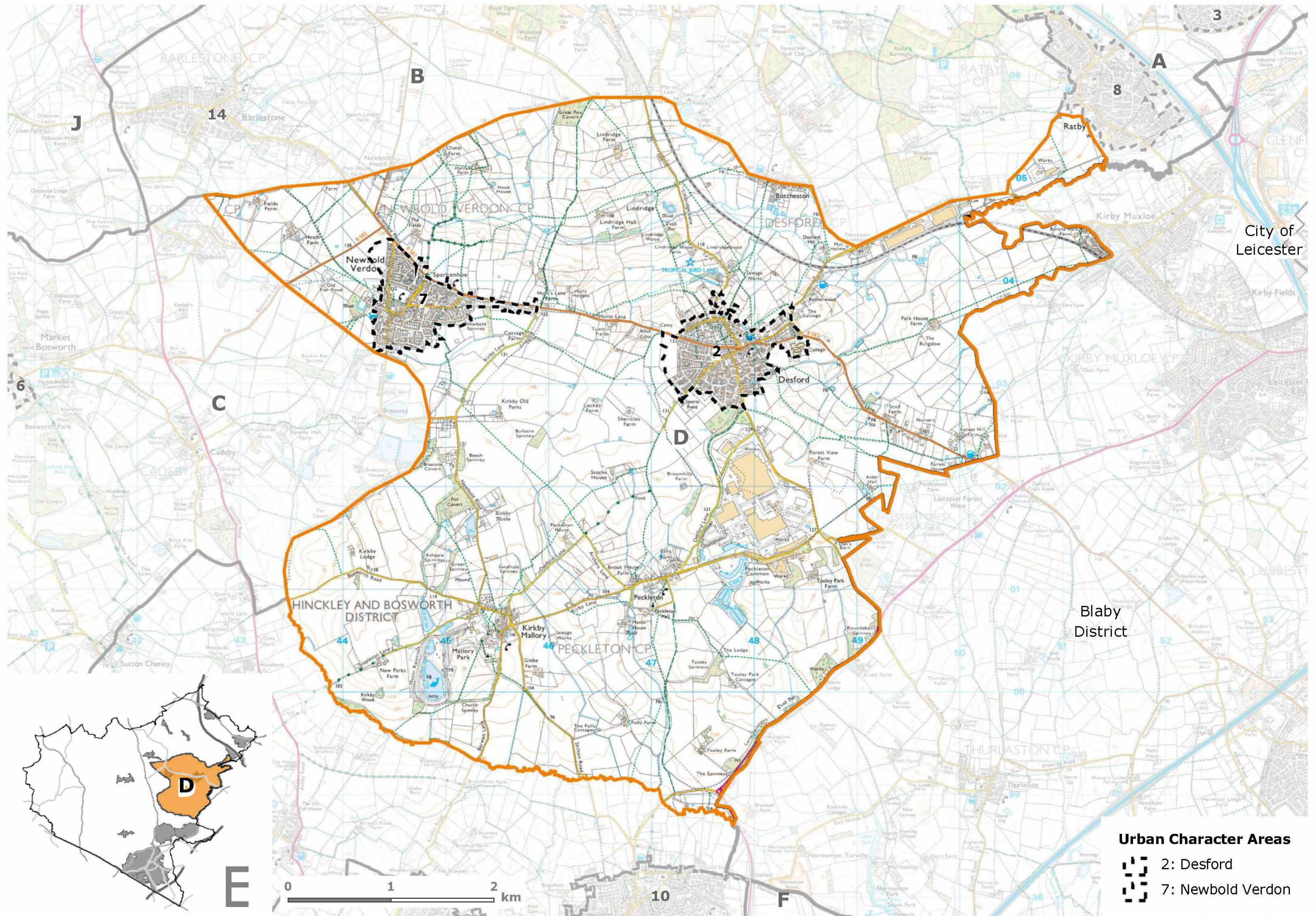

Appendix 1

Landscape Character Assessment Extracts



LCA D: Newbold and Desford Rolling Farmland



Urban Character Areas

- 2: Desford
- 7: Newbold Verdon

LCA D: NEWBOLD AND DESFORD ROLLING FARMLAND



Location and Boundaries

- 5.61

The Desford Vales character area lies on gently undulating farmland in the east of the Borough between the Charnwood Fringe to the north and the Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland in the south. The land slopes down to the River Soar in the east and shares its western boundary with the Bosworth Parkland Landscape Character Area.
- 5.62

Villages within the character area:

- Desford
 - Peckleton
 - Kirkby Mallory
 - Newbold Verdon

Key Characteristics

- 1)

Gently rolling landform rising to the north from the lower lying land around the River Soar.
- 2)

Clustered villages of varying size centred on crossroads.
- 3)

Predominantly arable farmland with clustered areas of industry and recreational facilities near to the village fringes.
- 4)

Tree cover is limited, with scattered trees and small linear woodland copses.
- 5)

Large to medium sized field pattern defined by single species hawthorn hedgerows.
- 6)

Good network of footpaths link settlements.
- 7)

Few major roads.
- 8)

Open views where hedgerows have been removed, giving an impression of a large scale landscape.
- 9)

Electricity pylons and wind turbines are often prominent vertical features in this open landscape.



