

SHILTON ROAD, EARL SHILTON

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

July 2025

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1 SUMMARY

The proposed residential development is considered to be sited suitably within the landscape and in the long-term would have a limited impact on the character of the surrounding landscape.

Due to the retention of the existing site boundary vegetation and the surrounding relatively flat topography, combined with additional boundary and screen planting, the small number of adverse effects are very localised. Adverse visual effects would only be experienced from the PRoW on the southern boundary of the site and from a small number of nearby receptors to the south and east of the site. There would be adverse landscape effects on land use and grassland pasture due to its replacement with residential buildings.

The slight harm on the immediate landscape and visual character would need to be balanced against the benefits of the providing new homes within the area.

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2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Giles Stanley Ltd asked Weddle Landscape Design to prepare a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) to support planning application for a residential development at Shilton Road, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire.

The objectives of the LVA are to assess the landscape character of the site and its surroundings and to consider the landscape and visual qualities of the site, its function in the landscape and its contribution to the wider landscape. The work undertaken includes an assessment of the existing landscape features, together with a visual appraisal of the site and its context.

The LVA is used to inform the continued design development of the proposed development and to explain the likely landscape and visual effects that may arise as a result of the proposed development. Therefore, providing sufficient information for decision makers to determine the landscape and visual impact of the development.

2.2 Landscape and Visual Appraisal

This document assesses the potential landscape and visual impacts arising from the proposed development. This LVA is split into the following sub-sections:

- Site Context and Baseline
- Legislation and Policy
- Landscape Character
- Site Appraisal
- Impact Assessment of the development proposals
- Baseline Landscape and Visual Condition
- Development Proposals
- Landscape and Visual Effects
- Limitations and Assumptions
- Conclusion

Paragraph 1.1 of the 3rd Edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ("GLVIA3"), published by Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (hereafter referred to as "GLVIA 3")¹. Paragraph 1.1 states that "*Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity*".

Paragraph 5.1 of the GLVIA3 describes how landscape effects are concerned with "how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character".

Paragraph 6.1 of the GLVIA3 describes how visual effects are concerned with "*assessing how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements*". Therefore, this assessment deals separately with each of these effects, although where relevant and appropriate, cross references may be made to the same features or elements where they are relevant to both assessments.

¹ Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ("GLVIA3"). 3rd Edition. Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. 2013

An LVA is a more concise version of an LVIA, proportional to the level of potential impact.

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2.3 Limitations and Assumptions

Whilst assessment of sensitivity and magnitude of change are subjective, the assessment has been carried out by professional, qualified, and experienced landscape architects, making judgements following a prescribed methodology based on GLVIA3.

3 SITE CONTEXT AND BASELINE

The site is located off Shilton Road, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire, 13km south-west of Leicester City centre. The site comprises of 3 pasture fields, currently used as horse paddocks, with an established hedgerow boundaries. A stable and a manege are located at the centre of the site, with a further stable and manege immediately adjacent to the western boundary. There is further agricultural land to the north, east, south and west.

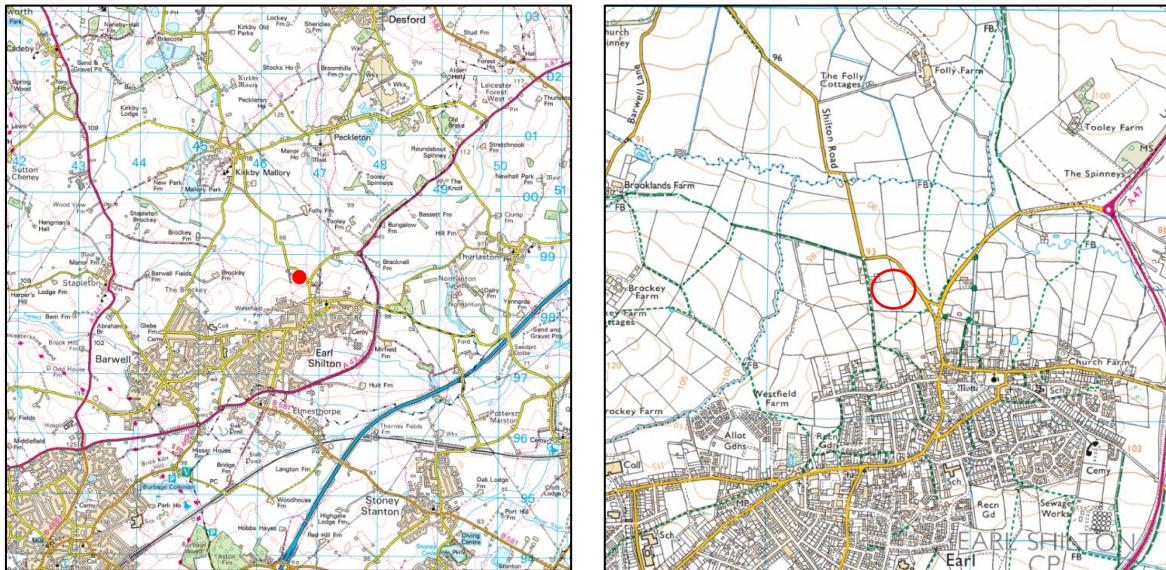


Figure 1: OS Mapping, with site location.

3.1 Landscape Setting

3.1.1 Topography and Hydrology

The site is located 0.45km to the east of an unnamed stream, running south to north, which then meets another unnamed stream 0.4km to the north of the site that runs west to east. Within a 3km radius of the site there are several brooks, streams, ponds and lakes. The largest are within Mallory Park motor racetrack, 2km to the north-west of the site and at Peckleton Common where there are numerous fishing lakes.

The site lies within the centre of a very shallow valley that runs west to east. The topography gently undulates to the north and south, with no prominent topographical features in the surrounding area.

