.
- 10.8. To effectively assess the landscape capacity of a site, an assumption is made as to the form that the potential development will take. For the purposes of this study it is assumed that development will include in the main 2 storey residential development. Employment areas will comprise 2-3 storey buildings. It is not anticipated that there will be any taller structures in the assessment unless otherwise stated in the detailed Land Parcel Sheets.
- 10.9. Each site was assessed against the criteria noted above, using a 5-point scale from A to E (guided by a definitions/descriptions that have been devised for this particular study to reflect local characteristics). These definitions are contained in Table 1 below.
- 10.10. The criteria were then scored, with 5 points being awarded to A’s (the most suitable for development) and 1 point to E’s (the least suitable for development). The scores were totalled for each Land Parcel to provide both a Landscape Sensitivity Profile and a Landscape Capacity Profile. Parcels with an overall higher score are considered to be relatively less sensitive to change and to also have a relatively higher capacity. The total score is then allocated an Overall Capacity value by using the following range. The bandings between categories have been defined based on the range of scores achieved in the study area.
- 20 – 23 = Low Landscape Capacity
24 – 27 = Medium Low Landscape Capacity
28 – 31 = Medium Landscape Capacity
32 – 35 = Medium High Landscape Capacity
36 – 39 = High Landscape Capacity
- 10.11. It should be emphasized that no absolute conclusion should be drawn from numerical totals. The influence of individual criteria in a given Land Parcel and in the context of the wider Landscape Character Assessment should also be given due consideration. There may be individual criteria, particularly in the ‘E’ category, where it is possible that development may be incompatible unless it can be effectively mitigated. It is important that the overall spread and balance of the

profiles is fully considered rather than just the total Landscape Capacity value. In other words, each proposal will still need to be considered on its merits. To aid these considerations a commentary of the key points has been provided for each land parcel.

Table 1

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement of criteria	Comments
Existing Landscape Features	Slope analysis	A = Plateau (away from edge) B = Rolling/undulating landform providing some enclosure C = Tributary valleys/lower valley slopes/floodplain edge D = Valley floor/floodplain E = Elevated landforms, plateau edge, ridges and prominent slopes on valley sides with limited enclosure	
	Enclosure by vegetation	A = Enclosed by mature vegetation – extensive tree belts/woodland B = Semi-enclosed by vegetation - moderate woodland cover, good quality tall hedgerows/hedgerows with hedgerow trees C = Fragmented vegetation - scattered small woodlands, fragmented shelterbelts and/or hedgerows D = Limited/poor hedges (with no trees) and/or isolated copses E = Largely open with minimal vegetation	
	Complexity/Scale	A = Extensive simple landscape with single land uses B = Large scale landscape with limited land use and variety	

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement of criteria	Comments
		<p>C = Large or medium scale landscape with variations in pattern, texture and scale</p> <p>D = Small or medium scale landscape with a variety in pattern, texture and scale</p> <p>E = Intimate and organic landscape with a richness in pattern, texture and scale.</p>	
	Landscape character quality/Condition	<p>A = Area of weak character in a poor condition</p> <p>B = Area of weak character in a moderate condition or of a moderate character in a weak condition</p> <p>C = Area of weak character in a good condition or of a moderate character in a moderate condition or of a strong character in a poor condition</p> <p>D = Area of moderate character in a good condition or of a strong character in a moderate condition</p> <p>E = Area of strong character in a good condition</p>	
Visual Factors	Openness to public view	<p>A = Site is well contained from public views</p> <p>B = Site is generally well contained from public views</p> <p>C = Site is partially contained from public views</p> <p>D = Site is moderately open to public views</p> <p>E = Site is very open to public views</p>	<p>Public views will include views from Roads, Rights of Way and public open space. The evaluation considers a summer and winter evaluation. However due to the time of the study the winter evaluation was estimated based on the character of the</p>

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement of criteria	Comments
			vegetation. This criteria is also considered in association with 'Scope to mitigate the development' criteria. Score will depend on the extent of the visibility from all the site perimeters and the rights of way through site.
	Openness to private view	<p>A = Site is well contained from private views</p> <p>B = Site is generally well contained from private views</p> <p>C = Site is partially contained from private views</p> <p>D = Site is moderately open to private views</p> <p>E = Site is very open to private views.</p>	This relates to private views from residential properties. The evaluation considers a summer and winter evaluation. However due to the time of the study the winter evaluation was estimated based on the character of the vegetation. This criteria is also considered in association with 'Scope to mitigate the development' criteria. The score will depend on the extent of the visibility from all the site perimeters.
	Relationship with existing urban edge	<p>A = Location where built development will form a natural extension of an adjacent part of urban fabric</p> <p>B = Location where built development will form some close associations with the existing parts of urban fabric</p> <p>C = Location where built development will form some moderate associations with existing urban fabric</p> <p>D = Location where built</p>	

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement of criteria	Comments
		development will only form some limited associations with the existing urban fabric due to major obstacles E = Location where development will be isolated from and not form any relationship with existing urban fabric.	
	Prevention of coalescence	A = Development would not compromise any separation B = Development would have slight impact on separation C = Development would have moderate impact on separation D = Development would significantly compromise separation E = Development would cause complete coalescence.	
Potential Landscape Features	Scope to mitigate the development	A = Good scope to provide mitigation in the short to medium term in harmony with existing landscape pattern B = Good scope to provide mitigation in the medium term and in keeping with existing landscape pattern C = Moderate scope to provide mitigation in the medium term broadly in keeping with existing landscape pattern D = Limited scope to provide adequate mitigation in keeping with the existing landscape in the medium term E = Very limited scope to	This is an assessment based on landscape character, aesthetic factors - scale, enclosure, pattern, movement – overall visibility of site and consideration of existing viewpoints

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement of criteria	Comments
		provide adequate mitigation in the medium to long term.	
Landscape Value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.	A = Low. B = Medium low. C = Medium. D = Medium high. E = High.	This is an assessment based on the degree to which one or all of these landscape qualities are significant. Factors such as frequency of public access, movement, noise, etc need to be taken into account.

APPENDIX 1

Review of Published Landscape Assessments

The Assessment included the re-examination of the following published Landscape Character Assessments that cover the area of Charnwood Borough Council or share similar landscape character designations.

Countryside Agency Countryside Character Volume 4: East Midlands

The document fully describes several Countryside Character Areas within the Borough.

The Soar and Wreake valleys in the Borough of Charnwood are in the Trent Valley Washlands and partly in the Leicestershire Vales landscape character areas and Langley Lowlands in the Melbourne Parklands landscape character area.

A list of the key characteristics is reproduced below:

69 – Trent Valley Washlands

The area is characterised by flat broad valleys with wide slow flowing rivers, exemplified above by the Soar.

- Flat broad valleys, contained by gentle side slopes, with wide rivers slowly flowing between alluvial terraces.
- Constant presence of urban development, mostly on valley sides, in places sprawling across the valley and transport corridors following the valley route.
- Contrasts of secluded pastoral areas, with good hedgerow structure, and open arable with low hedges.
- Strong influence of riparian vegetation, where rivers are defined by lines of willow pollards and poplars.
- Open character punctuated by massive cooling towers of power stations and strongly influenced by pylons, sand and gravel extraction, and roads.

70 – Melbourne Parklands

- Steeply-undulating landform.
- Large landscape parks with grand country houses.
- Reservoirs.
- Frequent woodland on steep slopes.
- Open areas of arable cultivation.
- Localised quarrying.
- Imposing and dramatically-sited churches.

73 – Charnwood

A unique landscape with upland qualities, remote and wholly different from their lowland farm surroundings, including dry stone walls and flora and fauna rarely found elsewhere in middle England.

- Unique landscape with upland qualities, rising out of lowland farmland.
- Outcrops of ancient Precambrian volcanic and plutonic rocks within bracken and heathland.
- Mudstone vales of pasture fields.
- Dry stone walls and hedges.
- Frequent woodlands.
- Large settlements mainly at the edge, with a few attractive villages and scattered farmsteads at the centre.
- Strongly rectilinear patterns of parliamentary enclosure fields and roads.
- Attractive historic parks and mansions.
- Farmsteads and village buildings dominated by dark local stone.
- Attractively-sited reservoirs and pools.

74 – Leicestershire & Nottinghamshire Wolds

- Rolling, glacial till ridges with small narrow valleys.
- Exposed, open, rather bleak ridge tops, often in arable use.
- Sheltered valleys and lower slopes with pasture and frequent hedge cover.
- Scattered small villages of red brick and pantiles.
- Isolated farms but few cottages and houses: an empty landscape.
- Fox coverts and strong associations with hunting.
- Deserted settlements, ridge and furrow and shrunken settlements.
- Prominent and wooded northern and western scarps.
- Many, deeply rural, remote areas with long, straight enclosure roads, wide verges and narrow sunken lanes.

93 – High Leicestershire

Well treed character, broad rolling ridges and quiet rural character.

- Broad rolling ridges and varied, often steep-sided valleys.
- Well-treed character from hedgerows, hedgerow trees, copses, spinneys and small woodlands, the last often sited on ridges.
- Mixed farming, but with arable mainly on the ridge tops and the wide valley bottoms.
- Sparse settlement of small villages with little modern development.
- Ironstone and limestone churches and vernacular buildings but also abundant brick.
- Frequent and very prominent ridge and furrow and many deserted settlements.
- Green lanes, quiet country and a remote, rural, often empty character.

94 – Leicestershire Vales

A gently undulating landscape retaining reasonably good hedgerow structure in a largely arable area.

- Gentle clay ridges and valleys with little woodland and strong patterns of Tudor and parliamentary enclosure.

- Distinctive river valleys of Soar, Welland and Nene with flat floodplains and gravel terraces.
- Large towns of Leicester and Northampton dominate much of the landscape.
- Frequent small towns and large villages, often characterised by red brick buildings.
- Prominent parks and country houses.
- Frequent imposing, spired churches.
- Attractive stone buildings in older village centres and eastern towns and villages.
- Great diversity of landscape and settlement pattern with many sub units, eg Nene Valley and Welland Valley.

The Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy (2001)

The Strategy describes eighteen landscape character areas, six of which are located within the Borough. A very small part of a seventh landscape character area – *Upper Soar* – falls within the Borough, but is too small to be considered in this document. The distinctive features of the six landscape character areas summarised in the Strategy are reproduced below.

Charnwood Forest

- upland landscape with rocky outcrops and fast-flowing streams
- high proportion of woodland cover
- distinctive mixture of woodland, farmland, heathland and parkland
- part of the National Forest
- buildings and walls in local stone
- many sites of ecological value

Soar Valley

- elongated floodplain
- pasture on floodplain, arable on upper valley sides
- City of Leicester at southern end, elsewhere settlements along lower valley sides
- very little woodland but influenced by woodland in adjoining Charnwood Forest character area
- willows along river
- road, rail, canal and power corridor
- marina developments and other water-based recreational uses
- gravel extraction

Wreake Valley

- flat bottomed river valley with gently sloping sides
- mixed arable and pasture
- little woodland
- urban influence of Melton Mowbray
- more rural character in the east

- widespread features of historical and ecological (particularly wetland) interest

High Leicestershire

- high dissected plateau with steep sided valleys
- arable on flatter ridges, pasture on slopes and in valleys
- locally high concentrations of woodland and many ancient woodland sites
- parkland important
- ridge and furrow
- narrow gated roads
- deserted villages
- field ponds

The Wolds

- rolling landscape drained by numerous stream valleys
- mixed farmland - arable on ridges, pasture in valleys
- urban and industrial influences of Melton Mowbray and Asfordby
- small to medium sized villages and individual farms
- little woodland or parkland
- local variation in character detail
- broad grass verges to minor roads

Langley Lowlands

- rolling landform
- well wooded appearance influenced by woodland within and beyond the character area
- quarries at Breedon Hill and Breedon Cloud
- many hedgerow trees
- villages linked by narrow winding lanes
- parkland influences

The National Forest Strategy (1994 updated 2004)

The National Forest Strategy has identified six Landscape Character Areas, one of which – *Charnwood* – is adjacent to the Borough. It is summarised as:

- Rugged, upland character with many exposed crags and rocky knolls.
- Heathland is a feature of the open summits.
- Former Ancient Forest with many ancient woodlands, parklands and scattered hedgerow trees.
- Stone field walls are distinctive in the upland landscape, with hedged fields a feature of the lower slopes.
- Vernacular stone buildings give the area a unified building style.
- Stone quarries occur in the area but are generally well-screened by trees.

The Strategy describes six landscape types, three of which are adjacent to the Borough: *Enclosed Farmlands*, *Urban/Urban Fringe* and *Wooded Parklands*. The key characteristics of the landscape types are summarised as:

Enclosed Farmlands

- Predominantly open, sparsely wooded mixed farmland.
- Strong rural character with few urban intrusions.
- Field pattern is generally defined by hedgerows or stone field walls.
- In areas of intensive cropping fields are large in scale with an 'open' pattern and occasional, poorly defined hedges.
- Most widespread are areas of mixed farming, with medium to large fields, low cut gappy hedgerows, scattered hedgerow trees and some woodlands.
- Pockets of permanent pasture remain along watercourses and around villages, with a traditional character of small fields with thick hedges and many hedgerow trees.
- Watercourse trees and clusters of small estate woodlands give a quite well wooded feel in places.
- Settlement is characterised by scattered farmsteads and villages.

Urban/Urban Fringe Landscapes

- Large, often sprawling settlements, new built development and occasional mineral workings are dominant.
- Major roads and railways are also prominent making areas busy with the noise and movement of traffic.
- Cropped farmland with gappy, poorly managed hedgerows and hedgerow trees often appears sandwiched between urban and industrial uses.
- Remnant pastures sometimes occur around settlements. These often have a strong hedgerow pattern, though hedges can appear overgrown and unmanaged.
- Urban trees, open spaces and new woodland planting contribute to the landscape setting of urban areas.
- Horse grazing, allotments and other non-agricultural activities add to the fragmented appearance.

