

**Charnwood Borough Council
Green Wedge Review**

February 2011

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GREEN WEDGE REVIEW

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Green wedges are a local planning policy designation that have been used in Leicestershire since the 1980's. They are part of the overall green infrastructure within Charnwood Borough and are popular with local people in the role they play in protecting areas of open land around urban areas and maintaining settlement identity.
- 1.2. Several local authority Core Strategy examinations in Leicestershire have emphasised the need to review the function of green wedges following advice in the East Midlands Regional Plan.
- 1.3. The green wedge review is an objective evidence gathering exercise and does not have any policy status. It assesses the extent of the green wedges currently shown on the Local Plan Proposals map. It does not change or delete existing green wedges or form new ones. It will however contribute to the Charnwood Borough Council Core Strategy which is currently being produced and it will also feed in to the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.
- 1.4. The report, whilst focusing on the Borough of Charnwood, is based on a methodology jointly prepared by local planning authorities comprising the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area who are affected by this policy layer.
- 1.5. The document has been separated into sections that follow the methodology. The format is as follows;
 - **History of the green wedge policy** – sets out the history of green wedge policy and an overview of its functions.
 - **Policy Context** – outlines the policies that have informed the production of the review along with relevant strategies.
 - **Methodology** – explains the Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Review Methodology
 - **Green wedge Analysis** – sets out the desk top and on site analysis.
 - **Evaluation** – Brings together the findings of the desk top survey and site investigations linking the objectives of the methodology
 - **Conclusion** – sets out some concluding points and makes recommendations that could be carried forward through the core Strategy and Sites Allocations Process.

2. History of the green wedge policy

Introduction

- 2.1. The very nature of green wedges means that they are not restricted to administrative boundaries and often cross into one or more districts. This section of the Report, therefore, does not just consider the history of the green wedge policy in Charnwood Borough, but also the green wedge within the other local authority areas.

History of the green wedge policy

- 2.2. The concept of green wedge policies to protect structurally important areas of open land was introduced in Leicestershire in the Leicestershire Structure Plan (1987). The Secretary of State's approval makes it clear that green wedges were considered to be '*...policies for protecting structurally important areas of open land which influence the form and direction of urban development in Leicester...*'. The safeguarding of green wedges will '*Ensure that, as urban developments extends, open land is incorporated within it.*' The Secretary of State also concluded that the function of green wedge areas was to prevent the coalescence and maintain the physical identity of settlements.
- 2.3. The Leicestershire Structure Plan (1994) maintained green wedge policies. It highlighted that '*green wedges around Leicester and Loughborough have proved to be effective in retaining open areas both between settlements and extending into the main built-up areas*'.
- 2.4. The Structure Plan policy set out what land uses would be granted planning permission within green wedge boundaries. These included agriculture, forestry, transport routes and mineral uses.
- 2.5. The policies in the Leicestershire Structure Plan 1991-2006 were then implemented in the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (2004). Policy CT/1 sets out to safeguard those areas of important separation between communities and to help protect individual identities of those communities. The policy also seeks to improve access to these areas and to secure landscape improvements. Previous technical reports used to inform Local Plans provide useful context as they define the original functions for each green wedge. This will be summarized in the analysis of each green wedge.
- 2.6. The Structure Plan was updated to form the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1996-2016 which was adopted in 2005. Strategy Policy 5 green wedges sets out the following four purposes of green wedges which should be allocated in association with planned urban extensions;
- Protecting structurally important areas of open land between the existing and planned development limits of the urban areas;
 - Ensuring that open land extends outwards between the existing and planned development limits of the urban areas;
 - Preserving strategic landscape and wildlife links between the countryside and urban open spaces; and
 - Preventing the coalescence and maintaining the physical identity of settlements adjoining the main urban areas.

- 2.7. Strategy policy 5 also expanded upon the previous Structure Plan in terms of the acceptable land uses and development allowed within green wedges including outdoor recreation, public access and burial grounds.
- 2.8. Strategy Policy 6, review of green wedges, states that green wedges will be reviewed as part of local plan reviews. The supporting text in paragraph 2.36 indicates that there may need to be review, and amend if necessary, the boundaries of some of the defined areas, after taking into account the need to reconcile the location of green wedges with the location of development.
- 2.9. The Structure Plan was superseded by the East Midlands Regional Plan (2009). The panel report (2007) stated that *“green wedges do not have the national policy status of Green Belt and... they should not be regarded as unduly restrictive and must be subject to review in order to accommodate new development”*.
- 2.10. The Regional Plan acknowledges that the long established green wedge policy, located around Leicester, has successfully controlled urban sprawl around the city. However, green wedge isn't supported by a policy in the Plan. It identifies green wedges as; *‘serving useful strategic planning functions in preventing the merging of settlements, guiding development form, and providing a “green lung” into urban areas and act as a recreational resource.’* The plan also accepts that they can identify small areas of separation between settlements; *‘provision will be made in green wedges for the retention or creation of green infrastructure and green links between urban open spaces and the countryside, and for the retention and enhancement of public access facilities, particularly for recreation.’*
- 2.11. The Regional Plan is the most up to date policy approach for green wedge and its guidance will be used as the basis of this review.

3. Policy Context and Evidence base

Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7): Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004).

- 3.1. The concept of Countryside and the uses that are appropriate within it are described in Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. The Government's overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all. Para 1(iv) of PPS7 states that new development in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled whilst ensuring that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced.
- 3.2. PPS 7 paragraph 24 recognises and accepts that there are areas of landscape outside nationally designated areas that have significant local value.
- 3.3. Paragraph 26 pays particular attention to the countryside around urban areas. It states that 'local planning authorities should ensure planning policies in Local Development Document's address the particular land use issues and opportunities to be found in the countryside around all urban areas, recognising its importance to those who live or work there, and also in providing the nearest and most accessible countryside to urban residents. Planning authorities should aim to secure environmental improvements and maximise a range of beneficial uses of this land, whilst reducing potential conflicts between neighbouring land uses. This should include improvement of public access (e.g. through support for country parks and community forests) and facilitating the provision of appropriate sport and recreation facilities'.

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)

- 3.4. PPS 1 states that planning policies should seek to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside. Planning should also seek to maintain and improve the local environment through positive policies on issues such as the provision of public open space (para 17 and 18).

Consultation Draft Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment (2010)

- 3.5. The Policy Statement makes it clear that key priorities are the natural environment, green infrastructure, open space and quality of public rights of way. This relates to the objectives of the green wedge which promotes providing a green lung in to the countryside and recreational opportunities.

Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Business Plan 2011-15

- 3.6. The DCLG business plan for 2011-15 proposes to create a new designation in the planning system for 'green spaces valued by local people' by April 2012. No further information about this policy has been released but it may provide a further level of protection in the future.

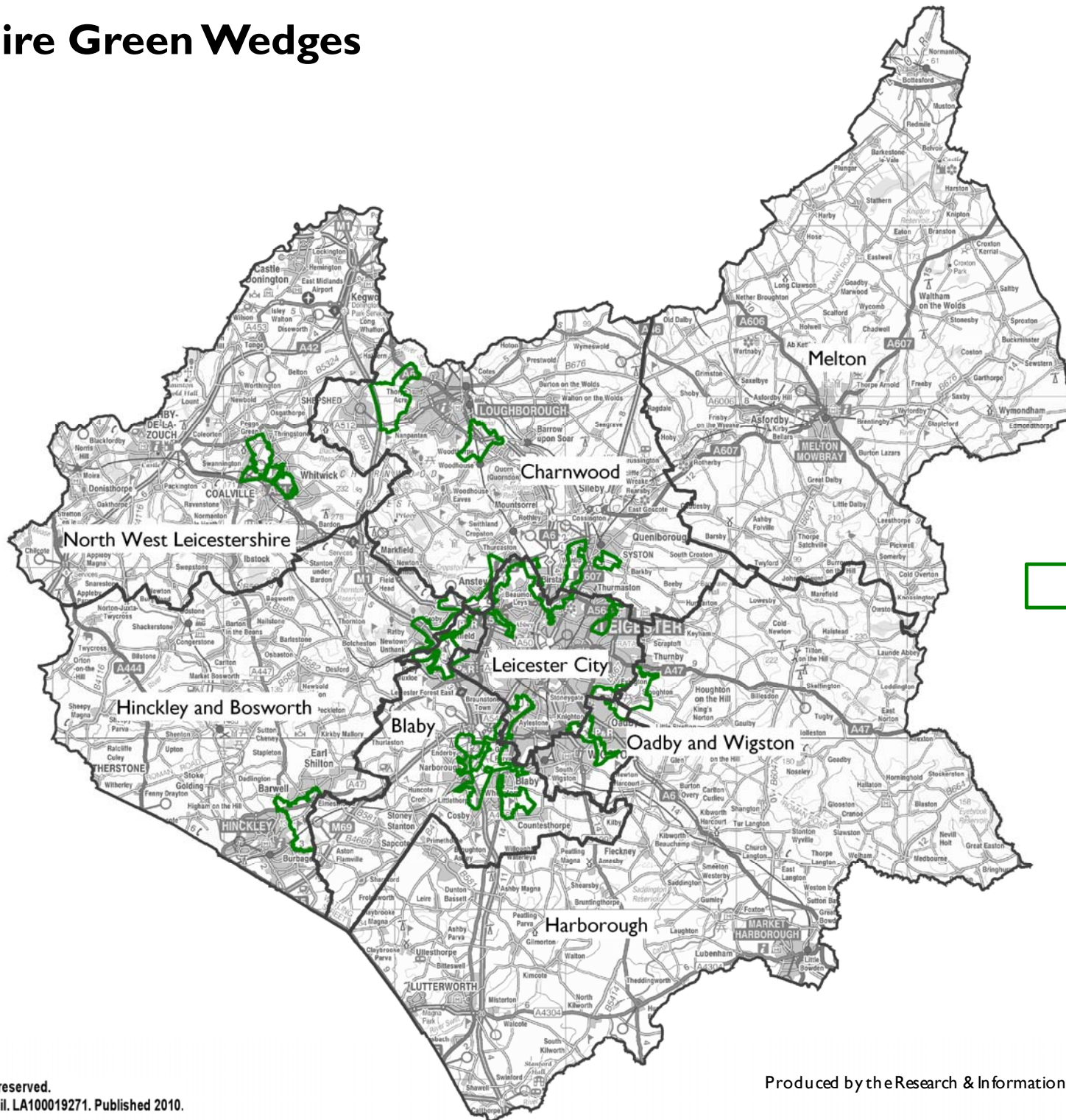
Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (January 2004)

- 3.7. Saved Policy CT/1 set out the general principles for areas of green wedge in terms of what development will be acceptable.
- 3.8. Saved Policy CT/3 defines the following locations of the green wedges;
- Loughborough/Quorn
 - Loughborough/Hathern
 - Loughborough/Shepshed
 - Leicester (Beaumont Leys)/ Birstall/Thurcaston/Anstey/Cropston;
 - Birstall/Leicester/Thurmaston (Soar Valley North);
 - Beaumont Leys/Glenfrith/Anstey/Groby
- 3.9. A map of the location of the green wedges within Charnwood Borough is at the end of this chapter.
- 3.10. Saved Policy CT/3 also sets out the following principle functions;
- To protect the predominantly open and undeveloped character of the areas; and
 - To be consistent with safeguarding the areas function to provide strategically important separation between settlements; and
 - Secure landscape improvements usually in the form of tree groups and woodland.

Areas of Local Separation

- 3.11. Saved Policy CT/3 Development in Areas of Local Separation sets out the areas for which Local Separation policy will apply and prescribes that development in these areas is acceptable if the narrow gap between settlements is not reduced and the predominantly open and undeveloped character of the area is retained. Areas of Local Separation policy became an established part of planning policy in Leicestershire in the 1980's. It was intended to be used in areas where green wedge policies do not apply and which cannot be regarded as countryside, but where development would result in a reduction in the separation between the built up areas of settlements. Within these areas is land of an open nature which has both urban and rural influences such as recreation land or allotments, but which lies outside the limits of the settlement framework.

Leicestershire Green Wedges



 Green Wedges

Evidence and Strategies

The National Forest Strategy (2004-2014)

- 3.12. Part of the Loughborough/Shepshed green wedge falls within Charnwood Forest. This is part of the overall National Forest. The National Forest strategy envisages forestry being multi purpose as a 'new resource for recreation and tourism, creating rich new wildlife habitats, restoring damaged landscapes and offering an alternative productive use of farmland'. This complements the role and objectives of green wedge.