3.1.2 Vegetation

The dominant vegetation in the surrounding area is agricultural pasture and crops. The field boundaries are typically hedgerows with scattered trees. There are small scattered woodland blocks to the north-west, north and east of the site, located within the agricultural fields. Normanton Millennium Wood is 1.8km to the south-east. The streams to the west and north of the site are lined with scattered trees and scrub.

3.1.3 Settlement and Land Use

Earl Shilton is the major settlement in the surrounding area, which is approx. 400m to the south of the site and extends to the south-west where it meets Barwell. These settlements are typically residential, with industrial and commercial properties mixed within. There are scattered farmsteads throughout the wider area.

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Immediately north, east and west of the site is agricultural land, containing mainly arable fields. These continue to the south of Earl Shilton. These are typically medium to large and rectangular and square in shape.

The A47 runs north to south approx. 1.36km to the east, while the M69 runs north-east to south-west 2.7km to the south-east of the site.

3.2 Designations

This section describes landscape designations that are of relevance to this landscape and visual appraisal.

3.2.1 Statutory Landscape Designations

Within a 3km of the site there are no statutory landscape designations. The closest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is 'Croft and Huncote Quarry SSSI', appox. 5km to the south-east. The closest Local Nature Reserves (LNR), 'Burbage Common and Woods LNR' is 4km south-west of site.

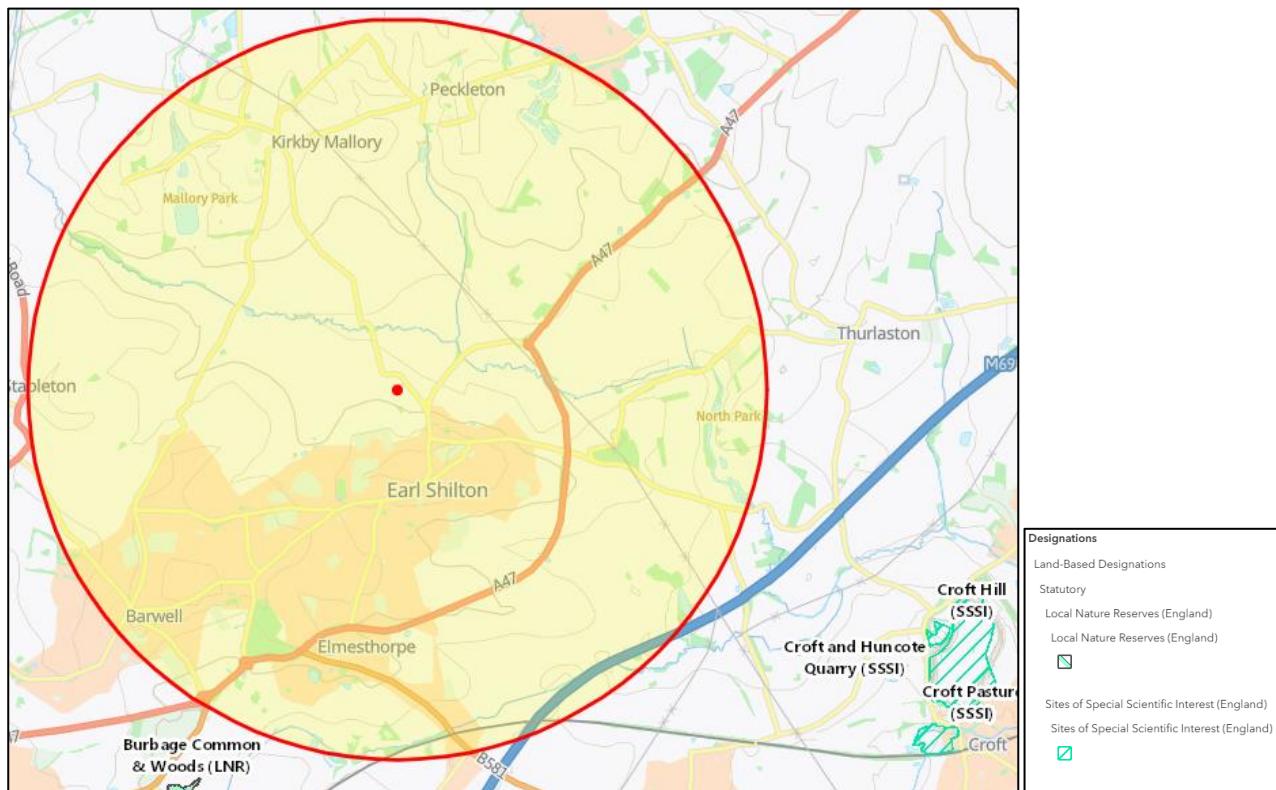
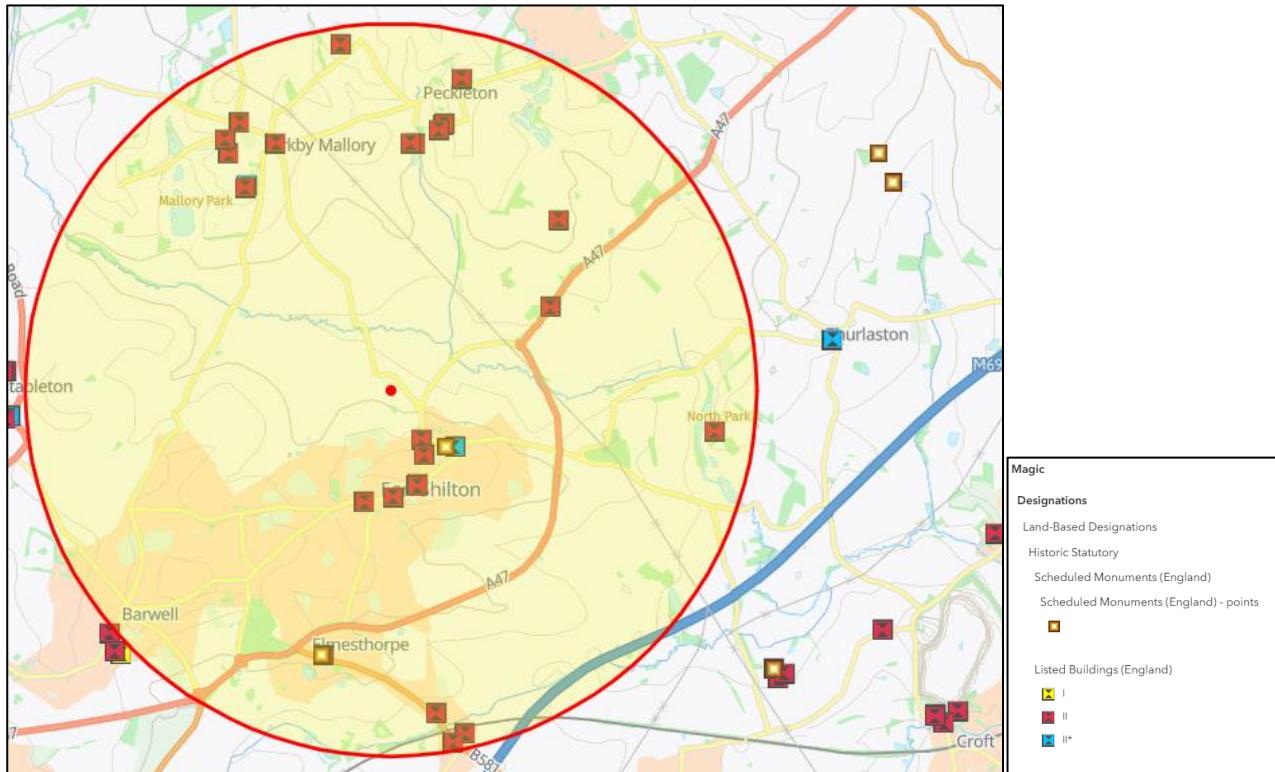