Wooded Parklands

- Distinctive, ancient landscapes of considerable interest and diversity.
- A varied hilly topography, with steeply sloping stream valleys and, in Charnwood, distinctive craggy granite rock outcrops.
- An enclosed, strongly wooded character with many ancient woodlands, large wooded estates, parklands with mature trees and numerous hedgerow trees.
- Woodlands are a characteristic feature on hilltops, steep valley slopes and along stream corridors.
- Farmland is a mixture of arable and pasture with medium sized fields.
- Hedgerows and stone field walls (in Charnwood) mark a strong intact field pattern.
- Remnant of semi-natural vegetation is a distinctive feature with areas of heathland, acid grassland, bracken and gorse.
- Settlement is marked by scattered farmsteads, country houses, hamlets and small villages, with many vernacular buildings.

Leicestershire County Council Charnwood Forest and Settlement Landscape Character Assessment (October 2008)

Leicestershire County Council commissioned a study to provide a robust landscape character based foundation to inform the development of future plans and policies for the Charnwood Forest. The study subdivided Charnwood Forest into seven areas, six of which are wholly or partly located within the Borough. The key characteristics are reproduced below.

Bradgate and Beacon

- Large tracts of informal open space with distinctive rolling hills. The highest are prominent, rising above surrounding countryside.
- Localised knolls and wooded rocky outcrops often within open space.
- Frequent blocks of both coniferous and broadleaved woodland on slopes which contrasts with open parkland and heathland.
- Cropston Reservoir surrounded by coniferous woodland.
- Distinctive ancient trees within Bradgate Country Park and mature oak and beech trees line the roads.
- Prominent landmark of Old John Tower at high vantage points.
- Small linear settlements on lower slopes characterised by granite stone and high proportion of thatch.
- Detached properties set with mature wooded gardens.
- Dry stone walls are a feature of property boundaries and open spaces, hedgerows used as field boundaries on lower slopes.

Ulverscroft

- Steeply sloping landform covered with woodland.
- Extensive mature woodland cover.
- Pockets of pasture set within woodland.
- Mature oak and beech trees border roads.
- Small heavily vegetated watercourses and ditches.
- Short distance views and enclosed landscape.
- Large individual private dwellings set within field-scale extended gardens.
- Ornamental boundary treatment e.g. railings, timber fencing and dry stone walls.

Charley

- Rocky outcrops surrounded by gorse, heath and scrub.
- Woodland clumps around rocky outcrops on high ground.
- Rolling farmland with a high woodland content.
- Enclosure varies from long and open views on the high topography to a strong sense of enclosure in the wooded valleys.
- Field enclosure is usually dry stone walls.
- Built form is limited to small hamlets and individual farmsteads nestled into the well wooded landscape.
- Larger settlements located along the western fringes tend to be on lower slopes and surrounded by mature woodland on higher ground.

Swithland

- Rural landscape character.
- Gently rolling farmland.
- Landform of Buddon Wood and Mountsorrel Quarry is a distinctive landscape feature.
- Mature woodland cover is a prominent feature of ridgelines and high ground.
- A patchwork of woodland blocks and agricultural fields.
- A number of small streams dissect the area.
- Swithland Reservoir is a distinctive feature.
- Dense, well-managed hedgerows, often with mature hedgerow trees.
- Small settlements nestled low in the landscape and large farmsteads scattered across the landscape.

Rothley Brook

- A broad, shallow valley associated with the Rothley Brook.
- Distinctive landform which follows the course of Rothley Brook and rises towards rocky upland.
- Well vegetated landscape with scrub vegetation following the sinuous line of the brook.
- A patchwork of land uses including agriculture, industry, infrastructure and settlements.
- Urban fringe influences from settlements and infrastructure routes interspersed with pockets of rural character.
- A line of pylons follows the brook and is visible on the skyline demarcating the position of the valley in the landscape.

Thornton and Markfield

- Undulating agricultural landscape.
- Substantial woodland/plantation coverage.
- Young developing woodland will dramatically change the landscape character of the area as it matures.
- Woodland blocks are formal and regular in layout.
- Single species woodland blocks provide seasonal colour.
- Man-made water bodies are frequent in the landscape.
- Large areas of land allocated to recreational use, particularly on restored land.
- Small settlements on ridgelines with larger settlements following topography.

Stepping Stones Landscape Character Assessment (2005)

This landscape character assessment was undertaken in 2005 to inform possible locations for the establishment of a Community Woodland Greenspace Project around Leicester within the geographical area covered by Stepping Stones Countryside Management Project. From the thirteen landscape character areas identified, six falls within the Borough and the key characteristics are described below.

Character Area 8 – *Barkby Thorpe Plateau*

- Large scale field pattern with low clipped hedgerow boundaries.
- Irregular shaped blocks of woodland on high ground from prominent features on the horizon.
- Open views of urban development on edge of Leicester.
- Urban edge appears contained with overall agricultural pattern and little evidence of urban fringe.

Character Area 9 – *Syston Fringe*

- Flat landscape with views of an almost continuous urban fringe.
- Medium to small scale field patterns bounded by hedgerows which are in places fragmented.
- Commercial and large scale agricultural buildings prominent in the landscape.
- Linear shelterbelts and mature hedgerow trees break up otherwise open views.
- Mix of land use closer to the urban fringe.

Character Area 10 – *Watermead Wetlands*

- Urban presence felt through glimpsed views of development on all boundaries.
- Mosaic of habitats ranging from wetlands to woodlands.
- Some areas of rough grassland indicating neglect of agricultural land in some areas.
- Major busy roads and road noise prominent in the landscape.
- Watermead Country Park and the Grand Union Canal are popular recreational resources.
- Mix of water habitats including rivers, streams, canals, ponds, ditches and lakes with evidence of more being created.

Character Area 11 – *Thurcaston Agricultural Slopes*

- Pocket of agricultural land surrounded by development and roads.
- Copse of woodland on high ground and wooded belt along railway visually prominent.
- Large scale arable with scrubby vegetation on lower ground.
- Unkempt feel to parts of the area where field boundaries have been enclosed and left to mature.

Character Area 12 – *Cropston and Rothley Parkland*

- Parkland character influenced by large estates and golf courses.
- Wooded parkland contained by spinneys on high ground and around villages.
- Isolated trees.
- Meandering Rothley Brook flows through the northern part of the site.
- Open views towards Charnwood Forest influence the character of the area.
- Some urban influences fragmenting character.

Character Area 13 – Anstey Open Farmland

- Open large scale farmland with views dominated by the high ground of Charnwood Forest.
- Little woodland although wooded feel created by adjacent Charnwood Forest.
- Long distance views of woodland on lower ground around Cropston Reservoir to the north of the character area.
- Loss of field boundaries – hedgerows becoming fragmented.
- Generally arable with some scrub vegetation adjacent to urban fringes.

Natural England: East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment

This document was produced in April 2010 by LDA Design for Natural England. (East Midlands Region, on behalf of The East Midlands Landscape Partnership). The document is designed to provide landscape evidence base at a regional level for future strategic, region wide landscape management.

It identifies 31 Regional Character Types, five of which are within Charnwood Borough

The Soar and Wreake valleys	<i>3a Floodplain Valleys</i>
Langley Lowlands	<i>5b Wooded Village Farmlands</i>
High Leicestershire	<i>5c Undulating Mixed Farmlands</i>
The Wolds	<i>8a Clay Wolds</i>
Charnwood Forest	<i>10d Forested Ancient Hills</i>

The lists of key characteristics of these areas are reproduced below:

3a Floodplain Valleys

- Deep alluvium and gravel deposits mask underlying bedrock geology to create wide, flat alluvial floodplains surrounded by rising landform of adjacent Landscape Character Types;
- River channels, often along managed courses, bordered by riparian habitat;
- Predominance of pastoral land use, with cereal growing increasing in some areas. “Warping” areas subject to more intensive cereal growing;
- Limited woodland cover; however, steep riverside bluffs and areas close to settlements or on former gravel extraction sites notable for a higher level of woodland cover;
- Regular pattern of medium to large fields defined by hedgerows or post and wire fencing, breaking down and becoming open in some areas;
- Hedgerows and riverside trees important component of landscape. Alder, Willow and Poplar are typical riverside trees;
- Limited settlement and development in rural areas;
- Sewage Treatment Works and power stations common close to larger settlements that fringe the floodplains;
- Roads and communication routes often define the outer edges of the floodplain; and

- Restoration of sand and gravel extraction sites to open water creates new character across many areas.

5b Wooded Village Farmlands

- Varied topography, ranging from gently undulating farmlands to rolling hills, becks and steep sided valleys, locally known as “Dumbles”;
- Scattered farm woodlands, ancient woodlands on prominent hills and tree lined valleys contribute to a well wooded character;
- Well maintained pattern of hedged fields enclosing pasture and arable fields, with evidence of decline close to urban areas;
- Sparsely settled, with traditional pattern of farms and small rural villages linked by quiet country lanes; and
- Strong sense of landscape history

5c Undulating Mixed Farmlands

- Varied landform of broad rolling ridges, steep sided valleys, rounded hills and undulating lowlands;
- Well treed character arising from abundant hedgerow trees, copses and woodlands;
- Upland areas mark a major watershed in Middle England and are the source of major rivers;
- Mixed farming regime with mainly arable land uses on hills and ridges and in fertile lowlands; intact hedgerow networks generally associated with pastoral land uses;
- Sparse settlement patterns with limited modern development; widespread use of local limestone and ironstone in vernacular buildings and churches;
- Network of quiet country lanes linking rural communities;
- Remote, rural and sometimes empty character; and
- Frequent and prominent ridge and furrow and evidence of deserted or shrunken medieval settlements.

8a Clay Wolds

- Broad plateau overlain by thick mantle of till surrounded by undulating ridges and valleys, and prominent scarp slopes;
- Clay plateau drained radially by streams occupying narrow valleys creating rolling landform;
- Mixed farming but with mainly arable on the plateau tops and pasture on steep sloping land and along valleys; hedged fields generally medium to large scale, with some evidence of amalgamation;
- Well treed character from hedgerows, hedgerow trees, copses and small woodlands despite limited areas of large woodland;
- Sparse settlement pattern of small villages and farms with little modern development;
- Ironstone and limestone churches and vernacular buildings, but brick the most abundant and widespread building material;
- Frequent and prominent ridge and furrow close to villages;
- Quite and remote, often empty character with expansive views contrasting with more intimate and intricate areas close to villages; and

- Damming of several valleys to create reservoirs which have localised impact on landscape character

10d Forested Ancient Hills

- Upland landscape of ancient Pre-Cambrian igneous rocks, rising out of lowland farmland;
- Distinctive rocky outcrops and knolls on elevated slopes and summits with extensive open areas;
- High proportion of woodland cover;
- Land use is a distinctive mixture of woodlands, predominately pastoral farmland, heathland, and parkland;
- Strongly rectilinear patterns of parliamentary enclosure fields and roads bounded by a mix of dry stone walls and hedges;
- Remnant historic parks and associated houses;
- Large reservoirs and pools are common landscape features; and

Occasional villages and scattered farmsteads within the upland area, often constructed in the dark local stone, in contrast to larger villages and settlements located mainly at the edge of the elevated ground.

The following landscape character assessments prepared by adjoining authorities describe landscape character areas that abut those of Charnwood and share some similarities.

Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment Report (March 2006)

From the 21 landscape character areas identified in the report, there are eight character areas adjacent to the Borough.

- The Wolds landscape character area in Charnwood abuts the Wolds Top, Ridge and Valley and Mixed Farmland landscape character areas.
- The Wreake valley landscape character area in Charnwood abuts the Wreake Valley
- High Leicestershire landscape character area in Charnwood abuts the Pastoral Farmland, Gaddesby Valley, Pastoral Farmland, Village Pastures and the High Leicestershire Hills.

Their description and distinct characteristics are reproduced below:

LCA 4 – *Wolds Top*

An even elevated wold top landscape with medium to large scale predominantly arable fields, homogenous and open with scattered ash trees but generally lacking distinctive qualities.

Distinct characteristics:

- narrow strip of elevated land
- open and homogenous
- large scale regular arable fields

LCA 6 – *Ridge & Valley*

A broadly homogenous gently rolling ridge & valley landscape with contrasting large scale arable fields along ridgelines and smaller scale pastures in the valleys, with managed hedges and scattered mostly ash trees.

Distinct characteristics:

- rolling landscape
- large scale open arable fields along ridgelines
- small scale enclosed pastures on valley sides and floors
- few buildings

LCA 7 – *Village Pastures*

A distinctive traditional pastoral landscape and attractive nucleated villages with a strong pattern of small fields often with historic features, enclosed by abundant hedgerow trees.

Distinct characteristics:

- traditional stone built villages
- small fields with ridge and furrow
- enclosed by ancient hedgerows with abundant hedgerow trees

LCA 10 – *Mixed Farmland*

A typical gently rolling lowland farmland landscape with contrasting intensive and traditional units, varied field sizes and scattered trees as well as recreational land.

Distinct characteristics:

- mixture of agricultural use and recreational land
- shallow valley
- variety of field sizes
- large, visually prominent agricultural buildings

LCA 11 – *Pastoral Farmland*

A typical, pleasant, rural, gently rolling lowland pastoral farmland landscape, generally well managed, with diverse field shapes and sizes, good hedges and scattered trees.

Distinct characteristics:

- rolling topography
- well managed pastoral landscape
- scattered farmsteads
- thick stock-proof hedges
- irregular shaped fields

LCA 12 – *Wreake Valley*

A gentle lowland river valley landscape with contrasting sinuous river course and regular pattern of small to medium scale pastoral fields with distinct wetland and water areas from former gravel pits, and small-nucleated villages situated along the rising slopes of the valley edge.

Distinct characteristics:

- River Wreake
- green wedge running into Melton Mowbray
- string of villages on edge of valley
- valley floor worked for sand and gravel and restored to wetland habitats

LCA 14 – *Gaddesby Valley*

A gentle valley floor with sinuous river course and mixture of country houses, parkland, orchards, pastoral farmland and horticulture.

Distinct characteristics:

- restricted to valley floor
- houses set in parkland
- farmsteads and horticulture
- traditional pastures and orchards

LCA 15 – *High Leicestershire Hills*

Classic landscape influenced by the requirements of sporting estates with attractive stone villages amongst rolling pastoral hills and escarpment, and a range of field shapes and sizes enclosed by well-managed often chamfered hedges, woodland, parkland, copses, green lanes, wide grass road verges and some more intensive arable land.