Charnwood Forest Regional Park Vision

- 3.13. The adopted East Midlands Regional Plan recognises the need for measures to protect and enhance the particular character of Charnwood Forest through a Regional Park initiative (Policy Three Cities SRS5). A draft vision statement has been prepared for the Regional Park which has been developed by relevant local authorities, Natural England, Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM), East Midlands Regional Assembly and the National Forest.

The River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy (July 2009)

- 3.14. Part of the Leicester/Thurmaston/Birstall green wedge falls within the strategy area. The Strategy recognizes that green wedge provides opportunities for extending the green Infrastructure offer. The green wedges will continue to provide open countryside space within the area and offer opportunities for outdoor recreation and landscape preservation. These open spaces provide an important mechanism for providing public open space, particularly compensation for the loss of private open space within existing large settlements. The Waterway provides an important green link between urban areas and green wedges.

6C's Green Infrastructure Strategy (July 2010)

- 3.15. The 6C's Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy provides a long term vision and strategic framework for delivery of green infrastructure across the 6C's Growth Point which encapsulates all Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire authorities.
- 3.16. All of the green wedges within this review fall within an Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zone which incorporates land that represents a significant resource for urban communities and the immediate landscape setting for the Leicester Principle Urban Area which links town and country. The Zone has the opportunity to deliver a range of economic, environmental and social benefits.
- 3.17. Additional, the strategy identifies green infrastructure corridors. The following green wedges fall within particular sub regional Green Infrastructure corridors;
- Loughborough/Shepshed green wedge – Charnwood Forest and National Forest Green Infrastructure corridor
 - Loughborough/Hathern – River Soar Green Infrastructure corridor

- Leicester/Anstey/Birstall – River Soar and Charnwood Forest/Nation Forest Green Infrastructure corridor
- Birstall/Thurmaston/Leicester – River Soar Green Infrastructure corridor.
- Syston/Thurmaston – Wreake Strategic River Corridor

Green Space Strategy (2004)

- 3.18. The purpose of the Green Space Strategy is to provide the context and strategic direction relating to the management and improvement of green space provision in the borough and provide a framework to facilitate improvements in provision. Development of greenways in built areas was one of the key needs identified.

Charnwood Borough Council Core Strategy Further Consultation Document (2008)

- 3.19. The Further Consultation Document describes green wedges as being part of Charnwood's wider green infrastructure network. They have a positive role to play providing access from within built-up areas to the open countryside and creating links to the wider green infrastructure network. Whilst green wedges will be safeguarded from incremental development they are intended to be flexible to allow for planned development to the edge of settlements. They are designed to change and grow with development, not to prevent it.
- 3.20. The consultation highlighted the general support for green wedges in the way they safeguard settlement identity but there was concern that development pressures will erode this purpose. Green wedges should be retained (or alternative designations such as countryside/green belt considered) because of access to recreation and protecting settlement identity. It was raised that some of the current green wedge locations don't meet the Regional Plan definition and therefore a review of green wedges is needed.

Charnwood Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study 2010

- 3.21. Charnwood Open Space, Sports and Recreation study examines 10 different types of open space. Part of the study involved a quality audit of over 500 sites within the Borough. For each of these types of open space, the study identifies issues of the quantity of provision, how accessible that provision is, and what quality it is. These issues are identified by comparing current provision against local standards derived through the study.

Stepping Stones Green Wedge Management Strategy

- 3.22. The Stepping Stones Project works with community groups, Parish and Town Councils and landowners in the Parishes around Leicester to help them to enhance the countryside for the benefit of people and wildlife.
- 3.23. The project is working with people who live in and around green wedges. There are currently four green wedge management strategies which offer recommendations for management of land.

4. Methodology

Background

- 4.1. The Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Review Joint Methodology was produced in August 2009. It was produced in partnership with seven Leicestershire local authorities, which include Charnwood alongside Blaby, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicester, North West Leicestershire and Oadby and Wigston. These authorities form the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA). Melton Borough Council is also part of the HMA but did not participate in the Joint Methodology as there are no green wedges in the administrative area.
- 4.2. The methodology was agreed by key stakeholders including Leicestershire County Council, The Environment Agency, The Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and The East Midlands Regional Assembly.
- 4.3. A joint methodology was prepared because many of the authorities in Leicestershire have green wedges that overlap into other local authority areas. Therefore, having a consistent approach to such a review is considered vital to ensure the soundness of Development Plan Documents prepared by each Local Authority.
- 4.4. The review assesses the role and function of the green wedges currently shown in the Local Plan in the context of the East Midlands Regional Plan (paragraph 4.2.18). Maps of the existing green wedges are in appendix 2. The green wedge principles as set out in the Regional Plan have been interpreted to reflect the local circumstances in the Housing Market Area.
- 4.5. It was agreed by all Local Authorities that for an area to be considered as a green wedge, it will fulfil all of the principles below or there should be a potential for particular green wedges to fulfil all of the criteria in the future if measures are put in place to allow it.

Preventing the merging of settlements

- 4.6. Green wedges will safeguard the identity of communities within and around urban areas that face growth pressures.

Guiding development form

- 4.7. Green wedges will guide the form of new developments in urban areas, consideration will be given to designating new green wedges or amending existing ones where it would help shape the development of new communities' such as potential sustainable urban extensions.

Providing a green lung into urban areas:

4.8. Green wedges will provide communities with access to green infrastructure and the countryside beyond. They are distinct from other types of open space in that they provide a continuous link between the open countryside and land which penetrates deep into urban areas. Green wedges will also provide multi-functional uses such as:

- Open space, sport and recreation facilities;
- Flood alleviation measures;
- Air quality management;
- Protection/improvement of wildlife sites and the links between them;
- Protection/improvement of historic/cultural assets and the links between them;
- Links to green infrastructure at both a strategic and local level; and
- Transport corridors.

A recreational resource

4.9. Green wedges will provide a recreational resource. This will include informal and formal facilities now and in the future. Public access will be maximised.

4.10. Each green wedge is assessed in the following stages;

- Data collection/desk top survey including existing uses with the area
- On site surveys
- Site evaluation against the role and function of green wedge as set out in the Regional Plan
- Consultation on the conclusion of the green wedge review.

Outputs

4.11. The review provides an objective assessment of the green wedges currently shown on the Local Plan Proposals map. It does not change or delete existing green wedges or form new ones. It will form an important part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

5. Green Wedge Analysis

Green wedges around Loughborough

- 5.1. These green wedges are located between Loughborough and the neighbouring settlements of Shepshed, Quorn and Hathern. A map of the all the green wedges is in appendix 2.

Loughborough/Quorn



Figure 1: Views from the green wedge

Size/extent

- 5.2. The Loughborough/Quorn green wedge covers an area of about 2800 hectares. It is at its widest along the A6 at about 1.8 km
- 5.3. The green wedge was considered to be a structurally important area of open land between Loughborough and Quorn. Its principle function was originally to secure open views of countryside from within Loughborough and Quorn, to safeguard rural, open aspect of approaches into Loughborough and to provide for public access, recreation, nature conservation and other green and open uses in a location accessible to a wide area.

Development pressures

- 5.4. No significant planning applications have been permitted since the adoption of the Local Plan. However, the area has been under constant pressure for development which has been resisted successfully.
- 5.5. One of the major development pressures is the development option at 'Land South of Loughborough' which has been subject to consultation for a potential sustainable urban extension to Loughborough as part of the Local Development Framework. This area is an extension of the urban area south of the town in the area south of Shelthorpe.
- 5.6. Land between Farley Way and the A6 bypass in Quorn has been promoted as a possible housing and employment site as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment evidence base.
- 5.7. The development option at 'Land East of Loughborough' which has been subject to consultation for a potential sustainable urban extension to Loughborough as part of the Local Development Framework would have an affect on this green wedge. This option would extend development to the East of the town but developers are proposing a new A60/A6 link road between Nottingham road and the A6 roundabout north of Quorn as

part of this development. This new road would cut through the defined green wedge area.

Uses

- 5.8. Over half of the area is in agricultural use. Other established uses are residential at various farmsteads namely Bull in the Hollow Farm and Beacon View Farm which is also a small industrial estate visible from the A6 but is no longer in use. Bull in the Hollow Farm also has some privately owned recreational facilities including an Archery Centre. There is one listed building within the green wedge at One Ash which is grade 2.
- 5.9. A number of major infrastructure routes bisect the green wedge such as the A6 corridor, the Midlands Mainline railway and the Great Central Railway.
- 5.10. Recreational uses include school playing fields north of Woodhouse Road, and equestrian facilities north of Farley Way, together with Charnwood Water and private playing fields west of the A6 at Loughborough.
- 5.11. Charnwood Water to the south of Loughborough is of importance for nature conservation. There are numerous sites just outside the green wedge that are designated in the same way, namely Mucklin Wood on the south western boundary and land to the south of Quorn High Street along a water course.
- 5.12. The southwest part of the green wedge is classified as grade 2 agricultural land. This covers land around Woodthorpe and southwards towards Woodhouse. There is also a small pocket of grade 2 agricultural land at Beacon View Farm to the north of Quorn. The majority of the rest of the green wedge is covered by grade 3 agricultural land.
- 5.13. The area has no significant flooding issues as it is in Flood Zone 1.
- 5.14. There are no sites allocated in the adopted Minerals and Waste Plan within the green wedge. The entire green wedge is, however, in a mineral consultation zone.
- 5.15. The green wedge is in close proximity to the south Loughborough priority neighbourhood.

Access

- 5.16. There is limited access in to the green wedge. What access there is can be achieved from 2 public footpaths. One of these footpaths connect Woodthorpe to Quorn and the other footpath extends out from Loughborough Road, adjacent to Bull in the Hollow Farm which eventually connects to a footpath into Barrow upon Soar.
- 5.17. The public footpath at Quorn is not very well sign posted and is more easily accessed from Woodthorpe. There was evidence, during the site visit, of mixed use of the footpath by walkers and cyclists but the footpath may not be accessible to people with disabilities due to the rough ground.

- 5.18. The public footpath adjacent to Bull in the Hollow Farm has limited access. It is accessed from a very busy dual carriage way and there is limited parking along this road. The footpath is also screened by mature hedgerow trees which limits any views towards Quorn.
- 5.19. The majority of the north section of the green wedge has very limited access from public rights of way or permissive routes.
- 5.20. There is a well used cycleway along the A6 and Epinal Way which connects Loughborough to Quorn. Another cycleway also runs along the boundary of the green wedge at Woodthorpe connecting Loughborough and Woodthorpe to Woodhouse.
- 5.21. There is no evidence of any informal use of the green wedge. Access is restricted to the footpaths only.

Ecology

- 5.22. The green wedge provides strategic landscape and wildlife links between the urban edges of Loughborough and Quorn and the countryside. There are several Local Wildlife Sites within the green wedge: Charnwood Water, Charnwood Water Wood and Great Fenny Wood. It also provide links between the eastern edge of Charnwood Forest and the western edge of the Soar Valley landscape areas on a west-east axis which enables species movement, migration and dispersal. It also provides links between the Charnwood Forest and the urban fringe.
- 5.23. A substantial number of Local Wildlife Sites are either adjacent or in close proximity to the green wedge: Charnwood Water Marsh, Mucklin Wood, Tom Long's Meadow, Farley Way Lake and Loughborough Moors. Mucklin Wood is also grade 2 on Natural England's Inventory of Ancient Woodland.
- 5.24. Several hedgerows within the green wedge have been identified as potential Local Wildlife Sites, one to the south of Charnwood Water and another to the east of Mucklin Wood.
- 5.25. The principal wildlife corridors within the green wedge which have been identified in ecological surveys are the Great Central Railway on a south-north axis, Mucklin Lane and species-rich hedgerows to the south of Charnwood Water on an east-west axis. There are other hedgerows, a minor watercourse and densely treed areas which offer some connectivity within the green wedge although these areas have not been surveyed.
- 5.26. Habitats of principal importance such as eutrophic standing water, wet woodland, mixed deciduous woodland, fens and mesotrophic grassland are located within the green wedge or in close proximity.
- 5.27. There are records of protected species, species of principal importance and Local BAP species within the green wedge such as common pipistrelle bat, common toad, water vole, sand martin, reed bunting, skylark and badger. Species such as the common toad rely on aquatic habitat, good terrestrial habitats and a network of wildlife corridors to migrate to and from their breeding places.

Air quality areas

- 5.28. Loughborough falls within one of Charnwood's Air Quality Management Areas. There is a diffusion tube monitoring station on Epinal Way Extension, Loughborough, which runs through the green wedge.

Existing boundaries

- 5.29. The northern and southern boundaries are based on the limits of the built areas of Loughborough and Quorn. The eastern and western boundaries are less clearly defined and follow field boundaries and natural features.