Landscape Character

The Desford Vales geology is characterised by Triassic Mercia Mudstone interspersed with some bands of sandstone and overlain by Quaternary diamiction and sand and gravel. Alluvium is found beneath the River Soar tributary. The majority of the area consists of reddish fine loamy clayey soils which are slowly permeable and therefore prone to seasonal waterlogging. A section of more permeable coarse loamy soils affected by groundwater can be found on the middle slopes, forming a band through the area. The landform is gently undulating, rising to the north, whilst the southern part of the area flattens out into a valley which contains a tributary to the River Soar.

Land cover consists of generally open, medium to large scale agricultural fields with a mix of arable and pasture in a regular shaped pattern. Some small scale uses exist, such as the allotments on the edge of Brascote village as well as some industrial influences including active sand and gravel quarrying, warehouses and factories. Small areas of woodland, often linear in form, can be found throughout the area, especially associated with Mallory Park and the Caterpillar works. Hedgerows with hedgerow trees of varying frequency are common, as are scattered trees, although some hedgerows have been removed along road sides.

A number of public footpaths and bridleways serve the area. There are few major roads, with a network of rural lanes and minor roads connecting the villages and the Caterpillar works to the A47 and A447 major transport corridors on the edges of the area. These have localised urban influences and create a strong sense of movement. However, areas of tranquillity can be found away from the settlement concentrations; areas with little light pollution in the north of the character area between Newbold Verdon and Desford indicate dark skies and a rural character.

Long distance panoramic views are possible from the higher ground and more open land in the north. Views from in and around the villages are occasionally restricted by vegetation and landform and punctuated by the pylons and wind turbines which together with quarries have urbanising and industrial influences on the otherwise rural landscape.

- 7

Settlement is characterised by clustered villages of varying sizes, including the larger centres of Desford and Newbold Verdon. Many isolated farmsteads are scattered throughout the farmland and were typically built in response to agricultural enclosure. Several farms are still located in the villages and more recently modern farm complexes and industrial agricultural units have become more apparent.
- 8

Desford is the most significant settlement in the area comprising a compact, nucleated village made up of two storey terraced cottages of mixed building materials. Red brick chimneys and small sub-divided windows are a feature whilst rough cast rendering, slate roofing and some timber framed thatched buildings are also present. The character is described in more detail in the Desford Urban Character Area.
- 9

The Caterpillar works form a major developed area to the south of Desford, yet is well-assimilated by woodland and tree planting around its boundary.
- 5.20

Peckleton and Kirkby Mallory are other small villages with farming origins that occupy the centre of the character area. These consist of a mix of former agricultural two storey cottages made from red brick and slate roofs contrasting with red brick, white render and clay roof tiles of modern infill and expansion.
- 71

Newbold Verdon is a compact settlement with a well-defined historic core characterised by two-storey, red brick dwellings with slate roofs. The urban form is made up of a mix of different styles



and is discussed as part of Urban Character Area 7.

Historical and Cultural Influences

5.72 Until the Industrial Revolution, the villages comprised small agricultural communities of farmhouses with associated strip fields, remains of which are evident in the ridge and furrow within fields surrounding some of the settlements such as Desford.

5.7 Mallory Park and the associated estate have Anglo-Saxon origins: Kirkby Moats, located to the north of Kirkby Mallory, consists of a series of rectilinear ditches, resembling a double moated enclosure with adjacent fish ponds. The present day motorcycle track began as a standby landing ground for the Royal Air Force Station during WWII, before it was later sold as part of the estate in 1953 and became a pony trotting circuit. It was less than a decade later that the first motorcycle sidecar racing was first held at Mallory Park when several motorcycle clubs hired the circuit from the previous owners. Since then a number of high profile races have been held at the circuit including the British Superbike Championships and British Touring Cars.

5.74 A tree in an uncultivated field near to the footpath between Peckleton and Earl Shilton known as the 'oak and ash tree' holds special value in local legend. The tree is two trees that have bonded together, making one which is unusual because they are two different species – oak and ash. Local legend says this unusual tree stems from two seeds being planted decades ago by lovers who were forced apart. The folk tale serves as an important piece of local history that ties Earl Shilton to its surrounding landscape and serves as a reminder of how the settlement used to be.

