

## **Land at Hill Lane, Markfield**

# **Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment**

On behalf of Glenalmond Properties Ltd

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. Align Landscape Planning are instructed by Glenalmond Properties Ltd to assess the landscape and visual implications arising from the proposed development of up to 67 dwellings at Hill Lane, Markfield ('the Site'). The Site is shown within its wider context on the **Site Location Plan** (SLP.001).

### 1.2. Approach

- 1.2.1. The purpose of this assessment is to objectively assess the proposed development in the context of the existing landscape character, visual environment and landscape related policy environment.
- 1.2.2. This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) would take the following format:
- Review of the Site's context in terms of landscape related policy, existing landscape character and the receiving visual environment;
  - Introduction of the proposed development, including the proposed landscape strategy;
  - Assessment of landscape and visual effects upon the existing receptors / resource and in relation to landscape related planning policy; and
  - The conclusions of the assessment would be set out.
- 1.2.3. The assessment has been prepared in accordance with the methodology that is included in Appendix 1. The methodology has been developed in line with guidance within Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition (GLVIA3), prepared by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and the Landscape Institute (LI) in 2013.
- 1.2.4. A suite of plans and photographs have been prepared to assist the assessment within this LVIA and these are referred to within the text. The photographs are included within Appendix 5.

## 2. BASELINE ASSESSMENT

### 2.1. The Site & its Setting

- 2.1.1. The Site lies to the east of Hill Lane, within the western part of Markfield, an established town located to the west of Leicester. The Site is illustrated within its wider context on the **Site Location Plan** (SLP.001).
- 2.1.2. Existing development wraps around the site from the west, to the north and round to the south east. Commercial development lies to the west, associated with the industrial estate at Hill Lane Close, while residential development on Ashby Road, The Elms and Upland Drive backs onto the Site to the north, east and south east. As a result, the Site is closely related to the existing settlement, with the surrounding built environment containing views of the Site from the wider landscape setting to the north, east and west.
- 2.1.3. The Site lies just to the north of the Hill Hole Quarry and nature reserve. The topography of this feature creates a sense of enclosure within the context of the Site and ensures that longer distance views from the south are not possible. There are panoramic views from the toposcope at the top of the quarry, with views over the Site to the north, however, it is seen against the backdrop of the residential development to the north and the context of the built form to the east and west. Footpath R17 follows a track, referred to as Hillside, to the south of the Site, with a series of paddocks and allotments creating a degree of physical separation from the Site for much of this route. The track forms a defensible edge between the urban fringe and the rising landscape of the quarry to the south.
- 2.1.4. The Site currently comprises an area of rough grassland and scrub that extends up to the settlement boundary. The established vegetation structure associated with the Site creates a compartmentalised character and ensures that there are no views into the main body of the Site from the wider public realm. The Site falls gently from north west to south east and is not publicly accessible. The existing components of the Site and its immediate setting are illustrated on the **Site Context Plan** (SCP.002).
- 2.1.5. **Settlement** – Markfield has a nucleated character, with development extending out from a historic core. Leicester Road and the A50 define the settlement to the north and create a defensible edge between the settled landscape in which Markfield is set and the more wooded landscape to the north. The wooded landscape wraps around the settlement to the east, containing further growth in this direction. Some more recent developments are located to the south of the settlement, extending it towards the ribbon development at Upper Grange. Hill Lane defines the western edge of the settlement, with the industrial estate located to the west of this.

The landform falls to the west of Hill Lane, down towards the M1 motorway corridor which runs broadly north – south through the landscape.

- 2.1.6. **Vegetation Cover** – The Site is currently characterised by a mix of overgrown hedgerows with scattered mature trees, scrub and rough grassland. The land to the south of the Site is characterised by semi-improved grassland and used for grazing. There is a degree of treescape associated with the sites setting, associated with former field boundaries, gardens and self-set groups on derelict land. However, this part of Markfield does not reflect a particularly “wooded” character unlike the landscape to the north of the A50.
- 2.1.7. **Topography** – The Site gently slopes down from the rears of the properties on Ashby Road, with the land then rising to the south of the Site up to the elevated edges of Hill Hole Quarry. Markfield extends to the south west down the localised slopes, wrapping around the foot of the hill that the quarry now forms the centre of.
- 2.1.8. **Public Rights of Way** – The site is not publicly accessible. A footpath (ref: R17) extends to the south east of Hill Lane, wrapping around the foot of Hill Hole Quarry, and linking through to the southern parts of Markfield. A network of informal footpaths run around the accessible slopes of the quarry and into part of the pit, linking through to Hill Lane, to the west.

## 2.2. Landscape Related Policy Background

- 2.2.1. The Site is covered by the saved policies of the Hinckley & Bosworth Core Strategy (2009) and Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (2016).
- 2.2.2. The Site is not covered by any qualitative landscape designations. Nor is the Site located within a Green Wedge.
- 2.2.3. The Site lies within the National Forest designation as identified within the adopted plan. Policy 21 of the Core Strategy requires 20% of proposed development sites to be dedicated to forest green infrastructure. This will generally involve woodland planting, but can also include creation and management of other appropriate habitats, open space provision and the provision of new recreational facilities.
- 2.2.4. In addition to Policy 21 of the Core Strategy, it is considered that Policies DM4 (*Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation*) and DM10 (*Development and Design*) of the SADMP are relevant to the site from a landscape perspective.

2.2.5. The Site is located approximately 100m to the west of the Markfield Conservation Area and is physically and visually separated from the heritage designation.

2.2.6. In addition to the planning policy documents prepared by the Council, the Markfield Neighbourhood Plan was Made in September 2021. The Neighbourhood Plan refers to the 2019 Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Assessment, in which the Site is located within the “Thringstone / Markfield Quarries and Settlement” landscape character area. Policy M2 of the Neighbourhood Plan identifies that:

**“Development should be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscape setting, retaining and, where possible, enhancing the distinctive qualities of the landscape character area (identified on Figure 3) which it would affect.**

**Development should:**

- 1. Conserve and, where possible, enhance the character and qualities of the local landscape through appropriate design of development proposals;**
- 2. Retain and where possible enhance woodland, hedgerows, mature trees, and stone walls as features of landscape importance unless it is demonstrated this is not viable or practicable;**
- 3. Be well integrated within the landscape with planting to soften urban edges;**
- 4. Be located and designed so as not to significantly harm the important long views from the publicly accessible locations at Billa Barra Hill, Hill Hole, and Altar Stones identified on the Map of Views; and**
- 5. Provide appropriate landscape mitigation and/or suitable off-site enhancements.”**

2.2.7. It is noted that Map 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan indicates the Site as Local Green Infrastructure. Policy M3 relates to Green Infrastructure and states that:

**“To be supported development proposals must demonstrate how they avoid significant harm to key features of the Green Infrastructure network identified on Map 4 and the Policies Maps. Where harm is demonstrated to be unavoidable proposals must mitigate and compensate for that harm.”**

2.2.8. National and local landscape related policy objectives have informed the design development of the proposals.

## 2.3. Landscape Character

- 2.3.1. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) defines landscape as “...an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and / or human factors”.
- 2.3.2. As set out within “An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment” (Christine Tudor, Natural England; October 2014) “**landscape character may be defined as a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse. Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive.**”
- 2.3.3. As part of the baseline assessment, published landscape character assessments have been identified and reviewed and these form the basis of the assessment of the landscape character of the Site.

### Regional Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.3.4. Natural England have prepared the Character Map of England which provides a broad assessment of landscape character at a regional level. The Site lies within the “Charnwood” national character area (NCA 73). An extract of the assessment is included within Appendix 2.
- 2.3.5. It is noted that the assessment identifies a number of key characteristics, including:
- “**Upland qualities, including extensive open summits and distinctive rocky outcrops, rising from the surrounding lowland undulating farmland.**
  - **Outcrops of ancient Precambrian rocks, with Mercia Mudstones in the vales; a significant proportion of the NCA is covered with superficial deposits of the Anglian ice age, as well as more recent deposits.**
  - **Thin, acidic, infertile soils are found on upland slopes; mudstones in the valley bottoms produce a deeper, fertile soil.**
  - **A well wooded character, with many areas of mixed, deciduous and coniferous woodlands. Large, ancient, pollarded oaks are a feature of country parks.**
  - **Rectilinear patterns of Parliamentary enclosure fields, bounded by a mixture of drystone walls and hedges. Many of the country parks are also bounded by drystone walls. Enclosure has created a distinctive road pattern.**

- **Land use is a distinctive mixture of woodland, predominantly pastoral farmland, heathland and parkland.**
- **A diverse variety of habitats (including woodlands, acidic grassland and heathland) support a large range of characteristic and rare species.**
- **Clear, fast-flowing watercourses and significant, large, open waterbodies and reservoirs.**
- **Historic parks and country parks such as Bradgate and Beacon Hill, large manor houses and the remains of medieval monastic buildings like Ulverscroft Priory are all prominent cultural heritage features that attract many visitors from the surrounding urban areas.**
- **Local Charnian rocks, Swithland Slate roofs, thatched roofs and some timber-framed buildings characterise the Charnwood villages. Occasional linear villages and scattered farmsteads through the heart of Charnwood contrast with larger settlements, which ring the elevated areas. A number of large quarries and some busy roads have an urbanising influence in places.”**

2.3.6. The regional assessment is useful in introducing the wider landscape character context in which the Site is set.

#### Local Landscape Character Assessment – Hinckley & Bosworth

2.3.7. At a more local level, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council have undertaken the Hinckley & Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment (2017). The Site is located within the “Charnwood Forest Settled Forest Hills” landscape character area (LCA). An extract from the published character assessment is included within Appendix 3.

2.3.8. The assessment identifies a number of key characteristics associated with this LCA which include:

- “1) Prominent elevated landform - the highest land in the Borough. Localised steep slopes around rocky outcrops.**
- 2) Distinctive pockets of igneous rock which appear as rocky outcrops. Granite quarries can appear dramatic in the landscape with cliff faces and deep pools.**
- 3) Diverse land uses which relate to the varied geology. Dominated by pasture and woodland with quarries, pools and outcrops.**
- 4) Woodland cover of varying age from mature ancient woodland to new National Forest plantations.**
- 5) Small to medium scale field pattern interspersed with large areas of woodland cover.**

- 6) **Large clustered villages with strong suburban influences.**
- 7) **Distinctive local assets for recreation and biodiversity such as Groby Pool and Billa Barra Hill and network of public footpaths.**
- 8) **Distant views to the urban edges of Leicester and woodland edges of the surrounding National Forest.**
- 9) **Diverse range of woodland habitats due to variable land use types.**
- 10) **Proximity to Leicester City and major transport infrastructure.**
- 11) **Long established aesthetic appeal created by its rugged, 'upland' and wooded character."**

2.3.9. The assessment goes on to identify a series of "Key Sensitivities and Values" associated with the LCA, these include:

- "1) Rocky outcrops on the elevated land together with past and former quarries provide exposures of great geological interest.**
- 2) Late to post medieval enclosure, ridge and furrow as well as some assarts in and around Ancient Woodland contribute to the sense of place and provides continuity to the agricultural past.**
- 3) Large mature woodlands and newer woodland plantations interspersed throughout the landscape create a well-wooded context and create relatively tranquil subareas away from the busy roads.**
- 4) The distinct historic cores of the villages with an abundance of local building stone provide a strong sense of place and a sense of time depth.**
- 5) The long distance and panoramic views to Leicester from the more elevated vantage points combine with contrasting contained views to provide a high scenic quality.**
- 6) Bury Camp and the Old Hays moated site have strong cultural associations and provide a sense of historic time depth.**
- 7) Groby Pool and Woods and Cliffe Hill Quarry have high biodiversity value and provide areas of ecological and geological importance.**
- 8) Valued for recreation, with local attractions including Groby Pool, the Alter Stones and Billa Barra Hill connected via a comprehensive network of public footpaths and bridleways, including the Leicestershire Round and the Ivanhoe Way."**

2.3.10. The assessment then sets out a series of landscape strategies which set out to conserve and enhance the key characteristics of the LCA.

2.3.11. The character assessment also undertakes an assessment of the various urban areas within the Borough. Markfield is referred to within UCA5. The assessment notes that the key characteristics of the settlement include:

- “1) A large, clustered settlement with a distinctive linear historic core containing a rich mix of well related architectural themes.**
- 2) The historic core nestled around the base of rising land in the north west of the village, with modern development spreading over flatter land to the east.**
- 3) Varied architectural styles and a broad age range and complex mix of housing, even within the older central core.**
- 4) Retail facilities concentrated along Main Street and Chitterman Way, with employment located towards the north-western edge of the village.**
- 5) Materials dominated by either red brick or granite or a mix of both. Some rendered or painted properties provide variation.**
- 6) Outcrops of rock together with granite cottages and boundary walls are the key component of the village streetscape.**
- 7) Small frontages often bounded by stone walls within the historic core.**
- 8) Views to the rolling and wooded landscape to the north from higher points in the village.**
- 9) Hill Hole Quarry, a key feature to the west of the settlement.”**

2.3.12. In terms of the “Key Sensitivities and Values” associated with Markfield, the published assessment identifies the following:

- “1) Old quarry houses, converted cottages and religious buildings create a diverse architectural heritage and a strong sense of place.**
- 2) Traditional building materials and the predominance of local stone contribute to the sense of place and create continuity to the past.**
- 3) The Greens contribute to the visual amenity of the historic core and the sense of place and open space linkages particularly to the west provide an important setting to the village.**
- 4) Hill Hole Quarry considered locally as a beauty spot with long views from the elevated land across the village adding to the visual amenity and the sense of place.**
- 5) St. Michaels Church provides a key landmark on the skyline and provides a sense of historic time depth.”**

2.3.13. In terms of the townscape strategy for the settlement, the guidelines include:

**“6) Ensure that future new development respects the setting of the village and its rural interface and enhance the urban edges, especially those to the south and east, to soften their impact on the landscape, through additional planting and careful design of any new development...”**

2.3.14. In addition to the Borough-wide landscape character assessment, the Council has also undertaken the Hinckley & Bosworth Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2017). An extract is included within Appendix 4. The site lies within Sensitivity Area 14. The assessment concludes that:

**“Despite its rural and intact character providing an attractive setting to Markfield, the assessment area is considered to have overall medium sensitivity to residential development due to the relatively strong relationship it has to built development in the east. There are also opportunities to provide landscape enhancement in this area with characteristic woodland planting.”**

2.3.15. The Sensitivity Assessment identifies that new development should:

- **“Seek opportunities to maintain the rural character of the landscape and where possible conserve rural views and setting of settlement.**
- **Seek to conserve and enhance the well-wooded character of the landscape and protect areas that retain a naturalistic character and replace mature / veteran trees as they begin to deplete.**
- **Seek to retain the pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and encourage the use of Midlands-style hedge laying for management.**
- **Plan for successful integration of potential new development in the landscape through sensitive design and siting, including use of sensitive materials and use of landscape mitigation to enhance sense of place.**
- **Consider opportunities to maintain and enhance the recreational assets including rights of way network.**
- **Consider opportunities to create and promote an integrated green infrastructure strategy linking with the urban area.”**

#### Local Landscape Character Assessment – Charnwood Forest

2.3.16. In addition to the borough-wide assessment, an assessment of the landscape character of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park has been undertaken. The regional park spans council boundaries, with Markfield located centrally within the area. The assessment, undertaken in 2019, has been informed by the Hinckley & Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment, dated

2017. The Site and urban area of Markfield lies within the Thringstone / Markfield Quarries and Settlement” LCA (6). An extract from the assessment is included within Appendix 5.

2.3.17. The assessment identifies a series of key characteristics associated with the LCA which include:

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

2.3.18. The assessment identifies that this is a changing landscape, heavily influenced by settlement and quarrying with urban fringe influences. These result in a generally low landscape condition. It is noted that, under “management recommendations” the assessment states that:

**“Ensure any new residential development is focussed at the main settlements and includes adequate landscape proposals to integrate development into the landscape.”**

2.3.19. These guidelines have informed the design development of the proposed layout and the landscape proposals.

### Site-specific Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.3.20. A more site-specific assessment of the localised landscape character has also been undertaken, and this has been informed by the published assessments prepared by Natural England, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council and the Charnwood Forest Regional Park.
- 2.3.21. The Site comprises an area of scrub and rough grassland on the edge of the settlement of Markfield. Residential development backs onto the northern and eastern boundaries of the Site, while Hill Lane and the industrial estate lie to the west. These elements reinforce the townscape setting of the Site. The elevated landscape of Hill Hole Quarry reinforces the contained nature of the Site, reducing intervisibility with the wider landscape to the south. The security fencing around parts of the quarry reinforces the perceived urban setting of the Site to the south. The existing vegetation contributes to the perception of a landscaped edge to Markfield on approaches from the south, however, the poor management of the former hedgerows and pasture gives it rather an uncared for appearance, reinforcing an urban fringe character.
- 2.3.22. As part of the landscape character assessment, there is a need to assess the susceptibility, value and overall sensitivity of the landscape resource. These assessments will inform the objective assessment of effects within Section 4.2 and ensure that a transparent and objective approach to the assessment is achieved. GLVIA3 defines landscape susceptibility, landscape value and landscape sensitivity, as follows:

**“Susceptibility: the ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences;**

**Landscape Value: the relative value that is attached to different landscape by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons;**

**Sensitivity: a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor.”**

#### Landscape Susceptibility

- 2.3.23. In terms of the susceptibility of the localised landscape receptor, Annex 1 within “An Approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management” (Christine Tudor, Natural England; June 2019) identifies a series of criteria which can be applied to assess the susceptibility of a landscape to change. Table 1, below, assesses the susceptibility of the various criteria when applied to the landscape resource in which the Site is set.

*Table 1: Baseline Landscape Susceptibility Analysis*

Susceptibility Criteria	Assessment of Susceptibility of the Landscape Resource
<i>Landform</i>	Low – The Site slopes gently to the south reflecting the localised setting. The elevated landscape around Hill Hole Quarry forms a distinct feature within the local landscape. The wider settlement extends to the east, following the prevailing topography. The A50 runs through a localised valley to the north of the Site.
<i>Landcover</i>	Low – The Site is set within a relatively simple landscape, comprising residential and commercial built form and settlement edge activities, such as the allotments and horse paddocks. The Site itself comprises an area of former pasture that has been neglected. The former quarry to the south, separates the settlement edge from the wider agricultural landscape to the south.
<i>Man-made Influences</i>	Low – This is a distinctly settled and industrialised landscape. The immediate setting of the site is characterised by built form and the former quarry. The A50 and M1 road corridors reinforce the presence of man-made influences.
<i>Scenic Quality &amp; Sense of Place</i>	Medium – While there are few scenic features associated with the Site, the landscape to the north of the A50 (north of Markfield) has a pleasant, wooded character. Views from the top of Hill Hole Quarry and the Altar Stones afford longer distance views across the landscape, although the presence of man-made influences is very evident.
<i>Remoteness / Tranquility</i>	Low – The settlement edge to the north, east and west reduces the perceived tranquility of the Site and its immediate setting. Noise from the industrial estate, A50 and M1 also diminish the tranquility of the Sites setting.
<i>Skylines</i>	Low – The Site is set lower down in the landscape than the properties to the north and Hill Hole Quarry dominates the landscape to the south, rising up over 20m above the Site and localised setting. The townscape setting to the north, east and west ensures that roofscape is a characteristic within the localised skylines.

<i>Movement</i>	Low – The presence of Hill Lane and the industrial estate to the west increase the perception of movement within the immediate setting of the Site.
<i>Intervisibility</i>	Low – The existing built environment to the north, east and west and elevated landscape of Hill Hole Quarry to the south contribute to a compartmentalised character, containing views and reducing intervisibility between the Site and the wider landscape setting.