Distinct characteristics:

- rolling hills and pronounced escarpment

- well preserved sporting estates
- historic features, green lanes and parkland
- unimproved grassland

Blaby District Character Assessment

From the fifteen landscape character areas which have been identified, only one – *Rothley Brook Fringe* – is adjacent to the Borough. The document lists the following key characteristics for the area:

- natural watercourse is a central focus within the character area.
- flat topography following course of Rothley Brook which gently rises towards valley edges.
- urban fringes located on higher ground on periphery of character area.
- varied land use, but predominantly agricultural land.
- dense vegetation follows watercourse corridor.
- pylons are a prominent feature.
- fields enclosed by managed hedgerows.
- channelled views along the watercourse and towards the urban fringes on the valley sides.
- large industrial estate prominent along the edge of Rothley Brook.

Eight landscape character types have been identified in the document:

- floodplain
- gently rolling farmland
- agricultural parkland
- hills
- open farmland
- urban fringe
- wooded farmland
- rural rolling farmland

Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment

Out of the 10 landscape character areas identified, one – *Charnwood Fringe* – is adjacent to the Borough, abutting the Rothley Brook and Ulverscroft sub-areas of Charnwood Forest landscape character area. The key characteristics are described as:

- prominent landform which includes the highest land in the Borough. Localised steep slopes around rocky outcrops and quarries.
- diverse land uses which relate to the varied geology. Dominated by pasture and woodland with quarries, pools and outcrops.
- woodland cover of varying age from mature ancient to new National Forest plantations.
- medium to small sized field pattern interspersed with large areas of woodland cover.
- large clustered villages with strong suburban influences.
- distinctive local assets such as Groby Pool and Billa Barra Hill.
- good network of public footpaths.

- distant wide views to the urban edges of Leicester and surrounding Charnwood Forest.
- diverse range of habitats due to variable.

Harborough District Landscape Character Assessment

Five landscape character areas have been identified and one – *High Leicestershire* – is adjacent to the Borough. The area is describes as such:

The predominantly rural character area comprises undulating fields with a mix of pasture on the higher sloping land and arable farming on the lower, flatter land. Fields are divided by well established hedgerows, with occasional mature hedgerow trees. A network of narrow country lanes, tracks and footpaths connect across the landscape interspersed by small thickets, copses and woodlands. Gated roads are a particular feature towards the northern areas around Lowesby, Baggrave and Quenby. Extensive views from the higher ground reveal a pattern of small attractive villages, hamlets and farm buildings set within an agricultural landscape with traditional churches acting as distinctive features of the settlements.

The key characteristics for the area are listed below:

- steep undulating hills
- high concentration of woodland
- parkland areas with narrow gated roads
- rural area with a mix of arable farming on lowlands and pasture on hillsides
- scattering of traditional villages and hamlets through the area
- encroachment of Leicester to the west of the area

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation (published 2010)

This project described the historic landscape character of Leicestershire and Rutland at Borough or District and National Forest level as the following twelve Broad Character types:

- Unenclosed land
- Fields and enclosed land
- Orchards and allotments
- Woodland
- Industrial
- Extractive and landfill
- Military
- Ornamental parkland and recreational
- Settlement
- Civic and commercial
- Transportation
- Water and valley floor

It further subdivides fields and enclosed land at district level, settlements at district and major town level and woodlands at district, National Forest and county landscape character area level. The woodlands are mapped in the following categories at district and County landscape character area (Charnwood Forest, High Leicestershire Langley Lowlands, Soar Valley, Wolds and Wreake Valley)

- Broadleaf ancient woodland
- Replanted ancient woodland
- Mixed ancient woodland
- Broadleaf woods with sinuous boundaries
- Mixed woods with sinuous boundaries
- Coniferous woodlands with sinuous boundaries
- Other woods with sinuous boundaries
- Broadleaf plantation
- Mixed plantation
- Coniferous plantation
- Other plantation

Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines and Greater Nottingham LDA (published July 2009)

In 1997 Nottinghamshire County Council published the Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines which included a Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines Landscape Types Plan viewable as an interactive map. This was developed following a Landscape Character Assessment exercise for the whole county of Nottinghamshire. Nottinghamshire Landscape & Reclamation Team is now reviewing the Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines in line with recent government guidance.

The neighbouring District of Rushcliffe comprises four regional landscape character areas, two of which are adjacent to the Borough. These are described in Greater Nottingham Landscape Character Assessment.

Soar Valley landscape character area in Charnwood abuts the *Trent Washlands*

The Wolds landscape character area in Charnwood abuts the *Nottinghamshire Wolds*

The neighbouring authorities of Rushcliffe and North-West Leicestershire have not yet published their own Landscape Character Assessment studies.

APPENDIX 2

Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment – Field Survey Form

Character Area:

Location on Field Map:

Viewpoint No.:

Grid reference:

Draft Landscape Character Type:

Geology:

Ecological Status:

Surveyor(s):

Photograph Nos:

Weather:

Date:

Topography:

flat	ridge	floodplain
rolling	hills	broad valley
undulating	plateau	narrow valley
steep slopes	knoll/mound	
gentle slopes	rock outcrops	

Dominant Landcover & Landscape Elements:

<u>Buildings*</u> (note age/material/roof material/state of repair) farm buildings - traditional - modern industry commercial village town edge nucleated settlement linear settlement dispersed settlement	<u>Heritage</u> vernacular buildings* country house* field systems church church tower/spire war monument ruins follies moats ridge & furrow	<u>Farming</u> fields arable meadow: - hay - silage pasture: - cattle - sheep - horse paddocks - mixed grazing set-aside forestry	<u>Landcover</u> woodland scrub parkland marsh grassland heath grassland amenity grassland bare ground common/green	<u>Leisure & recreation</u> informal recreation path signage horse riding manège angling caravan park boating allotments golf course sports field
--	--	---	--	---

<u>Woodland/Trees</u>	<u>Hydrology</u>	<u>Communication</u>	<u>Earthworks</u>	<u>Field pattern & enclosure</u>
<p>woodland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - deciduous - coniferous - mixed <p>young plantation spinney shelterbelt</p> <p>trees:</p> <p>hedgerow trees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dominant species? - frequency: R/O/F - age: S/Y/M/V/D <p>clumps of trees isolated trees</p> <p>dominant species?</p> <p>frequency: R/O/F</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - age: S/Y/M/V/D <p>riverside pollards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dominant species? - frequency: R/O/F - age: S/Y/M/V/D - management state: collapsed/mature/ re-pollarded* <p>orchard</p>	<p>river</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <p>meanders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - straight <p>stream</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <p>meanders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - straight <p>canal reservoir lake gravel pit pond scrape drainage ditch</p>	<p>motorway road lane track bridleway footpath railway line bridge pylons power lines masts/poles wind turbines</p>	<p>bunds embankments mineral workings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - active - disused 	<p>field size: vast/large/ medium/ small</p> <p>field shape: regular/ irregular geometric/ sinuous</p> <p>enclosure: walls: material: brick/stone state of repair: - intact - copping stones missing - derelict</p> <p>fences: - timber - post & wire - metal - electric state of repair: - intact - derelict</p> <p>hedges: < 1m/> 1m management state: - remnants - laid - mechanically pollarded - clipped - overgrown, grazed - unclipped, stockproof - overgrown + outgrowths</p> <p>banks ditches</p>

Frequency: R = rare; O = occasional; F = frequent
Age: S = sapling; Y = young; M = mature, V = veteran; D = dead

Visual Assessment Criteria

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Enclosure</u>	<u>Diversity</u>	<u>Texture</u>	<u>Form</u>	<u>Visual</u>
intimate	tight	uniform	smooth	straight	<u>dynamic</u>
small	enclosed	simple	textured	angular	sweeping
medium	open	diverse	rough	curved	spreading
large	exposed	complex	very rough	sinuous	dispersed
vast					channelled

<u>Unity</u>	<u>Colour</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Movement</u>	<u>Pattern</u>	<u>Naturalness</u>
unified	monochrome	harmonious	dead	random	undisturbed
interrupted	muted	balanced	still	organised	restrained
fragmented	colourful	discordant	calm	regular	tamed
chaotic	garish	chaotic	busy	formal	disturbed

Perception

<u>Security</u>	<u>Stimulus</u>	<u>Tranquillity</u>	<u>Pleasure</u>
intimate	monotonous	remote	unpleasant
comfortable	bland	vacant	pleasant
unsettling	interesting	peaceful	attractive
threatening	challenging	busy	beautiful
	inspiring		

Brief Description (including main elements, features, attractors and detractors):

Key Characteristics/Distinctive Features (and why they are important):

Evaluation

Forces for Change

Past:

Present & future:

Strength of Landscape Character

Landscape type representativeness:

Positive key characteristics influencing sense of place/identity:

Negative key characteristics influencing sense of place/identity:

Condition of the Landscape

Survival of characteristic features:

Visual unity/intactness:

Detracting Features:

Landscape Sensitivity

Key Landscape Character Sensitivities:

Overall Level of Sensitivity (high/medium/low):

Key Visual Sensitivities:

Overall level of Visual Sensitivity (high/medium/low):

Draft Landscape Guidelines

Agriculture

Renew/create:

Enhance:

Conserve:

Field patterns/boundaries

Renew/create:

Enhance:

Conserve:

Trees & woodland

Renew/create:

Enhance:

Conserve:

Buildings/settlement/development

Renew/create:

Enhance:

Conserve:

Mineral workings/reclamation

Renew/create:

Enhance:

Conserve:

Transport corridors/linear features

Renew/create:

Enhance:

Conserve:

Ecology

Renew/create:

Enhance:

Conserve:

Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance Notes for Field Survey Form

Dominant Landcover & Landscape Elements:

buildings vernacular buildings country house	age local material/stone type/colour/texture/brick colour/render roof material state of repair
fields	size shape
pasture	type of stock: cattle, sheep, horses, others
hedgerow trees	rare/occasional/frequent within hedge age: sapling/young/mature/veteran/dead
isolated trees	rare/occasional/frequent age: sapling/young/mature/veteran/dead
riverside pollards	rare/occasional/frequent management state: collapsed/mature/re-pollarded
drystone walls	management state: derelict/coping stones missing/intact
fence	type: post & wire/post & rail/railings/electric state of repair: derelict/poor/good
hedge	management state: remnant/laid/mechanically pollarded/clipped/overgrown/unclipped stockproof/ overgrown with outgrowths

HEDGE TYPES

(after Pollard, Hooper and Moore, 1974)



Remnant



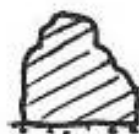
Laid



Mechanically pollarded



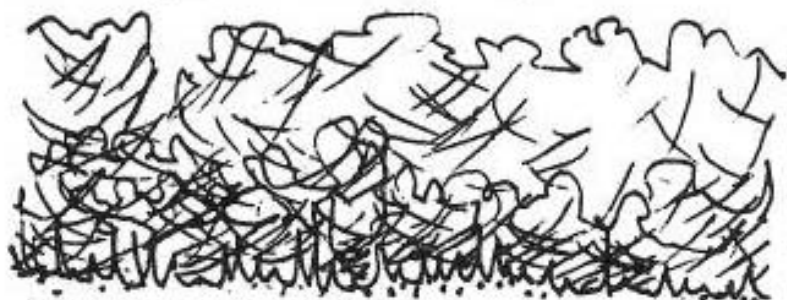
Clipped



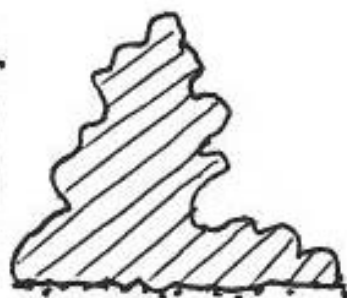
Overgrown; grazed



Unclipped stockproof



Overgrown with outgrowths



Visual Assessment Criteria

(extracts from CA's Landscape Character Assessment)

<p>Scale</p> <p>The overall scale of the landscape must be assessed once the factors that define it have been established. These include the degree of enclosure by landform and woodland and the main positions from which the landscape is viewed – scale increases with elevation and distance. Scale is closely related to balance, proportion and enclosure.</p>	<p>Enclosure</p> <p>Where elements are arranged so that they enclose space, this has an effect on the overall composition so that the space and mass become as one. It also has a great effect on scale due to the interaction of the height of the enclosing elements and the distance between them.</p>
<p>Diversity</p> <p>This needs to be assessed in two ways. First, within the boundaries of the landscape type the minor variations of the landscape should be assessed to determine overall how uniform or diverse the landscape is. Second, the diversity of a typical composition should be evaluated. Additionally, trends for change should be borne in mind, that is whether the degree of diversity is increasing or decreasing.</p>	<p>Texture</p> <p>This varies according to scale, but can be defined in relative terms as coarse, intermediate or fine. Texture is determined by crops, tree cover, size of trees, species, size of fields, etc. It is an important contributor to design unity and diversity, susceptible to change by addition or loss of elements.</p>
<p>Form</p> <p>This term describes the shapes of fields, woods, of linear features, of landform e.g. rectangular, curvilinear, rounded, flat, etc. It is a very important factor in defining ancient or planned landscapes. Form and shapes are quickly picked out, often on slight evidence.</p>	<p>Colour</p> <p>This refers to the dominant colours of fields, woodlands, the built environment and other landscape elements. It includes any notable seasonal effects due to farming activity and seasonal change.</p>
<p>Balance</p> <p>The relative quantities of different elements within the view affect balance. Criteria such as a 1/3 to 2/3 relationship (rule of thirds) can be used to assess how well balanced the landscape is in aesthetic terms. Temporal effects should be considered. Proportions may change with the seasonal addition or loss of elements.</p>	<p>Unity</p> <p>The repetition of similar elements, balance and proportion, scale and enclosure, all contribute to unity. The degree to which contrasting elements disrupt a composition depends also on the context. For instance a single quarry in the midst of an otherwise unified landscape pattern may cause a high degree of discontinuity.</p>

Brief Description (including main elements, features, attractors and detractors):

Also note evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of features present.