Figure 2: Statutory Designations – 3km (Magic Map), with site location.

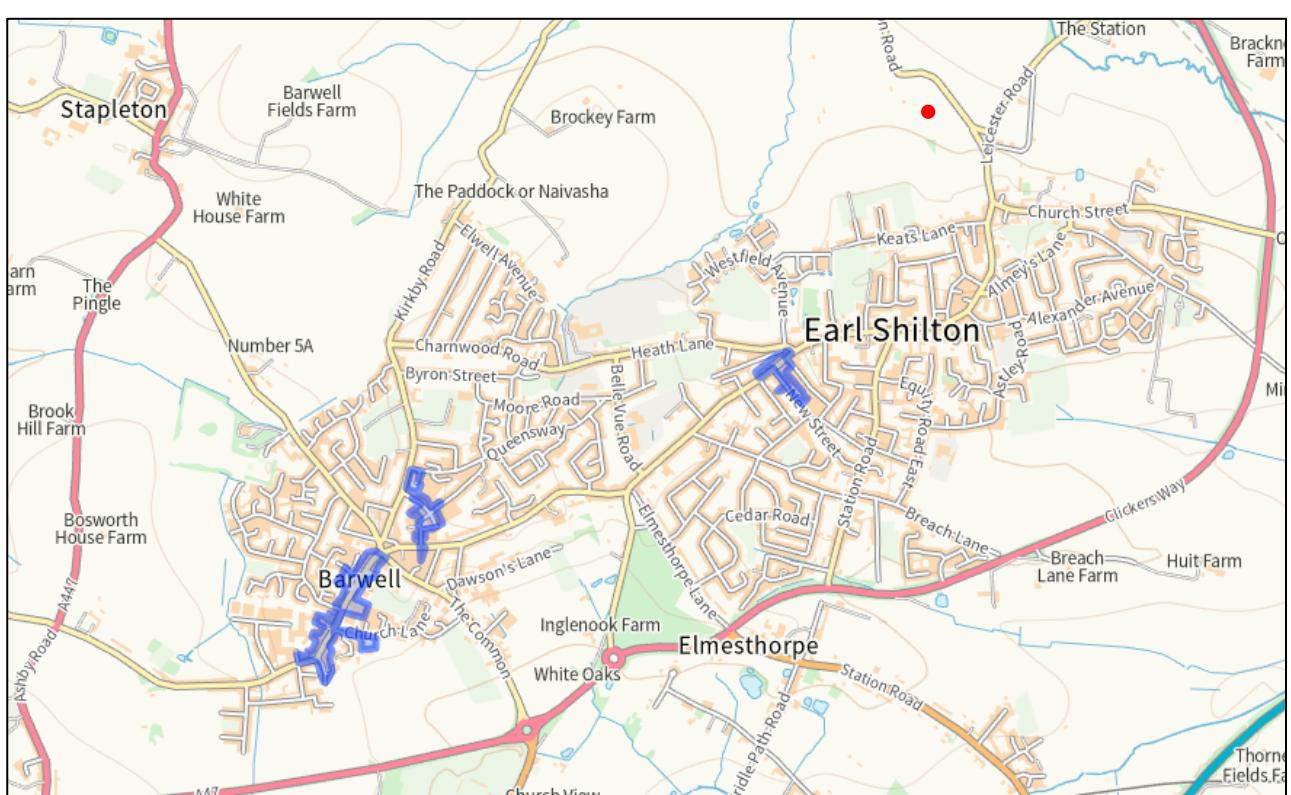
3.2.2 Historic Designations

Within a 3km radius of the site there are 2 Grade II* Listed Buildings (Church of All Saints and Church of St Simon and St Jude) and 25 Grade II listed buildings. A single Grade I listed building is located approximately 2.2km north-east of the site (Church of St Mary Magdalene).



All listed buildings are separated from the site by intervening vegetation and built form and are unlikely to be affected by any proposals for the site.