2.3.24. As an overview, it is considered that the neglected nature of the Site and its townscape setting influence the susceptibility of the landscape receptor. The presence of residential development to the north and east ensures that this is an established land use within the immediate context of the Site. The Site is set lower down in the landscape than the built edge to the north and the elevated landscape of Hill Hole Quarry to the south, which reinforces a compartmentalised, contained character with limited intervisibility with the wider landscape setting. The existing vegetation associated with the Site's boundaries is of some merit as it reinforces the compartmentalised character and contains views into the site from the localised public realm. It is concluded that the susceptibility of the landscape, in which the Site is set, to change of the type proposed is Low.

#### Landscape Value

2.3.25. In terms of value, GLVIA3 identifies a series of criteria which are generally accepted as being appropriate indicators of landscape value. This is supported by the updated assessment within the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note TGN 02-21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations. Table 2, below, assesses the landscape value of the Site and its immediate setting against the various criteria identified within the TGN.

*Table 2: Baseline Analysis of Landscape Value*

Value Criteria	Assessment
<i>Natural Heritage</i>	Medium – The Site has some ecological value. The boundary hedgerows form the primary features of ecological interest within the Site and reflect the historic field boundaries.
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	Medium – The Site lies outside of the Markfield Conservation Area, separated by areas of more contemporary residential development. The overgrown field boundaries within the Site reflect the historic field pattern,

	but the Site is not perceived as part of the agricultural setting of the settlement due to its overgrown, unmanaged character.
<i>Landscape Condition</i>	Medium / Low – The presence of the existing settlement edge abutting three sides of the Site reduces the scenic quality. The urban character is reinforced by the security fencing associated with the quarry, to the south. While there are no obvious detractors within the Site, the built environment to the north, east and west reinforces and urban fringe character.
<i>Associations</i>	None – There are no known associations with the Site or its immediate landscape setting.
<i>Distinctiveness</i>	Low – There are no rare elements or features associated with the Site or its immediate setting that do not exist elsewhere within the wider landscape context. Similarly, there are no characteristics or features associated with the Site or its immediate setting that are considered particularly important examples.
<i>Recreational</i>	Negligible – The Site is not publicly accessible. It is acknowledged that the south western part of the site forms the setting of the public right of way that runs between Hill Lane and the settlement to the east, but it does not form a recreational resource within the context Markfield.
<i>Perceptual (scenic)</i>	Medium / Low – The presence of the existing settlement edge abutting three sides of the Site reduces the scenic quality. The urban character is reinforced by the security fencing associated with the quarry, to the south. While there are no obvious detractors within the Site, the built environment to the north, east and west reinforces the urban fringe location.
<i>Perceptual (wildness &amp; tranquillity)</i>	Low – The presence of the existing settlement edge to the north, east and west, which includes an industrial estate, reduces the perceived tranquillity of the Site and its setting. The presence of the A50 and M1 road corridors further diminish this perception.
<i>Functional</i>	Low – The landscape in which the Site is set does not form the setting of any designated landscapes. The overgrown nature of the Site means it unintentionally contributes to the Green Infrastructure network of the district. Settlement defines the immediate setting of the Site, with built form abutting the site to the west, north, east and south east.

- 2.3.26. As an overview, it is considered that the overall value of the Site, and the landscape in which it is set, is Medium / Low. It is considered that the landscape in which the Site is set does not represent a “valued landscape” in the context of para 187a of the NPPF.

#### Landscape Sensitivity

- 2.3.27. Para 5.34 of GLVIA3 states that once an assessment of the baseline situation has been undertaken, the key components (also referred to as landscape receptors) that might be affected by the development should be identified, such as: “...**overall character and key characteristics, individual elements or features, and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects**”.

- 2.3.28. A series of landscape receptors associated with the Site and its landscape setting have been identified as part of the baseline assessment of susceptibility and value. These include:

- **Vegetation cover** – The Site is currently characterised by former pasture and hedgerow field boundaries, however, this has not been managed or farmed and is now characterised by rough grassland, scrub and overgrown hedgerows. The neglected nature of the Site evokes a rather uncared for appearance that does little to create a positive entrance to the village from the south;
- **Openness** – The localised townscape and elevated landscape to the south create a contained and compartmentalised character. This is reinforced by the established vegetation structure associated with the Site’s boundaries. This is not an open landscape and intervisibility is low; and
- **Land use** – The Site is currently undeveloped, comprising an area of former pasture that has been left fallow. The Site’s immediate setting is characterised by residential and commercial land uses, and together with the allotments, the Site and its setting have a distinct urban fringe character.

- 2.3.29. Overall, in terms of sensitivity, when the judgements of susceptibility and value are considered, it is concluded that the sensitivity of the landscape in which the Site is set is **Medium / Low**.

## 2.4. The Visual Environment

- 2.4.1. As part of the initial desk study a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) analysis was undertaken to understand the potential visibility of the proposals within the wider landscape setting. This

analysis is based on bare earth data, i.e. does not take into account above-ground features such as buildings, boundary enclosures or vegetation and, as such, represents a worst case scenario. However, it forms a useful tool to introduce the wider visual environment of the Site and informed the site visit. The viewshed analysis is illustrated on **Zone of Theoretical Visibility Plan** (ZTV.003).

- 2.4.2. The ZTV illustrates the undulating nature of the landscape in which the Site and Markfield are set. The rising landform to the south and west associated with Hill Hole Quarry and Old Cliffe Hill Quarry contain longer distance views from these directions. The valley to the north also limits views from the north of Markfield, although the ZTV indicates that there would, theoretically, be views from the rising wooded landscape towards Polly Botts Lane and Whitcrofts Lane. While the ZTV suggests views to the east, the built up nature of the landscape and local topography (falling to the east) ensures views are highly localised.
- 2.4.3. During the site visit, a number of key views were identified from publicly accessible locations which illustrate the Site in its localised and wider landscape context. The viewpoints seek to reflect the views of the Site by more sensitive receptors, such as walkers on the local Public Right of Way network, however, the viewpoints are considered representative and not exhaustive.
- 2.4.4. The viewpoints are illustrated on the **Viewpoint Location Plan** (VLP.004) within Appendix 6. The photographs were taken in October 2025. The day was overcast but with good visibility at longer distances.
- 2.4.5. The photographs were taken with a Canon 35mm equivalent digital SLR. The camera is a full frame sensor model so, in line with Landscape Institute TGN 06/19 – Visual Representation of Development Proposals, the photographs were taken at 50mm with a fixed focal length lens. The photographs are presented within **Appendix 6: Photographic Record** at a scale whereby they can be viewed at a distance of 260mm to represent the view from the particular location. The extent of the site is indicated on the photographs to assist the viewer's understanding of where the site sits within the context of the view. It must be noted that the photographs are illustrative and do not replace visiting the viewpoints in person.
- 2.4.6. As part of the baseline visual assessment, key receptors have been identified and this has informed the overall assessment of sensitivity of the view. Table 3, below, identifies the locations, receptors and sensitivities of the key viewpoints.

*Table 3: Baseline Visual Assessment*

Viewpoint	Location	Key Receptors	Receptor Sensitivity
1	Hill Lane, approximately 10m to the north of the site	Motorists	Medium
2	Hill Lane, approximately 35m to the west of the site	Motorists	Medium
3	Hill Lane, approximately 90m to the south west of the site	Motorists	Medium
4	Permissive path within the open space to the south of Hillside, on the edge of Hill Hole Quarry Nature Reserve	Walkers	High
5	Footpath R17, approximately 80m to the south of the site	Walkers	High
6	Footpath R17, approximately 200m to the south of the site	Walkers	High
7	Toposcope at the top of Hill Hole Quarry, approximately 285m to the south of the site	Walkers	High
8	Uplands Drive, approximately 10m to the east of the site	Motorists & Residents	Medium
9	Ashby Road, approximately 70m to the north of the site	Motorists	Medium
10	Ashby Road, approximately 90m to the north of the site	Motorists	Medium
11	Publicly accessible land at the Altar Stones, approximately 260m to the north west of the site	Walkers	High
12	Cliffe Lane, approximately 720m to the west of the site	Motorists	Medium
13	Footpath J94, approximately 1,500m to the north east of the site	Walkers	High

2.4.7. As illustrated by the Photographic Record, views of the Site are highly localised as a result of the topography, built form and vegetation cover that characterises the immediate setting. Views of the Site are possible from the top of Hill Hole Quarry, but it is seen against the backdrop of the wider settlement, with built form wrapping around it from the west, north and round to the east. Section 4.3 of this LVIA assesses the potential effects of the proposals upon these views.

### 3. THE PROPOSALS

- 3.1. The proposals comprise the development of up to 67 dwellings, with associated access, parking, public open space and landscaping within the site. The 'Site Layout', prepared by Ophir Architects, is included within Appendix 7 and an extract is included below for reference. The proposals would be accessed from Hill Lane, with a meandering internal road linking the new properties with the wider highways network.

*Figure 1: Extract from Ophir Architects 'Site Layout'*



- 3.2. The proposed layout has been carefully developed to ensure a sympathetic and appropriate layout that acknowledges its settlement edge location, respects the amenities of neighbours and provides a substantial area of 'forest green infrastructure' as required by the Core Strategy. Align Landscape Planning have worked closely with the architects and other members of the design team to ensure a robust and landscape-led layout is achieved.
- 3.3. The proposed layout adopts a positive outward looking approach to Hill Lane ensuring that the development avoids the perception of turning its back on the wider setting and creating a high quality entrance to the settlement. The properties are set back from the western boundary ensuring a landscaped frontage to the development can be achieved which would also enhance the character of the localised streetscene.

- 3.4. Internally, the layout has been carefully designed so as to retain the key tree groups and more historic hedgerows. This existing green infrastructure forms the foundation of the site-wide landscaping and open space strategy, with native planting creating a variety of high quality habitats as well as seasonal visual interest and breaking up the perceived built environment within the site.
- 3.5. A SUDS basin is located within the eastern part of the site and would be seasonally wet and seeded with a species-rich damp grass mix to ensure a distinctive habitat is achieved. The attenuation basin provides opportunities for informal play during dry periods, creating variety as well as habitat creation.
- 3.6. A play area would be located centrally within the Site, forming the green heart of the development. The proposed layout seeks to provide passive surveillance of the green space, with properties fronting onto, and overlooking the play area. The playspace is easily accessible for new and existing residents alike providing a suitable range of play experiences for younger and older children.
- 3.7. The proposed landscaping is illustrated on the **Landscape Strategy Plan** (LSP.005). The landscape proposals have been carefully designed and seek to not only assist the integration of the proposed development into its receiving environment, but also create a high quality and pleasant environment in which to live.
- 3.8. As noted above, the proposals have been informed by the detailed arboricultural assessment and the key existing vegetation would be retained within the development and create an established landscaped setting for the proposals from Day One. The areas around this planting would be reinforced with additional tree and understorey planting, where appropriate, and area of species-rich grassland. The aim is to create high quality, distinctive habitats that contribute positively to local biodiversity and enhances the setting of the proposed dwellings, contributing to a sense of place. The retention of existing boundary features would ensure a robust green edge to the site and an appropriate transition between the proposals and the landscape to the south is achieved.
- 3.9. Elsewhere within the site, a mix of ornamental and native tree planting would enhance the residential streetscenes and break up the perceived built elevations. A variety of species would be implemented to create seasonal visual interest and nesting and foraging opportunities for birds and animals.
- 3.10. The proposals have been informed by the Site's location within the national forest and the requirement to deliver 20% forest habitats within the development. The proposals achieve this, delivering over 39% natural and semi natural green space.
- 3.11. It is considered that details of the landscape proposals can be dealt with via an appropriately worded condition.

## **4. ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE & VISUAL EFFECTS**

### **4.1. Background**

- 4.1.1. In line with the guidance in GLVIA3, it is appropriate to assess the effect of the proposed development upon the baseline landscape character and visual environment as identified in Section 2 of the LVIA.

### **4.2. Effect upon Landscape Character**

#### Regional Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.2.1. With regard to the effect of the proposals upon the “Charnwood” national character area (NCA 73), the proposals would not introduce any new or alien features into this landscape setting or compromise any of the existing positive characteristics or features. There is evidence of a stone wall along part of the southern boundary and such features are identified as characteristic within the Charnwood NCA. This would be retained as part of the proposals, creating a high quality and defensible edge to the Site. The established hedgerow that runs broadly north – south through the western part of the Site would be retained where possible, with the higher quality trees creating an established landscaped setting for the proposals. The proposed open spaces within the development would provide significant opportunities for new planting, including broadleaf woodland to reinforce the wooded character of the Charnwood NCA.
- 4.2.2. The Site is bound to the north and east by existing residential development so the proposals would not introduce a new land use into this localised setting. The proposals would not extend the perception of the settlement into the wider character area. It is concluded that the proposals can be integrated without harm to the “Charnwood” NCA.

#### Local Landscape Character Assessments – Hinckley & Bosworth Borough

- 4.2.3. As noted within Section 2, the Site is located within the “Charnwood Forest Settled Forest Hills” LCA and immediately adjacent to the “Markfield” UCA as identified within the Hickley & Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment. The published assessment identifies a number of key sensitivities and values associated with this LCA and the adjoining UCA and it is considered appropriate to assess the likely effect of the proposals against each of these to assess the overall effect upon the character areas, refer Table 4 below.

*Table 4: Effect on Published Hinckley & Bosworth Landscape Characteristics*

Key Sensitivities and Values of the “Charnwood Forest Settled Forest Hills” LCA	Effect of the Proposals
<i>Rocky outcrops on the elevated land together with past and former quarries provide exposures of great geological interest.</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The proposals are located lower down in the landscape adjacent to the settlement edge. The proposals are set away from the rocky outcrops of Hill Hole Quarry and Altar Stones and would not affect the appreciation of these features from the wider landscape setting.
<i>Late to post medieval enclosure, ridge and furrow as well as some assarts in and around Ancient Woodland contribute to the sense of place and provides continuity to the agricultural past.</i>	<b>Minor / Negligible Adverse</b> – It is acknowledged that the proposals would result in the loss of some internal, overgrown hedgerows in order to accommodate the layout, however, the established planting associated with the eastern and southern boundaries would be retained and reinforced to ensure that the defensible green edges to the site are maintained. The proposals would retain the key trees within the north – south hedgerow within the western part of the Site as well as elements of other key hedgerow features within the development. The proposals would not extend beyond the established field boundaries and would not compromise the perception of the wider rural landscape to the south west. There are no ancient woodlands within or immediately adjacent to the Site.
<i>Large mature woodlands and newer woodland plantations interspersed throughout the landscape create a well-wooded context and create relatively tranquil subareas away from the busy roads.</i>	<b>Minor Beneficial</b> – There is no woodland associated with the Site or its immediate setting, as such the proposals would not harm the wooded character of the wider LCA. The creation of new wooded spaces within the site would reinforce the wooded character of the LCA.
<i>The distinct historic cores of the villages with an abundance of local building stone provide a strong sense of place and a sense of time depth.</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The proposals are set back from the Conservation Area and historic core of the village and abut more contemporary residential areas. Markfield has a nucleated character with the most recent developments on the outer

	edges of the settlement. The proposals would maintain this characteristic.
<i>The long distance and panoramic views to Leicester from the more elevated vantage points combine with contrasting contained views to provide a high scenic quality.</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – While the proposals would be visible from the toposcope at Hill Hole Quarry, they would not break up or prevent the characteristic panoramic views and would be seen within the context of the existing settlement edge that wraps around the site.
<i>Bury Camp and the Old Hays moated site have strong cultural associations and provide a sense of historic time depth.</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The proposals are located well away from these heritage assets.
<i>Groby Pool and Woods and Cliffe Hill Quarry have high biodiversity value and provide areas of ecological and geological importance.</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The proposals are located well away from these ecological assets.
<i>Valued for recreation, with local attractions including Groby Pool, the Alter Stones and Billa Barra Hill connected via a comprehensive network of public footpaths and bridleways, including the Leicestershire Round and the Ivanhoe Way.</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The Site is not publicly accessible and the proposed development would not compromise the public's ability to access and enjoy the countryside. The proposals would not affect the identified attractions or their perceived settings.
Key Sensitivities and Values of "Markfield" UCA	Effect of the Proposals
<i>Old quarry houses, converted cottages and religious buildings create a diverse architectural heritage and a strong sense of place.</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The proposals are set back from the more historic core of the village and would not affect any historic buildings, or their settings.
<i>Traditional building materials and the predominance of local stone</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The proposals would incorporate a sympathetic palette of materials that complements the local vernacular.

<i>contribute to the sense of place and create continuity to the past.</i>	
<i>The Greens contribute to the visual amenity of the historic core and the sense of place and open space linkages particularly to the west provide an important setting to the village.</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The Site and proposals are set well back from The Greens within Markfield ensuring that the proposed development does not affect the amenity of this space.
<i>Hill Hole Quarry considered locally as a beauty spot with long views from the elevated land across the village adding to the visual amenity and the sense of place.</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The Site lies to the north of Hill Hole Quarry, immediately adjacent to the existing settlement edge which wraps around the Site to the north, east and west. The proposals would not extend the perceived settlement any closer to the quarry than the existing settlement edge associated with Upland Drive. As noted above, the proposals would be visible from the top of the quarry, but would be seen within the context of the existing settlement and, as such, would not introduce any new or alien components to the views.
<i>St. Michaels Church provides a key landmark on the skyline and provides a sense of historic time depth.</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The church is not perceived within the immediate context of the Site. The proposals would not affect views towards, or the setting of, the church.

- 4.2.4. As identified above, it is considered that the proposals would not give rise to any notable effects upon the identified key sensitivities and values of the Charnwood Forest Settled Forest Hills LCA or the Markfield UCA. It is acknowledged that the proposals would result in the loss of some internal field boundaries, however, these are not readily perceived on the ground due to the overgrown nature of the Site. The proposals seek to retain key trees and tree groups that form part of these features within the layout and the proposed layout has been informed by the detailed Arboricultural Assessment that accompanies this application. The proposals also include new areas of natural and semi natural planting that would contribute positively to the wooded character of the wider LCA. The proposals lie immediately adjacent to the settlement edge, which abuts three of the four boundaries and residential built form already characterises the townscape to the north and east. the proposals would not extend the perceived settlement further out into the wider rural setting and would not introduce any new or alien components that would be at odds with the prevailing landscape or townscape character.