Topography

- 5.30. The area is generally flat which allows views into the distance of Mucklin Wood and Bradgate Park beyond Quorn. The main topographical feature is a shallow ridge south of Loughborough upon which Woodthorpe sits, which prevents inter-visibility between settlements.

Separation

- 5.31. The green wedge is very well screened by dense boundary treatment along Farley Way and Woodhouse Road in Quorn which restricts views from the green wedge into Quorn. The boundary treatment also means that views are restricted from the A6 into Quorn. The restricted views are most prominent in the area to the north and east of A6 out of Loughborough.
- 5.32. Loughborough and Quorn are about 1 mile apart. There is a perception of separation from local roads, the mainline railway, the Great Central Railway corridor, local footpaths and from views within and adjacent to the area.
- 5.33. Woodthorpe is visible from some parts of the green wedge along the Great Central Railway Line and there are also views of the tall Loughborough University buildings beyond Woodthorpe and the Epinal Way extension.

Conclusions

Criteria	Does the green wedge meet the Criteria?
Preventing the merging of settlements	Yes. Development has been restricted within the area and the boundary treatments along both settlement boundaries restrict views into either Loughborough or Quorn from the green wedge.
Guiding development form	Yes. The green wedge boundary was designated to allow for the large housing development in south Loughborough (Grange Park) so can be seen to guide development form at the plan making stage of the Local Plan. However, since then, it has restricted development rather than guiding it.
Providing a green “lung” into urban areas	<p>No. The wedge provides a link between the urban area and the countryside but it doesn’t penetrate deep into the urban area so doesn’t perform the role of providing a green lung.</p> <p>The land use is mainly agricultural with access via formal public footpaths from Loughborough and Quorn.</p> <p>There are, however, multi-functional uses include sports and recreation facilities.</p> <p>There are strategic landscape and wildlife links between the urban edges of Loughborough and Quorn and the countryside. There are several Local Wildlife Sites within the green wedge such as Charnwood Water.</p> <p>The green wedge is within one of Charnwood’s Air Quality Management Areas.</p>
A recreational resource	No. The green wedge provides access to the public through a limited amount of footpaths and cycles ways. There is no evidence of any informal uses within the area and the ability to provide additional recreational activities is limited due to private ownership and limited access.

Loughborough/Hathern



Figure 2 Views of Loughborough/Hathern green wedge

- 5.34. The green wedge comprises the narrow gap between Loughborough and Hathern with prominent built development at either end. There is an open landscape fabric.

Size/extent

- 5.35. The green wedge covers approximately 900 hectares. It is 930 metres at its widest north of the A6 and 670 metres at its narrowest along the A6 transport corridor.

Development Pressures

- 5.36. There has been increasing development pressure for ad hoc development schemes on the edge of the green wedge despite the restrictions on access off the A6 trunk road.
- 5.37. Planning permission has been granted on Land at Pear Tree Lane, Loughborough which is under construction. This is an allocated housing site in the Borough local plan that lies adjacent to the green wedge.
- 5.38. Planning permission (P/10/0415/2) has been granted for development of 58 homes adjacent to the green wedge on the boundary of Hathern. This scheme is also under construction.
- 5.39. A planning application (P/08/2048/2) was submitted in 2008 at Land to the North and West of Dishley Grange, Derby Road, Loughborough. The application is for employment development (Use Classes B1 & B8), with roundabout access to A6, associated engineering works and relocation of recreation uses. This application is still pending and would be located on the edge of the green wedge at Loughborough. However, the proposed highway works would be within the green wedge.
- 5.40. A Sustainable Urban Extension on land to the north of Garendon Park is being proposed through the Local Development Framework. This would potentially require a new link road between the A512 and the A6. Such a road would have to join the A6 at a new junction within the green wedge area.

Uses

- 5.41. The green wedge is very open in character with limited built development. The most prominent buildings are the Dishley Grange farmstead and the isolated housing along the A6.

- 5.42. The green wedge includes the town's main playing fields area and a golf range. There is also an allotment connected to Hathern. To the south of the A6, the area is mainly under arable cultivation. The A6 bisect the wedge.
- 5.43. Much of the land to the east of the A6 is washland and is affected by Flood Zone 3b.
- 5.44. There is a small pocket of grade 2 classified agricultural land located to the north of Loughborough in the vicinity of Dishley Grange Farm. The rest of the land within the green wedge is designated as grade 3 agricultural land.
- 5.45. There are three grade 2 listed buildings within the green wedge. These include two buildings on Dishley Grange farm and Garendon Park Lodge on Loughborough Road Hathern.

Access

- 5.46. There are many informal and formal walking routes within the green wedge which are well used. A cycle way runs through the green wedge along the A6 which is also quite well used.

Ecology

- 5.47. The green wedge comprises sites which were identified as District or Parish level sites which were in operation in the County before being replaced by the Local Wildlife Site system. District/Parish level sites within the green wedge include Hathern Drive, Bailey's Plantation, Pear Tree Lane and Oxley Gutter.
- 5.48. Protected species and species of principal importance defined under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 are within the green wedge and in close proximity and include species such as: badger, brown long-eared bat, common pipistrelle bat, noctule bat, white-clawed crayfish, water vole, common toad and song thrush.
- 5.49. There are a number of strong wildlife corridors consisting of hedgerows and woodland belts (Hathern Drive, Pear Tree Lane) which link up other habitats throughout the green wedge. They form part of the biodiversity network and connect habitats at the landscape scale along a south-north axis from Charnwood Forest to Langley Lowlands and from Langley Lowlands to the Soar Valley.

Air quality areas

- 5.50. Loughborough falls within one of Charnwood's Air Quality Management Areas. There is a diffusion tube monitoring station on Loughborough Road, Hathern which is on the northern boundary of the green wedge.

Existing boundaries

- 5.51. North West – The development edge of Hathern is well contained which provides an obvious boundary to the built up area and the green wedge.
- 5.52. South east – the development edge of Loughborough is again well contained with the newly built development at Pear Tree Lane and the buildings at Dishley Grange Farm.
- 5.53. South West – The elevated shoulder of land around Bellevue Hill affords long views across the Soar Valley to the east and Garendon Park to the south in the vicinity of Bailey’s plantation. It marks the point where the influences of the Loughborough/Shepshed and Loughborough/Hathern green wedges meet.
- 5.54. North East – the boundary is defined by hedge lines which contain the area acting as structural open space between Loughborough and Hathern.

Topography

- 5.55. The land peaks at Pear Tree Lane and falls away east to the floodplain of the River Soar. Long open views are possible from the higher land to the west of the A6 around Belle Vue Hill across the river valley towards Normanton on Soar to the north and Loughborough's main industrial estate of Derby Road to the East.

Separation

- 5.56. The topography of the green wedge in terms of the land and mature hedgerows at Pear Tree Lane preventing Loughborough or Hathern from being visible from the majority of the area. The strong hedge boundary surrounding the new housing development at Pear Tree Lane prevents this new development from being seen from within the wedge.
- 5.57. The ‘winding’ route of the A6 and undulating topography restricts inter-visibility along the road corridor. Views between the settlements are possible from within either built area. Both settlements present raw edges onto the countryside. There is no separate footpath/right of way between the two settlements in this locality, although there is footpath access to the east of the A6.
- 5.58. Due to the limited visibility of either settlement the perception of the distance between them is quite vast.
- 5.59. There is a strong defensible village boundary at Hathern and where it is clear where the village ends. The entrance into Loughborough is less formal. The buildings at Dishley Grange and the recreational uses adjacent to it gives the impression of Loughborough merging into the countryside.

Conclusions

Criteria	Does the green wedge meet the Criteria?
Preventing the merging of settlements;	Yes. Development has been restricted within the area.
Guiding development form;	No. The green wedge performs the role of restricting instead of guiding development form.
Providing a green “lung” into urban areas	<p>No. The well defined boundaries mean that the green wedge doesn’t provide a continuous link between the open countryside and the land which penetrates into the urban area.</p> <p>There are, however, a variety of recreational uses within the green wedge. It includes the town’s main playing fields area and a golf range, uses n terms of open space, sport and recreation facilities, flood alleviation measures, and air quality measures.</p> <p>There are a number of strong wildlife corridors consisting of hedgerows and woodland belts (Hathern Drive, Pear Tree Lane) which link up other habitats throughout the green wedge. They form part of the biodiversity network and connect habitats at the landscape scale along a south-north axis from Charnwood Forest to Langley Lowlands and from Langley Lowlands to the Soar Valley.</p> <p>Much of the land to the east of the A6 is washland and is affected by Flood Zone 3b.</p> <p>Loughborough falls within one of Charnwood’s Air Quality Management Areas. There is a diffusion tube monitoring station on Loughborough Road, Hathern.</p>
A recreational resource.	<p>Yes. There are many informal and formal walking routes within the green wedge which are well used. A cycle way runs through the green wedge along the A6 which is also quite well used.</p> <p>The wedge includes the town’s main playing fields area and a golf range. There is also an allotment connected to Hathern.</p>

Loughborough/Shepshed



Figure 3: Views of Loughborough/Shepshed green wedge

- 5.60. This green wedge separates the Borough's two largest settlements of Loughborough and Shepshed. It also merges with the Loughborough/Hathern green wedge to the north.

Size/extent

- 5.61. This green wedge is the most extensive in the Borough covering some 4340 hectares. It is about 0.8km at its narrowest and 2.5km at its widest, east to west. The M1 Motorway makes up its western boundary which in itself is a prominent landscape feature.
- 5.62. There is a much narrower belt of open land between the motorway and Shepshed, west of the M1 Motorway, which is not designated as green wedge.

Development Pressures

- 5.63. The main pressure has been for a sustainable urban extension in the area between Loughborough and the M1 Motorway, north of the A512, which is being assessed in the Borough Council's Core Strategy. This would involve built development on a substantial area of the currently defined green wedge to the north of Garendon historic park and garden.
- 5.64. It is proposed that the existing 23 hectare Science Park is extended to form a strategic science park allocation providing an additional 50 hectares to the west of Loughborough which is also being assessed through the Core Strategy. This would be located on some of the existing green wedge to the south of the A512.

Uses

- 5.65. Much of the area is arable farmland within the Garendon Estate. Garendon Park was registered as an historic park and garden in 1986 but there is no public access. This area makes up about 50% of the green wedge. Whilst the hall no longer exists, there are about 14 garden monuments such as the Obelisk and the Temple of Venus, that all survive. All of these are buildings and monuments are listed by English Heritage.
- 5.66. The M1 Motorway corridor is a prominent landscape feature. It alternates between embankment and cutting. From the embanked sections there are opportunities for

extensive view towards Loughborough and Shepshed. Shepshed is closer and far more prominent. Loughborough is visible from parts of the Garendon Estate. The A512/M1 Motorway Junction 23 is an obtrusive feature elevated in the landscape. The former Loughborough/Shepshed railway line forms an east to west linear feature with a natural wooded character which blends into the landscape.

- 5.67. There is a designated sports ground in the southern part of the green wedge along the A512.
- 5.68. The majority of the green wedge is covered by grade 3 agricultural land. There is an area of land stretching from Shepshed to Loughborough which is grade 2 agricultural land. This area covers land around Oxley Gutter and the Hermitage and stretches towards Butthole Lane towards Shepshed.
- 5.69. The green wedge is located mainly within flood risk zone 1. However, land around the Black Brook does have some localized flood risk issues.
- 5.70. The northern part of the green wedge (the area not covered by the registered historic park and garden) is designated as a mineral consultation zone.

Access

- 5.71. There is one public footpath that runs through the green wedge along Oxley gutter which is also a cycleway and one bridleway that runs along Pear Tree Lane to the Sewage works and Hathern Road.
- 5.72. There is no formal access to the southern part of the green wedge. There is evidence of informal walking routes through this area but these routes wouldn't be accessible to everyone due to the roughness of the ground.
- 5.73. A cycleway runs along the dismantled railway and then along the A512.

Ecology

- 5.74. The green wedge provides strategic landscape and wildlife links between the urban edges of Loughborough and the countryside. It also provides a strategic landscape and wildlife links between the northern edge of Charnwood Forest and Langley Lowlands as well as between Langley Lowlands and the western edge of the Soar Valley both on south-north axis and west-east axes which enable species movement, migration and dispersal.
- 5.75. The green wedge is in close proximity to a statutory site, Oakley Wood, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is listed on Natural England's inventory of ancient woodland.
- 5.76. The green wedge comprises the Hermitage Estate Local Wildlife Site and is bordered by the Black Brook Local Wildlife Site. It also is adjacent or in close proximity to other Local Wildlife Sites such as Longcliffe Golf Course to the south, Stonebow Washlands, Booth Wood and Gorse Covert to the east.