The closest conservation areas to the site are to the south-west, with the nearest 'Earl Shilton Area' approximately 1.2km to the south-west. All conservation areas are disconnected from the site by the intervening vegetation and buildings.



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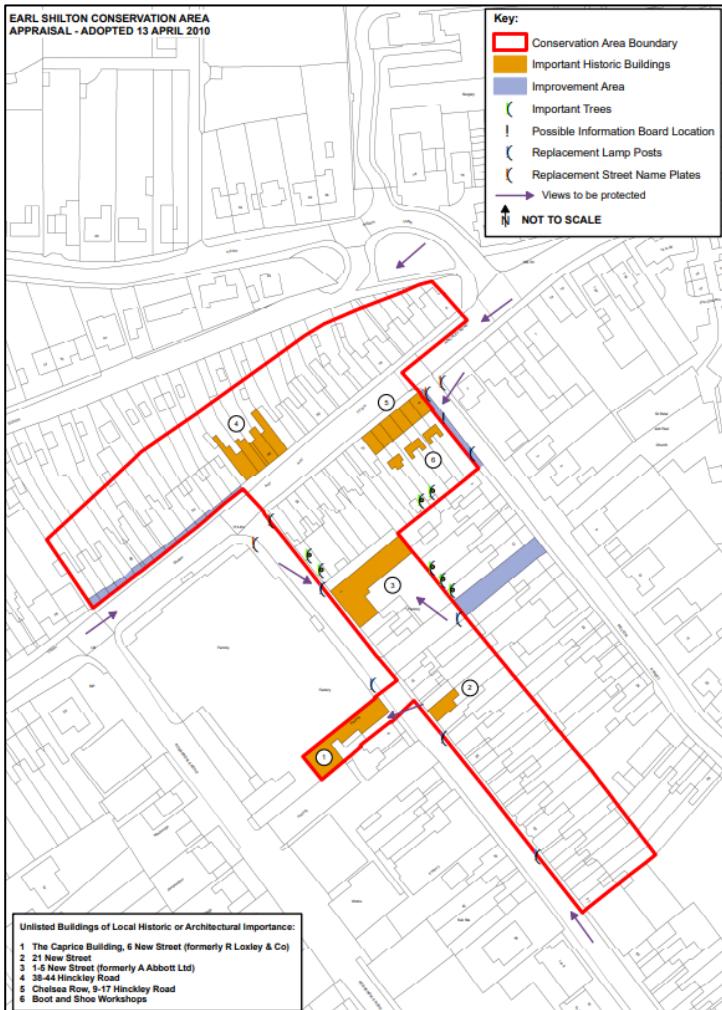


Figure 5: Earl Shilton Conservation Area

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3.2.3 Public Rights of Way

The public rights of way (PRoW) in the local area are a mix of Bridleways and footpaths. The Bridleways are generally located to the north and south of Earl Shilton, with Bridleway 'T95/3' running west from the north-west corner of the site. There is a network of footpaths surrounding and within Earl Shilton, with a footpath 'T94' running along the length of the western boundary connecting Earl Shilton with Shilton Road.