- 4.2.5. The published assessment includes a series of landscape and townscape strategies in order to conserve and enhance the key characteristics of the LCA and UCA. The proposals would not affect the historic core of Markfield and include areas of new woodland green infrastructure, in accordance with the Core Strategy, that would ensure that the proposals can be integrated into the receiving wooded landscape of the LCA. The proposals would not affect the perceived separation between Markfield or any of its neighbours. The proposals are set back from the rocky outcrops and elevated landscape of Hill Hole Quarry and would not affect the perception of these landscape features. The proposals would retain key trees and hedgerow features within the site and its boundaries and can incorporate appropriate management practices to ensure the long term success of the existing landscape features and the proposed planting.
- 4.2.6. With regard to the urban area, it is considered that the proposals respect the setting of Markfield. They are located adjacent to more recent development, much of which is residential, ensuring that the proposals do not introduce any new or alien components to the immediate setting of the settlement and do not materially change the character of approaches to Markfield along Hill Lane from the south. The proposed layout has been carefully developed to ensure that it responds positively to its gateway setting with the properties fronting onto Hill Lane, the existing stone wall retained, and new, native planting incorporated that would not only contribute positively to local biodiversity but also create a landscaped setting for the development and approach from the south.
- 4.2.7. Hinckley & Bosworth have also prepared a Sensitivity Study for the Borough. The Site lies on the edge of Sensitivity Area 14, immediately adjacent to the settlement edge. As can be seen on the plan within Appendix 4, the sensitivity area extends to the west and south of the settlement, with the M1 corridor defining the western boundary of the area. The assessment concludes that this area is of Medium sensitivity. Given the more rural character of the wider sensitivity area to the south of Markfield this conclusion would seem appropriate.
- 4.2.8. The sensitivity study sets out a series of guidelines to inform new development. The proposals are located immediately adjacent to the existing settlement edge and would not compromise the rural character of the wider sensitivity area. Rural views from Hill Lane across the landscape to the south west would not be affected by the proposals, nor would the long ranging, panoramic views from the top of Hill Hole Quarry. There is no woodland currently associated with the Site and while the proposals would result in the loss of some overgrown hedgerows and scrub, they do include over 1.1ha of woodland green infrastructure, which would be focussed on areas of retained trees and hedgerows to ensure that the existing landscaped setting of Markfield is retained and reinforced. Where appropriate, local landscape management measures would be employed to ensure characteristic hedgerows are achieved. The proposals are located in an area that is surrounded on three sides by existing development associated with Markfield. The

proposals have adopted a sympathetic and positive, outward looking layout, ensuring an appropriate interface with the landscape to the south and that the proposed properties respect the amenities of the existing neighbours to the north and east. the proposed layout also includes a series of linked green spaces that would reinforce the green infrastructure locally and contribute to biodiversity net gain as well as the aims and objectives of the National Forest.

4.2.9. As set out above, it is considered that the proposals would not affect the key sensitivities or values of the receiving landscape or townscape setting as identified within the published assessment. It is also considered that the proposals comply with the landscape and townscape strategies as set out within the Hinckley & Bosworth assessment. While it is acknowledged that the proposals would change the character of the Site, and result in the loss of some internal hedgerows, the site is bound on three sides by built form, with two of those sides characterised by residential land uses. The proposals would not introduce any new or alien land uses into this context and, given the existing settlement envelope, would not extend the perception of development within the context of the receiving landscape character.

4.2.10. The published Sensitivity Study identifies that the site is located within an area of Medium sensitivity. Given its location adjacent to the settlement edge, it is considered that, overall, the proposed development would give rise to a Low magnitude of change. It is concluded that the proposals would give rise to an effect of Minor Adverse significance. This is not considered notable. The proposals have been carefully developed to retain the key landscape features associated with the Site and residential scale built form is an existing component within the localised landscape setting. The proposals also include a comprehensive scheme of landscaping and, as this matures, it would reinforce the well-vegetated character of the receiving landscape.

#### Local Landscape Character Assessments – Charnwood Forest

4.2.11. In addition to the borough-wide assessment, a more recent assessment of the landscape character of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park has been undertaken, dated 2019. Within this assessment, the Site lies within the “Thringstone / Markfield Quarries and Settlement” LCA. The assessment identifies a series of key characteristics associated with the LCA and it is considered appropriate to assess the effect of the proposals upon these characteristics, refer Table 5.

*Table 5: Effect on Published Charnwood Forest Landscape Characteristics*

Key Characteristics of the “Thringstone / Markfield Quarries and Settlement” LCA	Effect of the Proposals
<i>Undulating landform heavily affected by extensive quarrying.</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The proposals would not require any significant ground remodelling that would affect the perceived undulating landscape.
<i>Highly settled with Whitwick and Thringstone, Agar Nook, Stanton-under-Bardon and Markfield villages</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The proposals would be located immediately adjacent to the established settlement edge of Markfield, with development wrapping around the Site from west, to north to south east. The proposals would not give rise to the perception of the settlement extending out into the wider LCA beyond its established extents.
<i>Small brook flows through the settlements and multiple field ponds</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The proposals would be located away from any existing watercourses and waterbodies, ensuring that the hydrology of the area is not affected.
<i>Mix of landuses including arable, pasture and woodland as well as quarrying and associated spoil mounds</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The Site is currently fallow and has not been used for agriculture for some time. The Site is influenced by the adjacent settlement edge which abuts the northern and eastern boundaries and which is characterised by residential uses. The proposals would reflect this land use and present an opportunity to create a positive, outward looking edge to the settlement.
<i>Fields enclosed by hedgerows with hedgerow trees as well as some walls and fences</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The proposals have been developed to retain the key trees and hedgerows associated with the Site and these would be reinforced as part of a comprehensive scheme of landscaping. The proposals would retain and restore the existing stone wall along the southern boundary.
<i>Mix of woodland with pine plantations and mixed woodland as well as new plantations and grasslands associated with quarry restoration</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – There is no woodland associated with the Site and it does not form part of the restoration of Hill Hole Quarry. The proposals would not affect the perceived wooded character of the LCA.

<i>Small scale regular fields on settlement edges and around peripheries of quarries, bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. Also some walls along roads</i>	<b>Minor Adverse (at a site level)</b> – The proposals would result in the loss of areas of fallow land, but would retain the key boundary hedgerows to ensure that the historic field pattern is conserved. The external boundary planting would be retained to ensure that, when perceived on the ground, a vegetated interface between the development and the landscape to the south west is achieved. The proposals would not affect this characteristic within the wider LCA.
<i>Linear villages of Thringstone, Whitwick and Stanton-under-Bardon, with small number of scattered farms. Markfield is a large clustered village located on higher ground. Settlements link along roads with the A511/A50 corridor passing through</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The proposals would complement the nucleated character of Markfield and would not give rise to the perception of the settlement extending out into the wider LCA, with Hill Lane forming a robust and defensible edge to the west and the elevated landform of Hill Hole Quarry enclosing the Site to the south. The proposals would not elevate the presence of the main road corridors within the LCA.
<i>Several PRow through area with Ivanhoe Way looping through.</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The Site is not publicly accessible and the proposals would retain and reinforce the existing vegetation that defines the southern boundary to ensure that a robust landscaped edge between the development and Footpath R17 is achieved. The proposals would not affect the recreational qualities of the LCA.
<i>Listed buildings associated with villages and some located close to quarries such as Bardon Hall</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The Site is physically and visually separated from the Conservation Area and associated townscape. The immediate setting of the Site is characterised by more contemporary residential and commercial built form.
<i>A rich heritage of quarrying in the area with Bardon Hill Quarry evident on OS maps dating back to 1884</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The Site is not perceived as part of the Hill Hole Quarry workings or development and would not affect the public's appreciation and enjoyment of the quarried landscape to the south.
<i>Large scale expansive views from higher levels often close to quarries. Background noise from industrial areas and settlements</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – While the proposals would be glimpsed from the top of Hill Hole Quarry, they would not break up longer distance views out over the wider landscape and, where visible, the proposals would be seen in the context of the wider settlement that wraps around the Site. The proposals would not give rise

	to the perception of the settlement extending out into the wider LCA and would not affect the qualities of the panoramic views from Hill Hole Quarry.
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- 4.2.12. As set out above, it is considered that the proposals could be integrated without any notable adverse effects upon the key characteristics of the LCA. It is acknowledged that the proposals would result in the loss of some former fields on the edge of the settlement, although the Site is no longer under agricultural or active use. The proposals would retain the key field boundary hedgerows ensuring that an appreciation of the scale and form of the field pattern around the settlement edge is maintained. The proposals would not affect the wider settlement edge of Markfield or the character of the wider LCA. It is considered that, overall, the proposals could be integrated without detriment to the character of the wider LCA.
- 4.2.13. As set out within the management recommendations, the proposals would be located immediately adjacent to the established settlement edge of Markfield, one of the main settlements within the LCA, and, as illustrated by the Landscape Strategy Plan, would include a comprehensive scheme of landscaping to ensure that the proposals could be integrated into the receiving landscape.
- 4.2.14. The published assessment identified that this is a settled landscape and that the condition adjacent to settlements is low. As set out above, the proposals would not give rise to the perception of the settlement extending out into the wider LCA beyond its established extents and present an opportunity to create an enhanced interface between Markfield and the wider setting, creating a positive, outward looking settlement edge. In conclusion, it is considered that the proposals could be integrated without compromising the key characteristics and special qualities of the “Thringstone / Markfield Quarries and Settlement” LCA.

#### Site-specific Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.2.15. As set out within Section 2 of this LVIA, an assessment of the localised landscape character of the Site and its more immediate setting has been undertaken, and this has been informed by the published assessments prepared by Natural England and Hinckley & Bosworth Council. The assessment within Section 2 concludes that the overall sensitivity of the localised landscape receptor, in which the Site is set, is Medium / Low.
- 4.2.16. The localised setting of the Site is characterised by a series of landscape receptors which were identified within the susceptibility and value judgements. It is considered appropriate to assess

the change upon these features as a result of the proposals which inform the overall assessment of effects upon the landscape character (refer Table 6 below).

*Table 6: Assessment of Change upon Key Landscape Receptors*

Landscape Receptor	Magnitude of Change
Vegetation Cover	<b>High Adverse at Year 1; Medium Adverse at Year 15</b> – It is acknowledged that the proposals would result in a noticeable change to the vegetation cover associated with the Site at Year One, however, this would be the same for any green field site and should not preclude development. The Site is not subject to any landscape, ecological or heritage designations and none of the trees are covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). The proposals are separated from the more rural wooded landscape to the north of the A50 by the built form on Ashby Road and the localised valley through which the A50 runs. The proposals would retain the key trees within the Site and on the site boundaries and would retain the boundary hedgerows, ensuring that the interface between the site and neighbouring land uses is maintained. Indeed, the proposals would include a comprehensive scheme of landscaping that would reinforce the retained planting. The proposals include 1.17ha of woodland green infrastructure which equates to circa 39% of the total site area. This excludes private greenspaces. It is considered that, as the landscaping matures, it would reinforce the vegetated character of the Site and reduce the perceived magnitude of change.
Openness	<b>Negligible Adverse</b> - As noted within the assessment in Section 2, the site and its localised setting have an enclosed character as a result of the existing topography, built environment and vegetation structure. This reduces intervisibility with the wider setting and contributes to a compartmentalised character. While the proposals would result in the loss of some internal hedgerows, they would retain the boundary planting and would reflect the townscape character of the areas to the north and east. It is considered that there would be some highly localised loss of openness within the Site itself, the perceived character of the Site's landscape and townscape setting would not be affected.
Land Use	<b>Negligible Adverse</b> – It is acknowledged that the proposals would represent a change to the existing perceived land use associated with the

	<p>Site, however, the existing settlement edge abuts the northern, eastern and western boundaries and is characterised by residential and commercial land uses. The proposed land use (residential) would not appear out of place within this context and the proposals would not extend the settlement edge beyond its existing extents. The proposals include a series of greenspaces through the layout that would not only provide informal recreation opportunities but would also ensure that the landscaped setting of this part of Markfield is maintained.</p>
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4.2.17. In conclusion, while it is acknowledged that the proposals would result in the loss of an area of rough grassland and scrub, the Site is not subject to any formal designations and lies immediately adjacent to the settlement edge, which wraps around three of the Site's boundaries. Residential built form is characteristic of the Site's immediate setting ensuring that the proposals do not introduce any new or alien features into this context. It is considered that the proposals would give rise to a Medium Adverse magnitude of change at Year 1, resulting in an effect of Moderate Adverse significance. However, as the landscape proposals mature, they would reinforce the retained planting and the landscaped setting of Markfield. By Year 15 the perceived magnitude of change would have reduced and the significance of the effect would be Minor Adverse. This is not considered notable.

4.2.18. As an overview, it is considered that the proposals can be integrated in this location without adversely affecting the key characteristics or sensitivities and values of the receiving landscape and townscape setting. It is considered that the proposals comply with the guidelines and strategies set out within the published assessments. While the proposals would result in the loss of an area of rough grassland and scrub, changing the character of the Site itself, the proposals are located within a distinctly settlement edge landscape, with commercial and residential development located to the north, east and west. The proposals would not introduce any new or alien features into the landscape context and would not extend the perceived extent of Markfield within the localised landscape. The proposals would retain key trees and landscape features and include a comprehensive scheme of landscaping, with over 39% of the Site being greenspace. As this planting establishes, it would enhance the landscaped setting of the proposals and the wider settlement. It is considered that the proposals would not give rise to any notable adverse effects and the perceived effects would reduce with time as the landscaping matures. It is concluded that the proposals could be integrated without any notable adverse effects upon the character of the "Charnwood" NCA, the "Charnwood Forest Settled Forest Hills" LCA, "Markfield" UCA, "Thringstone / Markfield Quarries and Settlement" LCA or the more immediate receiving landscape.

### 4.3. Effect upon the Visual Environment

- 4.3.1. Table 7, below, assesses the effect of the proposed development upon the identified key views which are included within Appendix 6.

*Table 7: Assessment of Visual Effects*

Viewpoint	Location	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance
1	Hill Lane, approximately 10m to the north of the site	Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse at Year 1
				Moderate / Minor Adverse at Year 15
<p><i>Assessment:</i> The properties within the western extent of the Site would be visible from this location, set back from the road behind a native hedgerow with some scattered hedgerow trees. The properties would front onto the road providing a positive, active frontage. The detached nature of the properties would add articulation to the built frontage, with breaks between the buildings affording views through of the retained treescape beyond. The proposed built form would be set back from the road corridor ensuring that it does not appear overbearing or prominent. Residential built form characterises the immediate setting of this view, with properties on Ashby Road, located just to the left. The character of Hill Lane is also influenced by the commercial development located to the west of the Site, that lies to the immediate right of this view and extends along the road corridor. As the proposed landscaping matures it would soften the perceived built edge and reinforce the presence of planting within the setting of the streetscene.</p>				
2	Hill Lane, approximately 35m to the west of the site	Medium	Medium / Low	Moderate / Minor Adverse at Year 1
				Minor Adverse at Year 15
<p><i>Assessment:</i> As with Viewpoint 1, the properties within the western part of the Site would be visible, fronting onto the Hill Lane streetscene. However, these properties would be set back from the highway behind a native hedgerow with scattered tree planting, a private driveway and front gardens ensuring that the proposed built form does not appear overbearing or prominent. Breaks between the buildings would create articulation in the built elevation, reducing the perceived scale, mass and bulk of the built form. The proposals front onto the streetscene, ensuring that a positive, outward looking development, and an appropriate gateway to the settlement, is achieved. As the proposed planting matures it would soften the perceived built edge and create a landscaped approach to Markfield, integrating the</p>				

proposed built form. Residential built form is an existing component of this view and, as such, it is considered that the proposals would not significantly affect the character or amenities of this view.				
3	Hill Lane, approximately 90m to the south west of the site	Medium	Low	Moderate / Minor Adverse at Year 1
				Negligible Adverse at Year 15
<p><i>Assessment:</i> The properties within the western part of the site would be visible from this location, fronting onto Hill Lane, however, the intervening vegetation and topography would contain views of the wider development. As the landscape proposals to the western boundary and south western corner mature they would integrate the proposed built form and create a sympathetic and attractive gateway and approach to Markfield from the south. Built form is an existing component of this view and, as such, it is considered that the proposals would not significantly affect the character or amenities of this view.</p>				
4	Permissive path within the open space to the south of Hillside, on the edge of Hill Hole Quarry Nature Reserve	High	Low	Moderate Adverse at Year 1
				Minor Adverse at Year 15
<p><i>Assessment:</i> From this location, the retained and offsite vegetation structure would soften views of the proposals. There would be views of the proposed roofscape during the winter, however, the proposals would not break the vegetated skyline or appear prominent. The retained vegetation would ensure a defensible and robust green edge to the site is achieved and the amenities of footpath users is not compromised. As the proposed landscaping within the development matures, it would reinforce the well-vegetated character of the area and further integrate the proposals.</p>				
5	Footpath R17, approximately 80m to the south of the site	High	Negligible	Moderate / Minor Adverse at Year 1
				Minor Adverse at Year 15
<p><i>Assessment:</i> From this location filtered views of development within the eastern part of the Site would be possible beyond the intervening hedgerows. The existing vegetation structure would be reinforced with new planting and where the proposals are visible, they would be seen within the context of the wider townscape to the north and east and the allotments in the foreground. This latter land use has an urban quality to it, reducing the perception of a rural setting to the south of the Site.</p>				

6	Footpath R17, approximately 200m to the south of the site	High	Negligible	Moderate / Minor Adverse at Year 1
				Minor Adverse at Year 15
<p><i>Assessment:</i> As with Viewpoint 5, some heavily filtered views of development within the eastern part of the site would be possible during the winter, beyond the intervening hedgerows. The existing vegetation structure would be reinforced with new planting and where the proposals are visible, they would be seen within the context of the wider townscape to the north and east and the allotments in the foreground. This latter land use has an urban quality to it, reducing the perception of a rural setting to the south of the Site.</p>				
7	Toposcope at the top of Hill Hole Quarry, approximately 285m to the south of the site	High	Low	Moderate Adverse at Year 1
				Minor Adverse at Year 15
<p><i>Assessment:</i> From this elevated location, the intervening topography of the former quarry would contain views of much of the built form within the Site, however, the proposed roofscape would be visible in the middle ground between the far side of the quarry and the properties on Ashby Road which extend across the view. The proposals would not project above the roofscape of the properties to the north, which are located in a slightly more elevated position, nor would the proposals affect the appreciation of the wooded slopes that characterise the wider setting and form a backdrop to the view. Residential built form is already a characteristic of this view and, as such, the proposals would not introduce any new or alien components. Nor would the proposals extend the perceived settlement edge beyond the existing built form associated with Ashby Road and the industrial estate to the west. While the proposals would be visible, they would not materially affect the public's ability to enjoy this view or the wider panoramic views to the east, south and west.</p>				
8	Uplands Drive, approximately 10m to the east of the site	Medium	Negligible	Moderate / Minor Adverse at Year 1
				Negligible Adverse at Year 15
<p><i>Assessment:</i> Some heavily filtered views of the proposed built form within the eastern part of the Site would be possible from this location during the winter, however, the proposals are set back from this boundary by the proposed SUDS basin and area of public open space. As the proposed landscaping matures it would reinforce the separation between the proposed built form and this viewpoint integrating</p>				

the development into the view. The context of the viewpoint must also be acknowledged. Mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century residential built form lies either side of the view reinforcing the townscape setting of the Site.

9	Ashby Road, approximately 70m to the north of the site	Medium	Negligible	Negligible Adverse at Year 1
				Negligible Beneficial at Year 15
<i>Assessment:</i> Some glimpsed views of the proposed roofscape would be possible at Year 1, behind the bungalow in the centre of the view. However, the proposals would not introduce any new or alien components into the view which is already characterised by modern residential built form. As the woodland green infrastructure within the Site matures it would soften views of the proposed built form and form a green backdrop to the existing properties in the foreground.				
10	Ashby Road, approximately 90m to the north of the site	Medium	Negligible	Negligible Adverse
<i>Assessment:</i> The intervening built form on Ashby Road would contain views of most of the proposed development from this location. Some glimpsed views of the roofscape associated with plots on the western edge of the development would be possible, but would not be prominent and would be seen in the context of the existing residential built form that characterises the foreground of the view. The proposals would not appear prominent on the skyline.				
11	Publicly accessible land at the Altar Stones, approximately 260m to the north west of the site	High	Negligible	Minor Adverse at Year 1
				Negligible Adverse at Year 15
<i>Assessment:</i> From this location the intervening residential and commercial built form associated with Altar Stones Lane and Ashby Road would largely contain views of the proposals. Some glimpsed views of the proposed roofscape would be possible, but would not extend the perception of the settlement towards the viewer, nor beyond the existing perceived extents of the townscape. As the proposed landscaping matures it would assist in integrating the proposed built form and reinforce the vegetated setting of Markfield.				