- 5.77. The green wedge comprises sites which were identified as District or Parish level sites in the site system which was in operation in the County before being replaced by the Local Wildlife Site system. District/Parish level sites within the green wedge include: Home Covert, the Dismantled Railway and hedgerows to the south of Ashby Road.
- 5.78. Ecological surveys have identified further candidate Local Wildlife Sites such as hedgerows to the north and north-west of the Hermitage Estate Local Wildlife Site.
- 5.79. Forty four mature / veteran trees have been recorded in the green wedge. Many trees have bat roost potential.
- 5.80. Habitats of principal importance found within the green wedge are wet woodland, reedbeds, eutrophic standing water, mature trees, mesotrophic grassland and mixed deciduous woodland.
- 5.81. Protected species and species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 are located within and in close proximity to the green wedge including species such as; badger, brown long-eared bat, common pipistrelle bat, noctule bat, white-clawed crayfish, water vole, common toad, song thrush.

Air quality areas

- 5.82. The Loughborough/Shepshed green wedge is not in an air quality management area.

Existing boundaries

- 5.83. South – the green wedge includes some land south of the A512 west of Snells Nook Lane. It follows the line of Burleigh Brook to Hurst Farm and then continues along field boundaries to the M1 Motorway embankment.
- 5.84. West – The boundary follows the M1 Motorway corridor between Hathern Road in the north to a point south of the A512.
- 5.85. East - The boundary is drawn close to the existing urban edge of Loughborough from Snells Nook Lane to Hathern Drive/Pear Tree Lane.
- 5.86. North – the green wedge ends along the valley of the Black Brook between Hathern Road and the Hathern Drive and then along Pear Tree Lane to Baileys Plantation. At its eastern extremity, this boundary is contiguous with the west boundary of the Loughborough/Hathern green wedge.

Separation

- 5.87. Inter-visibility between Shepshed and Loughborough is limited due to land form and tree cover.

- 5.88. There is a clear sense of separation when travelling along the bridleway and footpath between the two settlements. The sense of wide separation is apparent in views across the wedge from north and south and from east to west apart from along the A512 where the wedge is at its narrowest.
- 5.89. The topography peaks at the eastern section of the green wedge in front of the obelisk allowing views onto the green wedge and Garendon Park. However, Shepshed is still not visible from this area due to the dense field boundaries and the motorway noise bunds.
- 5.90. Neither settlement could be seen from any of the locations identified for the field work apart from visibility of gas research centre from Snells Nook Lane. This restricted view gives a perception of a vast separation between Loughborough and Shepshed.
- 5.91. Parts of the area of land between Loughborough and Shepshed are prominent from sections along the M1 Motorway corridor and other elevated viewpoints including the road between Shepshed and Hathern and the higher ground of Charnwood Forest to the south. For the most part the motorway embankment limits inter-visibility between settlements. Woodland and a mature landscape fabric help increase the sense of separation.

Conclusion

Criteria	Does the green wedge meet the Criteria?
Preventing the merging of settlements;	Yes. The green wedge fulfills its role of preventing the merging of Shepshed and Loughborough.
Guiding development form;	No. It is considered that the green wedge restricts development form instead of guiding it.
Providing a green “lung” into urban areas	<p>No. The wedge provides communities with limited access to countryside. It doesn't provide a continuous link between the open countryside and land which penetrates deep into urban areas of Loughborough or Shepshed. The boundary is very clear between where the town ends and the countryside begins.</p> <p>There are some multi-functional uses such as a limited amount of footpaths and cycles ways. There was evidence in the northern part of the wedge of informal footpath use but the southern part of the wedge is private land with no official access.</p> <p>The wedge does protect a large historic park and garden and numerous listed buildings but access to this area is prohibited.</p> <p>The green wedge is in close proximity to a statutory ecological site, Oakley Wood, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is listed on Natural</p>

Criteria	Does the green wedge meet the Criteria?
	<p>England's inventory of ancient woodland.</p> <p>Protected species and species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 are located within and in close proximity to the green wedge</p> <p>The green wedge is located mainly within flood risk zone I. However, land around the Black Brook does have some localized flood risk issues.</p>
A recreational resource.	<p>No. There is restricted access to the public through a limited amount of footpaths and cycles ways. There is evidence in the northern part of the wedge or informal footpath use but the southern part of the wedge is private land with no official access.</p> <p>Most, if not all of the land within the green wedge is privately owned and so, it would be difficult to provide other leisure uses other than footpaths.</p>

Green wedges around the Leicester Urban Area

- 5.92. The green wedges around the Leicester urban area extend beyond the City boundary into adjoining districts. They connect the City to the surrounding Leicestershire countryside. Two of the wedges in this section continue beyond the Charnwood Borough administrative boundary. Maps of the green wedges are in appendix 2.

Syston/Thurmaston



Figure 4: Views of Syston/Thurmaston green wedge

- 5.93. This green wedge is a small patch of land to the south of Syston and north of Thurmaston. It is a block of land east of Melton Road, and a very narrow area of playing fields west of Melton Road. The principle functions of the green wedge is to secure separation between Thurmaston on the edge of Leicester conurbation and the neighbouring settlement of Syston and to safeguard the area of open land which influences the form and direction of urban development at the north west edge of the city urban area.

Size/extent

- 5.94. This green wedge is the smallest in the Borough covering approximately 89 hectares. At its longest it measures just under 1km and at its widest, it measures just over 1.5km.

Development pressures

- 5.95. There have been no significant Development Control decisions made within the green wedge since adoption of the Local Plan.
- 5.96. The main development pressure has been for a sustainable urban extension in the area to the East of Thurmaston, North of Hamilton, which is being assessed as part of the Borough Councils Core Strategy. The development could potentially have an affect on the future size of the green wedge between Thurmaston and Syston.

Uses

- 5.97. There isn't very much existing built development within the green wedge apart from a limited number of farmsteads. Woodgate nursery is quite an extensive land use in the south section of the green wedge.

- 5.98. The majority of the land is arable farmland. West of the railway line in the vicinity of Roundhill Farm the fields are smaller. Between Barkby Road and Barkby Thorpe Lane there are some large properties in mature grounds and nurseries. The mainline railway crosses the area from north to south.
- 5.99. There are a number of known archaeological sites located within the green wedge. A large site is located south of Lime Drive in Syston. Smaller sites are located at Barkby Lodge, adjacent to the Midland Mainline Railway and Round Hill. There are no listed buildings within the area but there is a high proportion of listed buildings within Barkby village which is located near to the green wedge.
- 5.100. There is a high proportion of grade 2 agricultural land located in the western side of the green wedge. The rest of the green wedge is grade 3 agricultural land.

Access

- 5.101. There are no public rights or way or cycle ways that run through the green wedge. The Midland Mainline Railway runs along of the western boundary.

Ecology

- 5.102. There are no designated ecological sites within the green wedge as most of the area is under intensive agricultural production; however the green wedge area is adjacent to Barkby Brook which is a candidate Local Wildlife Site.
- 5.103. The tree-lined Barkby Brook forms the principal wildlife corridor across the area.
- 5.104. A number of protected species and species of principal importance which rely on habitat connectivity have been recorded within the urban edge adjacent to the green wedge including the common pipistrelle and badger.
- 5.105. The green wedge provides some buffer along the urban edge of Syston and Thurmaston and a link to the countryside although the current management of most of the area is too intensive to be currently of great value to wildlife. Barkby Brook forms the principal area of ecological interest and represents a valuable corridor providing connectivity between the urban area and the countryside and acting as the main biodiversity link in a south-north axis across the landscape.
- 5.106. The entire green wedge has hedgerows running across it, although the hedgerow network is denser to the west of the railway line. The green wedge to the north of Barkby Lane is arable farming land, more open in character with large open fields with few trees. South of Barkby Lane there is more trees and hedgerows. The area around Woodgate Nursery is in a heavily wooded setting, the rest of the southern area has more trees whether in freestanding mature trees, hedgerow trees or groups of trees.

Air Quality Management Zones

- 5.107. The green wedge is within the vicinity of the Syston Town Centre Air Quality Management Area.

Existing boundaries

- 5.108. North - the boundary is marked by the housing estate in Syston. The Midland Mainline Railway runs through the green wedge north to south and also marks the northwestern boundary.
- 5.109. West – The main western boundary (behind which Syston and Thurmaston meet) is heavily screened by trees.
- 5.110. South and East – the boundaries are rural in character and are marked by hedgerows, the other side of which is open countryside.

Topography

- 5.111. Barkby Lane runs across the green wedge approximately in an east west direction and represents the lowest part of the land within green wedge. Land gently rises up towards the southern housing estates of Syston (East of the railway).
- 5.112. Land also gently rises up from Barkby Lane around Roundhill Farm in Syston up towards Barkby Thorpe Lane in Thurmaston.
- 5.113. The eastern part of the green wedge is rural in character with longer distance views because of its more gentle topography.

Separation

- 5.114. Separation is at its narrowest in the west of the green wedge. The extreme western boundary is well screened by belts of trees, and effectively obscures the urban development behind it. This hides the area where Syston and Thurmaston meet giving a sense of separation between the two settlements on the eastern approaches of Barkby Lane and Barkby Thorpe Lane. Views of Thurmaston are more limited from Syston compared to view in the opposite direction viewing Syston from Thurmaston.
- 5.115. To the east of Melton Road, there is up to 900 metres between the communities although the flat, open nature of the terrain shortens the visual and physical separation.

Conclusions

Criteria	Does the green wedge meet the Criteria?
Preventing the merging of settlements;	<p>Yes. Dense planting on the far western boundary screen the area where built areas of Thurmaston and Syston merge along Melton Road. The area of green wedge to the west of the railway is important in creating a sense of separation between the settlements when viewed from rural eastern approaches.</p> <p>The distances between southern Syston and Thurmaston are far greater in the eastern part of the green wedge, with far less urban influences, giving the area a rural character. The area to the east therefore has less significance for the preventing the merging of Syston and Thurmaston.</p>
Guiding development form;	<p>No. The green wedge performs the role of restricting development instead of guiding development form.</p>
Providing a green “lung” into urban areas	<p>No. There are no recreational, publicly assessable open spaces within the green wedge. Central parts of the green wedge form part of the flood plain for the Barkby Brook.</p> <p>The green wedge is within the vicinity of the Syston Town Centre Air Quality Management Area.</p> <p>The green wedge does not penetrate into the urban area, and the lack of public access greatly diminishes its value as a green lung for the urban area.</p>
A recreational resource.	<p>No. The green wedge provides no public access. There is no evidence of any informal uses within the area and the ability to provide additional recreational activities is limited due to private ownership and limited access.</p>

Leicester (Beaumont Leys)/Birstall/Thurcaston/Anstey/Cropston



Figure 5: Views within the green wedge

- 5.116. The green wedge forms part of a larger green wedge which extends into neighbouring local authorities administrative areas including; Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Blaby District Council and Leicester City Council. In these other districts the green wedge is known simply as 'The Rothley Brook green wedge'.
- 5.117. The assessment first sets the context of the whole green wedge extending across local authority boundaries. It will then analyse the green wedge that lies within Charnwood. Because the green wedge in Charnwood involves two separate areas which are detached from one another it is necessary for the description and analysis of this green wedge to be split into two:
- Small parcels of land immediately to the south and north west of Birstall
 - A large area of green wedge stretching from Beaumont Leys through to Anstey and Cropston, largely associated with the Rothley Brook

General Description of the whole green wedge

- 5.118. The total area of the green wedge is 1375 hectares. It extends down towards the eastern edge of Kirby Fields/Kirby Muxloe to the south west. From this point it extends northwards in the area lying between Glenfield (Blaby District), Ratby and Groby (lying within Hinckley and Bosworth). A small finger penetrates into the City of Leicester in between Glenfield and Beaumont Leys, terminating at City Farm. The arc of the green wedge extends between Anstey Beaumont Leys towards Cropston and Thurcaston, before arching back towards Leicester City in the gap between Ashton Green and Birstall.
- 5.119. The green wedge is large in area but is relatively narrow in some places, particularly in the sections between Anstey and Beaumont Leys, between Thurcaston and Ashton Green, and between Birstall and Ashton Green. All of the areas of green wedge that lie in between Thurcaston and the City is within the administrative area of Leicester City. For the green wedge that lies in between Birstall and Ashton Green, the vast majority is within the City's boundary, but with small parcels of land in Charnwood Borough.
- 5.120. The part of the green wedge between Anstey and Beaumont Leys includes higher land at the edge of the plateau on which Beaumont Leys stands, together with adjoining parts of the lower Rothley Brook Valley.