APPENDIX 3

Landscape Character Assessment: Field Survey Points

Charnwood Forest – Bradgate & Beacon

Survey Reference No.	Grid reference	Direction of survey
1F	SK50411401	East
1K	SK53731475	South-west
1N	SK50721629	South-west
1O	SK50501848	South-west
1P	SK50401892	South to south-west
G3	SK50131760	North

Charnwood Forest – Ulverscroft

Survey Reference No.	Grid reference	Direction of survey
2B	SK49291212	North-east
2C	SK48571323	South-east
2E	SK52121199	West

Charnwood Forest – Charley

Survey Reference No.	Grid reference	Direction of survey
3N	SK49581599	South
3S	SK47591765	South
3T	SK47091702	South-west
SH1	SK46341888	West

Charnwood Forest – Swithland

Survey Reference No.	Grid reference	Direction of survey
4U	SK53911428	East
4W	SK56801436	West
4Y	SK54811611	North-west
4Z	SK51811721	South-east

Charnwood Forest – Rothley Brook

Survey Reference No.	Grid reference	Direction of survey
5A	SK59061334	South-west
5B	SK56791215	South-east
5D	SK56461031	North-west
5F	SK54430809	South-east
5G	SK54100798	North-east
5H	SK59141123	West
5I	SK58231208	South-east

High Leicestershire

Survey Reference No.	Grid reference	Direction of survey
HL2	SK70321016	South-west
HL3	SK67871036	North-east
HL5	SK64870983	North-east
HL7	SK66760690	North-east
HL9	SK62410981	North-east
HL10	SK63500930	North-east
HL13	SK63390907	South-west
HL14	SK63640879	North

Langley Lowlands

Survey Reference No.	Grid reference	Direction of survey
L3	SK47131955	North-west
L5	SK46952105	South-east
L6	SK49542197	North-west
L7	SK49292009	North
G1	SK49072016	South
G2	SK50681947	North-west

Soar Valley

Survey Reference No.	Grid reference	Direction of survey
S3	SK51872242	South-east
S6	SK57251736	South-west
S7	SK57751620	North-west
S8	SK57421657	South-west
S10	SK56981424	North-east
S11	SK60841121	West
S12	SK53932160	North-west

The Wolds

Survey Reference No.	Grid reference	Direction of survey
W2	SK58822066	South-east
W7	SK64222025	West
W8	SK62911949	North-west
W9	SK63182343	North-east
W10	SK60002283	South
W13	SK61292268	North-east
W14	SK60081831	North-west
W15	SK59892291	South-west
W16	SK58822280	South

Wreake Valley

Survey Reference No.	Grid reference	Direction of survey
WR2	SK63481409	North
WR4	SK63621499	South-east
WR5	SK64331531	South-east
WR6	SK65171517	North-west
WR8	SK65431391	South
WR11	SK62391256	North-east

APPENDIX 4

To Follow...

APPENDIX 5

The Following Tables Indicate Those Trees and Shrubs that are Locally Native to Each Landscape Character Area

When creating or restoring woodland, it is important to understand what native woodland habitat type (i.e. mix of native species present) is most appropriate to a particular locality. The six Character Areas within the Charnwood District (see Figure 1) give a rough indication of the species of tree and shrub that could be included in a planting scheme. These Character Areas are largely based on underlying geology:

- Charnwood Forest
- Soar Valley
- Wreak Valley
- High Leicestershire
- The Wolds
- Langley Lowlands

Particular care should be taken when planning a planting scheme to avoid including native species in sites that do not support their habitat requirements. For example, planting alder *Alnus glutinosa* on well-drained soils on top of a hill is not appropriate. It would be better to establish alder woodland within flood plains such as along riverbanks or on marshy ground that is appropriate for woodland establishment.

Trying to maximise the number of species in a planting scheme is not always good practice, since some species (e.g. elder *Sambucus nigra* and silver birch *Betula pendula*) will readily colonise by themselves, whilst other species naturally occur at very low densities (e.g. crab apple *Malus sylvestris*). In most cases it is possibly best to plant the main component tree and shrub species that make up the woodland type at lower densities than commercially recommended and then manage the woodland subsequently to encourage other less common species through natural regeneration or under-planting. For example ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and maple *Acer campestre* are the main components of ash/maple woodland, and sessile oak *Quercus petraea* is the main component of upland oak woodland.

Advice on native woodland planting within or directly adjacent to Sites of Special Scientific Interest can be obtained from Natural England. Advice on native woodland planting on other sites can be obtained from Charnwood Borough Council or Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust. Contact details can be found in Appendix 1.

An indication of the final form and size of each species has been provided (H high, M medium & S small).

Locally native species found in the Charnwood Forest Character Area		
Field maple <i>Acer campestre</i>	M	Generally characteristic of neutral soils and associated with ash woodland, not on acid soils
Alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	H	This species is distributed widely throughout the Charnwood Forest Character Area and is characteristic of riverbanks and wet or waterlogged soils. Precautions should be taken to avoid the transmission of the alder <i>Phytophthora</i> amongst riparian trees when planting alder
Silver birch <i>Betula pendula</i>	H	Widespread and common. Can be planted throughout the Charnwood Forest Character Area, but may colonise readily
Downy birch <i>Betula pubescens</i>	H	Generally, should not be widely planted as species has a local and restricted range in the Charnwood Forest Character Area. This species must only be planted in specific sites where it is appropriate (please seek advice from Charnwood Borough Council) and only local provenance stock sourced from the Charnwood Forest Character Area should be used
Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i>	S	Generally associated with less acidic or neutral soils and is often associated with pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>
Common hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	S	Generally not found in mature woodland stands, but is an important component of scrub/hedgerow habitats which are characteristic of young woodlands and edges of mature woodland stands
Broom <i>Cytisus scoparius</i>		Planting of this species is not recommended, as it will colonise by itself in appropriate areas
Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	H	Common but generally associated with less acidic or neutral soils
Holly <i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	M	Widespread and common. Can be planted throughout the Charnwood Forest Character Area
Honeysuckle <i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>		Generally not planted but is a component woodland species in dry areas
Crab apple <i>Malus sylvestris</i>	M	Very local but widespread species. Can be included in re-stocking schemes but should only be planted at very low densities to establish no more than 1 tree/ha
Aspen <i>Populus tremula</i>	M	Generally, should not be planted as species has a very local and restricted range. It is possibly a historic introduction to the Charnwood Forest Character Area where it occurs in wet woodland
Wild cherry/gean <i>Prunus avium</i>	M	Local and associated with neutral clay soils

Locally native species found in the Charnwood Forest Character Area		
Blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>	S	Generally not found in mature woodland stands but is an important component of scrub/hedgerow habitats which are characteristic of young woodland and edges of mature woodland stands
Sessile oak <i>Quercus petraea</i>	H	Generally, should not be widely planted as species has a local and restricted range in the Charnwood Forest Character Area. This species must only be planted in specific sites where it is appropriate (please seek advice from Charnwood Borough Council) and only local provenance stock sourced from the Charnwood Forest Character Area should be used
Pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	H	Widespread and common. Can be planted throughout the Charnwood Forest Character Area
Field rose <i>Rosa arvensis</i>	S	Generally not planted but is a component woodland species on less acidic or neutral soils
Dog rose <i>Rosa canina</i>	S	Generally not planted but is a component woodland species on less acidic or neutral soils
White willow <i>Salix alba</i>	H	Generally, should not be planted as this species has a local and restricted natural range in the Charnwood Forest Character Area. In most cases, alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> is the more appropriate species to use in planting schemes on wet or waterlogged soils
Goat willow <i>Salix caprea</i>	M	This species is distributed widely throughout the Charnwood Forest Character Area and is characteristic of riverbanks and wet or waterlogged soils
Grey willow <i>Salix cinerea</i>	S	This species is distributed widely throughout the Charnwood Forest Character Area and is characteristic of riverbanks and wet or waterlogged soils
Crack willow <i>Salix fragilis</i>	H	Generally, should not be planted as this species has a local and restricted natural range in the Charnwood Forest Character Area. In most cases, alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> is the more appropriate species to use in planting schemes on wet or waterlogged soils
Elder <i>Sambucus nigra</i>	S	Planting of this species is not recommended, as it will readily colonise by itself in appropriate areas
Rowan <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	M	Common and widespread. Can be planted throughout the Charnwood Forest Character Area
Gorse <i>Ulex europaeus</i>	S	Planting of this species is not recommended, as it will readily colonise by itself in appropriate areas
Guelder rose <i>Viburnum opulus</i>	S	Generally, only appropriate for planting on wet soils

Locally native species found in the Soar Valley Character Area		
Field maple <i>Acer campestre</i>	M	Generally characteristic of neutral soils and associated with ash woodland
Alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	H	Characteristic of riverbanks and wet or waterlogged soils. Precautions should be taken to avoid the transmission of the alder <i>Phytophthora</i> amongst riparian trees when planting alder
Dogwood <i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	S	Usually associated with hedgerows and woodland on alkaline soils
Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i>	S	Generally associated with neutral soils and often associated in woodland with pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>
Common hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	S	Generally not found in mature woodland stands but is an important component of scrub/hedgerow habitats which are characteristic of young woodland and edges of mature woodland stands
Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	H	Common and generally associated with neutral soils
Wild privet <i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	S	Widespread but a minor species of hedgerows and woodland usually associated with alkaline soils, and not found on acid soils
Crab apple <i>Malus sylvestris</i>	M	Very local but widespread species. Can be included in re-stocking schemes but should only be planted at very low densities to establish no more than 1 tree/ha
Aspen <i>Populus tremula</i>	M	Associated with woodland, hedgerows on wet soils and the banks of rivers and streams
Wild cherry/gean <i>Prunus avium</i>	M	Local and associated with neutral clay soils
Blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>	S	Generally not found in mature woodland stands but is an important component of scrub/hedgerow habitats which are characteristic of young woodland and edges of mature woodland stands
Pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	H	Widespread and common
Purging buckthorn <i>Rhamnus catharticus</i>	S	Locally frequent in hedgerows
Field rose <i>Rosa arvensis</i>	S	A component woodland species on neutral soils
Dog rose <i>Rosa canina</i>	S	Widespread, a component hedgerow and open woodland species on neutral soils
White willow <i>Salix alba</i>	H	On the banks of rivers and streams, hedgerows and wet woodlands
Goat willow <i>Salix caprea</i>	M	Usually associated with woodland, hedgerows and the banks of waterways
Grey willow <i>Salix cinerea</i>	S	Usually associated with wet soils in woodland, hedgerows and the banks of waterways

Locally native species found in the Soar Valley Character Area		
Crack willow <i>Salix fragilis</i>	H	Characteristic of riverbanks and at the margins of ponds, often as pollarded trees
Osier <i>Salix viminalis</i>	S	Associated with wet woodlands and hedgerows by water
Elder <i>Sambucus nigra</i>	S	Planting of this species is not recommended, as it will readily colonise by itself in appropriate areas
Guelder rose <i>Viburnum opulus</i>	S	Associated with woodland and hedgerows on wet soils

Locally native species found in the Wreake Valley Character Area		
Field maple <i>Acer campestre</i>	M	Generally characteristic of neutral soils and associated with ash woodland
Alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	H	Characteristic of riverbanks and wet or waterlogged soils. Precautions should be taken to avoid the transmission of the alder <i>Phytophthora</i> amongst riparian trees when planting alder
Dogwood <i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	S	Usually associated with hedgerows and woodland on alkaline soils
Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i>	S	Generally associated with neutral soils and often associated in woodland with pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>
Common hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	S	Generally not found in mature woodland stands but is an important component of scrub/hedgerow habitats which are characteristic of young woodland and edges of mature woodland stands
Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	H	Common and generally associated with neutral soils
Wild privet <i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	S	Widespread but a minor species of hedgerows and woodland usually associated with alkaline soils, and not found on acid soils
Crab apple <i>Malus sylvestris</i>	M	Very local but widespread species. Can be included in re-stocking schemes but should only be planted at very low densities to establish no more than 1 tree/ha
Aspen <i>Populus tremula</i>	M	Associated with woodland, hedgerows on wet soils and the banks of rivers and streams
Wild cherry/gean <i>Prunus avium</i>	M	Local and associated with neutral clay soils
Blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>	S	Generally not found in mature woodland stands but is an important component of scrub/hedgerow habitats which are characteristic of young woodland and edges of mature woodland stands
Pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	H	Widespread and common
Dog rose <i>Rosa canina</i>	S	Widespread, a component hedgerow and open woodland species on neutral soils
White willow <i>Salix alba</i>	H	On the banks of rivers and streams, hedgerows and wet woodlands
Goat willow <i>Salix caprea</i>	M	Usually associated with woodland, hedgerows and the banks of waterways
Grey willow <i>Salix cinerea</i>	S	Usually associated with wet soils in woodland, hedgerows and the banks of waterways
Crack willow <i>Salix fragilis</i>	H	Characteristic of riverbanks and at the margins of ponds, often as pollarded trees
Osier <i>Salix viminalis</i>	S	Associated with wet woodlands and hedgerows by water
Elder	S	Planting of this species is not recommended, as it

Locally native species found in the Wreake Valley Character Area		
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>		will readily colonise by itself in appropriate areas
Guelder rose	S	Associated with woodland and hedgerows on wet soils
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>		