12	Cliffe Lane, approximately 720m to the west of the site	Medium	No Change	<b>Neutral</b>
<p><i>Assessment:</i> The intervening vegetation structure and built form associated with the industrial estate would contain views of the proposals and ensure that the appreciation of the rocky outcrop of Hill Hole Quarry to the right is not compromised.</p>				
13	Footpath J94, approximately 1,500m to the north east of the site	High	No Change	<b>Neutral</b>
<p><i>Assessment:</i> The intervening distance, vegetation cover and built form would contain views of the proposals from this location, ensuring that the appreciation of the wider wooded landscape setting of Markfield is not compromised.</p>				

4.3.2. As an overview, it is considered that, while the proposals would give rise to some moderate adverse effects at Year 1, these would be highly localised and would reduce as the landscape proposals mature. The proposed built form would be visible from a number of localised viewpoints but would be seen in the context of the existing townscape setting, with the residential built form to the north and east and commercial development to the west evident in most views. The proposals would not introduce any new or alien components into the context of the receiving visual environment. The proposals have been carefully designed to adopt a positive, outward looking layout which also retains and reinforces the vegetated character of the site and its immediate setting.

4.3.3. It is considered that the proposals can be integrated without notable adverse effects upon the local public right of way network or the approaches to Markfield from the south. While the proposals would be glimpsed from the top of Hill Hole Quarry and the Altar Stones, they would not compromise the public's enjoyment of the broad panoramic views from these elevated locations and would not extend the perceived presence of the settlement beyond its existing extents. It is concluded that the proposals can be integrated without notable adverse effects upon the receiving visual environment.

#### 4.4. Effect upon Landscape Related Policy

- 4.4.1. In terms of the effect upon national and local landscape related policy, the Site and its setting are not covered by any qualitative landscape designations.
- 4.4.2. As set out in Section 2, it is considered that the Site and its setting do not represent a “valued landscape” in the context of Para 187a of the NPPF.
- 4.4.3. Para 187b of the NPPF requires development to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. As set out within this assessment, it is considered that the proposals can be integrated without long term adverse effects upon those landscape receptors which characterise the site and its wider landscape setting. It is concluded that the proposals would not harm the intrinsic character or beauty of the countryside in which the Site is set.
- 4.4.4. Policy 21 of the Adopted Core Strategy requires new development sites to include 20% ‘forest green infrastructure’. This does not need to be entirely made up woodland planting and can include a mix of other habitats, open space and informal recreation space. Based on the site area (3.01ha) the proposals should provide 0.6ha of forest green infrastructure. However, as illustrated on the Ophir Architects layout, the proposals achieve 1.17ha green space which would comply with the criterion of Policy 21. This equates to circa 39% of the Site and, as such, well exceeds the policy requirement. The green spaces that would be delivered includes a variety of public open spaces, the SUDS basin that would be seeded with a species rich grass mix and areas of existing hedgerow and tree planting. The existing planting would be reinforced with new native tree and understorey planting to reinforce the vegetated character of the Site’s setting. It is considered that the proposals comply with Policy 21 of the Core Strategy.
- 4.4.5. Policy DM4 states:

**“To protect its intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character, the countryside will first and foremost be safeguarded from unsustainable development. Development in the countryside would be considered sustainable where:**

- a) It is for outdoor sport or recreation purposes (including ancillary buildings) and it can be demonstrated that the proposed scheme cannot be provided within or adjacent to settlement boundaries; or**
- b) The proposal involves the change of use, re-use or extension of existing buildings which lead to the enhancement of the immediate setting; or**
- c) It significantly contributes to economic growth, job creation and/or diversification of rural businesses; or**

- d) It relates to the provision of stand-alone renewable energy developments in line with Policy DM2: Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development; or**
- e) It relates to the provision of accommodation for a rural worker in line with Policy DM5 - Enabling Rural Worker Accommodation.**

**and:**

- i) It does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside; and**
- ii) It does not undermine the physical and perceived separation and open character between settlements; and**
- iii) It does not create or exacerbate ribbon development;**
- iv) If within a Green Wedge, it protects its role and function in line with Core Strategy Policies 6 and 9; and**
- v) If within the National Forest, it contributes to the delivery of the National Forest Strategy in line with Core Strategy Policy 21,”**

4.4.6. The Site lies outside of the defined settlement boundary of Markfield and therefore lies within the Countryside, from a policy perspective. However, as set out within the character assessment and as is evident within the photographs within Appendix 6, the townscape setting of the Site significantly reduces the perception of a rural character. While the other submissions that accompany this application deal with the sustainability of the Site in terms of its location and access to services within the settlement and the social and economic benefits of the development, from a landscape perspective, the Site is considered an appropriate location for new housing within the Borough. The Site is surrounded on three sides by existing development and would not give rise to the settlement projecting out into open countryside.

4.4.7. In terms of Criteria i – v, it is considered that the proposal would not have a significant adverse effect upon the character of the countryside, would not compromise the perceived separation between Markfield and its neighbours, would not give rise to the perception of ribbon development, is not within a Green Wedge and, as set out above, complies with the objectives of the National Forest and Policy 21 of the Core Strategy. It is concluded that the proposals comply with Policy DM4.

4.4.8. Policy DM10 requires new development to address the following requirements :

- “c) It complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and architectural features;**

- d) The use and application of building materials respects the materials of existing, adjoining/neighbouring buildings and the local area generally;**
- e) It incorporates a high standard of landscaping where this would add to the quality of the design and siting;...”**

4.4.9. As set out above, the proposals are located immediately adjacent to the existing settlement edge, with residential development abutting the northern and eastern boundaries and commercial development located immediately to the west. It is considered that the proposals complement the localised townscape setting in terms of character and appearance. The proposals would adopt a simple and sympathetic palette of materials that would complement the existing townscape to the north and east. As set out within section 3 of this LVIA, it is considered that the landscape-led approach to the development ensures that not only can the proposals be integrated in this location, but that a high quality landscaped setting for the proposed development and wider townscape can be achieved. It is concluded that the proposals comply with Policy DM10.

4.4.10. In addition to the borough-wide policies, the Markfield Neighbourhood Plan sets out policies relating to landscape character and green infrastructure. Policy M2 relates to landscape character and requires development to conserve and, where possible, enhance the character and qualities of the local landscape. As set out in Section 4.2, the proposals could be integrated into this location without any notable adverse effects upon the receiving landscape character areas identified within the published assessments. The proposals would retain the key trees and hedgerows within the Site and would reinforce the well-vegetated character of the area with a comprehensive scheme of landscaping. The mature vegetation associated with the southern boundary of the Site would be retained and reinforced to ensure that an appropriate and sympathetic interface between the Site, and wider settlement, and the landscape to the south is achieved. As illustrated by Viewpoint 7, the Site is set down in the landscape when viewed from the top of Hill Hole Quarry. It is acknowledged that the proposed roofscape would be glimpsed from this location, however, it would be seen in the context of the wider settlement to the north, east and west and would not affect the wider panoramic views over the vales to the east and south or towards the undulating wooded landscapes to the north and west. The proposals would include a comprehensive scheme of landscaping that would mitigate any on-site losses and ensure that a high quality, landscaped development is delivered that contribute positively to the National Forest landscape and local biodiversity. It is considered that the proposals comply with Policy M2.

4.4.11. Within the Neighbourhood Plan, the Site is identified as an area of local green infrastructure. Policy M3 relates to green infrastructure and does not preclude development, but requires development to avoid significant harm to key features. As set out within this assessment, the

proposals would retain the key hedgerows and treescape associated with the Site and would include a comprehensive scheme of landscaping to mitigate any losses. As set out above, the proposals would deliver a significant area of natural and semi natural greenspace across the Site which would not only create a high quality setting for the proposals but also contribute positively to local biodiversity and habitat connectivity. It is considered that the proposals comply with Policy M3.

- 4.4.12. National and local policy seek to achieve high quality and sustainable development. It is considered that the proposals comply with the aims and objectives set out within the national and local planning policy framework from a landscape and visual perspective.

## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. Align Landscape Planning are instructed by Glenalmond Properties Ltd to assess the landscape and visual implications arising from the proposed development of up to 67 dwellings at Hill Lane, Markfield ('the Site').
- 5.2. The Site lies to the east of Hill Lane, within the western part of Markfield, an established town located to the west of Leicester. Existing development wraps around the site from the west, to the north and round to the south east. Commercial development lies to the west, associated with the industrial estate at Hill Lane Close, while residential development on Ashby Road, The Elms and Upland Drive backs onto the Site to the north, east and south east. As a result, the Site is closely related to the existing settlement, with the surrounding built environment containing views of the Site from the wider landscape setting to the north, east and west.
- 5.3. The Site currently comprises an area of rough grassland and scrub that extends up to the settlement boundary. The established vegetation structure associated with the Site creates a compartmentalised character and ensures that there are no views into the main body of the Site from the wider public realm. The Site falls gently from north west to south east and is not publicly accessible.
- 5.4. The Site is not subject to any qualitative landscape designations.

### Effect upon Landscape Character

- 5.5. It is concluded that the proposals could be integrated without any notable adverse effects upon the character of the "Charnwood" NCA, the "Charnwood Forest Settled Forest Hills" LCA, "Markfield" UCA, "Thringstone / Markfield Quarries and Settlement" LCA or the more immediate receiving landscape. It is considered that the proposals comply with the guidelines and strategies set out within the published assessments.
- 5.6. While the proposals would result in the loss of an area of rough grassland and scrub, changing the character of the Site itself, the proposals are located within a distinctly settlement edge landscape, with commercial and residential development located to the north, east and west. The proposals would not introduce any new or alien features into the landscape context and would not extend the perceived extent of Markfield within the localised landscape. the proposals would retain key trees and landscape features and include a comprehensive scheme of landscaping, with over 39% of the Site being greenspace. As this planting establishes, it would enhance the landscaped setting of the proposals and the wider settlement. It is considered that the proposals would not give rise to any

notable adverse effects and the perceived effects would reduce with time as the landscaping matures.

#### Effect upon the Visual Environment

- 5.7. It is acknowledged that, while the proposals would give rise to some moderate adverse effects at Year 1, these would be highly localised and would reduce as the landscape proposals mature. The proposed built form would be visible from a number of localised viewpoints but would be seen in the context of the existing townscape setting, with the residential built form to the north and east and commercial development to the west evident in most views. The proposals have been carefully designed to adopt a positive, outward looking layout which also retains and reinforces the vegetated character of the Site and its immediate setting.
- 5.8. It is considered that the proposals can be integrated without notable adverse effects upon the local public right of way network or the approaches to Markfield from the south. While the proposals would be glimpsed from the top of Hill Hole Quarry and the Altar Stones, they would not compromise the public's enjoyment of these views and would not extend the perceived presence of the settlement beyond its existing extents. It is concluded that the proposals can be integrated without notable adverse effects upon the receiving visual environment.

#### Effect upon Landscape Related Policy

- 5.9. In terms of the effect upon national and local landscape related policy, the Site and its setting are not covered by any qualitative landscape designations.
- 5.10. The assessment concludes that the Site and its landscape setting do not represent a "valued landscape" in the context of para 187a of the NPPF.
- 5.11. National and local policy seek to achieve high quality and sustainable development. It is considered that the proposals comply with the aims and objectives set out within the national and local planning policy framework from a landscape and visual perspective.

#### Conclusion

- 5.12. In conclusion, as set out within this assessment, it is considered that the proposals can be integrated in this location without long term adverse effects upon the receiving landscape character and visual environment. It is concluded that the proposals are supportable from a landscape and visual perspective.

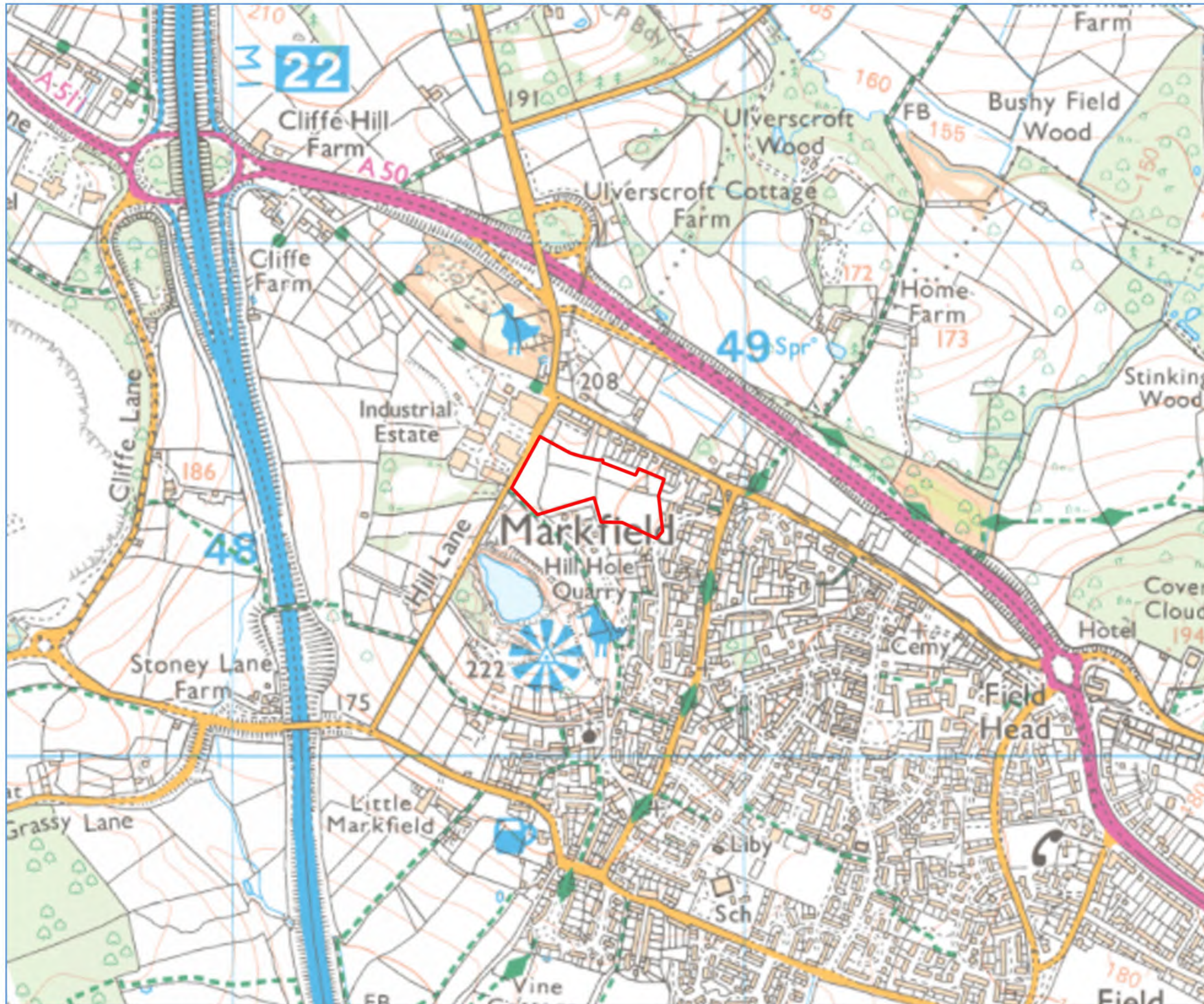
## PLANS

Not to Scale



Key

 Site Boundary



Land at Hill Lane,  
Markfield

Site Location Plan

Drawing Ref: Pr-1013.SLP.001 Rev. -  
Date: October 2025 Drawn: AM



Drawing notes: Image supplied by Google Maps & Ordnance Survey  
Accessed October 2025

Not to Scale



Key

 Site Boundary

Land at Hill Lane,  
Markfield

Site Context Plan

Drawing Ref: Pr-1013.SCP.002 Rev. -  
Date: October 2025 Drawn: AM

Not to Scale



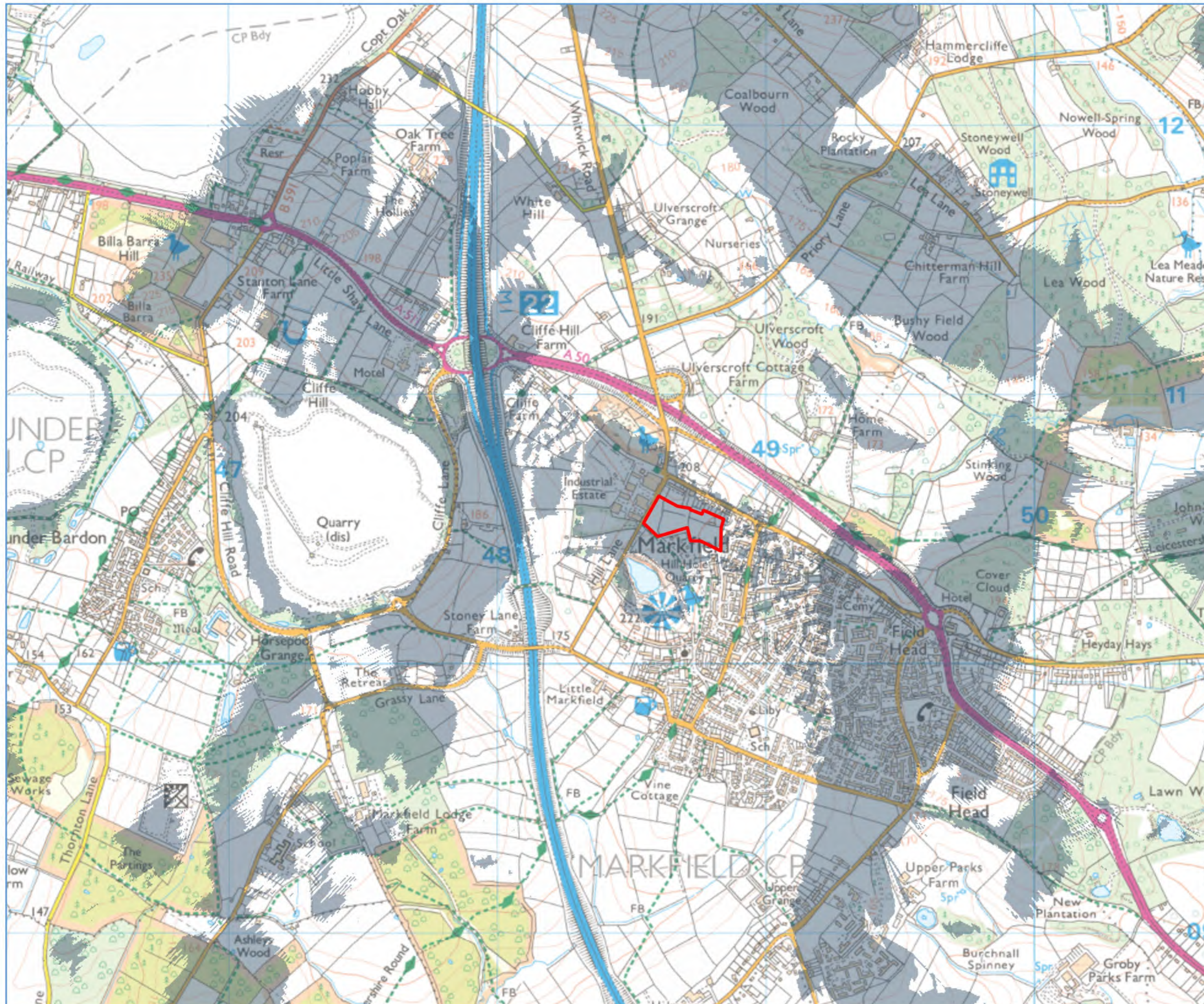
Key



Site Boundary



Zone of Theoretical  
Visibility - based on  
10m tall building and  
bare earth data



Land at Hill Lane,  
Markfield

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Drawing Ref: Pr-1013.ZTV.003 Rev. -  
Date: October 2025 Drawn: AM

Proposed properties front onto Hill Lane, creating a positive outward looking layout that enhances the approaches to Markfield from the south. Native tree and hedgerow planting ensures that the landscaped setting of Markfield is enhanced.