- 5.121. The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan Technical Report No 3 Assessment of green wedges (1995) defines the original intended function of the green wedge as follows:
- To ensure clear separation between Leicester’s urban area and adjacent separate settlements;
 - To secure open views of countryside from within the city and neighbouring settlements
 - To safeguard rural, open aspect of approaches into the city viewed from the North West.
 - To provide for public access, recreation, nature conservation and other green and open uses in a location accessible to a wide area.

Green Wedge within Charnwood Borough

Size/extent

- 5.122. The green wedge lying in Charnwood covers an area of 204ha (representing approximately 15%). The gap is down to 20 metres south of Thurcaston, 500 metres east of Anstey and 500 metres west of Birstall.

Development pressures

- 5.123. There have been no planning applications permitted contrary to green wedge policy since the adoption of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan in 2004.
- 5.124. There are significant development pressures from Leicester City with the area north of Beaumont Leys proposed for significant development in Leicester City’s Adopted Core Strategy Document (November 2010). This has potential implications particularly for the part of the green wedge nearer to Birstall and Thurcaston.

Air quality areas

- 5.125. The nearest air quality management area in Charnwood is located in Syston.

Existing green wedge boundaries in Charnwood Borough

- 5.126. South – The southern boundary is marked by borough boundary with Blaby
- 5.127. West – The boundary is tightly drawn alongside Groby Road, then along the edge of the built up area of Anstey then alongside Cropston Road to the edge of Cropston.
- 5.128. North/East – The boundary follows field boundaries across the Rothley Valley between Cropston. The eastern boundary is marked by Cropston Road, Anstey
- 5.129. East – The Great Central railway corridor

Overall Separation

- 5.130. There is intervisibility¹ between Leicester and the adjoining settlements. The gap is down to 200 metres south of Thurcaston, 500 metres east of Anstey and 500 metres west of Birstall.
- 5.131. From this point onwards description and analysis of the Charnwood part of the green wedge is divided into two:
- Small parcels of land immediately to the south and north west of Birstall
 - A large area of green wedge stretching from Beaumont Leys through to Anstey and Cropston, largely associated with the Rothley Brook

Small land parcels adjoining Birstall

- 5.132. There are two parcels of land that form part of the overall green wedge in this area. One is North of Harrowgate Drive and the other is South of Greengate Lane in Birstall.

Land use

- 5.133. The green wedge in this location is primarily in agricultural use. There are signs of more informal recreation in the small parcel of land south of Greengate Lane. The Great Central Railway runs next to the Birstall section of the green wedge.
- 5.134. With regard to the green wedge immediately west of Birstall, the area around Breech Spinney is grade 2 agricultural land. There is no data for the agricultural land quality of the area of green wedge south of Greengate Lane.
- 5.135. Part of the green wedge is located within the Hallam Fields permitted development. This area has been earmarked for the provision of a school play area, playing fields and recreational open space, sustainable urban drainage as well as the retention of Breech Spinney.
- 5.136. The area does not lie within areas prone to flooding.

Access

- 5.137. There are no public rights of way around Breech Spinney. There is a footpath running east/west across the green wedge south of Greengate Lane. There is also some evidence that the area of rough grazing land in the area south of Greengate Lane is used more informally for recreation, although there is no formal right of access over this land. With regard to the part of the green wedge lying immediately south and west of Birstall, there are no public footpaths or bridleways in the green wedge lying within Leicester.

¹ Definition of intervisibility: Mutually visible, or in sight, the one from the other.

Ecology

Green wedge south of Greengate Lane

- 5.138. This area consists of a couple of grassland ridge and furrow fields surrounded by mature hedgerows with standard trees. The fields had been assessed as ecologically significant at the Parish level under the old County Council non-statutory site designation system.
- 5.139. The green wedge is adjacent to the Great Central Railway Local Wildlife Site, which has been designated for its mixed grassland, scrub and early successional habitats. The LWS runs from Thurcaston to Birstall and forms a major wildlife corridor on a south-north axis at the landscape scale. It provides a buffer zone along the Great Central Railway Local Wildlife Site and between the urban edge of Birstall and the countryside. It complements the strong hedgerow network of the cemetery and allotment gardens and provides a link between these areas and the golf course.
- 5.140. Species which have been recorded in the vicinity of the green wedge include bat species and badgers which need habitat connectivity to commute, feed and disperse.

Separation

- 5.141. The degree of intervisibility between Birstall and Ashton Green in Leicester is greatest towards the north of Birstall around Harrogate Drive. This is because views across this part of the green wedge are across a shallow valley with little intervening vegetation. There is less intervisibility further south, around Greengate Lane, where there is a shallow ridge running along this part of the green wedge and where pockets of woodland limit views in this area.

Green wedge around Rothley Brook

Land use

- 5.142. The green wedge is predominantly in agricultural use, although there are significant recreation facilities including Castle Hill Country Park, Anstey Nomads Football Ground, and the allotments off Anstey Lane, Thurcaston.
- 5.143. Also of significance is that the green wedge is crossed by the A46 dual carriageway, a major transport route which follows the line of the Rothley Brook Valley.
- 5.144. The area is crossed by major electricity transmission lines. A significant amount of the area is covered by functional floodplain and part of the green wedge falls within the flood plain of the Rothley Brook.
- 5.145. King William Bridge and The Pack Horse Bridge in Anstey are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and also Listed Buildings. Anstey Mill and Gynsill Court are locally listed buildings which lie within the green wedge.

Access

- 5.146. For the area of green wedge lying along the Rothley Brook between Anstey, Cropston and Thurcaston, there are only public rights of way in the southern part of the green wedge. There is access across King William Bridge in Anstey across to Castle Hill Country Park. In addition there are 3 footpaths spreading out from the southwest of Anstey in the direction of Beaumont Leys and Glenfield.

Ecology

- 5.147. The Rothley Brook running along the length of the green wedge is a Local Wildlife Site. A Phase I Habitat Survey² has been carried out in relation to the potential areas for growth identified, within the green wedge, a number of species-rich hedgerows which are considered to meet the criteria as ecological important hedgerows and Local Wildlife Site designation: hedgerows off Groby Road, south of Gynsill Lane along borough boundary.
- 5.148. The Rothley Brook supports legally protected species, Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 species of principal importance and Local Biodiversity Action Plan priority species. The brook provides an important connection for species at the landscaped scale between Charnwood Forest and the Soar Valley.
- 5.149. There are records of otter, common pipistrelle bat, soprano pipistrelle bat, other unidentified bat species, yellow hammer, skylark, grey partridge, bullfinch and badger either within or adjacent to the green wedge.
- 5.150. Further hedgerows are considered to form parts of wildlife corridors within the biodiversity network south of Groby Road, south of Gynsill Lane, off Gorse Hill. Hedgerows linking up the Rothley Brook to the surrounding countryside and to the built up areas form important corridors which enable species to commute and disperse.
- 5.151. There are a large number of veteran / ancient trees within the area: 45 trees have been recorded within the green wedge, associated either with Rothley Brook, the pasture fields to the south of Gynsill Lane and field boundary hedgerows. Many trees have bat roost potential.
- 5.152. A small field adjacent to Rothley Brook to the north of the A6 has been identified as a candidate Local Wildlife Site. It consists of species-rich semi-improved neutral grassland associated with the floodplain.

Separation

- 5.153. Anstey is separated from the edge of Beaumont Leys by the valley of Rothley Brook. Beaumont Leys is visible from the opposite side of the valley situated as it is on a ridge line, and is more prominent when viewed from the higher up the slopes of the Rothley Brook Valley. The gap between Anstey and Beaumont Leys is at its narrowest in-between Anstey Nomads Football Club and the Old Pack Horse Bridge. The sloping topography

² <http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/habitatandspeciesassessments>

up to Beaumont Leys, combined with the level of vegetation in this part of the valley limit the intervisibility at this point.

Note:

The administrative boundary of Charnwood Borough is very close to the southern edge of the village at Thurcaston. The green wedge continues into Leicester, beyond the boundary.

Whilst this green wedge is beyond the conclusions of this particular review, lying as it does outside the Borough boundary, this issue needs to be born in mind as context in the conclusions below.

Conclusions

Criteria	Does the green wedge meet the Criteria?
Preventing the merging of settlements;	Yes. Although there is a degree of intervisibility between the settlements in the green wedge, it does serve to prevent the merging of Anstey, Thurcaston and Birstall with Leicester.
Guiding development form;	Yes. The green wedge successfully guides the development form of Leicester, as endured by the Ashton Green and Beaumont Leys areas.
Providing a green “lung” into urban areas	<p>Yes. The green wedge penetrates the urban area of Leicester around Birstall and the Great Central Railway line acts as significant wildlife corridors in this location. The green wedge around Anstey, Beaumont Leys, Cropston and Thurcaston does not penetrate deep into the urban area, but has significant value as a wildlife corridor along Rothley Brook and its floodplain. This part of the green wedge also has access and recreational value, and potential wider sub-regional importance for green infrastructure.</p> <p>Although not located near to an Air Quality Management Area within the Borough of Charnwood, this does not diminish its role in providing a green lung.</p>
A recreational resource.	<p>Yes. There is a degree of public access across the green wedge which links into surrounding communities. There is more formal areas of recreations such as Castle Hill Country Park, as well as evidence of more informal access to the areas immediately West/South West of Birstall. The current and potential recreational resource of the area is underlined by its identification as part of the 6Cs Strategic Green Infrastructure network. The recreational value of green wedge is reinforced by its proximity to priority neighborhoods in Beaumont Leys.</p>

Birstall/Leicester/Thurmaston



Figure 6 : Views of the green wedge

5.154. The green wedge forms part of a larger green wedge which extends into Leicester's administrative boundary, for which an overarching description is provided in this introductory section. Whilst the conclusions reached within this review specifically relate to green wedge within Charnwood Borough, it is necessary to do this within the context of the function of the entire green wedge within Leicester. The review is split into 2 parts;

- A description of the whole green wedge extending across local authority boundaries putting the part of the green wedge that lies in Charnwood can be seen in context.
- An analysis of the green wedge that lies within Charnwood.

General Description of Larger green wedge

5.155. The total area of the green wedge is 333 hectares. The southern tip of green wedge lies adjacent to historic Belgrave village area in Leicester. It extends northwards along the River Soar underneath Leicester Outer Ring Road at Redhill and then is largely contiguous with Watermead Country Park. The northern boundary of the green wedge is marked by the A46 Road, situated in Charnwood Borough.

Function

5.156. The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan Technical Report No 3 Assessment of green wedges (1995) considered this green wedge and defined the function as follows:

'The initial intention was to safeguard the area of open land which penetrates into the City urban area along the valley of the River Soar, and separates communities along either side. The area is also proposed for agricultural and recreational uses as part of the evolving Country Park. The area was also intended to provide a vital 'breathing' space separating developments which have extended alongside the A6 and A46 routes'.

Green wedge in Charnwood Borough

Size/extent

5.157. The green wedge lying in Charnwood covers an area of 230 hectares which represents approximately 69% of the total green wedge. It is linear in form and separates Birstall and

Thurmaston on either side by no more than 800 metres. Intervisibility is lessened in places by the flatness of the landform and existing landscape features.

Development Pressures

- 5.158. There is immediate pressure to release land adjacent to the Hope and Anchor pub to the north of the green wedge for employment. There are further longer term pressures for redevelopment of land around the Marina to the South.

Land Use

- 5.159. Built development within the green wedge is mostly associated with the river, canal and Watermead Country Park. There is a marina to the south, numerous pedestrian bridges, and smaller car parks fringing the area. Besides this there are numerous trails and structures such as locks associated with the Park and the canal.
- 5.160. The area currently comprises a mixture of agriculture, recreation, sand and gravel extraction, landfill and nature conservation. A significant area comprises Watermead Country Park which has been developed as an after use from mineral extraction.
- 5.161. A very high proportion of the land lies within the functional floodplain.
- 5.162. There are three archaeological alert areas located within green wedge.
- 5.163. The southwestern corner of the green wedge adjoins the Birstall Conservation Area. Within the Birstall Conservation Area there are numerous listed buildings and areas of archaeological interest.
- 5.164. Part of the green wedge is located within the priority neighbourhood (Charnwood South Zone 2) it is also close to the Charnwood Priority Neighbourhood South Zone 1 located to the south of Thurmaston.
- 5.165. All of the land within the green wedge at Birstall/Thurmaston is grade 4 agricultural land.

Topography

- 5.166. The land is generally low lying through which the river meanders.

Access

- 5.167. There are a number of public rights of way within the green wedge in and around Watermead Country Park.