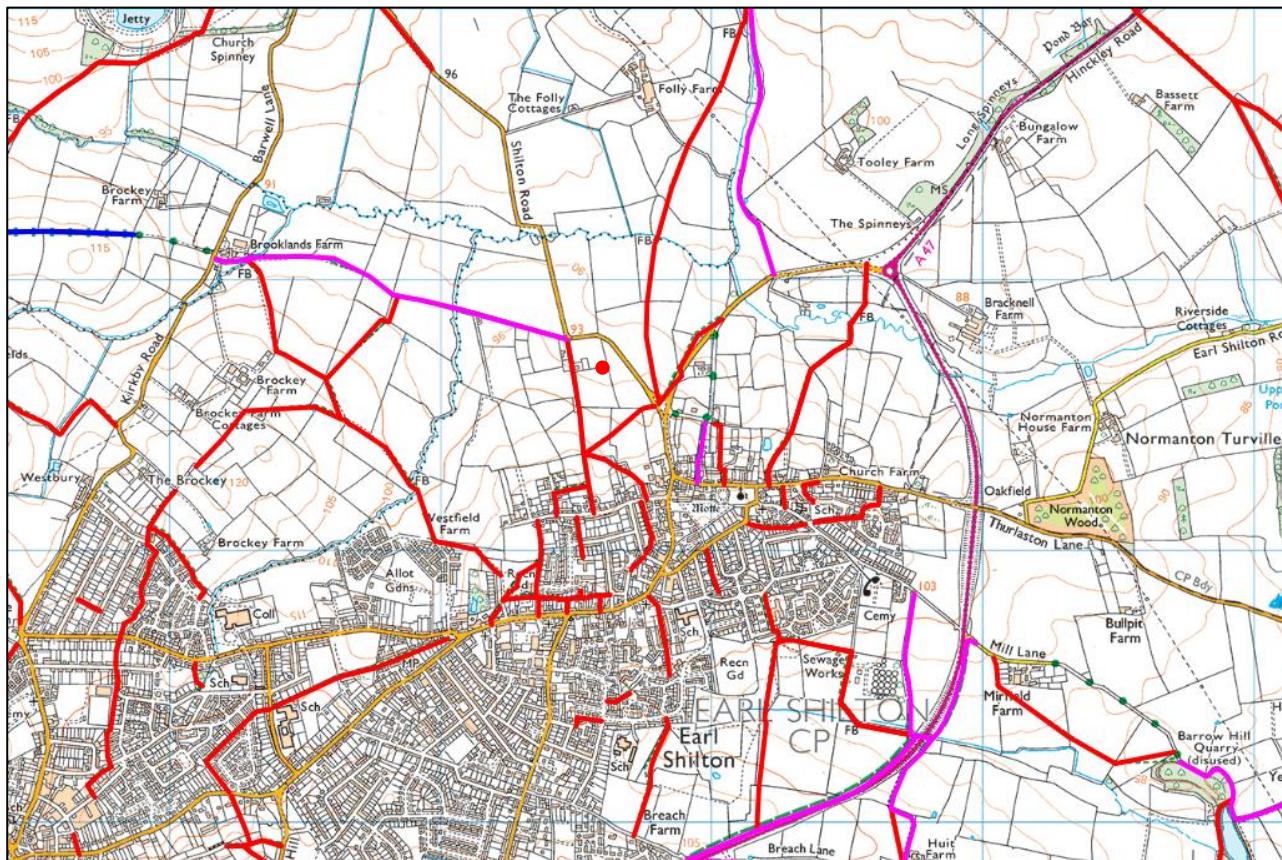


Figure 6: Public Rights of Way - Footpath: red, Bridleway: fuchsia, Byway open to all traffic: blue

3.3 Section Summary

The site is located off Shilton Road, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire, 13km south-west of Leicester city centre. The dominant vegetation in the surrounding area is agricultural pasture and crops. The field boundaries are typically hedgerows with scattered trees. There are small scattered woodland blocks to the north-west, north and east of the site. Within a 3km radius of the site there are several brooks, streams, ponds and lakes. The site lies within the centre of a very shallow valley that runs west to east. The topography gently undulates to the north and south, with no prominent topographical features in the surrounding area. Earl Shilton is the major settlement in the surrounding area and extends to the south-west where it meets Barwell. These settlements are typically residential, with industrial and commercial properties mixed within.

Regarding nearby designations, there are no statutory landscape designations within 3km of the site; the closest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is 'Croft and Huncote Quarry SSSI', approx. 5km to the south-east; Regarding historic designations with 3km of the site there are 2 Grade II* Listed buildings, 25 Grade II listed buildings and a single Grade I listed building; The closest conservation areas to the site are to the south-west, with the nearest 'Earl Shilton Area' approximately 1.2km to the south-west; The public rights of way (PRoW) in the local area are a mix of Bridleways and footpaths. The Bridleways are generally located to the north and south of Earl Shilton, with Bridleway 'T95/3'

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running west from the north-west corner of the site. There is a network of footpaths surrounding and within Earl Shilton, with a footpath 'T94' running along the length of the western boundary connecting Earl Shilton with Shilton Road

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4 PLANNING POLICY

This section describes landscape policies that are of relevance to this LVA.

There are planning policies in place at all levels that require effects on landscape and landscape quality to be considered as part of planning applications for new development. There is an emphasis in these policies on retaining existing landscape features and undertaking enhancements where appropriate.

4.1 National Legislation and Planning Policy

National Planning Policy is set out in *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*². This is supported by *National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)*³.

In respect to plan-making, Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states that:

“Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for...conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.”

Further relevant detail is provided in section 15 of the NPPF. Paragraph 187 states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- *maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”*

4.2 Local Planning Policy

The site lies within the administrative area of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. Current planning policy is contained within the documents that make up Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Local Plan 2006-2026, The Core Strategy DPD (adopted December 2009), Site Allocations & Development Management Policies (Adopted July 2016) and Earl Shilton and Barwell AAP DPD (adopted 2014).

² National Planning Policy Framework. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. 2021.

³ Planning Practice Guidance, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. 2016 to current.

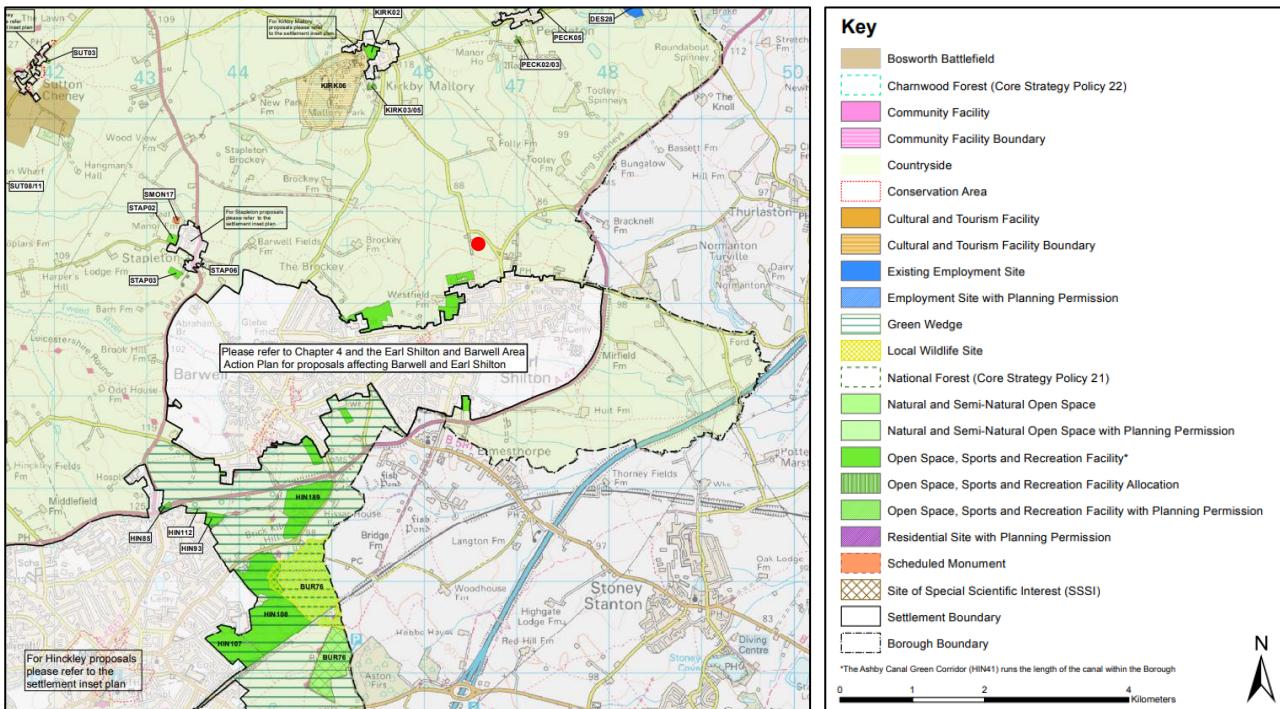


Figure 7: Extract from Hinckley and Bosworth Council's Site allocations and development management policies DPD