Existing mature treescape and hedgerows retained as part of the proposals to form the foundation of the green spaces through the development and conserve an appreciation of the historic field pattern.

Street trees break up the perceived elevations and extend the vegetated character through the development.

Existing boundary planting retained and reinforced as part of the proposals to assist the integration of the proposed development as well as enhance the well vegetated character of the area.

Areas of woodland green infrastructure incorporated into the proposed layout through retention of key trees and hedgerows as well as creation of new habitats, including native trees, mixed native hedgerow, native scrub, neutral grassland and wetland.

Areas of neutral grassland created as part of the site-wide biodiversity enhancements.

SUDS basin contributes to both the blue and green infrastructure.

Trees			
Species	Specification	Girth	Height
Acer campestre	Heavy Standard, 175cm Clear Stem, RB	12-14cm	3.0 - 3.5m
Betula pendula	Heavy Standard, 175cm Clear Stem, RB	12-14cm	3.0 - 3.5m
Carpinus betulus	Extra Heavy Standard, 200cm Clear Stem, RB	14-16cm	3.5 - 4.5m
Pinus sylvestris	Heavy Standard, 175cm Clear Stem, RB	12-14cm	3.0 - 3.5m
Prunus avium	Heavy Standard, 175cm Clear Stem, RB	12-14cm	3.0 - 3.5m
Quercus ilex	Extra Heavy Standard, 200cm Clear Stem, RB	14-16cm	3.5 - 4.5m
Quercus robur	Heavy Standard, 175cm Clear Stem, RB	12-14cm	3.0 - 3.5m

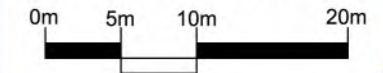
Ornamental Shrub Mix				
Species	Specification	Height	Pot Size	Density
Quercifolius Blue Cushion	Bushy, 3/4 Breaks	30-40cm	5L	3/m <sup>2</sup>
Choisya ternata	Bushy, 3/4 Breaks	30-40cm	5L	3/m <sup>2</sup>
Cornus stolonifera 'Flaviramea'	Bushy, 3/4 Breaks	30-40cm	5L	3/m <sup>2</sup>
Escallonia 'Apple Blossom'	Bushy, 3/4 Breaks	30-40cm	5L	3/m <sup>2</sup>
Philadelphus caucasicus 'Aureus'	Bushy, 3/5 Breaks	30-40cm	5L	3/m <sup>2</sup>

Mixed Native Hedge				
Species	Specification	Height	Density	Mix
Acer campestre	BR Double staggered row	60-80cm	5m	15%
Corylus avellana	BR Double staggered row	60-80cm	5m	15%
Crataegus monogyna	BR Double staggered row	60-80cm	5m	25%
Fagus sylvatica	BR Double staggered row	60-80cm	5m	15%
Ilex aquifolium	BR Double staggered row	60-80cm	5m	15%
Ligustrum vulgare	BR Double staggered row	60-80cm	5m	15%

Native Shrub Mix					
Species	Specification	Height	Pot Size	Density	Mix
Acer campestre	Branched, 2 Breaks, 1+1	60-80cm	Br	3m <sup>2</sup>	25%
Corylus avellana	Branched, 2 Breaks, 1+1	60-80cm	Br	3m <sup>2</sup>	15%
Crataegus monogyna	Branched, 2 Breaks, 1+1	60-80cm	Br	3m <sup>2</sup>	25%
Prunus spinosa	Branched, 2 Breaks, 1+1	60-80cm	Br	3m <sup>2</sup>	15%
Viburnum lantana	Branched, 2 Breaks, 1+1	60-80cm	Br	3m <sup>2</sup>	10%
Viburnum opulus	Branched, 2 Breaks, 1+1	60-80cm	Br	3m <sup>2</sup>	10%

Drawing notes: Image supplied by Google Maps & Ordnance Survey  
Accessed October 2025

Scale: 1:500 @ A3



#### Key

- Site Boundary
- Existing Vegetation
- Proposed Trees
- Proposed Hedge
- Proposed Ornamental Shrubs / Hedges
- Proposed Native Shrubs
- Proposed Wildflower Grassland
- Proposed Flowering Lawn
- Proposed Wet Meadow
- Proposed Lawns

Land at Hill Lane,  
Markfield

Landscape Strategy Plan

Drawing Ref: Pr-1013.LSP.005 Rev. -  
Date: October 2025 Drawn: AM

## **APPENDIX 1**

### Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

# **LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. This methodology, and the assessment to which it applies, has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance:
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition – GLVIA3 (2013) - Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment;
  - Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Guidelines on Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) – LITGN-2024-01, published by the Landscape Institute (August 2024);
  - Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Technical Guidance Note 06/19), published by the Landscape Institute (2019).
- 1.2. The purpose of this methodology is to set out a clear and transparent approach to the assessment of landscape character and visual effects, in line with guidance set out by GLVIA3.
- 1.3. When assessing character within an urban context, this methodology can be applied to Townscape Assessments and assessing how a proposed development could affect the elements that make up the townscape and its distinctive character.

## **2. THE LVIA PROCESS**

- 2.1. The main stages of the LVIA process are outlined below. The process typically comprises:
- Stage 1* - the baseline assessment;
- Stage 2* - the description of the proposed development; and
- Stage 3* - the assessment of effects.
- 2.2. This process seeks to provide a clear and transparent method that will assist in identifying the potential effects of a development on the receiving landscape and the visual environment.

## ***Stage 1 - Baseline Study***

- 2.3. The baseline assessment sets out the existing landscape character and visual environment conditions against which any future changes resulting from new development can be measured or predicted and assessed.

### Landscape

1. The scope of the assessment is defined.
2. Landscape related planning policy, including any landscape designations, is identified and outlined.
3. The landscape baseline is established through an initial desk study, which includes an assessment of published regional and local Landscape Character Assessments, where available, and subsequently a site visit to identify the value and susceptibility of the landscape resource (receptor) to a change of the type proposed, at community, local, national or international levels, as appropriate.

### Visual

1. The scope of the assessment is defined.
2. The visual baseline is identified as the extent of visual receptors within the study area, and establishes the number and sensitivity of the representative viewpoint and/or groups of people (receptors) within the study area whose views may be altered as a result of the proposals. The use of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) models can be a useful tool, assisting in identifying the theoretical visual extent of a proposal, where appropriate. However, it must be noted that these are not definitive, and do not replace viewing the site “in the field” as set out in GLVIA3, but can assist in scoping out those areas where topography will contain views of a development. Photographs from the key viewpoints are taken and presented in accordance with best practice guidance, illustrating the baseline situation.

## ***Stage 2 - Description of the Development / Design Proposals***

- 2.4. The baseline study will highlight opportunities and constraints for the integration of the proposals into the receiving environment. The various components of the proposals at

each phase of the development process, which will potentially give rise to effects on the landscape character and the visual environment, need to be identified. At this time, the proposals can be modified to ensure that further mitigation measures are incorporated into the design in response to the local landscape and visual environment.

#### Mitigation of landscape and visual effects

2.5. Paragraph 4.21 of GLVIA3 states that “*measures proposed to prevent / avoid, reduce and, where possible, offset or remedy (or compensate for) any significant adverse landscape and visual effects, should be described*”. In practice, such mitigation measures are generally considered to fall into three categories:

- Primary measures, developed through the iterative design process, which have become integrated or embedded into the project design;
- Standard construction and operational management practices for avoiding and reducing environmental effects;
- Secondary measures, designed to address any residual adverse effects remaining after primary measures and standard construction practices have been incorporated into the scheme.

#### **Stage 3 - Description of Effects**

2.6. The assessment should then identify the level of effect as a result of the different components of the proposals upon both landscape and visual receptors.

2.7. In order to assess the significance of the effect on the receiving environment, it is necessary to consider the **magnitude**, i.e. the degree of change, together with the **sensitivity** of the receptor.

2.8. The assessment will identify the type of effect experienced by the receptor, as set out in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Interpretation of Effects**

Type of Effect	Interpretation
Direct	A direct effect will be one where a development will affect the character of a landscape or a view, either beneficially or adversely.

Indirect	An indirect effect will occur as a result of elements associated with a development, i.e. a development may result in an increase of traffic on a particular route.
Short, medium or long term	This relates to the anticipated duration and magnitude of effects associated with a development. Within this assessment, the potential effects are typically assessed during the Construction Phase, then at Years 1 and 15, following completion of the development.
Temporary or Permanent	This relates to whether the resulting effect of a development can be mitigated or not, and whether the result of the mitigation is beneficial or adverse.
Beneficial or Adverse	<p><u>Beneficial effects</u> would typically occur where a development would positively contribute to the landscape character or view.</p> <p><u>Adverse effects</u> would typically occur where key landscape elements are lost, or the proposal detracts from the quality and / or character of a landscape or view.</p> <p><u>Neutral effects</u> can occur where changes neither add nor detract from the quality and character of a landscape or view.</p>

#### Assessing cumulative effects

- 2.9. Cumulative effects are additional effects caused by a proposed development in combination with other similar developments. This can be cumulative landscape effects on the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or cumulative visual effects caused by two or more developments being visible from one viewpoint (in combination) and / or from a route where the viewer has to move to another viewpoint to see the same or a different development (sequentially). The scope of cumulative effects should be agreed at the outset to establish what schemes are relevant to the assessment, and at which planning stage this is appropriate. It is generally considered that existing and consented developments, and those for which planning applications have been submitted but not yet determined, should be included. The assessment of cumulative effects must be considered as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) but does not have to be assessed as part of a non-EIA project.

#### **Stage 4 - Significance of Effects (EIA only)**

- 2.10. A final judgement on whether the effect is likely to be significant will be made, as required by the EIA Regulations. These conclusions should draw out the key issues and outline the scope for reducing any negative / adverse effects.

### **3. ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1. The purpose of the LVIA is to provide an objective assessment of the potential effects of the proposals upon the identified landscape and / or visual receptor. GLVIA3 states that *“Assessing the significance of landscape and visual effects is a matter of judgement. It is vital that the basis of such judgements are transparent and understandable, so that the underlying assumptions and reasoning can be examined by others”*.
- 3.2. This section sets out the basis for assessing landscape and visual sensitivity, the magnitude of proposed effects, and the overall assessment of significance.

#### **LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY**

- 3.3. The sensitivity of a particular landscape in relation to new development is categorised as very high, high, medium, low or negligible. This takes into account the **susceptibility** of the receptor to the type of development proposed and the **value** attached to different landscapes by society.

#### Susceptibility of the Landscape Receptor

- 3.4. GLVIA3 defines the **SUSCEPTIBILITY** of a receptor to change as being the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue negative consequences upon the baseline situation.
- 3.5. A judgement as to the level of susceptibility (High, Medium, Low or Negligible) is made in relation to each criterion, and these judgements contribute to an overall judgement of susceptibility for the landscape receptor.
- 3.6. A landscape deemed to be highly susceptible is likely to be small-scale, with a mosaic of natural habitats and limited human influences, while a less susceptible landscape receptor is likely to be simpler, with noticeable human influences and fewer natural / semi-natural habitats present.

### Value of the Landscape Receptor

3.7. Following the publication of GLVIA3, it is now generally agreed that the **VALUE** of a landscape receptor can be determined by a range of factors set out within Box 5.1 of GLVIA3. These include:

- Landscape quality (condition);
- Scenic quality;
- Rarity and representativeness;
- Conservation interests;
- Recreation value;
- Perceptual aspects; and
- Associations.

3.8. The Box 5.1 criteria are used to determine the value of landscape receptors. The resulting value levels under each factor are recorded, and an overall judgement of the level of value is reached.

3.9. A professional judgement as to how the landscape reflects or contributes to the various criteria is made which leads to an assessment of value in relation to each factor (High, Medium, Low or Negligible) and these judgements contribute to an overall judgement of value.

### Overall Judgement of Landscape Sensitivity

3.10. Once judgements regarding the susceptibility and the value of the landscape receptor have been made, an overall judgement of landscape sensitivity is reached. The following table explains each threshold, and the factors that contribute to the degree of sensitivity.

**Table 2: Definition of Landscape Sensitivity Thresholds**

Sensitivity	Definition
<b>Very High</b>	Landscapes which would have a high susceptibility to change, and which are considered to be of high value. Such landscapes would have a high degree of intimacy, strong landscape structure, and a high sense of intactness, and contain features worthy of protection. Townscapes may include a high proportion of historic assets and be designated as a World Heritage Site.

	Typical examples may be nationally or internationally designated, e.g., World Heritage Sites, National Parks, Heritage Coasts or National Landscapes.
<b>High</b>	Landscapes where there is a medium - high susceptibility to change, and which are considered to be of high value. Such landscapes may be small scale, have a strong landscape structure, be relatively intact and contain features and / or elements worthy of protection. Townscapes may include a number of historic assets. Typical examples may be locally designated or within the immediate setting of National Parks, National Landscapes, World Heritage Sites etc.
<b>Medium</b>	Landscapes where there is a medium susceptibility to change, and which are considered to be of medium value. Such landscapes will have good landscape structure, with some detracting features or evidence of recent change. Townscapes may include a proportion of historic assets or assets of cultural value locally.
<b>Low</b>	Landscapes where there is a low susceptibility to change, and which are considered to be of low value. Typical landscapes will have some characteristics of interest, but human influences and some detractors will be present.
<b>Negligible</b>	Landscapes where there is little or no susceptibility to change, and which are of low value. Typical landscapes are likely to be characterised by extensive human influences, be of weak landscape structure, with intensive land uses present, and require landscape restoration.

## **VISUAL SENSITIVITY**

- 3.11. As part of the assessment of visual effects, the sensitivity of the visual receptor will be assessed against the magnitude of visual change. Each receptor should be assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity, and also the value attached to particular views. The sensitivity of receptors is categorised as very high, high, medium, low and negligible.

**Table 3: Visual Sensitivity Thresholds**

Sensitivity	Definition
<b>Very High</b>	Viewers on public rights of way, within nationally designated landscapes such as National Parks or National Landscapes, whose prime focus is on the high quality of the landscape around, and who are very aware of its value.
<b>High</b>	Viewers on public rights of way, whose prime focus is on the landscape around, or residential properties which lie immediately adjacent to, and look directly onto the development site. Examples may include users of the public right of way network (e.g., promoted routes, national trails, footpaths or bridleways), or the setting of a listed building.
<b>Medium</b>	Viewers engaged in outdoor recreation with some appreciation of the landscape, occupiers of residential properties with oblique views from which the proposals may be visible, and users of rural lanes and roads, including pedestrians, cyclists or horse riders. Examples may include viewers within moderate quality landscapes and / or local parks or recreation grounds.
<b>Low</b>	Viewers engaged in outdoor sports or recreation, whose prime focus is on their activity rather than their setting, or those passing through the area on main transport routes (A-roads, dual carriageways, motorways or the rail network), whose attention is focused away from an appreciation of the landscape through which they are passing.
<b>Negligible</b>	Viewers whose attention is focused on their work or activity, and who are not susceptible to changes in the surrounding visual environment.

**MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT**

- 3.12. The magnitude of change relates to the extent to which a proposed development will affect the characteristics and / or elements that define the landscape character or view. This change is categorised as high, medium, low, or negligible.

**Table 4: Magnitude of Change**

<b>Magnitude</b>	<b>Effect Definition</b>
<b>High</b>	Change resulting in a high degree of harm or improvement, such as the introduction of prominent new elements that are considered to make a major alteration to a landscape or view.
<b>Medium</b>	Change resulting in a moderate degree of harm or improvement, or when constitutes a perceptible change within a landscape or view.
<b>Low</b>	Change resulting in a low degree of harm or improvement to a landscape or view, or which constitutes only a minor component within a landscape or view.
<b>Negligible</b>	Change resulting in a barely perceptible degree of harm or improvement to a landscape or view.
<b>No Change</b>	It is also possible for a landscape or view to experience no change, due to the proposed development being totally compatible with the receiving environment or not visible due to intervening structures or vegetation.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLD**

- 3.13. To assess the overall significance of the effect, the magnitude of change is considered against the sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptor.
- 3.14. In formulating the significance of the potential landscape or visual effect, reasoned professional judgement, based on clear and transparent methods, suitable training and experience, and a detached and dispassionate view of the development, is required. The matrix at Table 6 should be used as a guide for consistency rather than a prescriptive tool. Where the final judgement differs from the matrix, this will be supported by a clear explanation.
- 3.15. The significance thresholds are predicted as Substantial, Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible, and can be either beneficial or adverse. Where there is no perceptible change in terms of the magnitude, regardless of the sensitivity of the receptor, the significance of the effect on a landscape or view will be Neutral.

- 3.16. Unless otherwise stated, all effects are predicted in the winter months. The extent of mitigation measures should be clearly stated, and in the case of planting proposals, the contribution to reducing adverse effects over time should be demonstrated at different stages (typically construction stage and operational stages year 1 and year 15).

**Table 5: Significance of Effect**

Significance	Threshold Definition
<b>Substantial</b>	A very high magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view of national / international importance which has no ability to accommodate change.
<b>Major</b>	A high magnitude of change that materially affects a high sensitivity landscape or view which has some ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a damaged landscape or view.
<b>Moderate</b>	A medium magnitude of change that affects a landscape or view which may have the ability to accommodate the type of development proposed. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
<b>Minor</b>	A low magnitude of change that has some effect upon a landscape or view which can integrate the type of development proposed. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
<b>Negligible</b>	A negligible magnitude of change that has little effect on a landscape or view which has the ability to accommodate change.
<b>Neutral</b>	A significance of neutral occurs where there is no perceptible change, or where the proposals are considered compatible with local character or views.

- 3.17. The significance of the effect is measured on the ability of a landscape or view to accommodate the change. In assessing the significance of effects, the following matrix provides a guide through determining the significance of the effect based on the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change, but it is not a prescriptive tool.

**Table 6: Measuring Significance of Effect**

		Sensitivity of Receptors				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude of Change	High	Substantial	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor
	Medium	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
	Low	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible/ Neutral

- 3.18. In terms of assessing whether the effects are significant or otherwise, it is noted that para 5.56 of GLVIA3 states that there are no “hard and fast rules” about what makes a significant effect. For the purposes of this methodology, and with regard to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (updated 2017), “significant” landscape or visual effects are those effects considered to be of Substantial, Major or Major / Moderate significance, as set out within Table 6.
- 3.19. It is reasonable to say that, where development will result in substantial loss of or irreversible adverse effects over an extensive spatial area on features and / or aspects that are key to the aesthetic and perceptual character of nationally valued landscapes, these will be of the greatest significance. By contrast, effects which may be reversible or can be mitigated over a shorter duration, within a more restricted spatial extent, on features that contribute to but may not be key characteristics of a landscape which has some (or even limited) local value, are likely to be of lesser significance, depending on the circumstances.
- 3.20. Landscape and visual assessments must make a *professional* and *objective* judgement on the significance of the effect, and whether or not these are considered significant, providing reasoned justification as to how the conclusions have been reached.