Ecology

- 5.168. The green wedge forms part of an important wildlife corridor within the floodplain of the River Soar strategic corridor with a range of wetland habitats. The green wedge provides a strategic landscape and wildlife links within the Soar Valley landscape area on a south-north axis which enables species movement and dispersal.

- 5.169. The River Soar/Grand Union Canal has been designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) along its whole length. The River Soar functions as the main wildlife corridor within the green wedge. It has been identified as a Strategic River Corridor and a Biodiversity Enhancement Area in the East Midlands Regional Plan.
- 5.170. Most of the green wedge is made up of Watermead Country Park which is a Local Wildlife Site. Another Local Wildlife Site within the green wedge is the Sedge Bed near Thurmaston Marina. Part of the green wedge encompasses Wanlip Meadows, a nature reserve owned and managed by Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust, part of which has Local Wildlife Status status.
- 5.171. The green wedge comprises a network of priority habitats including floodplain wetland, reedbeds, wet woodland, mature trees and hedgerows. An area between Watermead Country Park and Worcester Avenue/ Ashmead Crescent in Birstall has seen the creation of wet woodland, one of the priority habitats in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 5.172. There are other flooded gravel pits within the green wedge to the east of Watermead Country Park. They have evolved into valuable complementary floodplain wetland habitats such as open water, reedbeds and wet woodland.
- 5.173. A large number of protected species, Section 41 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 species of principal importance, Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Red Data Book species have been recorded within the green wedge, such as otter, Daubenton's bat, brown long-eared bat, common pipistrelle bat, noctule bat, water vole, common toad, grass snake, bullfinch, skylark, reed bunting and sand martin.
- 5.174. There are a large number of veteran / mature trees within the green wedge: 50 trees have been recorded.

Existing boundaries

- 5.175. North/Eastern - marked by dual carriageway roads.
- 5.176. West - The boundary follows the eastern edge of Birstall and Wanlip village.

Separation

- 5.177. The settlements either side of the green wedge are no more than 800 metres apart. The edges of Birstall, Thurmaston and Leicester are in the main softened by substantial landscaping; much of Birstall in particular is not visible because of the presence of woodland along sides of the green wedge. Despite being narrow, the area of green wedge particularly around Watermead Country Park has a natural, tranquil feel, clearly distinct from surrounding urban areas. The distinct character is evident when crossing the green wedge from leaving one settlement and entering another.

Conclusions

Criteria	Does the green wedge meet the Criteria?
Preventing the merging of settlements;	Yes. The natural wooded setting creates a clear physical break between the settlements, preventing the merging of settlements. Although flat, the landscaped edges of the green wedge screen the settlement edges and limit the intervisibility between settlements.
Guiding development form;	Yes. The green wedge penetrates into the urban area and extends out into the countryside, guiding development form.
Providing a green “lung” into urban areas	<p>Yes. There is extensive public access (both formal and informal) across and along the length of the green wedge, linking urban areas with the countryside. There are many and varied recreational opportunities, including, bridleways, part of the National Cycle network and the River Soar and Grand Union Canal</p> <p>Most of the green wedge lies within flood plain, and has significant role to play in flood alleviation.</p> <p>The green wedge adjoins an Air Quality Management Area, and therefore has an important role ameliorating local air quality.</p> <p>Most of the site is a Local Wildlife site and therefore has significant ecological value, supporting role as a green “lung” in an urban area.</p> <p>The site lies in an area identified as Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Area and as River Soar Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridor within the 6Cs Green Infrastructure Strategic Green Infrastructure Strategy. The green wedge therefore is an important part of the 6 Cs Sub-Regional green infrastructure.</p>
A recreational resource.	Yes. There is extensive public access (both formal and informal) across and along the length of the green wedge, linking urban areas with the countryside. There are many and varied recreational opportunities, including, bridleways, part of the National Cycle Network and the River Soar and Grand Union Canal corridor. A lot of the public access and recreation opportunities takes place in Watermead Country Park which is a significant tourist attraction with over 230 thousand visitors a year.

Criteria	Does the green wedge meet the Criteria?
	<p>The green wedge also contains a marina which acts as a significant recreational attraction.</p> <p>The significance of the recreational resource within the green wedge is raised by its proximity to priority neighborhoods which have higher levels of deprivation. The green wedge has value in terms of potential to improve health and well being, particularly for those neighborhoods where this has been identified as a problem.</p>

6. Evaluation

- 6.1. This section sets out how the existing green wedge areas in the Borough perform against the requirements in the Regional Plan.
- 6.2. The evaluation in this assessment will not revise the adopted boundary of the green wedge. The revision of the boundary will be carried out within the Site Allocations Development Plan Document. This review will be used as an evidence base for this process. As a result, the green wedge boundary identified on the Adopted Proposals Map will remain in place until the above DPD is adopted.

Loughborough/Quorn

- 6.3. The green wedge has been successful in preventing the merging of Loughborough and Quorn.
- 6.4. The green wedge originally helped to guide development form in the way it was allocated around the housing allocation in the areas.
- 6.5. It is considered that although the green wedge provides a link between the urban area and the countryside, it does not provide a green lung into Loughborough or Quorn as it does not penetrate the urban area.
- 6.6. The green wedge does provide some recreational activities through formal footpaths and some football pitch but it is not considered to be providing enough recreational activities to supports its function in the green wedge definition.

Loughborough/Hathern

- 6.7. The green wedge has successfully prevented the merging of Loughborough and Hathern.
- 6.8. The green wedge performs the role of restricting instead of guiding development form by preventing development in the area.
- 6.9. It is considered that although the green wedge provides a link between the urban area and the countryside, it does not provide a green lung into Loughborough or Quorn as it does not penetrate the urban area.
- 6.10. It is considered that the green wedge provides a good recreational resource by providing informal and formal public footpaths, cycleways. Playing fields and a golf range are also within the area.

Loughborough/Shepshed

- 6.11. The green wedge has successfully prevented the merging of Loughborough and Shepshed.
- 6.12. The green wedge performs the role of restricting instead of guiding development form by preventing development in the area.

- 6.13. The wedge provides communities with limited access to countryside and It doesn't provide a continuous link between the open countryside and land which penetrates deep into urban areas of Loughborough or Shepshed. The boundary is very clear between where the town ends and the countryside begins.
- 6.14. Most, if not all of the land within the green wedge is privately owned and so it would be difficult to provide any other recreational uses other than footpaths.

Syston/Thurmaston

- 6.15. The green wedge has successfully prevented the merging of Syston and Thurmaston
- 6.16. The green wedge performs the role of restricting instead of guiding development form by displacing development elsewhere.
- 6.17. The green wedge does not penetrate into the urban area, and the lack of public access greatly diminishes its value as a green lung for the urban area. It is considered that the area is not close enough to Syston Town Centre Air Quality Management Area to successful improve the air quality in that area.
- 6.18. The ability to provide additional recreational activities is limited due to private ownership and limited access.

Leicester (Beaumont Leys)/Birstall/Thurcaston/Anstey/Cropston

- 6.19. There is a degree of intervisibility between settlements in the green wedge, but overall it does serve to prevent the merging of Anstey and Birstall with Leicester
- 6.20. The wedge successfully guides development form of Leicester, particularly developments in the Ashton Green and Beaumont Leys area.
- 6.21. The wedge penetrates the urban area around Birstall and the Great Central Railway line acts as significant wildlife corridors.
- 6.22. There is a degree of public access across the green wedge which links into surrounding communities. There is more formal areas of recreations such as Castle Hill Country Park, as well as evidence of more informal access to the areas immediately West/South West of Birstall. The recreational value of green wedge is reinforced by its proximity to priority neighborhoods in Beaumont Leys

Birstall/Leicester/Thurmaston

- 6.23. The green wedge has successfully prevented the merging of the settlements
- 6.24. The green wedge successfully guides development out of Leicester.
- 6.25. The green wedge provides a green lung into the urban area. There is extensive public access across the green wedge, linking urban areas with the countryside. Most of the

green wedge lies within flood plain, and has a significant role to play in flood alleviation. The green wedge adjoins an Air Quality Management Area, and therefore has an important role ameliorating local air quality. Most of the site is a Local Wildlife site and has significant ecological value. The green wedge is an important part of the green infrastructure network within the 6Cs Green Infrastructure Strategy.

- 6.26. The green wedge is an excellent recreational resource. There is a variety of recreational opportunities, including, bridleways, part of the National Cycle network and the River Soar and Grand Union Canal.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. Green wedges were always intended to have malleable boundaries, to ensure appropriate areas of land are retained in and around the main urban areas. They do not and never have been intended, to have the permanence of a 'Green Belt'. This report provides the necessary evidence to review areas of green wedge and to inform future planning policy.
- 7.2. Of the six green wedge areas located within the Borough, two meet the Regional Plan criteria. These are the green wedges that are connected to Leicester:
- Birstall/Leicester/Thurmaston green wedge
 - Leicester (Beaumont Leys)/Birstall/Thurcaston/Anstey/Cropston green wedge
- 7.3. The other four green wedge areas do not meet all four of the specified criteria:
- Loughborough/Quorn
 - Loughborough/Hathern
 - Loughborough/Shepshed
 - Syston/Thurmaston
- 7.4. In light of the outcome of the review it is important to consider the appropriate planning policy approach to be taken forward in the Local Development Framework. This may include evaluating existing policy designations and considering alternative policy approaches. Factors that future planning policy should take into account are set out below.

Preventing the merging of settlements

- 7.5. Settlement identity is a high priority for local people and it is important to ensure that planning policy continues to maintain it. Mechanisms need to be in place to consider at what point development is likely cause the coalescence of settlements.

Support for wider green infrastructure

- 7.6. The role that green wedge areas play in supporting wider green infrastructure needs to be recognised. This includes improvements to health, supporting and protecting biodiversity, promoting recreation and being able to mitigate the impacts of climate change. It is important that green wedge policy can complement the wider intentions of the green infrastructure policy approach.
- 7.7. Providing open space within urban areas is still very important in giving people easy access to these areas to improve their living standards and to allow for a health lifestyle.

Recreational resource

- 7.8. It is important to ensure that recreation is supported and improved in the countryside adjacent to urban areas to promote a healthy lifestyle. Locating recreational activities in these areas would also support reducing the need to travel by car.

Protecting areas from inappropriate development

- 7.9. Planning policy will need to be developed to ensure that green wedge areas are not affected by inappropriate development in the future.
- 7.10. A consideration will need to be given as to what forms of development will be acceptable in these areas.

Appendix 1: Site Visit Survey Notes

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Hathern
Location 1: A6 at the entrance to Pear Tree Lane
Time and date of site visit: 0830, 6th August 2009

Land use description	Edge of A6, Hedgerow boundaries, Limited visibility	
Adjacent land uses	Adjacent to housing estate (not visible) opposite a pair of semi detached houses	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	High hedgerows restricting views	
Topography	Land use gently rising to a ridge line towards Hathern	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	Neither settlement can be seen from this location	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Neither settlement can be seen which gives the impression that there is a significant distance between settlements	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes✓	No✓
Details	This location is at the edge of the green wedge adjacent to Loughborough, the edge of green wedge is characterized by a strong hedgerow boundary	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Only one house is visible from this location	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	This location is along the main access route. More built development could have the effect of weakening the green wedge.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No✓
Details	Countryside location	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Well used walking routes and cycle way	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details		
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	Bridleway, footpath and cycle route visible	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Clearly sign posted	
What visible informal uses are there?	None	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Yes. Established footpaths already in place.	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Hathern
Location 2: Baileys Plantation
Time and date of site visit: 0900, 6th August 2009

Land use description	Agricultural fields	
Adjacent land uses	Industrial buildings are visible in the distance	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Mature woodland and mature hedgerow boundaries	
Topography	Gentle gradient rising to a ridgeline	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	Neither settlement can be seen from this position	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Perception of being in the middle of the countryside, no buildings are visible	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes	No✓
Details	Not a clear boundary as it merges with the Loughborough/Shepshed green wedge	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No✓
Details	Perception of being in the middle of the countryside	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Industrial buildings can be see in the distance	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	It would limit the perception of countryside	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No✓
Details	Countryside location	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Public footpath well used.	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details		
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details		
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Evidence of use during visit	
What visible informal uses are there?	None	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Yes	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Hathern
Location 3: A6 between Loughborough and Hathern on ridgeline
Time and date of site visit: 0930 6th August 2009