Locally native species found in High Leicestershire Character Area		
Field maple <i>Acer campestre</i>	M	Generally characteristic of neutral soils and associated with ash woodland
Alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	H	Characteristic of riverbanks and wet or waterlogged soils. Precautions should be taken to avoid the transmission of the alder <i>Phytophthora</i> amongst riparian trees when planting alder
Dogwood <i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	S	Usually associated with hedgerows and woodland on alkaline soils
Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i>	S	Generally associated with neutral soils and is often associated in woodland with pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>
Common hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	S	Generally not found in mature woodland stands but is an important component of scrub/hedgerow habitats which are characteristic of young woodland and edges of mature woodland stands
Midland hawthorn <i>Crataegus laevigata</i>	S	Generally, should not be widely planted as species has a restricted range in Charnwood District. This species must only be planted in specific sties where it is appropriate (please seek advice from Charnwood Borough Council) and only local origin stock sourced from the High Leicestershire Character Areas should be used
Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	H	Common and generally associated with neutral soils
Wild privet <i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	S	Widespread but a minor species of hedgerows and woodland usually associated with alkaline soils, and not found on acid soils
Crab apple <i>Malus sylvestris</i>	M	Very local but widespread species. Can be included in re-stocking schemes but should only be planted at very low densities to establish no more than 1 tree/ha
Wild cherry/gean <i>Prunus avium</i>	M	Local and associated with neutral clay soils
Blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>	S	Generally not found in mature woodland stands but is an important component of scrub/hedgerow habitats which are characteristic of young woodland and edges of mature woodland stands
Pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	H	Widespread and common
Purging buckthorn <i>Rhamnus catharticus</i>	S	Occasional in hedgerows, at low density
Field rose <i>Rosa arvensis</i>	S	A component woodland species on neutral soils
Dog rose <i>Rosa canina</i>	S	Widespread, a component hedgerow and open woodland species on neutral soils
White willow	H	On the banks of rivers and streams, hedgerows and

Locally native species found in High Leicestershire Character Area		
<i>Salix alba</i>		wet woodlands
Goat willow <i>Salix caprea</i>	M	Usually associated with woodland, hedgerows and the banks of waterways
Grey willow <i>Salix cinerea</i>	S	Usually associated with wet soils in woodland, hedgerows and the banks of waterways
Crack willow <i>Salix fragilis</i>	H	Characteristic of riverbanks and at the margins of ponds, often as pollarded trees
Elder <i>Sambucus nigra</i>	S	Planting of this species is not recommended, as it will readily colonise by itself in appropriate areas
Guelder rose <i>Viburnum opulus</i>	S	Associated with woodland and hedgerows on wet soils

Locally native species found in The Wolds Character Area		
Field maple <i>Acer campestre</i>	M	Generally characteristic of neutral soils and associated with ash woodland
Alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	H	Characteristic of riverbanks and wet or waterlogged soils. Precautions should be taken to avoid the transmission of the alder <i>Phytophthora</i> amongst riparian trees when planting alder
Dogwood <i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	S	Usually associated with hedgerows and woodland on alkaline soils
Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i>	S	Generally associated with neutral soils and is often associated in woodland with pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>
Common hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	S	Generally not found in mature woodland stands but is an important component of scrub/hedgerow habitats which are characteristic of young woodland and edges of mature woodland stands
Midland hawthorn <i>Crataegus laevigata</i>	S	Generally, should not be widely planted as species has a restricted range in Charnwood District. This species must only be planted in specific sties where it is appropriate (please seek advice from Charnwood Borough Council) and only local origin stock sourced from the Wolds Character Areas should be used
Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	H	Common and generally associated with neutral soils
Wild privet <i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	S	Widespread but a minor species of hedgerows and woodland usually associated with alkaline soils, and not found on acid soils
Crab apple <i>Malus sylvestris</i>	M	Very local but widespread species. Can be included in re-stocking schemes but should only be planted at very low densities to establish no more than 1 tree/ha
Wild cherry/gean <i>Prunus avium</i>	M	Local and associated with neutral clay soils
Blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>	S	Generally not found in mature woodland stands but is an important component of scrub/hedgerow habitats which are characteristic of young woodland and edges of mature woodland stands
Pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	H	Widespread and common
Purging buckthorn <i>Rhamnus catharticus</i>	S	Occasional in hedgerows, at low density
Field rose <i>Rosa arvensis</i>	S	A component woodland species on neutral soils
Dog rose <i>Rosa canina</i>	S	Widespread, a component hedgerow and open woodland species on neutral soils
White willow	H	On the banks of rivers and streams, hedgerows and

Locally native species found in The Wolds Character Area		
<i>Salix alba</i>		wet woodlands
Goat willow <i>Salix caprea</i>	M	Usually associated with woodland, hedgerows and the banks of waterways
Grey willow <i>Salix cinerea</i>	S	Usually associated with wet soils in woodland, hedgerows and the banks of waterways
Crack willow <i>Salix fragilis</i>	H	Characteristic of riverbanks and at the margins of ponds, often as pollarded trees
Elder <i>Sambucus nigra</i>	S	Planting of this species is not recommended, as it will readily colonise by itself in appropriate areas
Guelder rose <i>Viburnum opulus</i>	S	Associated with woodland and hedgerows on wet soils

Locally native species found in Langley Lowlands Character Area		
Field maple <i>Acer campestre</i>	M	Generally characteristic of neutral soils and associated with ash woodland
Alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	H	Characteristic of riverbanks and wet or waterlogged soils. Precautions should be taken to avoid the transmission of the alder <i>Phytophthora</i> amongst riparian trees when planting alder
Dogwood <i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	S	Usually associated with hedgerows and woodland on alkaline soils
Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i>	S	Generally associated with neutral soils and often associated in woodland with pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>
Common hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	S	Generally not found in mature woodland stands but is an important component of scrub/hedgerow habitats which are characteristic of young woodland and edges of mature woodland stands
Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	H	Common and generally associated with neutral soils
Wild privet <i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	S	Widespread but a minor species of hedgerows and woodland usually associated with alkaline soils, and not found on acid soils
Crab apple <i>Malus sylvestris</i>	M	Very local but widespread species. Can be included in re-stocking schemes but should only be planted at very low densities to establish no more than 1 tree/ha
Aspen <i>Populus tremula</i>	M	Associated with woodland, hedgerows on wet soils and the banks of rivers and streams
Wild cherry/gean <i>Prunus avium</i>	M	Local and associated with neutral clay soils
Blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>	S	Generally not found in mature woodland stands but is an important component of scrub/hedgerow habitats which are characteristic of young woodland and edges of mature woodland stands
Pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	H	Widespread and common
Field rose <i>Rosa arvensis</i>	S	A component woodland species on neutral soils
Dog rose <i>Rosa canina</i>	S	Widespread, a component hedgerow and open woodland species on neutral soils
White willow <i>Salix alba</i>	H	On the banks of rivers and streams, hedgerows and wet woodlands
Goat willow <i>Salix caprea</i>	M	Usually associated with woodland, hedgerows and the banks of waterways
Grey willow <i>Salix cinerea</i>	S	Usually associated with wet soils in woodland, hedgerows and the banks of waterways
Crack willow <i>Salix fragilis</i>	H	Characteristic of riverbanks and at the margins of ponds, often as pollarded trees
Osier	S	Associated with wet woodlands and hedgerows by

Locally native species found in Langley Lowlands Character Area		
<i>Salix viminalis</i>		water
Elder <i>Sambucus nigra</i>	S	Planting of this species is not recommended, as it will readily colonise by itself in appropriate areas
Guelder rose <i>Viburnum opulus</i>	S	Associated with woodland and hedgerows on wet soils

Native species, not recommended for general planting schemes (RDB = Red Data Book)	
Spurge laurel <i>Daphne laureola</i>	Candidate RDB species
Spindle <i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Rare in Leicestershire, not native to any of the Character Areas in Charnwood
Alder buckthorn <i>Frangula alnus</i>	RDB species. Should only be planted as part of an organised conservation project that is supported by national and local nature conservation bodies
Black poplar <i>Populus nigra</i>	Restricted distribution/Recovery programme. Should only be planted as part of an organised conservation project that is supported by national and local nature conservation bodies
Bird cherry <i>Prunus padus</i>	Rare in Leicestershire. Should only be planted as part of an organised conservation project that is supported by national and local nature conservation bodies
Eared willow <i>Salix aurita</i>	RDB species. Should only be planted as part of an organised conservation project that is supported by national and local nature conservation bodies
Purple willow <i>Salix purpurea</i>	Restricted distribution. Should only be planted as part of an organised conservation project that is supported by national and local nature conservation bodies
Almond willow <i>Salix triandra</i>	Restricted distribution. Should only be planted as part of an organised conservation project that is supported by national and local nature conservation bodies
Dwarf Willow <i>Salix repens</i>	RDB species. Should only be planted as part of an organised conservation project that is supported by national and local nature conservation bodies
Wild service <i>Sorbus torminalis</i>	Candidate RDB species. Should only be planted as part of an organised conservation project that is supported by national and local nature conservation bodies
Small-leaved lime <i>Tilia cordata</i>	Candidate RDB species. Should only be planted as part of an organised conservation project that is supported by national and local nature conservation bodies
Western gorse <i>Ulex galii</i>	Candidate RDB species. Should only be planted as part of an organised conservation project that is supported by national and local nature conservation bodies
Wych elm <i>Ulmus glabra</i>	Susceptible to Dutch Elm disease, but cuttings from surviving trees might be worth propagating as it is an important species for invertebrate fauna. Should only be planted as part of an organised conservation project that is supported by national and local nature conservation bodies
Small-leaved elm <i>Ulmus minor</i>	Susceptible to Dutch Elm disease
English elm <i>Ulmus procera</i>	Susceptible to Dutch Elm disease

Native species, not recommended for general planting schemes (RDB = Red Data Book)	
Wayfaring tree <i>Viburnum lantana</i>	Candidate RDB species. Should only be planted as part of an organised conservation project that is supported by national and local nature conservation bodies

Non-native species, <u>not recommended</u> for planting schemes (Please note that this list is not comprehensive)		
	Origin	
Firs <i>Abies spp</i>	North-America	
Norway maple <i>Acer platanoides</i>	Scandinavia	Invasive, cast dense shade
Sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Central Europe, Asia Minor	Invasive, cast dense shade
Horse chestnut <i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	Balkans/Asia Minor	
Grey alder <i>Alnus incana</i>	Central Europe	Invasive, suckers freely
Italian alder <i>Alnus cordata</i>	Italy	
Hornbeam <i>Carpinus betulus</i>	South-eastern & eastern counties; not native of Leicestershire	
Sweet chestnut <i>Castanea sativa</i>	Mediterranean region	
Cedars <i>Cedrus spp</i>	Various, eg Lebanon	
Beech including copper beech <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Southern counties; not native of Leicestershire	Moderately invasive, casts dense shade
Walnut <i>Juglans regia</i>	Balkans/Asia Minor	
Common juniper <i>Juniperus communis</i>	Not native of Leicestershire	
European larch <i>Larix decidua</i>	Alps & Carpathians	
Garden privet <i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i>	Japan	
Spruce <i>Picea spp</i>	Various, eg Norway, Canada	
Pine <i>Pinus spp</i>	Various, eg Corsica, Austria	
Scots pine <i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Highlands, North & Central Europe; not native of Leicestershire	
London Plane <i>Platanus x hispanica</i>	Hybrid	

Non-native species, <u>not recommended</u> for planting schemes (Please note that this list is not comprehensive)		
White poplar <i>Populus alba</i>	Central Europe to Central Asia	Invasive, suckers freely
Grey poplar <i>Populus canescens</i>	Holland to Caucasus	Suckers freely
Lombardy poplar <i>Populus nigra</i> 'Italica'	Italy	
Cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	Balkans to SW Asia	
Wild pear <i>Pyrus pyraister</i>	Europe, West Asia	
Evergreen oak <i>Quercus ilex</i>	Mediterranean region	
Turkey oak <i>Quercus cerris</i>	Balkans	Host plant for knopper gall wasp
Red oak <i>Quercus rubra</i>	North-America	
Ramanas rose <i>Rosa rugosa</i>	North-east Asia	
Rhododendron <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>	SE Europe and SW Asia	Highly invasive and suppresses other plants
Weeping willow <i>Salix x sepulcralis</i> (<i>Salix babylonica</i>)	Hybrid, China	
Redwood <i>Sequoia spp</i>	North America, E Asia, Tasmania	
Common whitebeam <i>Sorbus aria</i>	S. England; not native of Leicestershire	
Swedish whitebeam <i>Sorbus intermedia</i>	Sweden & Baltic States	
Snowberry <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	Western North America	Invasive
Yew <i>Taxus baccata</i>	Not native of Leicestershire	Should not be planted if it is intended to establish native woodland as this species is likely to be a historic introduction
Lime <i>Tilia x europea</i>	Hybrid	
Large-leaved lime <i>Tilia platyphyllos</i>	Not native of Leicestershire	

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Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust

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APPENDIX 6

Ancient Woodland in Charnwood Borough Listed in Natural England's Inventory

Site Name	Landscape Character Area	Grid Ref.	Status
Hookhill Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK455192	LWS
Blackbrook Spinney	Charnwood Forest	SK459189	LWS
White Horse Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK469185	LWS
Copt Oak Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK485130	LWS
Coalbourn Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK488120	LWS
Charnwood Forest Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK491112	LWS
Barnby Wood (Chitterman Hill Wood)	Charnwood Forest	SK494116	LWS
Poultney Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK494130	SSSI
Cover Cloud	Charnwood Forest	SK498103	LWS
Bushy Field Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK498110	LWS
Stoneywell Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK499120	SSSI
Sheet Hedges Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK529088	SSSI
Nowell Spring Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK502121	LWS
John Lee's Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK505106	LWS
Holywell Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK507182	LWS
Burleigh Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK508178	LWS
Leicester Hill	Charnwood Forest	SK512111	LWS
Outwoods/Jubilee Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK514165	SSSI
Blakeshay/Sandhills Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK515115	LWS
Benscliffe Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK515125	SSSI
Hallgate Hill Spinney	Charnwood Forest	SK536115	SSSI
Swithland Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK538125	SSSI
Mucklin Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK538164	LWS
Brazil Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK558137	SSSI
Buddon Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK560152	SSSI
Crow Wood	Charnwood Forest	SK561125	LWS
Black-A-Moor Spinney	The Wolds	SK555229	Not an Ancient Woodland

LWS = Local Wildlife Site

SSSI = Site of Special Scientific Interest

APPENDIX 7

Landscape Capacity & Sensitivity Field Survey Results

Survey and Appraisal

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 1

Surveyors:

MF/SE

Date Surveyed:

16/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure			√			3
	Complexity/Scale		√				4
	Condition			√			3
	Sub Total						13

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view		√				4
	Relationship with existing urban built form					√	1
	Prevention of coalescence	√					5
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						16

Overall Landscape Sensitivity		29
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A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.

Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.			√			3
	Sub Total						3

Overall Landscape Capacity		32
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General Commentary

- This zone is located to the north east of Loughborough on the opposite side of the River Soar adjacent to the village of Cotes and is situated in the Soar Valley character area. The majority of the zone slopes gently south west towards the River Soar with more steeply sloping landform that provides a marked change in slope in the east corner and along the north west boundary. A tributary stream flows across the central part of the area and is marked by mixed woodland.
- Land within the zone is predominantly arable and is divided into two areas by the well vegetated line of the stream. Woodland belts have been planted along part of the boundary with the A60 and along substantial part of Stanford Lane. Hedgerows are well clipped with very few trees.
- There are no public footpaths within the area and public views are from the un-vegetated section of the A60 and land beyond, and from parts of Stanford Lane.
- The zone is significantly detached from the existing built edge to Loughborough and would not form a natural extension to the urban form.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

This zone is considered to have a **Medium High** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the lower land either side of the stream being fairly contained from public views, the overall zone being well contained from private views and the landscape within the zone having limited land use variety. Development would not compromise separation from other settlements but is significantly detached from the urban edge of Loughborough. Given the nature of the adjacent village and surrounding roads commercial development would be much less suitable. Residential development could be suitable, subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 2

Surveyors:

MF/SE

Date Surveyed:

19/4/12

Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.

Criteria

A	B	C	D	E	Total
				√	1
	√				4
			√		2
				√	1
Sub Total					8

Visual Factors

Openness to public view

Openness to private view

Relationship with existing urban built form

Prevention of coalescence

Potential Landscape Features

Scope to mitigate the development

Sub Total

				√	1
			√		2
			√		2
√					5
			√		2
Sub Total					12

Overall Landscape Sensitivity

A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.

Landscape value

Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.

Sub Total

					20
				√	1
Sub Total					1

Overall Landscape Capacity

21

General Commentary

- This zone is located on the western edge of Loughborough within the Charnwood Forest landscape character area. The zone runs along the edge of the Outwoods and is defined as being the steeper upper slope of Zone 3 to its east.
- There are mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- The landscape is of strong character which is in good condition and has a variety in pattern and texture.
- It forms a buffer and setting to the woodland of the Charnwood Forest edge.
- There are public footpaths through the site and it is prominent in the view from the many houses on the rising ground of western Loughborough.
- It has a good degree of tranquillity and scenic beauty.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Low** capacity to accommodate development because of its setting adjacent to the Charnwood Forest and its prominence in public and private views. Built development on this zone is undesirable because of the difficulty of screening development on such a visually exposed slope, and would conflict with its role as a buffer to the Outwoods edge.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 3

Surveyors:

MF/SE

Date Surveyed:

19/4/12

Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.

Criteria

A	B	C	D	E	Total
		√			3
		√			3
			√		2
			√		2
Sub Total					10

Visual Factors

Openness to public view

Openness to private view

Relationship with existing urban built form

Prevention of coalescence

Potential Landscape Features

Scope to mitigate the development

Sub Total

			√		2
			√		2
		√			3
√					5
		√			3
Sub Total					15

Overall Landscape Sensitivity

A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.

Landscape value

Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.

Sub Total

					25
			√		2
Sub Total					2

Overall Landscape Capacity

27

General Commentary

- This zone is located on the western edge of Loughborough within the Charnwood Forest landscape character area. It is situated between the urban residential edge of Loughborough and the higher land of Charnwood Forest and is the lower slope of Zone 2.
- It is generally flatter than Zone 2 and has mature landscape features including woodlands and provides extensive views towards the wooded landscape of Charnwood Forest.
- It is a landscape of strong character with good vegetation cover and a variety in texture and scale. Boundaries within this area are low hedgerows with few trees the exception being the boundaries along streams where mature trees are a significant feature. Planting directly adjacent and within the urban built form significantly breaks up the urban edge.
- It is open to extensive public and private views but still maintains a good degree of tranquillity and scenic beauty. Two public footpaths cross the area providing views over the landscape towards Loughborough, and direct and convenient access to the Outwoods . There are good private views from surrounding residential properties towards the Outwoods
- The new housing development of Fairmeadows and Haddon Way adjoins part of this zone.
- The area forms some relationship with the existing urban edge but this is significantly interrupted by the sports ground.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium Low** capacity to accommodate development close to the existing urban edge. This is due to the proximity to the residential urban edge and flat land close to this edge, together with the fact that it would not compromise any separation with surrounding villages or hamlets. Development could be suitable, subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 4

Surveyors:

MF/SE

Date Surveyed:

19/4/12

Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.

Criteria

A	B	C	D	E	Total
		√			3
		√			3
	√				4
				√	1
Sub Total					11

Visual Factors

Openness to public view

Openness to private view

Relationship with existing urban built form

Prevention of coalescence

Potential Landscape Features

Scope to mitigate the development

Sub Total

		√			3
	√				4
			√		2
				√	1
				√	1
Sub Total					11

Overall Landscape Sensitivity

A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.

Landscape value

Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.

Sub Total

					22
				√	1
Sub Total					1

Overall Landscape Capacity

23

General Commentary

- This zone is located on the south side of Loughborough within the Charnwood Forest landscape character area. It is situated between the new urban edge and the village of Woodhouse and was formally part of the landscaped park to Beaumanor Hall, from which it derives its strong landscape characteristics. The open parkland and substantial woodland create a visually distinctive landscape.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Low capacity** to accommodate development. This is due to the strong landscape character that is in good condition. Being fairly contained from public and private views it has a high degree of tranquillity. Development would have a significant impact on coalescence and its visual impact would be difficult to mitigate. Given these factors it is not considered appropriate to develop in this zone.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 5

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

24/4/2012

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure				√		2
	Complexity/Scale	√					5
	Condition			√			3
	Sub Total						13

Visual Factors	Openness to public view			√			3
	Openness to private view				√		2
	Relationship with existing urban built form	√					5
	Prevention of coalescence		√				4
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						18

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							31
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.		√				4
	Sub Total						4

Overall Landscape Capacity

35

General Commentary

- This zone is located on the south side of Loughborough adjacent to the hamlet of Woodthorpe within the Charnwood Forest landscape character area. The north west part of the site slopes gently towards new urban edge of Loughborough with slightly higher land to the southern and eastern part of the area.
- Arable farming is prominent which has resulted in fragmented hedgerows with few hedgerow trees. And large open fields.
- Development on the higher part of the land would be prominent to wider views from the north and views from the south.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium High** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the land that slopes towards the new urban edge being partially contained from views by the higher land in the southern and eastern part of the area, and the landscape within the zone having limited land use variety. Development would easily link in to the existing urban edge of Loughborough but could compromise separation from other settlements. Given the new housing to the north, residential development could be suitable subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 6

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

24/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis		√				4
	Vegetation enclosure			√			3
	Complexity/Scale				√		2
	Condition				√		2
	Sub Total						11

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view			√			3
	Relationship with existing urban built form					√	1
	Prevention of coalescence				√		2
	Scope to mitigate the development			√			3
	Sub Total						11

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							22
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.			√			3
	Sub Total						3

Overall Landscape Capacity

25

General Commentary

- This zone is located on the south side of Loughborough, slightly beyond the urban edge and within the Charnwood Forest landscape character area.
- The landform is undulating with significant changes in level compared with adjacent zones to the north, east and west. South of Whatoff Lodge the landscape is more greatly incised by a watercourse which creates steeper slopes.
- Watercourses are lined with mature trees and substantial vegetation.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium Low** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the undulating landform which could help to mitigate development and is partially contained from private and public views. However it is of moderate landscape character in good condition with variety in texture and pattern. Development would significantly compromise separation between Woodhouse, Quorn and Loughborough. Given these factors it is not considered appropriate to develop in this zone.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 7

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

24/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure			√			3
	Complexity/Scale			√			3
	Condition			√			3
	Sub Total						12

Visual Factors	Openness to public view					√	1
	Openness to private view		√				4
	Relationship with existing urban built form					√	1
	Prevention of coalescence				√		2
	Scope to mitigate the development			√			3
	Sub Total						11

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							23
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.		√				4
	Sub Total						4

Overall Landscape Capacity

27

General Commentary

- This zone is located on the south east side of Loughborough on the boundary of the Charnwood Forest and Soar Valley landscape character areas.
- This small area is dominated by the arboretum within the grounds of 'One Ash' and a well wooded watercourse in the central part of the area, giving it a distinctively different character to the adjacent zones to the south west.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium** Low capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the extensive public views across and from within. Impact of development on these views would be difficult to mitigate. The area does not have a relationship with the existing urban edge and could significantly compromise separation from the nearby village of Quorn. Development could be appropriate in limited parts of the zone, subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 8

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

24/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure		√				4
	Complexity/Scale			√			3
	Condition			√			3
	Sub Total						13

Visual Factors	Openness to public view		√				4
	Openness to private view		√				4
	Relationship with existing urban built form	√					5
	Prevention of coalescence				√		2
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						19

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							32
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.		√				4
	Sub Total						4

Overall Landscape Capacity

36

General Commentary

- This zone is located on the south east side of Loughborough within the Soar Valley landscape character area. It is enclosed by the A6 and Epinal Way which create an area that is isolated from its immediate surroundings.
- Contrasting subzones of the parkland associated with Quorn Lodge, horse culture and arable farming.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **High** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to its semi enclosure by vegetation and being well contained from public and private views. It has a good relationship with the existing urban edge and being between two major roads would form a natural extension to the urban fabric. Development in this area would have a significant impact on separation but could be suitable, subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 9

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

24/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis				√		2
	Vegetation enclosure			√			3
	Complexity/Scale			√			3
	Condition		√				4
	Sub Total						12

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view		√				4
	Relationship with existing urban built form			√			3
	Prevention of coalescence			√			3
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						16

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							28
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.		√				4
	Sub Total						4

Overall Landscape Capacity

32

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the north of Quorn within the Soar Valley landscape character area. It is situated on fairly flat land between the urban edge of the village and the A6 by-pass road and is of moderate landscape character but in a weak condition.
- The eastern end of the area is substantially hidden from view by existing vegetation but the western end is moderately open to public view, particularly from the A6 by-pass.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium High** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the weak condition of a fragmented landscape. Development would have limited impact on both private and public views of the area and would significantly compromise separation. This could be mitigated against by upgrading the condition of the landscape. Development could be suitable subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number:10

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

26/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis				√		2
	Vegetation enclosure		√				4
	Complexity/Scale		√				4
	Condition				√		2
	Sub Total						12

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view				√		2
	Relationship with existing urban built form			√			3
	Prevention of coalescence				√		2
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						13

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							25
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.				√		2
	Sub Total						2

Overall Landscape Capacity

27

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the north of Loughborough and east of Hathern within the Soar Valley landscape character area. It is an area of flat land within the flood plain of the River Soar.
- The western edge of the area is slightly higher where the land rises from the flood plain.
- The southern part of the area is defined by large fields with clipped hedgerows this gives way to smaller fields with increased vegetation cover in the central and northern part of the site.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium** Low capacity to accommodate development. This is due to its openness to private and public view, and the way in which it would significantly compromise coalescence of Loughborough with Hathern. Development could be appropriate in limited parts of the zone, subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 11

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

26/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis		√				4
	Vegetation enclosure			√			3
	Complexity/Scale			√			3
	Condition				√		2
	Sub Total						12

Visual Factors	Openness to public view					√	1
	Openness to private view					√	1
	Relationship with existing urban built form		√				4
	Prevention of coalescence	√					5
	Scope to mitigate the development			√			3
	Sub Total						14

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							26
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.			√			3
	Sub Total						3

Overall Landscape Capacity

29

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the north west of Shepshed within the Langley Lowlands landscape character area. It is situated on the valley slopes either side of the Black Brook with higher land to the northern part of the area forming a ridge which is considered as Zone 11a.
- The landscape is fairly open but with substantial vegetation along the Black Brook corridor and some small isolated copses.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium** capacity to accommodate development on the lower slopes. This is due to a sense of enclosure from the wider landscape provided by the topography, even though the area is substantially open to views within its bowl. It has a close relationship with the existing urban edge and would not compromise separation between settlements. Residential development on the lower slopes could be suitable, subject to mitigation measures

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number:

11a

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

26/4/12

Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.

Criteria

A	B	C	D	E	Total
				√	1
				√	1
	√				4
			√		2
Sub Total					8

Visual Factors

Openness to public view

Openness to private view

Relationship with existing urban built form

Prevention of coalescence

Potential Landscape Features

Scope to mitigate the development

Sub Total

				√	1
	√				4
				√	1
√					5
			√		2
Sub Total					13

Overall Landscape Sensitivity

A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.

Landscape value

Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.