## **APPENDIX 2**

Extract from Natural England's Character Map of England –  
"Charnwood" NCA 73

Introduction & Summary

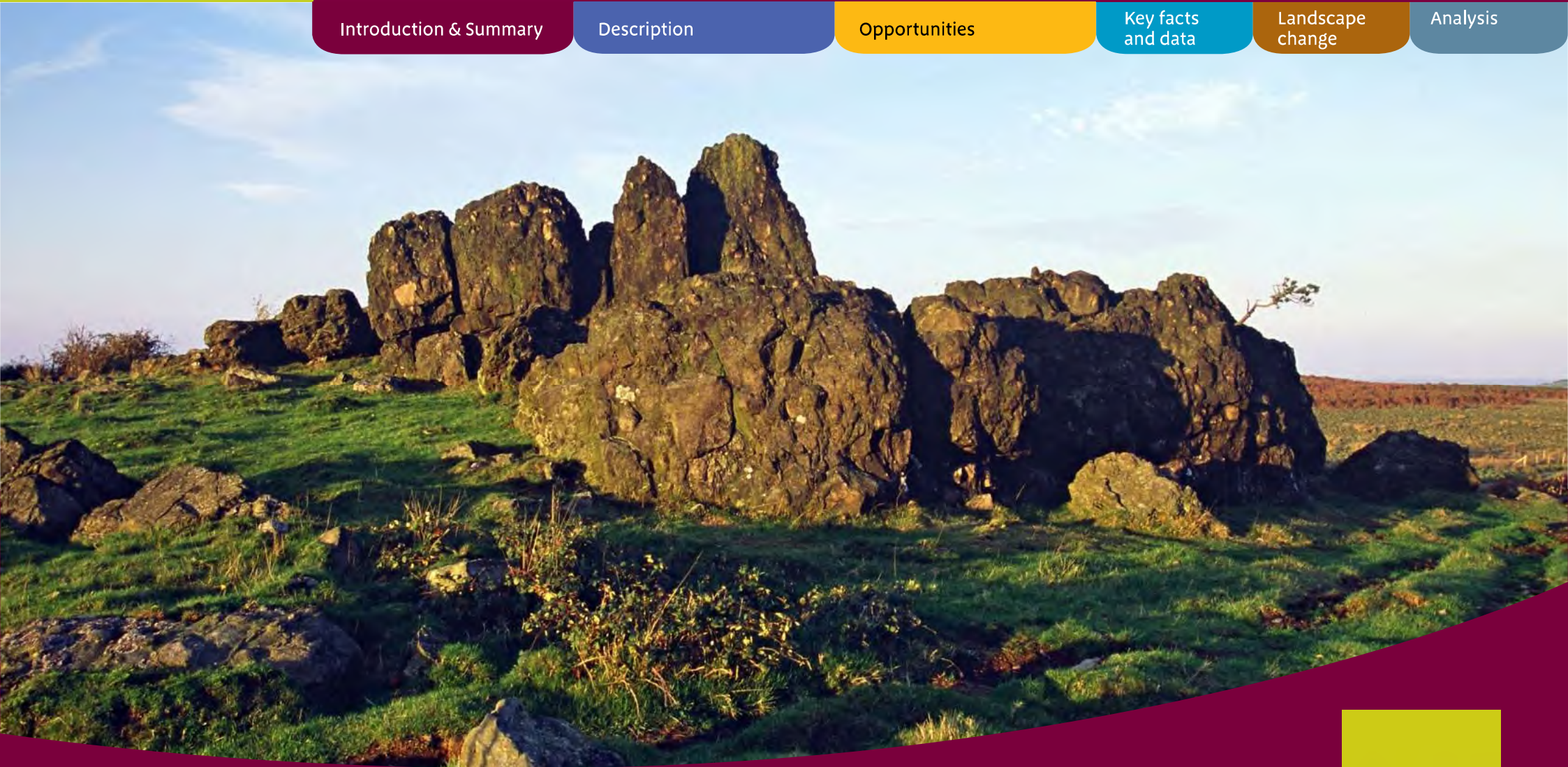
Description

Opportunities

Key facts  
and data

Landscape  
change

Analysis



[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)



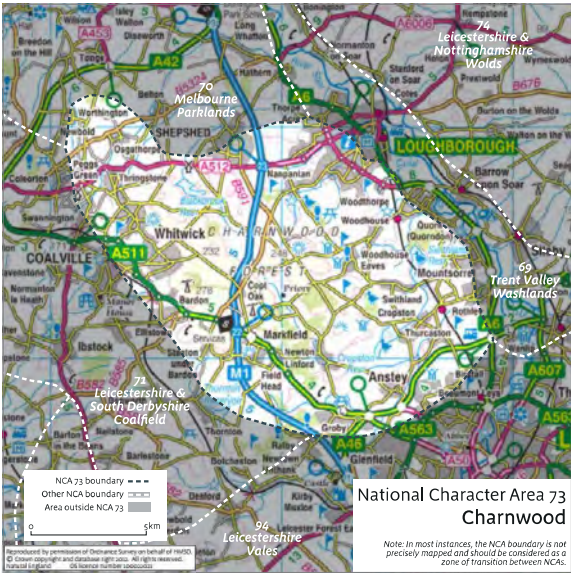
# Summary

Charnwood is a unique landscape, marked out by its geology and upland qualities, which contrast with the surrounding gentle lowlands. It is formed by a mosaic of heathland, farmland, parkland and woodland. The underlying Precambrian geology has given rise to the distinct area of land characterised by exposures of rugged, rocky outcrops. It is a relatively well wooded landscape, with many areas of mixed, deciduous and coniferous woodlands. The western part of Charnwood lies within The National Forest, which offers people extensive access, environmental education and volunteering opportunities, and the chance to become involved with local community projects.

Situated between Coalville, Loughborough and Leicester, Charnwood is surrounded by large, urban areas, but retains a rural character. Larger villages lie on the southern, western and eastern fringes, with small, linear villages in the central area. Many buildings in the central part of the area are characterised by local Charnian rocks and Swithland Slate.

Key ecosystem services provided by Charnwood include its internationally important geology – which provides fossilised evidence of the earliest forms of multi-cellular life in Britain – and its internationally and nationally important wildlife, such as the unique Charnwood spider. Recreation is also a key service: Bradgate Park and Beacon Hill Country Park are both places where local communities can enjoy the health benefits of recreation, and the reservoirs (Blackbrook, Cropston, Thornton and Swithland) provide opportunities for walking and birdwatching, as well as water supplies.

The area is facing key challenges around how to protect and enhance its unique natural assets while accommodating the pressure for modern growth and development, and significant mineral extraction. There is great scope to build on and support the partnership work of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park to protect and enhance this area, and the work of The National Forest in promoting sustainable woodland management and extending woodland (where appropriate).



Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce.

## Statements of Environmental Opportunity

- **SEO 1:** Protect, manage and promote the important geology and cultural interests of Charnwood, including the internationally significant Precambrian geology, the characteristic rocky outcrops, the unique country parks, the manor houses and the medieval monastic buildings, to ensure access and interpretation, and for people to enjoy and understand these important resources.
- **SEO 2:** Conserve the strong settlement character of the inner Charnwood villages and ensure that development is sympathetic to the character of this rural NCA, surrounded by large and expanding urban areas. Maximise the green infrastructure and sustainable recreation opportunities.
- **SEO 3:** Protect and significantly increase the extent and quality of the unimproved grasslands, heathlands, open waterbodies and streams, to enhance biodiversity, ecological networks, water availability and quality, climate regulation and sense of place.
- **SEO 4:** Where appropriate, manage and expand the native woodlands throughout Charnwood to reinforce the wooded character, to increase the potential for biomass, access and recreation, and to regulate climate change and water quality.



Following the discovery, in 1957, of the Charnian fossil *Charnia masoni* and *Charniodiscus concentricus* and more recent new discoveries, Charnwood Forest has been established as having one of the best Precambrian fossil assemblages in the world.

## Description

### Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

Charnwood rises abruptly out of the Leicestershire Vales NCA to the south and the Melbourne Parklands NCA to the north. To the west, it rises less steeply from the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield NCA. To the east, the Charnwood NCA is shaped by the flood plain of the Soar, which runs through the narrow Trent Valley Washlands NCA, beyond which rises the Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds NCA.



There are expansive views to the surrounding lowland plain and distant horizons from the more elevated open areas of Charnwood.

Clear and fast-flowing streams that rise in Charnwood drain north-westwards and eastwards towards the River Soar, and south-eastwards to the River Sence. They eventually drain into the Trent Basin, providing links with the Trent Valley Washlands, and then out to the North Sea via the Humber Estuary. Four reservoirs (Blackbrook, Cropston, Thornton and Swithland) supply water to surrounding areas and provide important opportunities for walking and birdwatching.

The National Forest is creating new woodland within both this and adjoining NCAs, and is providing strong woodland linkage with neighbouring Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield and Melbourne Parklands NCAs. Some 58 per cent of Charnwood lies within The National Forest: the area represents 20 per cent of it.

There are expansive views to the surrounding lowland plain and distant horizons from the more elevated open areas of Charnwood. On clear days it is possible to see the Shropshire Hills, the Cotswolds, distant Lincoln Cathedral and the Boston Stump from both Beacon Hill and Bardon Hill. In contrast, at lower elevations, views are contained by the intricate pattern of woodlands and farmland, which convey a secluded and intimate character.

Three working quarries lie within the NCA, supplying stone both locally and nationally. The M1 cuts almost midway through Charnwood, providing a strong functional link between the south and the north.

## Key characteristics

- Upland qualities, including extensive open summits and distinctive rocky outcrops, rising from the surrounding lowland undulating farmland.
- Outcrops of ancient Precambrian rocks, with Mercia Mudstones in the vales; a significant proportion of the NCA is covered with superficial deposits of the Anglian ice age, as well as more recent deposits.
- Thin, acidic, infertile soils are found on upland slopes; mudstones in the valley bottoms produce a deeper, fertile soil.
- A well wooded character, with many areas of mixed, deciduous and coniferous woodlands. Large, ancient, pollarded oaks are a feature of country parks.
- Rectilinear patterns of Parliamentary enclosure fields, bounded by a mixture of drystone walls and hedges. Many of the country parks are also bounded by drystone walls. Enclosure has created a distinctive road pattern.
- Land use is a distinctive mixture of woodland, predominantly pastoral farmland, heathland and parkland.
- A diverse variety of habitats (including woodlands, acidic grassland and heathland) support a large range of characteristic and rare species.
- Clear, fast-flowing watercourses and significant, large, open waterbodies and reservoirs.
- Historic parks and country parks such as Bradgate and Beacon Hill, large manor houses and the remains of medieval monastic buildings like Ulverscroft Priory are all prominent cultural heritage features that attract many visitors from the surrounding urban areas.
- Local Charnian rocks, Swithland Slate roofs, thatched roofs and some timber-framed buildings characterise the Charnwood villages. Occasional linear villages and scattered farmsteads through the heart of Charnwood contrast with larger settlements, which ring the elevated areas. A number of large quarries and some busy roads have an urbanising influence in places.

### **APPENDIX 3**

Extract from Hinckley & Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment (2017) –  
“Charnwood Forest Settled Forest Hills” LCA and “Markfield” UCA



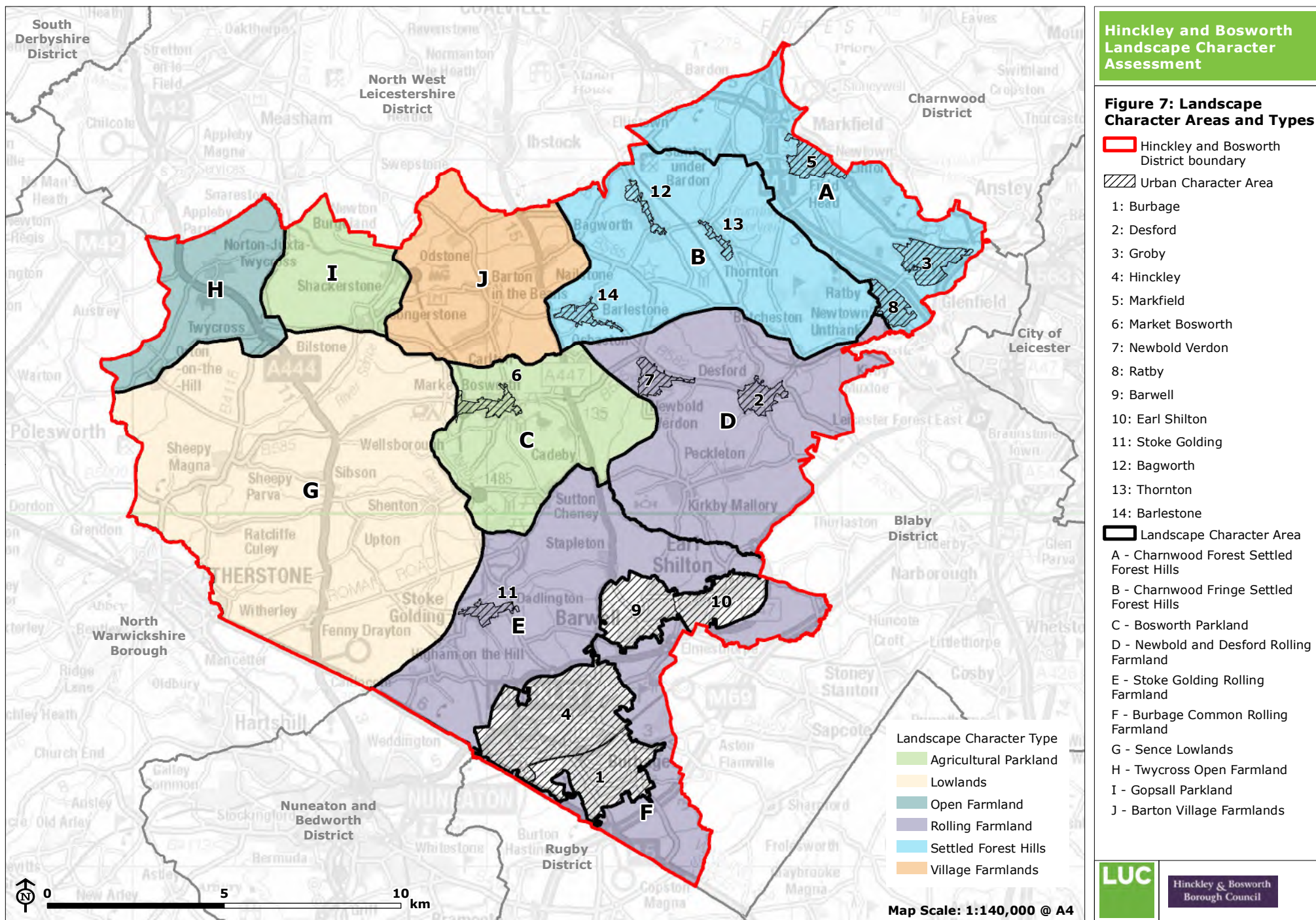
[www.landuse.co.uk](http://www.landuse.co.uk)

# **Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment**

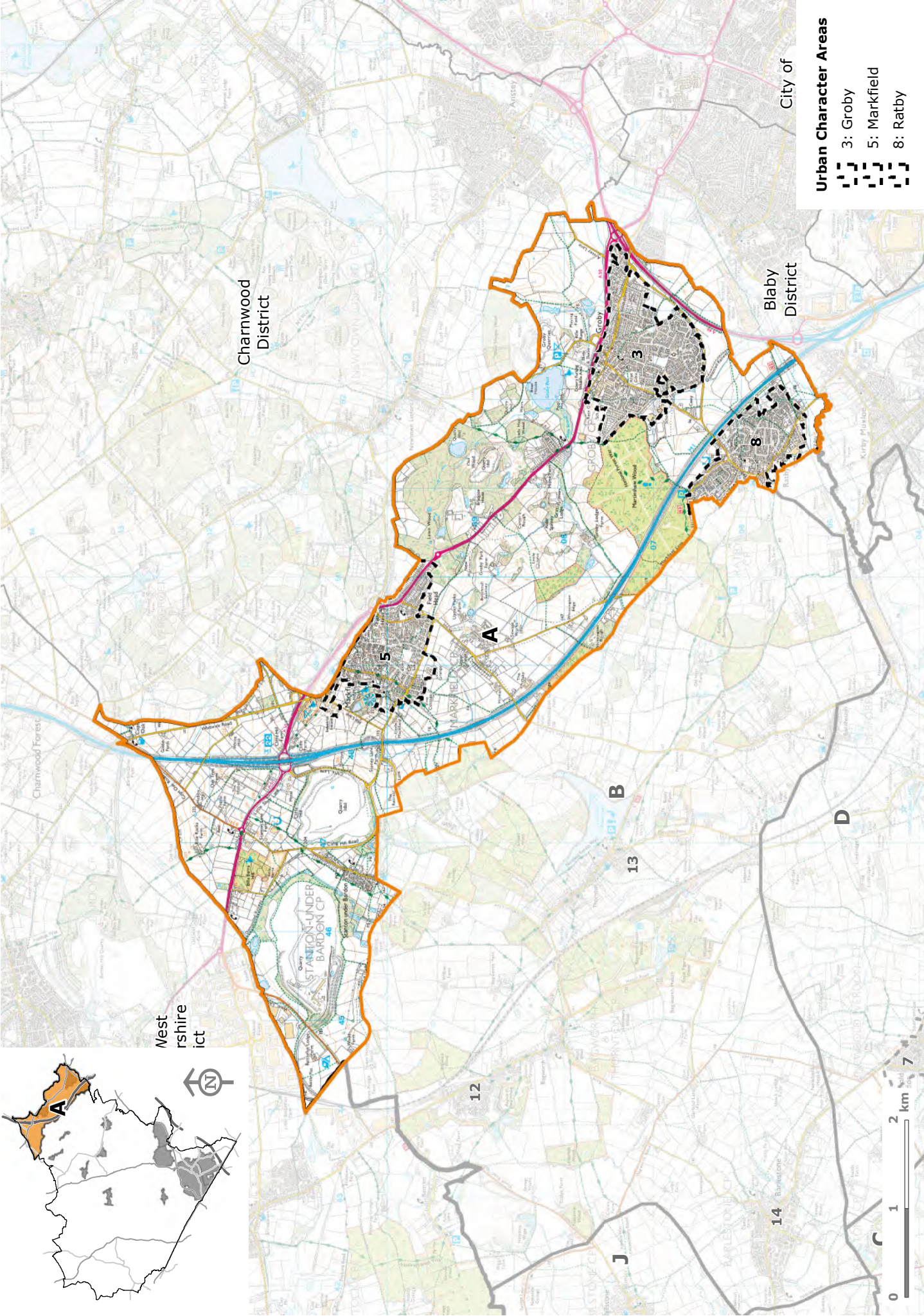
**Final Report**

**Prepared by LUC**

**September 2017**



# LCA A: Charnwood Forest Settled Forest Hills



# LCA A: CHARNWOOD FOREST



## Location and Boundaries

- 5.4 This character area covers the more elevated land in the north eastern part of the Borough, adjacent to Leicester to the south-east. It is defined by the igneous geological outcrops, urban settlements and concentration of infrastructure which makes it distinct from LCA B Charnwood Fringe area to the west.
- 5.5 The district of Charnwood is located beyond the administrative boundary to the north east. The area forms the western part of the Charnwood Forest, an area of similar rugged 'upland'

character recognised in local planning policy, and the National Forest which covers almost all of the character area and extends outside the borough to the north.