5.75 Desford Hall is a Grade II listed country house dating from around 1875. The manor of Desford belonged to many Earls of Leicester and was important as it had associations with the royal

hunting forest, Leicester Forest, within which people had important rights of common.

5.76 A moated site to the south west of Lindridge Fields Farm is designated as a Scheduled Monument. Another Scheduled Monument marks a moated site at the edge of Newbold Verdon (see Urban Character Area) which is likely to have housed a previous manor house. The former moats would have enclosed islands of dry ground on which stood domestic or religious buildings and remain as status symbols indicating the distribution of wealth in the countryside in the medieval period. These have been modified through ploughing and are generally buried but are discernible on the ground through slightly raised land and water-filled ditches.

Natural Influences

5.77 The area is predominantly made up of agricultural fields with little ecological value. However a number of rectilinear blocks of deciduous woodland are scattered throughout the landscape, some of which is Ancient Woodland. Charity Fields to the north east of Desford and Manor Farm Meadow on the edge of Brascote Village are also recognised as Local Wildlife Sites for their communities of mesotrophic grassland.

Key Sensitivities and Values

- 1) The remaining areas of ridge and furrow which create a sense of historic time depth.
- 2) The rural settlement pattern of compact and nucleated agricultural settlements connected by a network of rural lanes and minor roads is largely unspoiled. The rural landscape and sense of tranquillity is sensitive to change from further development.
- 3) Isolated farmsteads interspersed throughout the farmland contribute to the historic rural character and provide continuity to the past.
- 4) The estate at Mallory Park has strong historic and cultural associations and provides a nationally-popular attraction.
- 5) Long distance and panoramic views from the elevated land in the north creates a high scenic quality and adds to the visual amenity.
- 6) Relatively small communities of mesotrophic grassland and deciduous woodland provide valuable habitat in a predominantly agricultural landscape.
- 7) The areas which provide a rural setting to the settlements are sensitive to changes as a result of new development, as well as views from the wider landscape to church spires.

Landscape Strategies

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Conserve historic field patterns where possible, and the agricultural setting to isolated farmsteads. 2) Conserve the relatively small-scale villages and ensure any new development contributes positively to the character and built vernacular. 3) Conserve and enhance pedestrian access between adjacent villages including the recreational and ecological corridor of Rotherley Brook. 4) Conserve Mallory Park and its predominantly rural setting. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5) Conserve and enhance the long, panoramic views from higher ground of uncluttered skylines and church spires, and consider the visual impact of vertically prominent elements in any new development. 6) Conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the landscape through a mosaic of habitats. 7) Identify opportunities for replacement of hedgerows along roadsides and their future management as landscape features 8) Promote regeneration and enhancement of tree cover through establishment of linear copses and hedgerow trees within field boundaries and around urbanising influences. |
|---|---|

Appendix 2

Desford Urban Character Area



UCA 2: DESFORD



Location and Setting

- 6.24 Desford is situated in the eastern part of the Borough at the intersection of roads linking Kirby Muxloe, Newbold Verdon, Thornton and Thurlaston.
- 6.25 It is located on a steep, east facing slope in an open expanse of farmland with tree planting along property boundaries forming a relatively soft settlement edge. The large Caterpillar logistics park is located a short distance to the south and is generally contained by landform and screening planting.
- 6.26 Desford lies within LCA D: Newbold and Desford Rolling Farmland.

Key Characteristics

- 1) **A compact nucleated settlement with the historic core on the northern edge.**
- 2) **Built form of largely two storey terraced cottages, often with prominent red brick chimneys and small subdivided windows.**
- 3) **Residential properties from the 17th – 19th century surround the central core whilst the 1940s – 1950s dwellings extend to the south.**
- 4) **Mixed building materials used include red brick, rough cast rendering and slate roofing, with some timber framed thatched buildings.**
- 5) **The Church of St Martin forms a local landmark with its distinctive spire.**
- 6) **Minimal frontages and narrow lanes create a small compact streetscape which then opens out to a later, wider street pattern with winding cul-de-sacs within the twentieth century development areas.**