Sub Total

					21
					2
Sub Total					2

Overall Landscape Capacity

23

General Commentary

- This sub-area of zone 11 consists of the higher land on the crest of the hill. Vegetation is much sparser, the fields are very large with only a few fragmented hedgerows.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Low** capacity to accommodate development because of its elevated landform with limited enclosure. Built development on this zone is undesirable because of the difficulty of

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 12

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

30/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis					√	1
	Vegetation enclosure	√					5
	Complexity/Scale					√	1
	Condition					√	1
	Sub Total						8

Visual Factors	Openness to public view					√	1
	Openness to private view			√			3
	Relationship with existing urban built form				√		2
	Prevention of coalescence	√					5
	Scope to mitigate the development				√		2
	Sub Total						13

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							21
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.					√	1
	Sub Total						1

Overall Landscape Capacity

22

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the west of Loughborough and south of Shepshed in the Charnwood Forest landscape character area. It is situated between the urban fringe of Shepshed and the higher part of the Charnwood Forest.
- It has an elevated landform with prominent slopes and a substantial number of trees and woodlands.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Low** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the visual prominence of an elevated landform, its openness to views and the lack of opportunity for successful mitigation measures. The edge of the area adjacent to Ashby Road (A512) is lower lying and successful mitigation measures to assimilate development could be possible, subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 13

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

30/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis		√				4
	Vegetation enclosure		√				4
	Complexity/Scale				√		2
	Condition				√		2
	Sub Total						12

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view				√		2
	Relationship with existing urban built form		√				4
	Prevention of coalescence	√					5
	Scope to mitigate the development			√			3
	Sub Total						16

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							28
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.				√		2
	Sub Total						2

Overall Landscape Capacity

30

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the west of Shepshed in the transition between the Charnwood Forest and Langley Lowlands landscape character areas. It is situated on the edge of the Charnwood Forest and has an undulating landform with moderate woodland cover and good quality hedgerows.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the undulating land form and mature vegetation cover. It also has some close associations with the existing built form and would not compromise any issues of coalescence. However the area is moderately open to both private and public views. Residential development could be suitable, subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 14

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

30/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure				√		2
	Complexity/Scale		√				4
	Condition		√				4
	Sub Total						13

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view		√				4
	Relationship with existing urban built form					√	1
	Prevention of coalescence				√		2
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						13

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							26
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.			√			3
	Sub Total						3

Overall Landscape Capacity

29

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the north west of Hathern within the Langley Lowlands landscape character area. It is situated on lower valley slopes of the River Soar with the highest part of the area along its southern edge around Oxley Grange Farm.
- It is characterised by large arable fields with clipped hedgerows and few trees.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the area having a landscape with little land use variety and being in a moderate condition. Its location is significantly isolated from the existing urban edge and would not form a natural extension to the existing built form. Limited residential development could be suitable subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 15

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

30/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis		√				4
	Vegetation enclosure			√			3
	Complexity/Scale		√				4
	Condition				√		2
	Sub Total						13

Visual Factors	Openness to public view			√			3
	Openness to private view		√				4
	Relationship with existing urban built form		√				4
	Prevention of coalescence			√			3
	Scope to mitigate the development			√			3
	Sub Total						17

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							30
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.			√			3
	Sub Total						3

Overall Landscape Capacity

33

General Commentary

- This zone is located between Loughborough, Shepshed and Hathern on the boundary between the Langley Lowlands and Soar Valley landscape character areas. It is situated partly on the terrace slopes of the Soar Valley and the undulating landform of the Langley Lowlands.
- The higher part of the site is along its northern edge which forms a ridge line to Bellvue Hill from where the eastern part of the area slopes down to the Soar Valley on one side and both slopes of the Black Brook on the other side.
- The northern area acts as a separation zone between Loughborough and Hathern.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium High** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the undulating landform creating a bowl which is generally well contained from private views. It also has a link with the existing urban edge and would have a moderate impact on settlement separation. Residential development could be suitable subject to mitigation measures .

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number:

15a

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

30/4/12

Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.

Criteria

A	B	C	D	E	Total
				√	1
			√		2
	√				4
			√		2
Sub Total					9

Visual Factors

Openness to public view

Openness to private view

Relationship with existing urban built form

Prevention of coalescence

Potential Landscape Features

Scope to mitigate the development

Sub Total

				√	1
	√				4
				√	1
√					5
			√		2
Sub Total					13

Overall Landscape Sensitivity

A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.

Landscape value

Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.

Sub Total

					22
			√		2
Sub Total					2

Overall Landscape Capacity

24

General Commentary

- This sub-area of zone 15 consists of the higher land on the crest of the slope of Hathern Hill. Vegetation is sparser.
- It is more open to public view.
- The fields are larger and more open than Zone 15, with vegetation restricted to well managed hedgerows.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium Low** capacity to accommodate development because of its elevated landform on a prominent slope with limited enclosure. Built development on this zone is undesirable because of the difficulty of screening development on such a visually exposed slope.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 16

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

30/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis		√				4
	Vegetation enclosure		√				4
	Complexity/Scale					√	1
	Condition				√		2
	Sub Total						11

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view		√				4
	Relationship with existing urban built form		√				4
	Prevention of coalescence				√		2
	Scope to mitigate the development					√	1
	Sub Total						13

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							24
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.					√	1
	Sub Total						1

Overall Landscape Capacity

25

General Commentary

- This zone is located between Loughborough and Shepshed on the boundary between the Charnwood Forest and Langley Lowlands landscape character areas. It is situated adjacent to the urban edge of Loughborough and is bounded on the south by Ashby Road (A512) and the west by the M1 motorway.
- The area of undulating land comprises primarily of the historic parkland associated with Garendon Hall which has fine views throughout of monuments and garden follies.
- In parts the area has substantial tree cover.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium Low** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the complexity, richness and texture of the landscape and it being an area of strong landscape character. Development within the area would have a significant impact on settlement separation and would be difficult to provide appropriate mitigation measures. Development could be appropriate in limited parts of the zone, subject to overcoming difficulties subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 17

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

30/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure		√				4
	Complexity/Scale		√				4
	Condition		√				4
	Sub Total						15

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view		√				4
	Relationship with existing urban built form	√					5
	Prevention of coalescence		√				4
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						19

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							34
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.	√					5
	Sub Total						5

Overall Landscape Capacity

39

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the east of Shepshed on the transition between the Charnwood Forest, Langley Lowlands and the Soar Valley landscape character areas. It is situated on a narrow strip of land between the existing urban edge of Shepshed and the M1 motorway.
- It displays very few of the characteristics of either the Charnwood Forest or the Langley Lowlands but has substantial hedgerows and woodland belts which hide the area from private views.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **High** capacity to accommodate development. This is due its weak landscape characteristics parts of which are in poor condition. The area lacks any degree of tranquillity. Development could be suitable subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 18

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

30/4/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure			√			3
	Complexity/Scale			√			3
	Condition			√			3
	Sub Total						12

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view		√				4
	Relationship with existing urban built form		√				4
	Prevention of coalescence				√		2
	Scope to mitigate the development			√			3
	Sub Total						15

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							27
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.		√				4
	Sub Total						4

Overall Landscape Capacity

31

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the west of Loughborough within the Charnwood Forest landscape character area. It is bounded by the urban edge of Loughborough, Ashby Road (A512), M1 motorway and the rising land of the Charnwood Forest.
- It is an area of moderate landscape character in a good condition with some variations in land use. Trees are confined to watercourses and small woodlands and some mature trees in hedgerows.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to its proximity to the urban edge of Loughborough and the characteristics of the areas vegetation to be used to mitigate new development. Mitigation would be more difficult to successfully achieve at the western end of the zone. Given the nature of the adjacent urban form residential or commercial development would be suitable, subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 19

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

3/5/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis				√		2
	Vegetation enclosure		√				4
	Complexity/Scale			√			3
	Condition			√			3
	Sub Total						12

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view			√			3
	Relationship with existing urban built form			√			3
	Prevention of coalescence		√				4
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						16

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							28
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.			√			3
	Sub Total						3

Overall Landscape Capacity

31

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the east of Loughborough within the Soar Valley landscape character area. It is situated within the flood plain of the River Soar with the exception of the south western part of the area which sits slightly above the flood plain.
- This area of higher land is characterised by large arable fields but the area beyond is dominated by copses of mature trees.
- To the south and east of the former waste tip field boundaries become degraded and the landscape is in a poorer condition.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the flat and open nature of the landscape which is for the most part in good condition. Much of the area is open to public views from the network of routes running through the area. Development could be appropriate in limited parts of the zone, subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 20

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

3/5/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis				√		2
	Vegetation enclosure			√			3
	Complexity/Scale		√				4
	Condition				√		2
	Sub Total						11

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view		√				4
	Relationship with existing urban built form			√			3
	Prevention of coalescence				√		2
	Scope to mitigate the development					√	1
	Sub Total						12

Overall Landscape Sensitivity	23
--------------------------------------	-----------

A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.

Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.				√		2
	Sub Total						2

Overall Landscape Capacity

25

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the north east of Loughborough within the Soar Valley landscape character area. It is situated on the meadow land between the River Soar and the main line railway.
- The area is characterised by large scale open grassland and willow trees along the watercourse.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium** Low capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the flat and open nature of the landscape and the inability of vegetation characteristic to help mitigate development, together with its openness to public view. Given these factors it is not considered appropriate to develop in this zone.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 21

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

3/5/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure				√		2
	Complexity/Scale	√					5
	Condition	√					5
	Sub Total						15

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view				√		2
	Relationship with existing urban built form		√				4
	Prevention of coalescence					√	1
	Scope to mitigate the development			√			3
	Sub Total						12

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							27
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.	√					5
	Sub Total						5

Overall Landscape Capacity

32

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the north of Syston in the Wreake Valley landscape character area. It is situated on the lower valley slopes of the River Wreake between the urban edge of Syston and Queniborough.
- The land on either side of Melton Road (A213) is almost entirely used for horticulture which has created a distinctive feature.
- However, this is not an attractive landscape typical of the character of the area as it is devoid of trees and hedgerows.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium High** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the degraded condition of the appearance of the landscape and its low degree of tranquillity. However, development is likely to have a significant impact on the coalescence of Syston and Queniborough. Development could be suitable subject to mitigation measures:.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 22

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

3/5/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure				√		2
	Complexity/Scale		√				4
	Condition		√				4
	Sub Total						13

Visual Factors	Openness to public view					√	1
	Openness to private view				√		2
	Relationship with existing urban built form	√					5
	Prevention of coalescence			√			3
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						15

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							28
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.		√				4
	Sub Total						4

Overall Landscape Capacity

32

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the east of Syston and is within the Wreake Valley landscape character area. It is situated on an area of flat land between the urban edge of Syston and Barkby/Queniborough Road.
- The new urban edge is distinct and creates an abrupt connection with the rural landscape.
- Generally hedgerows are poor with a lack of significant trees but the landscape quality improves towards the southern end of the area, where there are significant trees along the banks of the Barkby Brook.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium High** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the weak condition of the landscape and lack of variety in land use. It could form a natural extension to the existing urban form and provide an opportunity to mitigate the impact of the urban edge on the wider landscape. Residential development could be suitable subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 23

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

3/5/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure			√			3
	Complexity/Scale		√				4
	Condition			√			3
	Sub Total						13

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view		√				4
	Relationship with existing urban built form				√		2
	Prevention of coalescence			√			3
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						15

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							28
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.						
			√				4
	Sub Total						4

Overall Landscape Capacity

32

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the north of Birstall on the northern side of the A46 (Leicester Western By-pass), between the Charnwood Forest and Soar Valley landscape character areas. It is situated on the flood plain edge either side of the A6 with the land rising markedly towards the south west edge of the site.
- The arable landscape is open with large fields enclosed by clipped hedgerows and few trees.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium High** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the lower lying part of the land either side of the A6 being partially enclosed by landform and vegetation. It would be significantly detached from the existing urban form. Residential development could be suitable subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 24

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

3/5/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis		√				4
	Vegetation enclosure		√				4
	Complexity/Scale				√		2
	Condition				√		2
	Sub Total						12

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view			√			3
	Relationship with existing urban built form				√		2
	Prevention of coalescence				√		2
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						13

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							25
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.				√		2
		Sub Total					2

Overall Landscape Capacity

27

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the south of Rothley within the Charnwood Forest landscape character area. It has an undulating landform with a distinct ridge in the centre and is semi enclosed by vegetation.
- The northern part of the area includes parts of the former parkland to Rothley Court some of which has been utilised to create a mature landscaped golf course.
- The south west corner of the area is higher and is subject to arable farming which creates a more open landscape.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium Low** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the good condition of the landscape which has a variety in pattern texture and scale. It also has a medium high degree of tranquillity. Given these factors it is not considered appropriate to develop in this zone.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 25

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

9/5/12

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Existing Landscape Features.	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure			√			3
	Complexity/Scale		√				4
	Condition			√			3
	Sub Total						

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view			√			3
	Relationship with existing urban built form		√				4
	Prevention of coalescence		√				4
	Scope to mitigate the development			√			3
Sub Total							16

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							29
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.			√			3
		Sub Total					

Overall Landscape Capacity

32

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the north of Anstey within the Charnwood Forest landscape character area. It is situated on tributary valley slopes between the residential urban edge of Anstey and Cropston Reservoir.
- From its boundary with Cropston Road the land rises slightly towards its western edge. The south east corner of the area is incised by a brook which has resulted in a slightly lower lying area adjacent to the urban edge.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium High** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the simplicity of the landscape and the lower lying area adjacent to the urban edge and the opportunity to provide mitigation that is in keeping with the existing landscape pattern. Development could be appropriate in parts of the zone adjacent to the urban edge of Anstey, subject to mitigation measures:

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 26

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:
9/5/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure		√				4
	Complexity/Scale				√		2
	Condition			√			3
	Sub Total						12

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view			√			3
	Relationship with existing urban built form			√			3
	Prevention of coalescence				√		2
	Scope to mitigate the development			√			3
	Sub Total						13

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							25
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.			√			3
		Sub Total					3

Overall Landscape Capacity

28

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the south west of Anstey within the Charnwood Forest landscape character area. It is situated on higher land above the flood plain of the Rothley Brook. From
- The section close to Groby Road has good hedgerows, with hedgerow trees. From here the land rises towards the central part of the area which is more open with clipped hedgerows.
- The northern part of the area has a shallow valley with wooded watercourse.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the openness to public view of most of the area and the complexity of the landscape. Development could be appropriate in parts of the zone adjacent to the urban edge, subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 27

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

9/5/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure		√				4
	Complexity/Scale			√			3
	Condition			√			3
	Sub Total						13

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view			√			3
	Relationship with existing urban built form		√				4
	Prevention of coalescence					√	1
	Scope to mitigate the development			√			3
	Sub Total						13

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							26
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.						
			√				4
	Sub Total						4

Overall Landscape Capacity

30

General Commentary

- This zone is located to the south and east of Anstey within the Charnwood Forest landscape character area. It is situated either side of the Rothley Brook between Anstey and the urban edge of Leicester.
- The area is bisected by the A46 (Leicester Western By-pass) which has a significant detrimental impact on the quality of the landscape.
- The valley of the brook has a significant number of trees, particularly towards the northern end of the site. The part of the area south of the by-pass is more complex and undulating.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the fact that development would significantly compromise separation of Anstey and Leicester and its openness to private and public views which would be difficult to mitigate. Development could be appropriate in parts of the zone adjacent to the urban edge of Anstey or Leicester, subject to mitigation measures:

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 28

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:
9/5/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis				√		2
	Vegetation enclosure		√				4
	Complexity/Scale			√			3
	Condition			√			3
	Sub Total						12

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view		√				4
	Relationship with existing urban built form			√			3
	Prevention of coalescence				√		2
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						15

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							27
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.						
			√				4
	Sub Total						4

Overall Landscape Capacity

31

General Commentary

- This zone is located between Syston, Thurmaston and Wanlip within the Soar Valley landscape character area. Most of the area comprises of former gravel workings either side of the Grand Union Canal, and includes part of Watermead Country Park.
- The area has areas of open water and good vegetation cover with a considerable number of mature trees. The area is substantially open to views from the A46.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to the flatness of the land and its openness to public view. Issues of coalescence would need to be carefully considered. Given the nature of the adjacent urban form commercial development could be suitable in certain parts of the area, subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 29

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:
9/5/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure				√		2
	Complexity/Scale		√				4
	Condition			√			3
	Sub Total						12

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view		√				4
	Relationship with existing urban built form		√				4
	Prevention of coalescence				√		2
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						16

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							28
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.			√			3
		Sub Total					3

Overall Landscape Capacity

31

General Commentary

- This zone is located between Syston, Thurmaston and Barkby and Barkby Thorpe on the boundary between the Wreake Valley and High Leicester landscape character areas. It is situated on lower valley slopes which lead from the urban edge of Thurmaston and Syston to the higher land around Barkby and Barkby Thorpe.
- It is a landscape of large fields and clipped hedges with few trees, with the exception of the copse at Woodgate Nurseries and along the banks of the Barkby Brook north of Barkby Lane.
- This arable landscape is significantly open to views from the higher land close to Barkby and Barkby Thorpe.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to its openness to public view, lack of vegetation cover and the need to avoid coalescence. It is however a simple landscape in a moderate condition, and the western and northern areas have close associations with the existing urban edge. Development could be appropriate on the lower land adjacent to the urban edge, subject to mitigation measures.