- 5.6 Towns/ villages within the character area:

- *Groby*
- *Ratby*
- *Markfield*
- *Stanton under Bardon.*

## Key Characteristics

- 1) **Prominent elevated landform - the highest land in the Borough. Localised steep slopes around rocky outcrops.**
- 2) **Distinctive pockets of igneous rock which appear as rocky outcrops. Granite quarries can appear dramatic in the landscape with cliff faces and deep pools.**
- 3) **Diverse land uses which relate to the varied geology. Dominated by pasture and woodland with quarries, pools and outcrops.**
- 4) **Woodland cover of varying age from mature ancient woodland to new National Forest plantations.**
- 5) **Small to medium scale field pattern interspersed with large areas of woodland cover.**
- 6) **Large clustered villages with strong suburban influences.**
- 7) **Distinctive local assets for recreation and biodiversity such as Groby Pool and Billa Barra Hill and network of public footpaths.**
- 8) **Distant views to the urban edges of Leicester and woodland edges of the surrounding National Forest.**
- 9) **Diverse range of woodland habitats due to variable land use types.**
- 10) **Proximity to Leicester City and major transport infrastructure.**
- 11) **Long established aesthetic appeal created by its rugged, 'upland' and wooded character.**



## Landscape Character

- 5.7 Distinct to this area are pockets of igneous rock which appear as rocky outcrops and have resulted in the local granite quarries that can appear dramatic in the landscape with cliff faces and deep pools. Elsewhere the geology is Triassic Mercia Mudstone with bands of Quaternary boulder clay and alluvium associated with water courses. The landform is distinctive; upland, rugged and rolling with areas of rocky outcrops. Small streams are incised within folds in the land, and the Rothley Brook forms a distinct river corridor to the east of the area, extending into Blaby district. Soils are mostly fine loamy/clayey soils which are slowly permeable and seasonally waterlogged. Reddish, fine loamy, slowly permeable, calcareous clayey soils are also found on the slopes.
- 5.8 The majority of the Borough's woodland is found within this character area with large mature woodlands at Martinshaw Wood and Lawn Wood around Ratby and Groby. Rectilinear agricultural fields make up much of the land cover in the area and these are arranged in an irregular pattern, well-defined by hedgerows and hedgerow trees, which add to the perception of a well-wooded context. Smaller blocks of deciduous woodland plantations also break up the expanse of agricultural fields, as well as frequent historic quarries which are scattered throughout the landscape.
- 5.9 The M1 motorway runs through the area north-south, as well as the A50, another strategically important transport route, resulting in substantial traffic movement through the area. The proximity and ease of access to the urban centre of Leicester to the south-east means that the area becomes busy with people and traffic, particularly during commuting hours, and increasingly influenced by nearby development and development pressures. Wind turbines and solar farms around Groby and Ratby are increasingly common. The concentration of quarrying and industrial areas around Stanton under Bardon results in urban influences in the north-west of the character area. However, much of the countryside remains hidden, feeling remote and quiet particularly in the east and around Groby Pool where woodland cover is more concentrated.
- 5.10 There are a number of local countryside sites including Groby Pool, the Alter Stones and Billa Barra Hill. These are connected via a comprehensive network of public footpaths and bridleways, including the Leicestershire Round and the Ivanhoe Way. There are also elements of changing landscape, with some working quarries, areas of restoration and new planting.
- 5.11 The open dramatic landform creates contrasting areas of elevated openness and strong enclosure, increased by the frequent presence of mature woodland and trees. It is a predominantly peaceful and unified landscape but is sometimes interrupted by infrastructure. Views can be either limited by landform and vegetation or contrastingly panoramic, especially from high vantage points such as at Hill Hole Quarry and Billa Barra Hill. Long distance views of Leicester are also possible from the north. Bardon Hill, the highest point in Charnwood Forest, lies just outside the borough to the north
- 5.12 The main settlements are Groby, Ratby and Markfield, which have recently expanded to accommodate new development. Groby and Ratby are situated on the river corridor of Rothley Brook. These villages still exhibit locally distinctive characteristics, especially as a result of their 'organic' settlement cores and the frequent use of local stone as a building material. The settlements are well integrated in the landscape because of the rolling topography and wooded character and are



well connected by a good road network with links to Leicester via the M1, A46 and A50.

- 5.13 **Groby** is a large clustered settlement characterised by red brick or local granite terraced housing. It is largely influenced by major transport corridors and twentieth century development, mostly of anonymous vernacular. Groby is described in more detail in Urban Character Area 3.
- 5.14 **Markfield** is another large clustered village in the north eastern area of the borough with a historic

core rich in architectural styles. This is described within Urban Character Area 5.

- 5.15 **Ratby** is medium sized village with origins dating back to medieval times. It is situated on rising landform with the church at the top forming a local landmark. Urban Character Area 8 describes the character of the village in more detail.
- 5.16 **Stanton-under-Bardon** is a small linear village in the north of the area near to Cliffe Hill Quarry and is characterised by red brick, terraced housing.



### Historical and Cultural Influences

- 5.17 The field systems that characterise the landscape date back to the post-medieval period whereby medieval fields were organised by informal agreements between neighbouring farmers. Some later enclosure is present around Markfield, evident in the geometric and planned appearance. These are defined by hedges and are typically a result of acts of parliament. Small areas of ridge and furrow are also located around the village edges which were created through open-field or strip-cultivation. Woodland of varying scale has also been cleared to accommodate agricultural fields in the form of assarts with irregular and rectilinear boundaries.
- 5.18 Ratby Camp, more commonly known as Bury Camp, comprises an Iron Age hill fort to the west of Ratby. It is formed by a rectangular earthwork consisting of an enclosure formed by a large single rampart bank and outside ditch, with four openings in the middle of each side likely to be the original entrances. Archaeological digs have uncovered Late Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery as well as sherds dating back to the Roman period and the historical importance is recognised through the Scheduled Monument designation.
- 5.19 Old Hays moated site is also located a short distance from the village and includes the remains of a medieval moated enclosure and associated manorial earthworks. The rectilinear enclosure includes the remains of the Grade II listed Old Hays farmhouse and outhouse building and is surrounded by a partially dry moat of varying depth. The importance of this site is greatly increased by the vast historical documentation relating to the manorial complex and its association with Leicester Abbey.

### Natural Influences

- 5.20 Deciduous woodland is abundant throughout the Charnwood Fringe and includes considerable areas of Ancient Woodland at Martinshaw Wood and Lawn/Old Woods, situated to the north of Groby and Ratby. The character area is one of the most

biodiverse within the Borough with areas of high ecological and geological importance. This is recognised through the SSSI designations at Groby Pool and Woods as well as Cliffe Hill Quarry.

- 5.21 Groby Pool and Woods comprise examples of alder wood, dry and wet grassland, marsh, reedswamp and open water. Additional interest is provided by the significant numbers of wintering wildfowl using the area, the variety of the breeding bird community and by the diversity of the invertebrate fauna. Cliffe Hill Quarry also represents important geological exposures of markfieldite and the volcanic and sedimentary rocks coming into contact with each other.

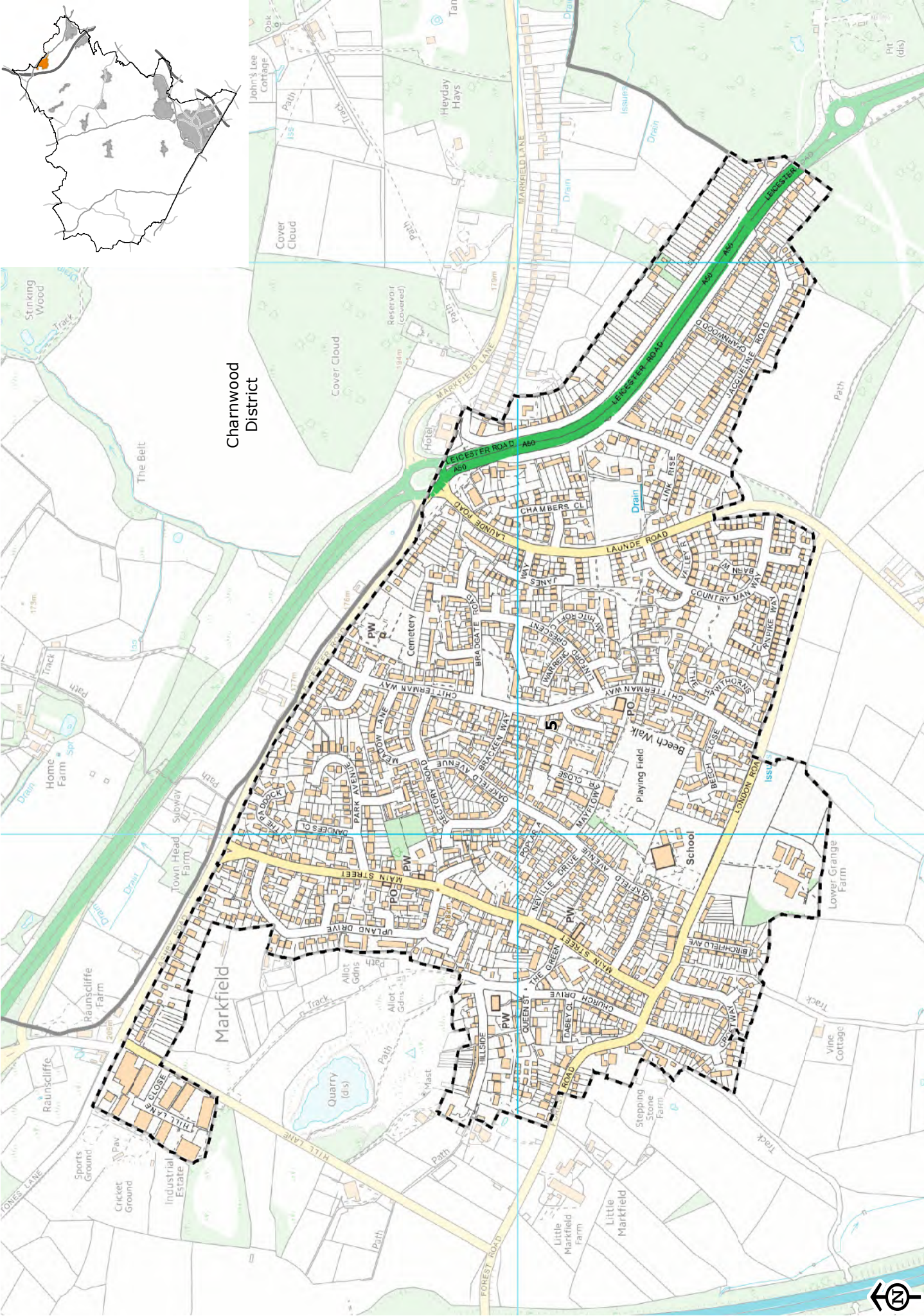
## Key Sensitivities and Values

- 1)** Rocky outcrops on the elevated land together with past and former quarries provide exposures of great geological interest.
- 2)** Late to post medieval enclosure, ridge and furrow as well as some assarts in and around Ancient Woodland contribute to the sense of place and provides continuity to the agricultural past.
- 3)** Large mature woodlands and newer woodland plantations interspersed throughout the landscape create a well-wooded context and create relatively tranquil subareas away from the busy roads.
- 4)** The distinct historic cores of the villages with an abundance of local building stone provide a strong sense of place and a sense of time depth.
- 5)** The long distance and panoramic views to Leicester from the more elevated vantage points combine with contrasting contained views to provide a high scenic quality.
- 6)** Bury Camp and the Old Hays moated site have strong cultural associations and provide a sense of historic time depth.
- 7)** Groby Pool and Woods and Cliffe Hill Quarry have high biodiversity value and provide areas of ecological and geological importance.
- 8)** Valued for recreation, with local attractions including Groby Pool, the Alter Stones and Billa Barra Hill connected via a comprehensive network of public footpaths and bridleways, including the Leicestershire Round and the Ivanhoe Way.

## Landscape Strategies

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1)</b> Conserve and enhance the historic core of village settlements and ensure extensions are well integrated within this wooded landscape. Promote characteristic building forms.</p> | <p><b>5)</b> Conserve rocky outcrops and semi-natural vegetation in disused quarries. Promote amenity and biodiversity through quarry restoration schemes.</p>  |
| <p><b>2)</b> Support the vision of the National Forest Strategy by planting native and mixed species woodland, linking areas beyond the National Forest boundary.</p>                         | <p><b>6)</b> Conserve and enhance the well wooded character of the landscape. Promote woodland management such as coppicing and ground flora diversification, as well as hedgerow tree planting.</p>                              |
| <p><b>3)</b> Conserve the distinct and separate identity of Groby and Ratby, including the rural gap that separate the villages.</p>  | <p><b>7)</b> Promote a positive landscape strategy, including woodland planting, around Stanton-under-Bardon to help integrate the industrial units, quarries and development pressures associated with the M1 (junction 22).</p> |
| <p><b>4)</b> Locate solar farms and wind turbines in the least sensitive areas.</p>   |   |

# UCA 5: Markfield



## UCA 5 : MARKFIELD



### Location and Setting

- 6.81 Markfield is a historic village located in the north eastern extent of the Borough along the administrative boundary with Charnwood District. and is surrounded by the rolling wooded landscape to the north and the flat floodplain fields to the south.
- 6.82 It is situated on rising, sloping landform within the National Forest and the Charnwood Forest,
- 6.83 Markfield lies within LCA A: Charnwood Forest.

### Key Characteristics

- 1) **A large, clustered settlement with a distinctive linear historic core containing a rich mix of well related architectural themes.**
- 2) **The historic core nestled around the base of rising land in the north west of the village, with modern development spreading over flatter land to the east.**
- 3) **Varied architectural styles and a broad age range and complex mix of housing, even within the older central core.**
- 4) **Retail facilities concentrated along Main Street and Chitterman Way, with employment located towards the north-western edge of the village.**
- 5) **Materials dominated by either red brick or granite or a mix of both. Some rendered or painted properties provide variation.**
- 6) **Outcrops of rock together with granite cottages and boundary walls are the key component of the village streetscape.**
- 7) **Small frontages often bounded by stone walls within the historic core.**
- 8) **Views to the rolling and wooded landscape to the north from higher points in the village.**
- 9) **Hill Hole Quarry, a key feature to the west of the settlement.**



### Townscape Character

- 6.84 Markfield is a relatively large, clustered village which gradually expanded from a small linear agricultural settlement to accommodate the increasing numbers of workers at nearby quarries of (Old) Cliffe Hill and Hill Hole. Both sites are now closed although the associated cottages are still evident at Hill Lane and date back to the early 19th century. The village has developed over the years from the historic core along Main Street and around St Michael's Church, which still retains its dominant position around the village green, forming a landmark from many vantage points in and around Markfield. The end of the 20th century saw the selling of village farms and the development of residential properties and other inappropriate buildings in their place. This fragmentation is particularly evident at Main Street where traditional 19th century cottages, stone boundary walls and modern infill make up the continuous building line.
- 6.85 Buildings are typically one to two storeys with low eaves and steeply pitched roofs, made up of stone or brick and render usually concealing stone facades. Many properties front immediately on to the edge of the pavement or have small front gardens with stone walls which contribute to the predominance of stone in the streetscape.
- 6.86 The village retained its linear form centred on the village green up until the 1960s when it underwent expansion spreading over the flatter land to the east. By the 20th century, the village had more than doubled its original size and had little relation to the character of the historic core. The construction of the M1 and subsequently the A50 bypass also produced significant changes by removing traffic from the core of the settlement. The village has continued to develop with construction of dwellings off London Road during the 1980s and 90s creating a second village centre with a surgery, post office and local shop on Chitternman Way.
- 6.87 Within the settlement the undulating landform channels most views along streets, however, the higher points offer longer views over the

settlement. The southern slopes and peak of Hill Hole Quarry are prominent in views from within the settlement on the lower land to the east. There are also views from these slopes looking over the village roofscape and across to the rolling, wooded landscape in the distance. Distant views from Hill Hole Quarry viewpoint are wide ranging and include views of Bardon Hill, Billa Barra and views into the surrounding districts.

- 6.88 The M1 introduces movement into the landscape with glimpses being afforded from the southern edge. The noise from the motorway is also discernible throughout the village.
- 6.89 The most prominent building is the Church of St. Michael set within the village green, which forms a local landmark. Originally dating back to the 12th century, the church was restored in 1865 and is constructed of random coursed Mountsorrel granite, ashlar dressings, slate roofing and stone coped gables. The Old Rectory, a three storey, Grade II listed building located on The Nook on the edge of Main Street provides a second landmark building, set amongst the surrounding small cottages and terraced buildings.

### Materials and Local vernacular

- 6.90 There is a diverse architectural heritage within the village. The old quarry houses comprise small terraced cottages of varying styles, typically brick and render or local stone and surround the church. The retail buildings on Main Street include several old converted cottages retaining original lintel and sill features interspersed with late 1960s units. The historic core of the village consists of predominantly terraced cottages constructed of granite with red brick detailing and slate roofing.
- 6.91 More recent expansion typically consists of winding cul-de-sac roads serving bungalows, semi-detached and detached dwellings in a variety of architectural styles and a wide range of building materials. There is little response to local character however more recent developments within the Conservation Area on the site of a



former factory have been more sympathetic in approach, following local building styles.

### Green Spaces

- 6.92 There are two greens within the village core which create a local sense of openness and are a key focal point for the settlement. Large areas of public open space can be found at Alter Stones Lane which is thought to be the site of ancient druid worship and Hill Hole. The restored areas of the former quarry are open for nature walks and rocky outcrops often used by climbers. A large public open space and play area is located adjacent to the Community Centre, with additional small areas of green space located throughout the 20th century development areas.

### Historical and Cultural Influences

- 6.93 Markfield was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 and was formerly known as Mercenfeld in Anglo-Saxon times. It is also one of the highest villages in Leicestershire being located approximately 190m Above Ordnance Datum.
- 6.94 The village developed to serve a small community of farmers and tradesmen and by the early 18th century this included a millwright, a carpenter, a mason, a blacksmith, shoemaker, grocer and several framework knitters. The linear historic core of the village is covered by Conservation Area status and encompasses the Church, the Old Rectory, the Bulls Head and cottages on the Nook. St Michael's Parish Church was also where the non-conformist John Wesley first came in the mid to late 1700s to preach to the village.

### Key Sensitivities and Values

- 1)** Old quarry houses, converted cottages and religious buildings create a diverse architectural heritage and a strong sense of place.
- 2)** Traditional building materials and the predominance of local stone contribute to the sense of place and create continuity to the past.
- 3)** The Greens contribute to the visual amenity of the historic core and the sense of place and open space linkages particularly to the west provide an important setting to the village.
- 4)** Hill Hole Quarry considered locally as a beauty spot with long views from the elevated land across the village adding to the visual amenity and the sense of place.
- 5)** St. Michaels Church provides a key landmark on the skyline and provides a sense of historic time depth.