Townscape Character

- 6.27 Desford is a compact nucleated settlement with the historic core located on the northern edge, designated as a Conservation Area. This area is defined by the old village core surrounding Main Street, Church Lane and High Street and includes buildings of many periods and styles.
- 6.28 A medieval street pattern survives, with subtle changes in direction as well as a network of jitties, once providing access to the neighbouring countryside. Narrow streets are lined by small terraced cottages and large detached cottages. Main Street and Newbold Road are partially cut into the landform which has resulted in an asymmetrical streetscape. Buildings level with the pavement on one side of the road contrast with adjacent properties accessed from steps, raised pavements and brick retaining walls. Properties were built along Main Street, often within large green spaces and mature planting.
- 6.29 There are several listed buildings within the old historic core. The Parish Church of St. Martin originates from the 13th century and its spire creates a local landmark. There are several buildings such as the Malt Houses, the Old Manor House, the Grange and Ivy House, all of which are grade II or II* listed. One of the most significant and oldest surviving buildings is the Old Manor House, in the High Street which was constructed in 1640 for Thomas Muxloe. It is an impressive dwelling with gables and a grand entrance porch faced with stone.
- 6.30 The majority of development occurred during the late 1940s and early 50s with red brick terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings rapidly being built post war. These follow a variety of architectural styles with the majority following winding cul-de-sacs.
- 6.31 Building styles are typically varied and reflect the historic development of the village. Low, shallow buildings are characterised by medieval timber frames with brick extensions and steeply pitched gable roofs punctured by brick chimneys, though facades have been subject to superficial alterations over the years. Victorian feature buildings are of regular design, high quality materials and are usually two rooms deep with steeply pitched gabled roofs parallel to the street, whilst post war properties are predominantly bungalows with shallow pitched roofs and adjoining double garages set in larger plots of ground.
- 6.32 Similar to nearby villages, Desford grew out of a farming village as a result of a thriving hosiery industry which later diversified into mining. Desford Colliery, approximately two miles north of the village, was closed in 1984 although a commemorative half colliery wheel serves as a memorial within the village. Today local industry provides employment at Newtown Unthank, and at Caterpillar on a major site between Desford and Peckleton.
- 6.33 Modern extensions around the fringes of the village are more exposed and lack cohesion with the historic core and rest of the settlement. Winding country lanes with low clipped hedgerows and grass verges create a rural setting to Desford. This is reinforced by long views out from the settlement edge over rolling farmland with wind turbines present in views to the north.
- 6.34 Red brick is the predominant building material in the historic core, apart from St Martin's Church which is formed of stone. There are a number of other styles and materials evident in the village including rough cast rendering and slate, with the occasional use of other materials such as stone, thatch, clay roof tiles and timber framing.
- 6.35 The open space around St. Martin's Church provides a welcome contrast in the otherwise relatively enclosed streetscape of Main Street. This area is mostly defined by mature sycamore trees



whilst an avenue of semi-mature conifer trees frames a narrow pathway through the graveyard. The Pickard Recreation Ground is situated within the urban grain and provides a small rectilinear expanse of amenity grassland defined by mature trees in each corner. This is accessed only by a few jitties which creates a quiet recreational area, enclosed by houses on each side.

Historical and Cultural Influences

- 6.36 The village of Desford is believed to be of Anglo-Saxon origin with the earliest written record in the Domesday Book of Deresford or Diresford. There are signs of Romano-British occupation with the remains of two kilns found on the demolition site of The Manor House.
- 6.37 Prior to the 1700s, employment in the village was predominantly agriculture-based until the

Industrial Revolution and the village contained a small agricultural community of farmhouses with associated strip fields, remains of which are evident in the ridge and furrow in the nearby fields.

- 6.38 Following the end of the Second World War, the village altered dramatically expanding to the southwest and virtually doubling in size. Since then, the village has undergone further expansion with new housing being focussed around the settlement edge serving a large commuter population.
- 6.39 Desford was subject to a great fire in 1657 which engulfed several dwellings, barns, stables and valuables. After a village petition, Oliver Cromwell sought charity from Christians across the country to aid with the repair works.

Key Sensitivities and Values

- 1) The historic character of small terraced cottages and large detached cottages arranged in a medieval street pattern and connected by an extensive network of jitties provides sense of place and a link to the past.
- 2) Medieval, Georgian and Victorian building styles and materials contribute to the visual amenity and provide a sense of historic time depth.
- 3) The colliery wheel at the centre of the village provides continuity to the landscape's industrial past and provides a link with other nearby mining settlements.
- 4) Small pockets of enclosed green space providing intimate areas within the enclosed built form and contribute to the recreational value.
- 5) Distinctive asymmetrical streetscape largely influenced by the hilltop topography and historic buildings such as the Old Manor House on the High Street.
- 6) The Parish Church of St Martin which forms a local landmark and focal point at the centre of the historic core.
- 7) Occasional open views of the countryside which provide a reminder of the settlement's origins as an agricultural settlement

Townscape Strategies

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) Retain listed buildings and buildings of local interest wherever possible. | 4) Encourage proposals to provide landscape enhancements, including tree planting, to the settlement edge. |
| 2) Ensure any new development respects the rural setting of the village and the Conservation Area in terms of siting, scale, design and materials used. | 5) Enhance pedestrian links between adjacent villages and consider potential as key gateways to the National Forest. |
| 3) Retain and enhance important views of the church and other key visual buildings and spaces in the Conservation Area. | 6) Build upon and improve Desford's sense of place and individual identity through sensitive design and appropriate materials. |