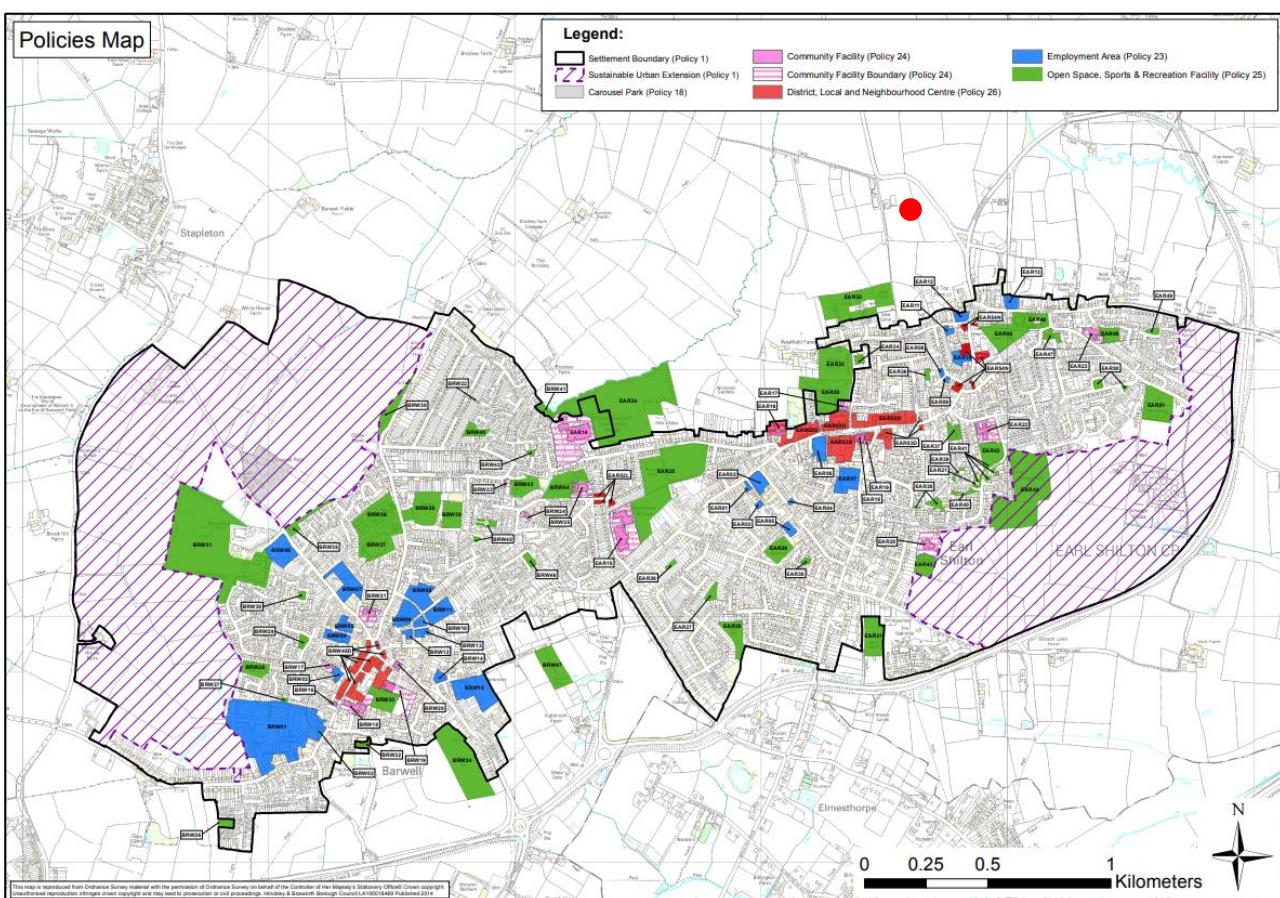


Figure 8: Hinckley and Bosworth Council's Earl Shilton and Barwell Area Action Plan

The extract above shows that the site, the proposed development and the surroundings are covered by the following relevant policies from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Site Allocations & Development Management Policies (Adopted July 2016) and Earl Shilton and Barwell AAP DPD (adopted 2014) and are summarised below.

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4.2.1 Sites Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (July 2016)

The site is shown as being located within 'Countryside', as shown on the Borough Wide Policies Map. The following policies are relevant. Policy DM4 – Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation 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 will be considered sustainable where:

...

c) it significantly contributes to economic growth, job creation and/or diversification of rural businesses."

Policy DM6 – Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest states:

"Development proposals must demonstrate how they conserve and enhance features of nature conservation and geological value including proposals for their long term future management.

Major developments in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services.

On site features should be retained, buffered and managed favourably to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. The removal or damage of such features shall only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated the proposal will result in no net loss of biodiversity and where the integrity of local ecological networks can be secured.

If the harm cannot be prevented, adequately mitigated against or appropriate compensation measures provided, planning permission will be refused."