Land use description	Fields in Agricultural use adjacent to A6 road.	
Adjacent land uses	A6 road	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Mature hedgerow boundaries. Field boundaries.	
Topography	Located one the ridgeline overlooking river valley to the east and west.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes✓	No
Details	Edge of Pear Tree Lane development is visible and some of Hathern village	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Perception of leaving Loughborough because it can be seen in the distance but no perception of being near to Hathern.	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes	No
Details	Not see from this location	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No
Details	Not seen from this location	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	None clearly seen	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Development would prevent the wedge from looking like countryside. Development along the A6 would bring the settlements closer together.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No✓
Details	Perception of being in the countryside	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Site visit point is located on a cycle path	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	Cycle path	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details		
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Well used. Visible evidence on site visit	
What visible informal uses are there?	None seen	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Yes	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Hathern
Location 4: Green wedge boundary at Hathern, north of the A6
Time and date of site visit: 1000, 6th August 2009

Land use description	Field patterns, doesn't look cultivated	
Adjacent land uses	Allotment garden to the south of the site. On boundary with Hathern to the north	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Mature hedgerow boundaries and trees	
Topography	Flat land	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	Edge of Hathern visible at this location	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Perception of being on the village boundary of Hathern, but Loughborough not visible	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes✓	No
Details	The obvious boundary at this location would be the field adjacent to this location which would be on the boundary to Hathern	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	None visible	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Would prevent it from looking like countryside	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No✓
Details	The green wedge does not penetrate the village boundary	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Footpaths are visible at this location	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details		
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details		
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Well worn footpaths	
What visible informal uses are there?	None seen	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Yes	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Hathern
Location 5: Dishley Grange Farm
Time and date of site visit: 1045, 6th August 2009

Land use description	Bull in the Hollow farm – mixed use site. Edge of A6 with hedgerow boundaries. Edge of sports fields	
Adjacent land uses	Sport fields, countryside, housing shielded by hedgerows	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	High hedgerow restricting views to south. Ridgeline in distance to the north	
Topography	Land use gently rising to ridgeline towards Hathern.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	Perception of being on the outskirts of Loughborough	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Significant distance perceived.	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes	No
Details	Unsure where green wedge ends and where the countryside begins	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Built development clearly visible	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Green wedge would probably cease to exist	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No✓
Details	Perception of being in the countryside.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Cycle way and access to sports fields	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	Bridleway way, footpath and cycle route visible	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	Well used	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Well used	
What visible informal uses are there?	None	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Yes	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Shepshed
Location I: The Obelisk
Time and date of site visit: 0900, 18th August 2009

Land use description	Edge of cultivated field. Agricultural land	
Adjacent land uses	Mainly agricultural. On edge of wooded area	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Many mature trees/hedgerow field boundaries which restricts views over the green wedge	
Topography	Very gently undulating gradient. At a peak at the Obelisk. Able to look down on the peak	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	No settlement boundaries can be seen due to field boundaries	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Perception of large distance between settlements. Can hear a faint sound of the M1 Motorway in the distance	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes✓	No✓
Details	The residential land use ends suddenly at the boundary	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Non visible	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Would prevent it from giving the perception of countryside	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No✓
Details	Open space is outside settlement boundary	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Publish footpath	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details		
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details		
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Well used defined formal route	
What visible informal uses are there?	Some informal footpath routes	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Possible	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Shepshed
Location 2: Hathern Drive at entrance to Butthole Lane
Time and date of site visit: 0945, 18th August 2009

Land use description	Agricultural land	
Adjacent land uses	Gate house (residential property)	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Open fields with low hedgerow field boundaries. More thick mature boundaries in the distance	
Topography	Quite flat in this location. Land rises in the distance.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Neither settlement is visible so perception of great distance between settlements	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes	No✓
Details	Not in this location – in the middle of the green wedge	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No
Details	n/a	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	No other buildings except the gatehouse visible	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Development would reduce the openness of the area	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No✓
Details	Perception of being in the countryside not urban area	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	There is a cycle way/footpath between the settlements	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	This part of the green wedge can be accessed	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details		
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Well surfaced and good evidence of use	
What visible informal uses are there?	No informal uses	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Yes because of its size.	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Shepshed
Location 3: Butthole Lane on Loughborough side of M1
Time and date of site visit: 1115, 18th August 2009

Land use description	Public cycle way over the M1	
Adjacent land uses	Playing field adjacent to the M1 (which is outside of the green wedge), public footpath leading to agricultural land	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Hedgerow boundaries. Thick boundary along cycle way. Enclosed fields	
Topography	Footpath over the M1 on higher ground – able to overlook the green wedge	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	Very enclosed footpath. Able to see commercial building on Hathern Road and the sewage works. But not a sense of being in a settlement	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Feeling of being separated from Loughborough	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes✓	No✓
Details	M1 is a strong defensible boundary	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Some buildings are visible – sewage works and farms buildings. Many roads are visible – Hathern Road, M1	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Some development may not be clearly visible because views are restricted by landscapes	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No✓
Details	Plenty of use of footpath but in a rural setting	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Cycle way and footpaths visible	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	Not openly accessible but there are footpath routes	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	Well surfaced cycle way but not over looked	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Evidence of use when on visit	
What visible informal uses are there?	None seen	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Yes	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Shepshed
Location 4: Snells Nook Lane
Time and date of site visit: 1030, 18th August 2009

Land use description	Agricultural land	
Adjacent land uses	Agricultural land (golf course visible?)	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Mature hedgerow boundaries	
Topography	Gently undulating towards the A512	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	Loughborough Gas research centre can be seen on the edge of Loughborough	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Vast distance perceived	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes	No✓
Details	Perception of being in the middle of the countryside not on the edge of a green wedge	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes✓	No
Details	Boundary closer to Loughborough would bring green wedge into urban area	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Only development visible is gas research centre on the edge of the wedge at Loughborough	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Would prevent the area from looking like countryside	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No✓
Details	No perception of being near to an urban area at this location	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Some public footpaths signed within the area	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	Some public footpaths signed within the area	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles / gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	Signposted but the surface type may prevent them from being used by some people	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	No evidence seen on site visit	
What visible informal uses are there?	No informal uses seen	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Yes, limited use in area at present anyway.	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Shepshed
Location 5: A512
Time and date of site visit: 1045, 18th August 2009

Land use description	Roadside lay by	
Adjacent land uses	Not clearly visible due to dense hedgerow boundaries. Adjacent to M1 and agricultural fields	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	High/dense hedgerow boundaries	
Topography	Land slopes away from road	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	Neither settlement can be seen	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Perception of great distance due to restricted visibility	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes	No
Details	n/a This location is not on the boundary	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No
Details	n/a This location is not on the boundary	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	None seen other than service station and roads	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Not much affect. Road already a dominant feature	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No✓
Details	Perception of being between settlements not within	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Cycle way along the A512	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes	No✓
Details	Other than the A512, nothing else is visible	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	Cycle way well surfaced	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Some. Not extensive	
What visible informal uses are there?	None	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Yes	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Quorn
Location I: Public footpath going over the Great Central Railway
Time and date of site visit: 1430 18th August 2009

Land use description	Agricultural land	
Adjacent land uses	Settlement boundary of Woodthorpe and the Great Central Rail are visible	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Mature hedgerow boundaries. Mature trees on the horizon restricting views of Quorn	
Topography	Flat landscape. Able to see land rise in the distance towards the South West of Quorn	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	Woodthorpe is visible and some high buildings of Loughborough University. Grange Park is also visible	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Perception of extensive distance between Quorn and Woodthorpe as Quorn is not visible	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes✓	No
Details	Boundary clearly seen at Woodthorpe	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Extent of built development within the green wedge	No buildings visible, the A6 can be seen in the distance	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	May not give the perception of merging of settlements because of the restricted views.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes✓	No
Details	Whilst there is limited access via 1 public footpath – This location is easily access by those living on the edge of Loughborough and Woodthorpe.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details		
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details		
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	Evidence of use by cyclists and walkers. May not be suitable for those with mobility problems. Not well sign posted from Woodthorpe Road	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Evidence of use on site visit	
What visible informal uses are there?	None	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?		

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Quorn
Location 2: Settlement boundary of Woodthorpe, near to Hillcrest Drive
Time and date of site visit: 1415, 18th August 2009

Land use description	Agricultural land	
Adjacent land uses	Settlement boundary of Woodthorpe and the Great Central Rail are visible	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Mature hedgerow boundaries. Mature trees on the horizon restricting views of Quorn	
Topography	Flat landscape. Able to see land rise in the distance towards the South West of Quorn	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	Woodthorpe is visible and some high buildings of Loughborough University. Grange Park is also visible	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Perception of extensive distance between Quorn and Woodthorpe as Quorn is not visible	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes✓	No
Details	Boundary clearly seen at Woodthorpe	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Extent of built development within the green wedge	No buildings visible, the A6 can be seen in the distance	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	May not give the perception of merging of settlements because of the restricted views.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes✓	No
Details	Whilst there is limited access via 1 public footpath – This location is easily access by those living on the edge of Loughborough and Woodthorpe.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details		
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details		
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	May not be suitable for those with mobility problems. Not well sign posted from Woodthorpe Road	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Evidence of use on site visit	
What visible informal uses are there?	None	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?		

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Quorn
Location 3: Public footpath at Bull in the Hollow farm
Time and date of site visit: 1115, 18th August 2009

Land use description	Edge of recreation facility, agricultural land	
Adjacent land uses	Bull in the Hollow farm – private recreational facility (archery)	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	High mature tree line boundary along footpath	
Topography	Flat land	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	The footpath boundary treatment restricts views to the footpath only	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	The views in this location are restricted. Only the A6 is visible through the tree line. Therefore the perception between settlements is great	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes	No
Details	N/a not visible	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No
Details	N/a not visible	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	None visible	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Such limited views that it is unlikely to have any affect at this location	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No✓
Details	Access to footpath was difficult	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	But very limited access	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	Limited access	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details		
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths / bridleways?	No one seen on footpath at time of visit	
What visible informal uses are there?	None seen	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Yes	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Quorn
Location 4: Rear of playing fields on Woodhouse Road
Time and date of site visit: 1430, 18th August 2009

Land use description	Agricultural land	
Adjacent land uses	Playing field, near to Loughborough Road.	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Mature hedgerow boundaries. Mature trees restricting views of Quorn	
Topography	Flat landscape.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	Woodthorpe is visible and some high buildings of Loughborough University. Grange Park is also visible	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Perception of extensive distance between Quorn and Woodthorpe as Quorn is not visible	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes✓	No
Details	Boundary clearly seen at Woodthorpe	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Extent of built development within the green wedge	No buildings visible, the A6 can be seen	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	May not give the perception of merging of settlements because of the restricted views.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes✓	No
Details	Whilst there is limited access via 1 public footpath – This location is easily access by those living on the edge of Loughborough and Woodthorpe.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details		
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details		
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	Evidence of use by cyclists and walkers. May not be suitable for those with mobility problems. Not well sign posted from Woodhouse Road, Quorn	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths / bridleways?	Evidence of use on site visit	
What visible informal uses are there?	None	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?		