Charnwood Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Survey Form

Zone Number: 30

Surveyors: MF

Date Surveyed:

9/5/12

		A	B	C	D	E	Total
Criteria Group Existing Landscape Features.	Criteria						
	Slope analysis			√			3
	Vegetation enclosure				√		2
	Complexity/Scale		√				4
	Condition			√			3
	Sub Total						12

Visual Factors	Openness to public view				√		2
	Openness to private view			√			3
	Relationship with existing urban built form		√				4
	Prevention of coalescence			√			3
	Scope to mitigate the development		√				4
	Sub Total						16

Overall Landscape Sensitivity							28
A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.							
Landscape value	Degree of tranquility, remoteness, wildness or scenic beauty.			√			3
		Sub Total					3

Overall Landscape Capacity

31

General Commentary

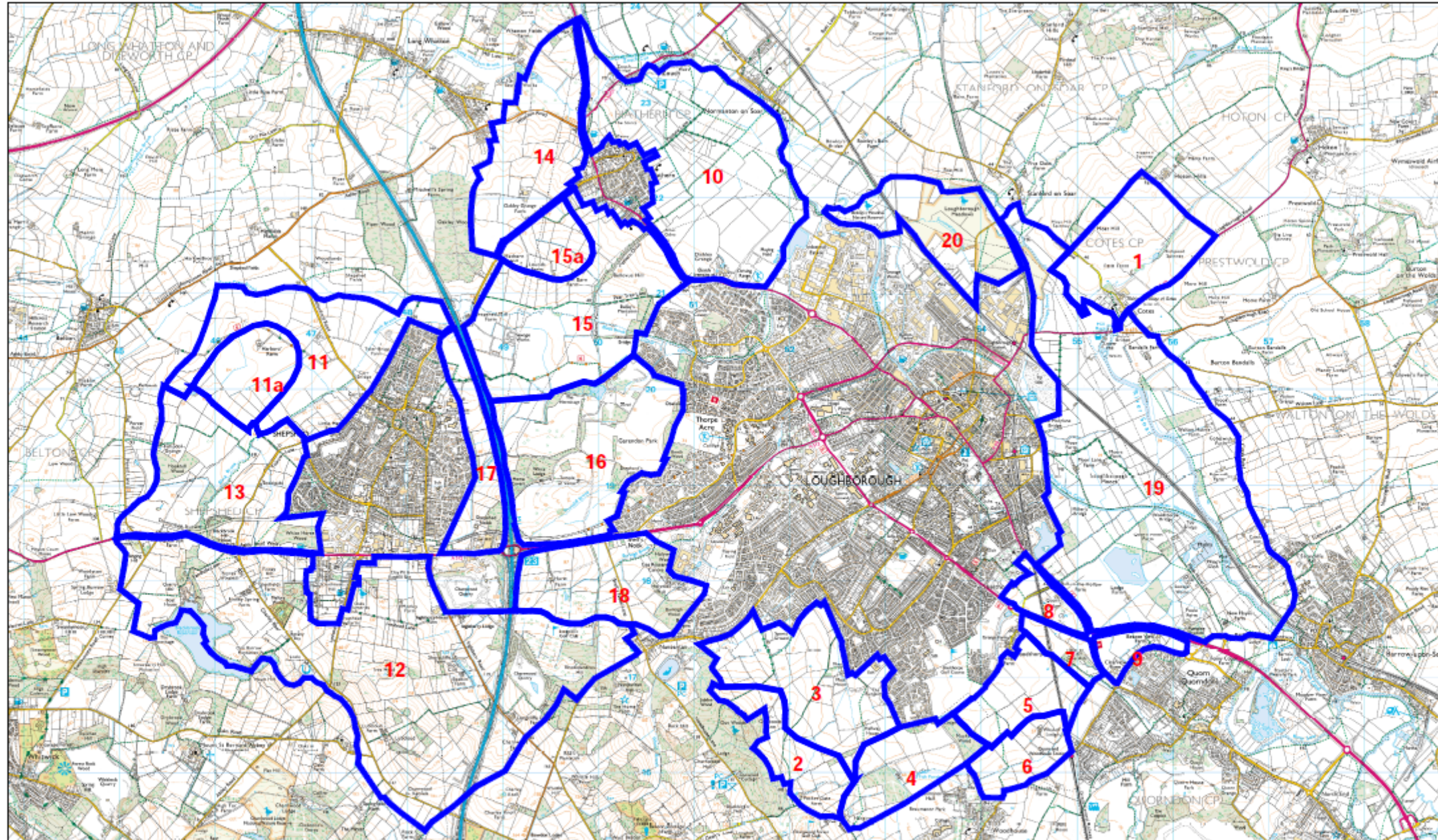
- This zone is located adjacent to Leicester's northern urban fringe within the High Leicestershire landscape character area. It is situated on lower valley slopes either side of the Melton Brook. The land rises to a rural ridgeline along the northern boundary of the area and to the urban edge of Leicester on the south side.
- The northern and south western slopes are characterised by large arable fields with clipped hedgerows and few trees but the southern slopes west of Hamilton Grounds Farm have smaller fields with significant trees and copses.
- Almost the whole area is open to views from either side of the valley.

Comments on suitability for development and mitigation measures

It is considered to have **Medium** capacity to accommodate development. This is due to its openness to public view and the lack of vegetation cover. It is however a simple landscape with some variety, close to the existing urban edge of Leicester. The existing landscape pattern in the south eastern part of the area could guide mitigation that is in keeping, subject to mitigation measures.

APPENDIX 8

Landscape Capacity & Sensitivity Survey Zones – LOUGHBOROUGH & SHEPSHED

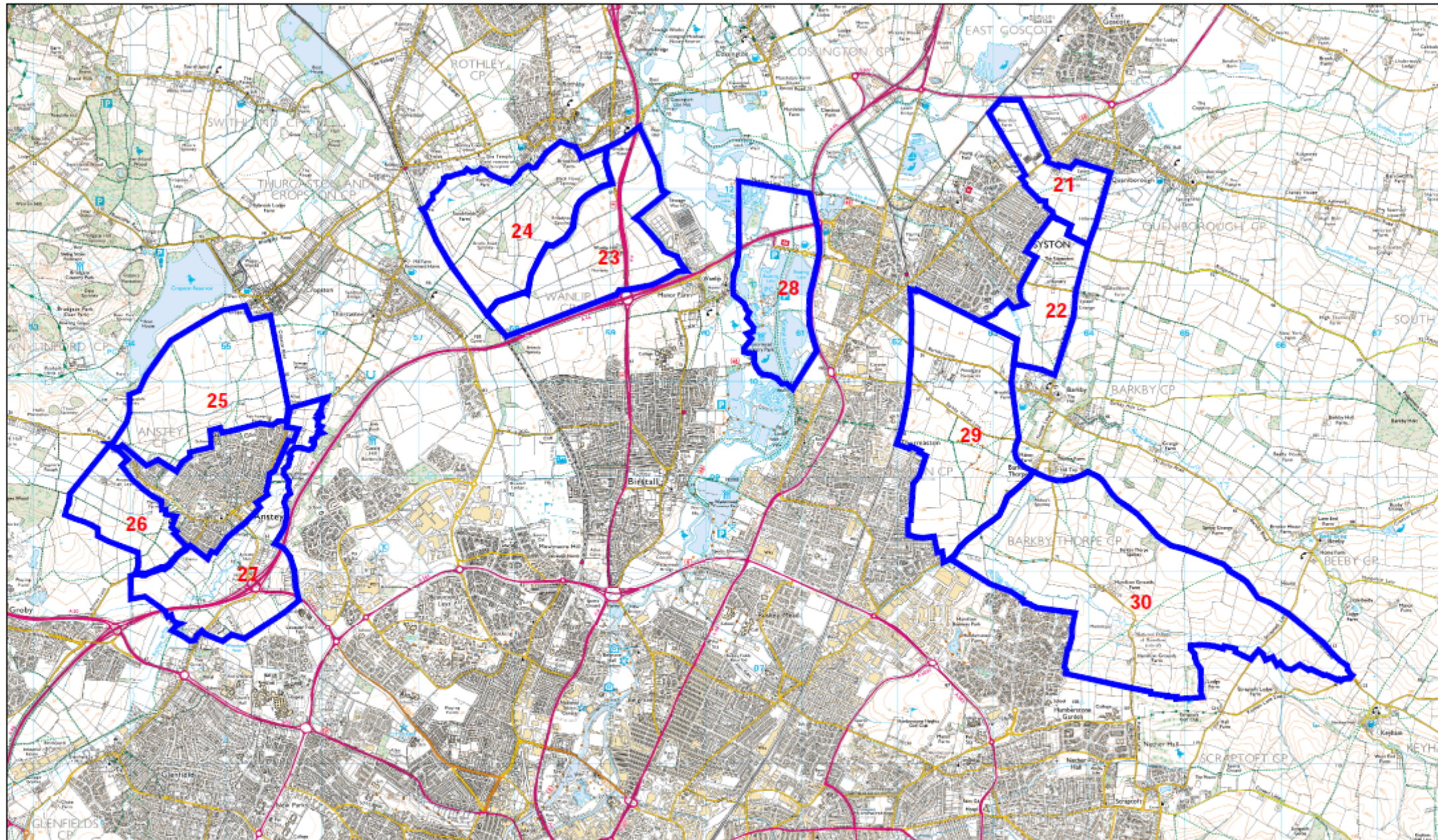


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Landscape Capacity & Sensitivity Survey Zones – NORTH LEICESTER



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GLOSSARY

(Source indicated in bracket)

Biodiversity

The variety of life in all its forms. (UK Biodiversity Action Plan)

Character

Character is a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse. Particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, field patterns and human settlement create character. (Natural England)

Characterisation

The process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character. (Natural England)

Characteristics

Elements (or combinations of elements) which make a particular contribution to distinctive character. (Natural England)

Elements

Individual components which make up the landscape, such as trees and hedges. (Natural England)

Features

Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements, like tree clumps, church towers, or wooded skylines. (Natural England)

Geodiversity

The variety of geological (rocks, minerals, fossils), geomorphological (land form, processes) and soil features. It includes their assemblages, relationships, properties, interpretations and systems. (Draft PPS – Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment)

Green Infrastructure

Comprises the networks of multi-functional greenspace which sit within, and contribute to, the type of high quality natural and built environment required to deliver 'sustainable communities'. Delivering, protecting and enhancing these networks requires the creation of new assets to link with river corridors, waterways, woodlands, nature reserves, urban greenspace, historic sites and other existing assets. (East Midlands Regional Plan, March 2009)

Habitat of Principal Importance

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. Included on the list are fifty-six habitats of principal importance which have been identified as requiring action in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). They include terrestrial habitats such as upland hay meadows to lowland mixed deciduous woodland, and freshwater and habitats such as ponds. (Natural England)

Landscape

An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. (European Landscape Convention)

Landscape Character Areas

These are single unique areas and are discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type. Each area has its own individual character, even though it might share the same generic characteristics with other areas of the same landscape character type. (Natural England)

Landscape Character Types

These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern. (Natural England)

Local Geological Site

Local Geological Sites (previously known as Regionally Important Geological/geological Sites [RIGS]), are generally selected by county or unitary authority areas for their value in terms of important advances in Earth science knowledge, for study by Earth scientists and for their educational purpose. (Natural England)

Local Nature Reserve

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They offer people special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it. (Natural England)

Local Wildlife Site

Local Wildlife Sites are non-statutory areas of local importance for nature conservation that complement nationally and internationally designated geological and wildlife sites. They support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife, and many sites contain habitats and species that are priorities under the UK or County Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP). (Natural England)

Natural Environment

Encompasses biodiversity, geodiversity & soil, and landscape.

Rare Plant Register

The Rare Plant Register is the first complete published listing of those flowering plants, ferns, club mosses and horsetails recorded growing wild in the combined counties of Leicestershire and Rutland (Vice-County 55) since 1933. It includes the records of 1762 plants, including micro-species, hybrids and subspecies, available at 31st December 2010. (Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust)

Red Data Book

Red Data Books identify species which are endangered or seriously declining and gather information on threats and ecology relevant to individual species and their habitats, in order to establish a base to help conservationists to take active steps to conserve them and assess future changes.

Site of Special Scientific Interest

Sites of Special Scientific Interest are the country's very best wildlife and geological sites. They are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. (Natural England)

Species of Principal Importance

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. Included on the list are 943 species of principal importance included which have been identified as requiring action under the UK BAP. (Natural England)