5 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

5.1 National Landscape Character

At the National Level, the site is located within National Character Area (NCA) 94: Leicestershire Vales as defined by Natural England, as shown below:

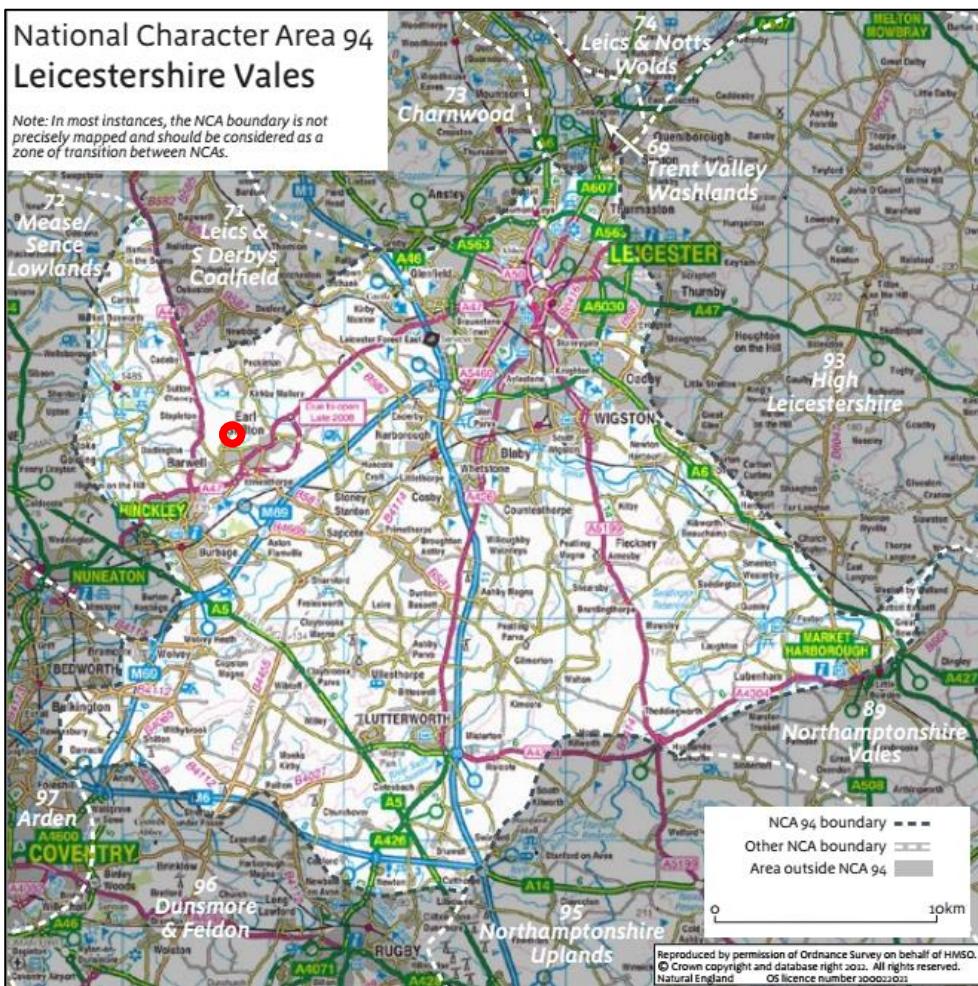
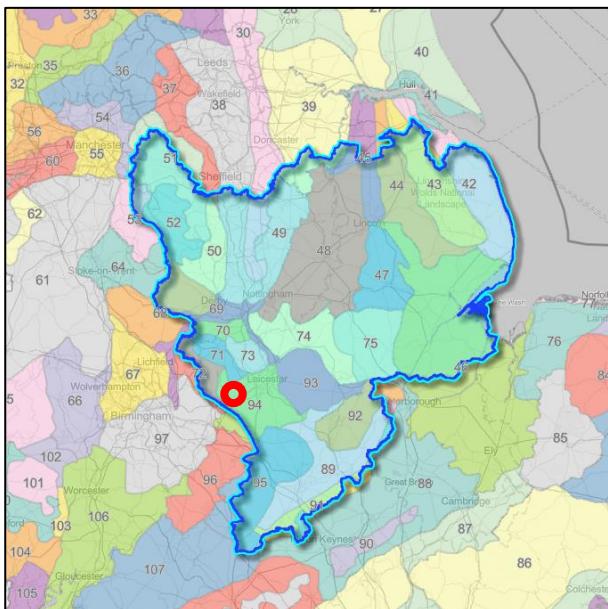


Figure 9: National Character Area (NCA) 94: Leicestershire Vales

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Key characteristics of relevance to the site and its local context identified on page 7 include:

- *"An open landscape of gentle clay ridges and valleys underlain by Mercia Mudstone and Lias groups bedrock but with an extensive cover of superficial deposits occasionally giving rise to moderately steep scarp slopes. There is an overall visual uniformity to the landscape and settlement pattern."*
- *Land use characterised by a mixture of pasture and arable agriculture that has developed on the neutral clay soils.*
- *Distinctive river valley of the Soar and Swift, with flat flood plains and gravel terraces together with tributaries including the Sence. Riverside meadows and waterside trees and shrubs are common, along with waterbodies resulting from gravel extraction.*
- *Woodland character derived largely from spinneys and copses on the ridges and the more undulating land and from waterside and hedgerow trees and hedgerows. The density, height and pattern of hedgerows varies throughout.*
- *Diverse levels of tranquillity associated with contrasts between busy urban areas and some deeply rural parts. Large settlements dominate the open character of the landscape. Leicester, Lutterworth, Hinckley and Market Harborough and related infrastructure, including major roads, are often visually dominant.*
- *Frequent small towns and large villages often characterised by red brick buildings and attractive stone buildings in older village centres and eastern towns and villages. Frequent, imposing spired churches are also characteristic, together with fine examples of individual historic buildings.*
- *Rich and varied historic landscape, with the nationally important Bosworth Battlefield near Sutton Cheney, prominent historic parklands and country houses, ridge-and-furrow earthworks and important medieval settlement remains, for example at Wistow Hall, Gumley, Knaptoft and Peatling Magna".*