### Townscape Strategies

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1)</b> Protect the historic character of the village core and of the two village greens.</li> <li><b>2)</b> Ensure important views of the church and other key landmarks are protected.</li> <li><b>3)</b> Ensure any new development is in keeping with the existing style of the settlement and encourage the reuse of traditional building materials.</li> <li><b>4)</b> Create a focal point at the entrance to the main street to improve gateway features to the village core and a definite sense of arrival.</li> <li><b>5)</b> Conserve and enhance the distinctiveness and diversity of public open space.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>6)</b> Ensure that future new development respects the setting of the village and its rural interface and enhance the urban edges, especially those to the south and east, to soften their impact on the landscape, through additional planting and careful design of any new development.</li> <li><b>7)</b> Enhance pedestrian links between adjacent villages and consider potential as key gateways to the National Forest.</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

## **APPENDIX 4**

Extract from Hinckley & Bosworth Landscape Sensitivity Study (2017)



[www.landuse.co.uk](http://www.landuse.co.uk)

# **Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**

## **The sensitivity of areas of pressure**

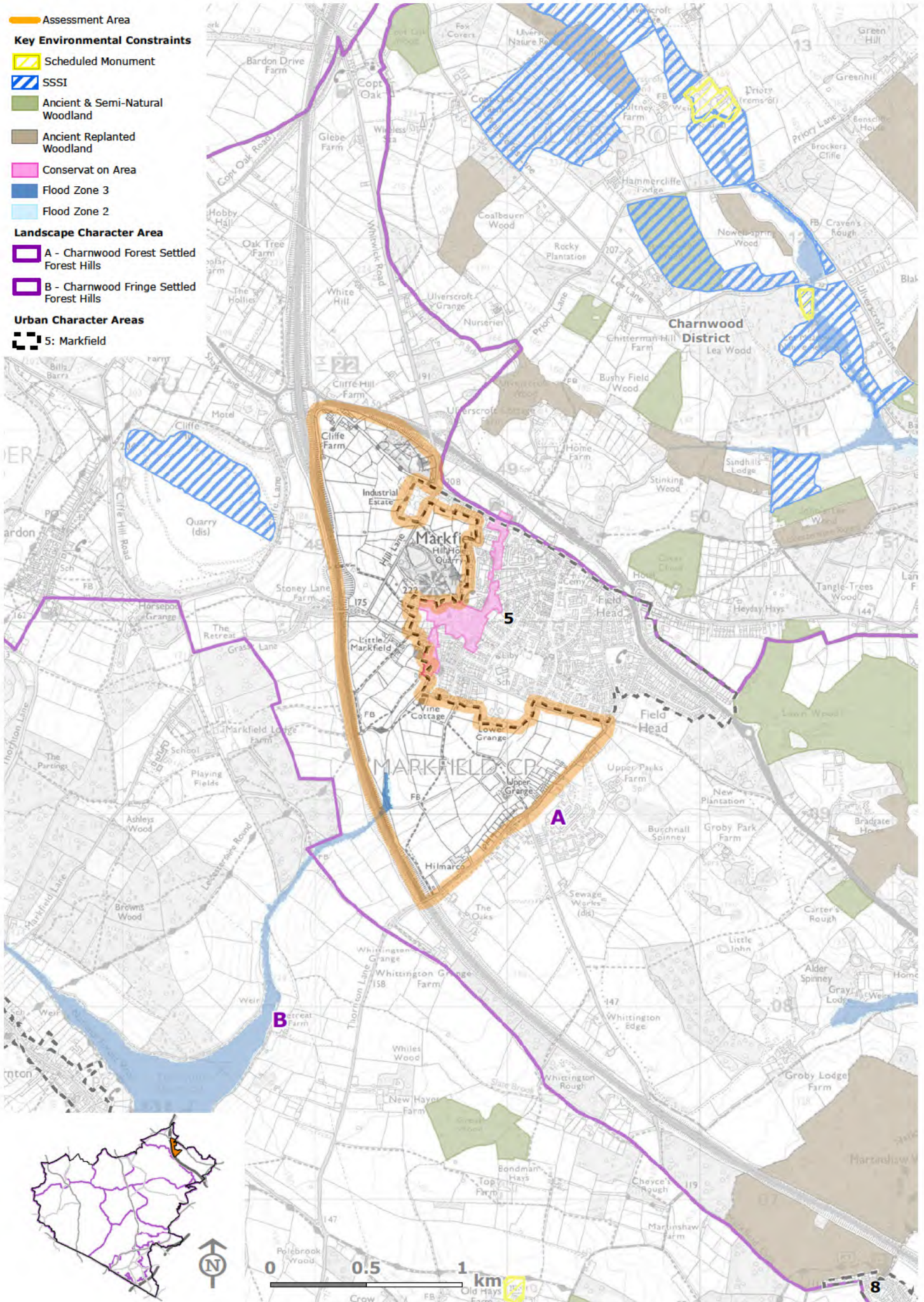
**Final Report**

**Prepared by LUC**

**September 2017**



# Sensitivity Area 14: Markfield



## 14. MARKFIELD

### Summary

This assessment area extends from the west of Markfield up to the M1 and is situated within LCA A: Charnwood Forest. It wraps around the northern and southern settlement edge and comprises 157.1 hectares of pasture fields divided by hedgerows with frequent mature hedgerow trees. Small wooded copses are found on the most elevated land and a linear swathe of woodland runs along the eastern bank of the motorway.

### Representative photographs



### Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity	Rating
Physical character	The area has an elevated landform, sloping steeply away from the settlement edge. It is characterised by small to medium arable and pasture fields well-defined by hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees. Small areas of woodland are also found on the higher land and a small stream also runs down the slopes from north to south, flowing into Thornton Reservoir beyond.	<b>M-H</b>
Settlement form & edge	Markfield forms a large clustered settlement situated on rising, sloping land. The settlement edge is defined primarily by minor roads and rural lanes, which creates a regular, well-defined edge. A small amount of development has extended south of this limit including a small industrial estate in the north but these areas are generally visually contained by mature tree planting and woodland.	<b>M-H</b>
Settlement setting	The wooded slopes provide a strong rural setting to Markfield and contribute to the well-wooded character of the settlement. The sparsely settled landscape with intact field boundaries provides an attractive scenic quality in edge of settlement views. The well-defined farmland also provides a rural setting to the many footpaths extending from the built edge, including the Leicestershire Round.	<b>M-H</b>
Visual character	The elevated position of this area allows for vast intervisibility with the wider landscape. The mature trees within field boundaries soften views of the built edge and although the settlement of Markfield is situated on	<b>M-H</b>

## 14. MARKFIELD

	higher ground, development sits below the wooded hills beyond.	
Perceptual qualities	The area is predominantly undeveloped, crossed by few roads and despite some noise intrusion from the M1, mature screening planting along the roadside helps to maintain a high scenic quality. Mature tree planting occupying the sloping land also provides a degree of naturalness and a sense of rurality with long views out over the Charnwood Forest.	<b>M</b>
Historic character	Other than Little Markfield Farm and attached buildings which are Grade II listed, the area does not contain any designated heritage assets.  Post medieval field systems are evident in the area and are highlighted by the HLC as piecemeal and planned enclosure. The planned enclosure is recognised by small or large fields with geometric boundaries and is often associated with purpose-built historic farm complexes. The piecemeal enclosure is less regular and is characterised by small to medium irregular fields with at least two s-curve or dog leg boundaries.	<b>M</b>

### Key sensitivities and values

Despite its rural and intact character providing an attractive setting to Markfield, the assessment area is considered to have overall **medium** sensitivity to residential development due to the relatively strong relationship it has with built development in the east. There are also opportunities to provide landscape enhancements in this area with characteristic woodland planting.

The landscape is considered to have overall **medium-high** sensitivity to commercial development because of its distinctive landform allowing for great intervisibility with the surrounding countryside. Although there is a small industrial estate in the north of the area, rooftops of residential properties can be seen within Markfield within a well-wooded context which creates a rural village character.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing 2-3 stories (C3)	<b>L</b>	<b>L-M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M-H</b>	<b>H</b>
Commercial development Small scale (B1/B2)	<b>L</b>	<b>L-M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M-H</b>	<b>H</b>
Commercial development Large scale (B8)	<b>L</b>	<b>L-M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M-H</b>	<b>H</b>

### Key sensitivities and values

- The rural and sparsely settled character of the landscape with a relative sense of tranquillity.
- The well-wooded slopes providing a strong sense of place and ecological linkages to the wider landscape.
- The long distance and panoramic views from elevated vantage points towards the Charnwood Forest which contribute to the high scenic quality and attractive setting to Markfield.
- Footpaths including the Leicestershire round provide recreational connections to the wider landscape and neighbouring villages.

## 14. MARKFIELD

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### Guidance

Any new development should:

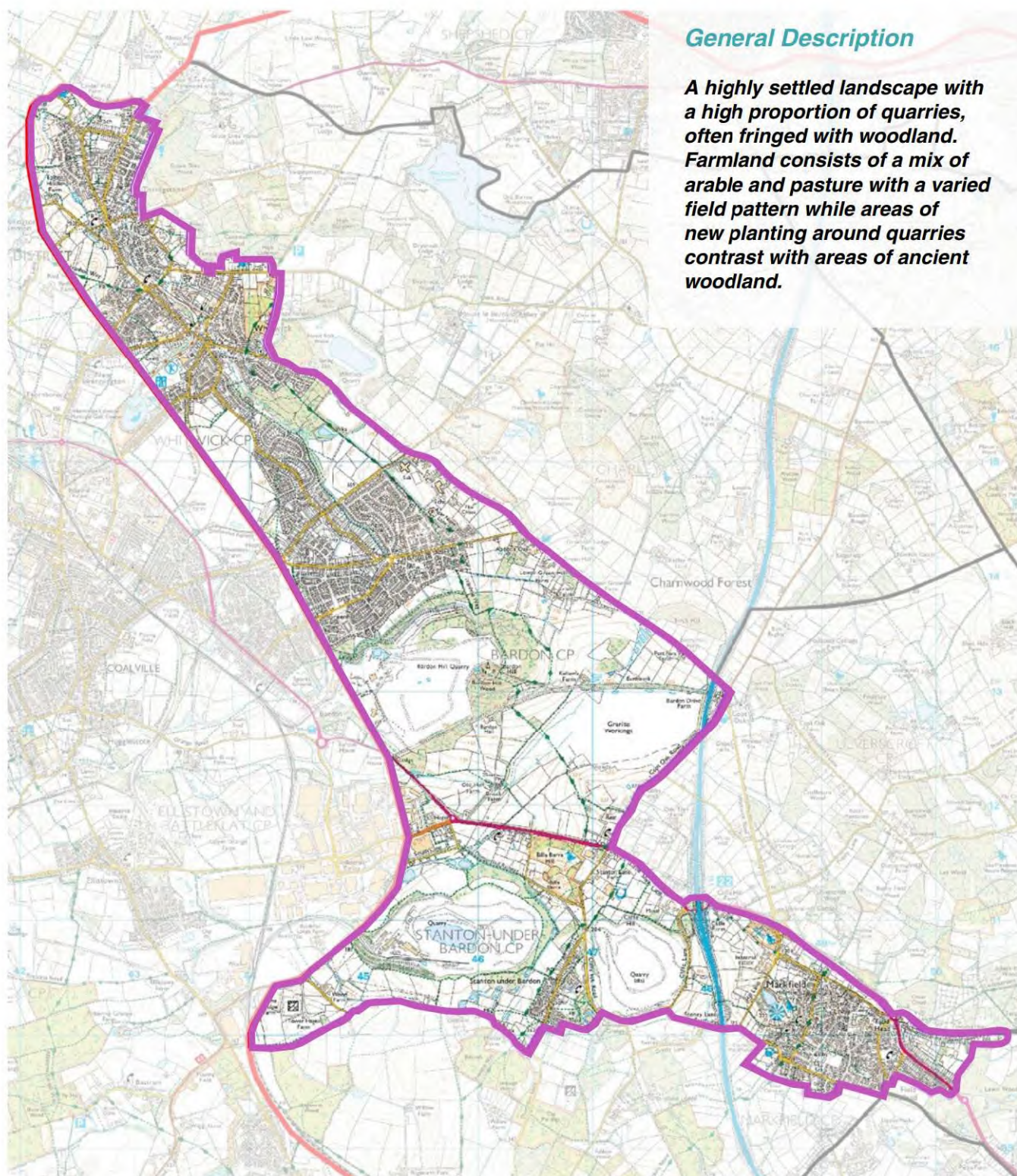
- Seek opportunities to maintain the rural character of the landscape and where possible conserve rural views and the setting of settlement.
- Seek to conserve and enhance the well-wooded character of the landscape and protect areas that retain a naturalistic character and replace mature/veteran trees as they begin to deplete.
- Seek to retain the pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and encourage the use of traditional Midlands-style hedgelaying for management.
- Plan for successful integration of potential new development in the landscape through sensitive design and siting, including use of sensitive materials and use of landscape mitigation to enhance sense of place.
- Consider opportunities to maintain and enhance the recreational assets including rights of way network.
- Consider opportunities to create and promote an integrated green infrastructure strategy linking with the urban area.

## **APPENDIX 5**

Extract from Charnwood Forest Regional Park Landscape Character Assessment –  
“Thringstone / Markfield Quarries and Settlement” LCA

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

### Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement



# LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

## Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement

### Key Characteristics

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

### Specific Characteristics

#### Landform and Hydrology

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

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

#### Landcover and Vegetation

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

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

## Chapter 5.0

# LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

### Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement

#### Field Pattern and Enclosure

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

#### Settlement Pattern, Roads and PRow

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

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

#### Cultural Heritage

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

#### Perceptual Qualities

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



*View of Bardon Hill Quarry*

# LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

## Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement

### Summary of Landscape Condition

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

### Forces for Landscape Change

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

### Sensitivities for Key Landscape Characteristics

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

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

### Management Recommendations

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



View west from Hill Lane on the edge of Markfield




## **APPENDIX 6**

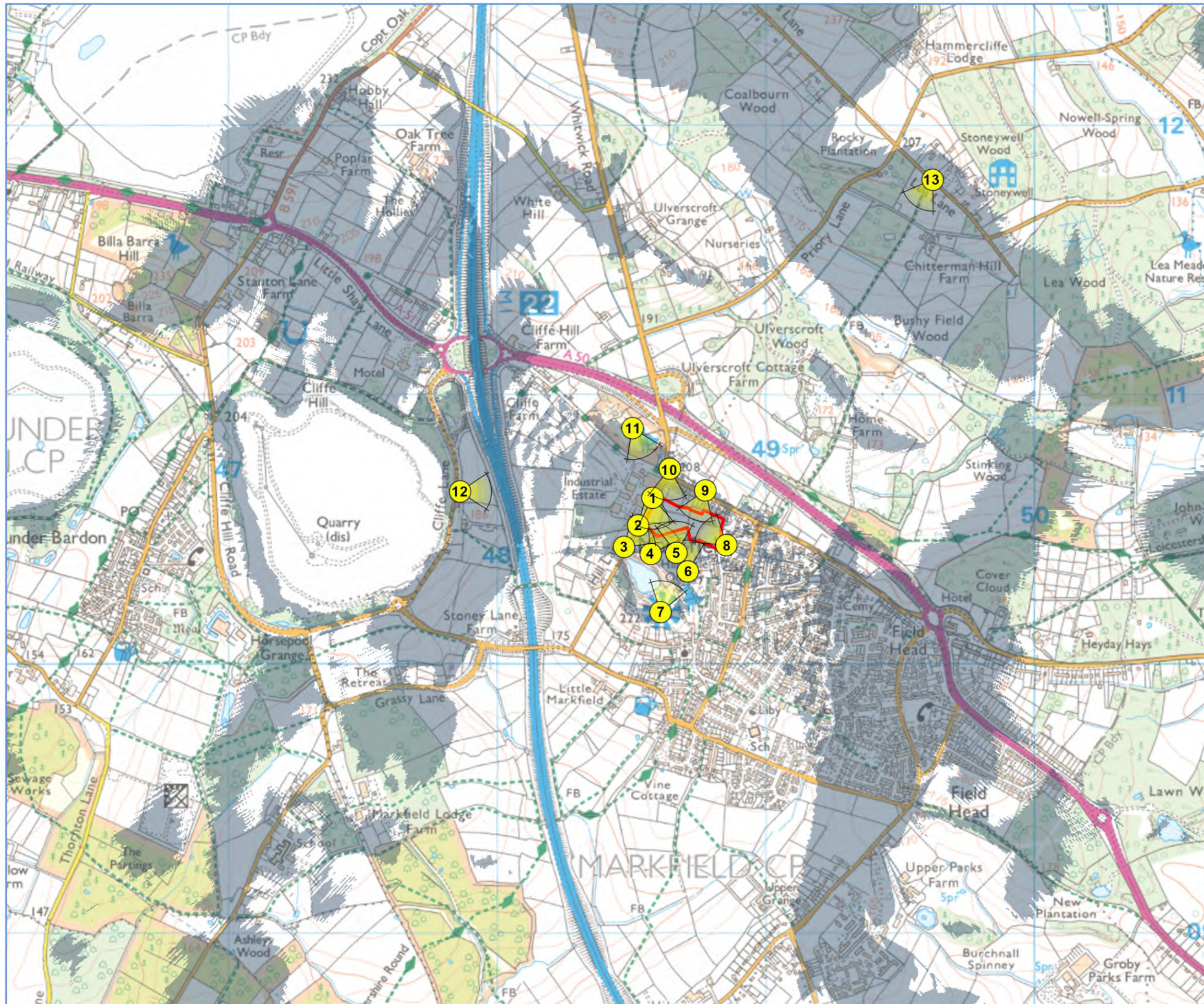
Viewpoint Location Plan (VLP.004) and Photographic Record

Not to Scale



Key

-  Site Boundary
-  Zone of Theoretical Visibility - based on 10m tall building and bare earth data
-  Viewpoint Location



Land at Hill Lane,  
Markfield

Viewpoint Location Plan

Drawing Ref: Pr-1013.VLP.004 Rev. -  
Date: October 2025 Drawn: AM



**Viewpoint 1 - Hill Lane, approximately 10m to the north of the Site**



**Viewpoint 2 - Hill Lane, approximately 35m to the west of the Site**

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera in line with best practice and current guidance. The camera (Canon EOS 6D) is a full sensor DSLR model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 50mm focal length using a fixed 50mm Canon lens. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context.



**Viewpoint 3 - Hill Lane, approximately 90m to the south west of the Site**



**Viewpoint 4 - Permissive Path, approximately 75m to the south of the Site**

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera in line with best practice and current guidance. The camera (Canon EOS 6D) is a full sensor DSLR model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 50mm focal length using a fixed 50mm Canon lens. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context.



**Viewpoint 5 - Footpath R17, approximately 80m to the south of the Site**



**Viewpoint 6 - Footpath R17, approximately 200m to the south of the Site**

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**Viewpoint 7 - Toposcope at Hill Hole Quarry, approximately 285m to the south of the Site**



**Viewpoint 8 - Uplands Drive, approximately 10m to the east of the Site**

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera in line with best practice and current guidance. The camera (Canon EOS 6D) is a full sensor DSLR model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 50mm focal length using a fixed 50mm Canon lens. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context.



Viewpoint 9 - Ashby Road, approximately 70m to the north of the Site



Viewpoint 10 - Ashby Road, approximately 90m to the north of the Site

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera in line with best practice and current guidance. The camera (Canon EOS 6D) is a full sensor DSLR model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 50mm focal length using a fixed 50mm Canon lens. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context.



**Viewpoint 11 - Altar Stones, approximately 260m to the north west of the Site**



**Viewpoint 12 - Cliffe Lane, approximately 720m to the west of the Site**

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera in line with best practice and current guidance. The camera (Canon EOS 6D) is a full sensor DSLR model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 50mm focal length using a fixed 50mm Canon lens. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context.



**Viewpoint 13 - Footpath J94, approximately 1,500m to the north east of the Site**

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## **APPENDIX 7**

Ophir Architects 'Proposed Layout'



SCALE BAR 1:500



☐ Preliminary ☐ Design ☐ Information ☐ Comment ☒ Planning ☐ Construction

Client: Glenalmond Developments Ltd

Project: Markfield Scale: 1:500 Sheet Size: @ A1

Title: Site Layout Coloured		Date: Sept 2025	Rev: D
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Job No: GDA05	Drawing No: PL003	Drawn: DM	Checked:
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JOB NO: GDA05      Drawing NO: PL002      Drawn: DM      Checked: -

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