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Loughborough/Quorn
Location 5: Farley Way, Quorn
Time and date of site visit: 1400, 19th August

Land use description	Farm land. Restricted view along Farley Way. Evidence of paddock use from the A6. Beacon View Business Park also visible from the A6.	
Adjacent land uses	The A6 bisects this area. There is residential development to the south	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	High hedgerow along Farley Way which restricts views into the Wedge	
Topography	Flat flood plain	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	Sense of being within Quorn. Hedgerow boundary restricts view into the wedge	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Sense of being outside of Loughborough. A6 helps to define the separation, especially the land uses along the A6	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes✓	No
Details	High hedgerow marks the boundary	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes✓	No
Details	The A6?	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	A farm and the football ground are visible at this location.	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?		
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No✓
Details	No access in to this area	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes	No✓
Details	No access	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes	No
Details	n/a	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	None visible	
What visible informal uses are there?	None visible	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	May improve the function of the green wedge	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Anstey
Location: Anstey Cemetery
Time and date of site visit: 7th October 2010

Land use description	Cemetery	
Adjacent land uses	Arable farmland	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Tall pylons. Areas of woodland	
Topography	Gently sloping down from cemetery towards Rothley Brook. Valley edge.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes✓	No
Details	Edge of Beaumont Leys and Glenfield	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Visible but seem distant.	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes✓	No✓
Details	Groby Road provides a strong defensible boundary to the north of this green wedge.	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes✓	No
Details	A46 or Rothley Brook could provide alternative defensible boundary.	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Pylons. A46 dual carriageway. Agricultural buildings.	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Would urbanise an area that already has some urban influences. Depending upon the scale then could affect settlement identity.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes✓	No
Details	The edge of Leicester is visible from this vantage point. There is footpath adjacent to the survey point.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	There is footpath adjacent to the survey point. Cemetery provides area for quiet recreation.	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	There is footpath adjacent to the survey point	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	There is footpath adjacent to the survey point	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Appeared well trodden, and was being used during the time of the site visit.	
What visible informal uses are there?	Little visible from this vantage point.	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Could be maintained, but would recreational value might not have same weight in policy terms.	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Anstey/Thurcaston/Birstall
Location: North of Glenfield within Charnwood, adjacent to the boundary with Blaby District
Time and date of site visit: 8th October 2010

Land use description	Agricultural. Rough grazing land.	
Adjacent land uses	Communications (A46). Residential	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	High hedgerows. Hedgerow trees. Free-standing trees.	
Topography	Ground rising up from survey point towards the southeast.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes✓	No
Details	Anstey and Glenfield/ Beaumont Leys.	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Distance between settlements appears great.	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes	No✓
Details	The survey point is where the green wedge extends into Hinckley and Bosworth and Blaby. There are no boundaries close to survey point.	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes✓	No
Details	A46 provides a defensible boundary to the north.	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Mainly A46 and electricity pylons.	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Would urbanise and area already subject to urban influences. Depending on the scale of development, development in the green wedge south of the A46 could have detrimental impact on Anstey. The land lies high than Anstey on a downward sloping facing this village. Development in this location could appear dominant, and reduce the feeling of separation.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes✓	No
Details	The green wedge lies adjacent to the Leicester Principal Urban Area.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Survey point situated on a footpath.	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	See above	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes?	No
Details	Footpaths are accessible, although slightly overgrown at the time of the survey.	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Footpaths appeared reasonably well used.	
What visible informal uses are there?	None evident.	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Quality of recreational opportunity may be reduced if lost green wedge status was removed.	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Anstey/Thurcaston/Birstall
Location: Anstey Lane, near to north eastern boundary of green wedge
Time and date of site visit: 7th October 2009

Land use description	Arable farmland	
Adjacent land uses	Country Park, allotment land.	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Large fields, low hedgerows. Tall electricity pylons	
Topography	Survey point highest in all of green wedge within Charnwood, sloping down towards southwest and west.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes✓	No
Details	Anstey, Thurcaston and Cropston can be seen.	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Distances appear relatively great, sufficient for each village to appear separate from one another	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes✓	No✓
Details	Cropston Road Anstey provides strong defensible boundary to the West.	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes✓	No
Details	Rothley Brook. (A46 outside of Charnwood Borough boundary?) are possibilities. Thurcaston Lane provides more obvious defensible boundary	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Limited. There is a sewerage works.	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Development would have an impact on the open, undeveloped character of the countryside.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No✓
Details	The area north of Thurcaston Lane has a predominantly rural feel.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	A bridleway forms most of the northern boundary of the green wedge, with links into Anstey, Thurcaston and towards Leicester City. There is an allotment site within the green wedge.	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	See above	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	Bridleway and footpaths are signposted and appear in reasonable condition.	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	No users at time of visit, but was well defined.	
What visible informal uses are there?	None obvious.	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Yes.	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Anstey/Thurcaston/Birstall
Location: Old Bridge
Time and date of site visit: 7th October 2010

Land use description	Informal open space, agricultural land.	
Adjacent land uses	Village hall, industrial, residential uses. School uses.	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	High hedgerows. Rothley Brook. Pylons. Tall highway street lighting.	
Topography	Valley bottom. Gentle slopes.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	N/A	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes?	No✓
Details	Edge of Anstey village	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes✓	No
Details	Rothley Brook/A46	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Farmsteads pylons.	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Would not have major impact upon settlement separation. Would affect setting of Anstey and detract from recreational/ amenity value.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes✓	No
Details	Leicester cannot be seen from this vantage point, but is accessible.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Informal open space, recreational access routes	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	See above	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details		
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Although few people seen on survey. The area seemed maintained to a standard where it could be well used by a number of people.	
What visible informal uses are there?	Informal open space.	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Quality of recreational opportunity may be reduced if lost green wedge status was removed.	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Anstey/Thurcaston/Birstall
Location: Castle Hill Country Park
Time and date of site visit: 7th October 2009

Land use description	Country Park/ Informal Recreational Space	
Adjacent land uses	Agricultural	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Groups / lines of trees. Rough grassland.	
Topography	Undulating	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	It is not possible to see any settlement looking south from Thurcaston Lane, Anstey. Looking towards Castle Hill Country Park.	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	N/A	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes	No✓
Details	There are no strong defensible boundaries looking south.	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes✓	No
Details	Rothley Brook?	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Limited development.	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Would affect the landscape, recreational, social amenity and wildlife qualities of the Country Park.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes✓	No
Details	The green wedge lies close to the outskirts of Leicester.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Close to trails of country park and its informal recreational spaces.	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	Can be accessed into Castle Hill Country Park to the south.	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	Maintained as part of the Country Park.	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Appeared well used.	
What visible informal uses are there?	There are plenty of opportunities for informal recreation within the country park.	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Provided the Country Park was maintained the recreational opportunities could be maintained. Full opportunities may not be realised if not in green wedge such as improving linkages in a strategic sense.	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Anstey/Thurcaston/Birstall
Location: King William Bridge
Time and date of site visit: 7th October 2010

Land use description	Footpath and woodland scrub.	
Adjacent land uses	Football pitches. Residential in Anstey.	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Pylons. Woodland, scrub, Willow trees along Rothley Brook.	
Topography	Valley bottom. Slopes up towards Beaumont Leys.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	Anstey can be seen from survey point. Wooded slope towards Beaumont Leys means that settlement not visible in this direction.	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	N/A	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes?	No✓
Details	Edge of Anstey village?	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes✓	No
Details	A46. Rothley Brook.	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Old stone bridge. Electricity pylons are dominant features. Playing fields	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Despite road noise and dominant pylons in the landscape, the area has a natural feel. Development in this area would affect the natural feel of the environment.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes✓	No
Details	The green wedge is located close to the Principal urban area of Leicester.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	A couple of access tracks/ rights of way cross at the survey point near to King William Bridge. Right of way links Anstey to Leicester. There are playing fields.	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	See above	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details		
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Appeared well used at the time of the site visit.	
What visible informal uses are there?	There is space for informal recreation near to right of way, along playing fields and next to the Rothley Brook	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Quality of recreational opportunity may be reduced if lost green wedge status was removed.	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Birstall/Thurmaston
Location: North of Green wedge, roundabout next Hope and Anchor Public House
Time and date of site visit: 12th May 2010

Land use description	Boating Lake, semi natural environment	
Adjacent land uses	Industrial, residential and main roads	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Scrub, woodland and lakes	
Topography	Flat	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	Can see residential and industrial parts of Syston.	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	N/A	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes✓	No
Details	Has strong defensible boundary to the north and to the east. Boundary to the west there is not an obvious defensible boundary such as road or other feature.	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No✓
Details	There may be scope to the west to consider amending the boundary.	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Limited. Some access roads associated with the boating lake.	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	There may be some scope for small-scale developments associated with recreation etc. Although the part of the green wedge has some urban influences from major roads and industrial development, it has still a very open aspect and any larger buildings might impact of the open character of the green wedge.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes✓?	No
Details	Accessible from Syston and Wanlip. There is a question of whether these adjoining settlements form part of the urban environment of Leicester, although the separation between Syston and Thurmaston is very slight.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Boating, footpaths	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	There is a network of footpaths	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	Yes.	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Country Park car park areas appeared well used.	
What visible informal uses are there?	Little sign from this survey point.	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Yes, but only very minor changes.	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Birstall/Thurmaston
Location: Central
Time and date of site visit: 12th May 2010

Land use description	Country Park/Nature Reserve	
Adjacent land uses	Village of Thurmaston – mixed use mostly residential.	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Scrub, trees, lakes, areas of woodland, tall grassland.	
Topography	Wide flat valley with Thurmaston standing on lip of valley.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Thurmaston can be seen in the distance. Primarily rural, tranquil feel. Distances appear great.	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes✓	No
Details	No obvious transport route. Edge of village is on edge of floodplain.	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Very little. Fencing and gravel trails.	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Would affect the rural tranquil feel of the area, but development is unlikely given the flooding issues with the area.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes✓	No
Details	Pedestrian links to Birstall, Thurmaston and Leicester City	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Includes trails and cycleways for informal recreation.	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	Good pedestrian linkages to Birstall and Thurmaston.	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	Set out and maintained as country park.	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Appeared well used at time of site survey.	
What visible informal uses are there?	Little opportunities in the immediate area around the survey point, as footpaths surrounded by water.	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Would not affect potential for development within the green wedge as this is already limited because it is within a floodplain. Quality of recreational opportunity may be reduced if lost green wedge status was removed.	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Birstall/Thurmaston
Location: Adjacent to Industrial Estate
Time and date of site visit: 12th May 2010

Land use description	Country Park / Nature Reserve	
Adjacent land uses	Industrial Estate	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Grassland (amenity + natural) woodland, river, scrubland.	
Topography	Flat. Birstall and Thurmaston sit on lip of shallow valley.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes✓	No
Details	Birstall and Thurmaston.	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Sense of distance is increased by heavy tree screening to both settlement edges, increasing rural tranquil feel.	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes✓	No
Details	Edge of flood plain. No major transport corridor etc which could act as defensible boundary.	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No✓
Details		
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Very limited within green wedge. Structures associated with footpaths and the canal.	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Development could dramatically reduce the rural character and tranquility.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes✓	No
Details	Adjacent and accessible to Thurmaston, Birstall and Leicester City.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Recreational opportunities walking, fishing, boating, informal grassed areas large enough for games or ball sports.	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	Yes.	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes	No
Details	Well sign posted. Surface condition good enough for able bodied – may be not for some physically impaired people.	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Was well used at the time of site visit.	
What visible informal uses are there?	Areas of informal amenity grassland appear capable of for a variety of uses.	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Would not affect potential for development within the green wedge as this is already limited because it is within a floodplain. Quality of recreational opportunity may be reduced if lost green wedge status was removed.	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Birstall/Thurmaston
Location: Immediately south of marina
Time and date of site visit: 12th May 2010 (Early afternoon)

Land use description	Country Park/Nature Reserve/arina	
Adjacent land uses	Industrial and residential. (These uses are located some distance away from the survey point)	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Fences, waterway, lakes, high hedges, areas of woodland, informal amenity grassland, marina	
Topography	Flat with settlements on higher ground.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No✓
Details	From specific vantage point no settlements can be seen.	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	N/A	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes	No✓
Details	N/A	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No✓
Details	N/A	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Marina development with moorings, pontoons, buildings and small buildings	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Small scale buildings that might support some recreational uses, such as at the marina may be compatible with the character of the green wedge.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes✓	No
Details	Adjacent and accessible to Thurmaston, Birstall and Leicester City.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes	No
Details	Recreational opportunities walking, fishing, boating, informal grassed areas large enough for games or ball sports.	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	Adjacent and accessible to Thurmaston, Birstall and Leicester City.	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	Well sign posted. Surface condition good enough for able bodied – may be not for some physically impaired people.	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Appeared well used at the time of survey.	
What visible informal uses are there?	Some areas adjacent to trails which could be used for informal recreation.	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Would not affect potential for development within the green wedge as this is already limited because it is within a floodplain. Quality of recreational opportunity may be reduced if lost green wedge status was removed.	

GREEN WEDGE SITE VISIT PROFORMA

Green wedge: Birstall/Thurmaston
Location: Birstall Canal Bridge to the south of green wedge
Time and date of site visit: 12th May 2010

Land use description	Waterway. Country Park/Nature Reserve	
Adjacent land uses	Residential/industrial	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Trees, scrub, woodland, grassland, canal and associated structures	
Topography	Flat. Birstall on higher ground.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes✓	No
Details	Leicester City, Thurmaston, Birstall.	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	Neighbouring settlements appear distant / separate.	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes	No✓
Details	N/a edge of green wedge in this location is the edge of the floodplain.	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No
Details	N/a edge of green wedge in this location is the edge of the floodplain.	
Extent of built development within the green wedge	Structures associated with waterway and trails.	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	Would affect the natural and tranquil feel.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes✓	No
Details	Close to and easily accessible to Birstall, Thurmaston and Leicester City.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths/cycle ways/bridle paths)	Yes✓	No
Details	Footways, towpaths. National cycle routes.	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes✓	No
Details	See above	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles/gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes✓	No
Details	Well cared for. Most of footpaths and access could be used by people with some physical impairment.	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths/bridleways?	Appeared well used at the time of survey.	
What visible informal uses are there?	Areas of grassland and amenity space next to canal.	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Yes, but only very minor changes.	