5.2 County Landscape Character Type and Area

At a County level, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has produced 'Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment', September 2017, that further describes 6 Landscape Character Types (LCTs). These landscape types are then further subdivided into component Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The LCAs are discrete geographic areas that possess the common characteristics described for the landscape type. Each character area has a distinct and recognisable local identity

The site is located within LCT 'Rolling Farmland' and lies within the LCA 'E – Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland' as shown below:

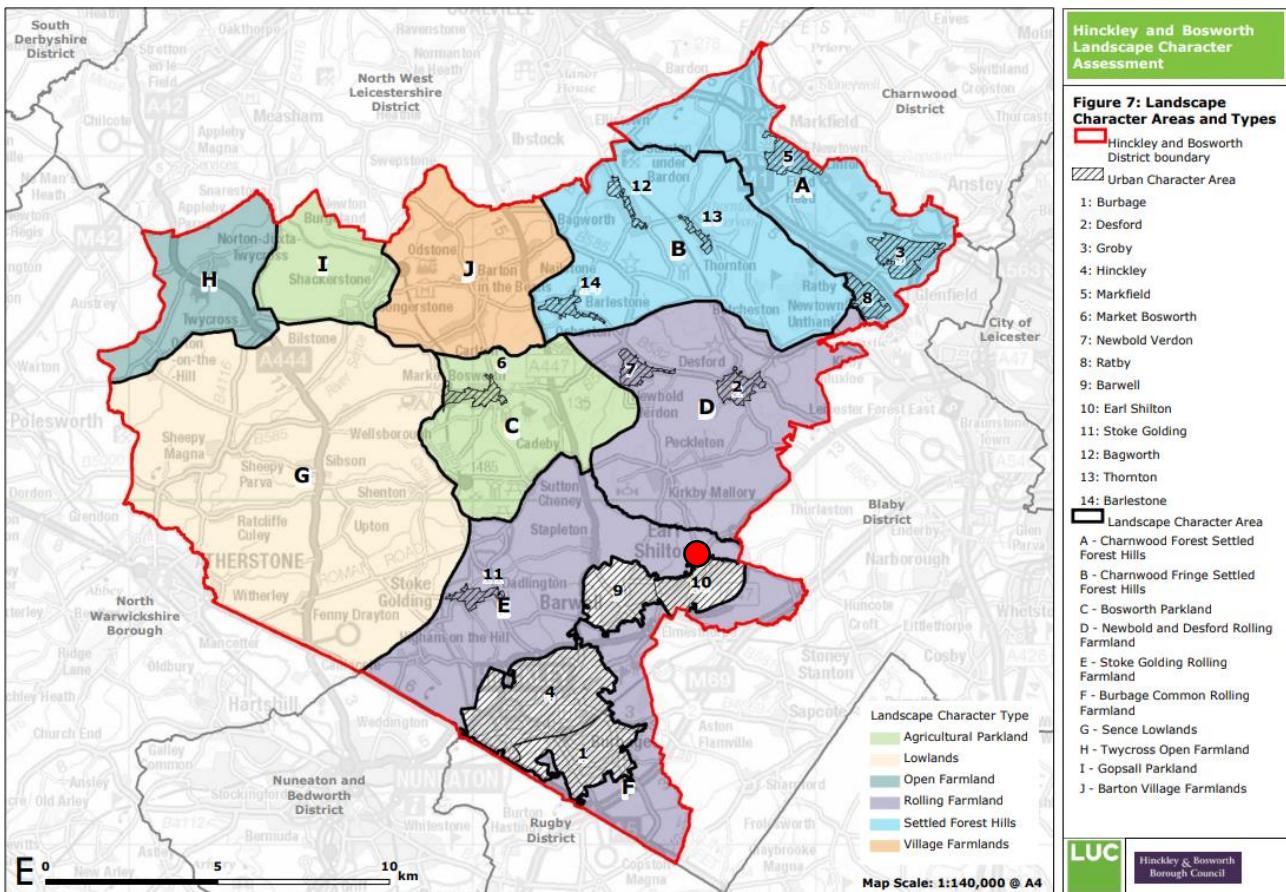


Figure 10: The Landscape Character Areas of Hinckley and Bosworth District

The Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland LCA is described as follows:

“Land cover is characterised by a mix of arable and pasture farmland arranged in small to medium scale fields in a simple regular pattern. Areas containing more irregular (curved or dog-leg) field shapes are likely to be post medieval field systems which add visual and historic interest to the landscape. These are present, for example, north of Stapleton (east of the A447), north of Hinckley around Rogue’s Lane and between Stapleton and Barwell. Smaller fields are often found around settlements which can contain species-rich grassland where not given over to agricultural intensification and mature trees valuable for biodiversity. Tree cover in the wider character area is formed of mature trees within low hedgerows frequently define field boundaries, and occasional woodland clumps along small watercourses give the area a relatively wooded appearance.”

Key characteristics include:

- *“Undulating arable and pasture farmland with gentle valleys sloping down to the Ashby Canal, Tweed River and associated tributaries.*
- *Small to medium scale rectilinear field pattern divided by low hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees typical of parliamentary enclosure, with smaller pasture fields around settlements, creating a largely unified field pattern and providing continuity with the agricultural past.*
- *Rural settlement pattern with former agricultural villages typically demonstrating a historic core, modern outskirts and sporadic farmsteads on the outer edges, within a strong rural setting.*
- *Historic villages occupying higher ground with attractive red brick cottages fronting onto the road and connected by rural lanes with grass verges and well-maintained hedgerows.*
- *Church spires and towers within villages in and around the character area form distinctive landmarks on the skyline.*
- *Associations with the Battle of Bosworth, particularly at Crown Hill in Stoke Golding.*

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- *Ashby Canal has affiliations with coal mining that has influenced the landscape over the years and is designated as a conservation area. It is now important for biodiversity and tourism.”*

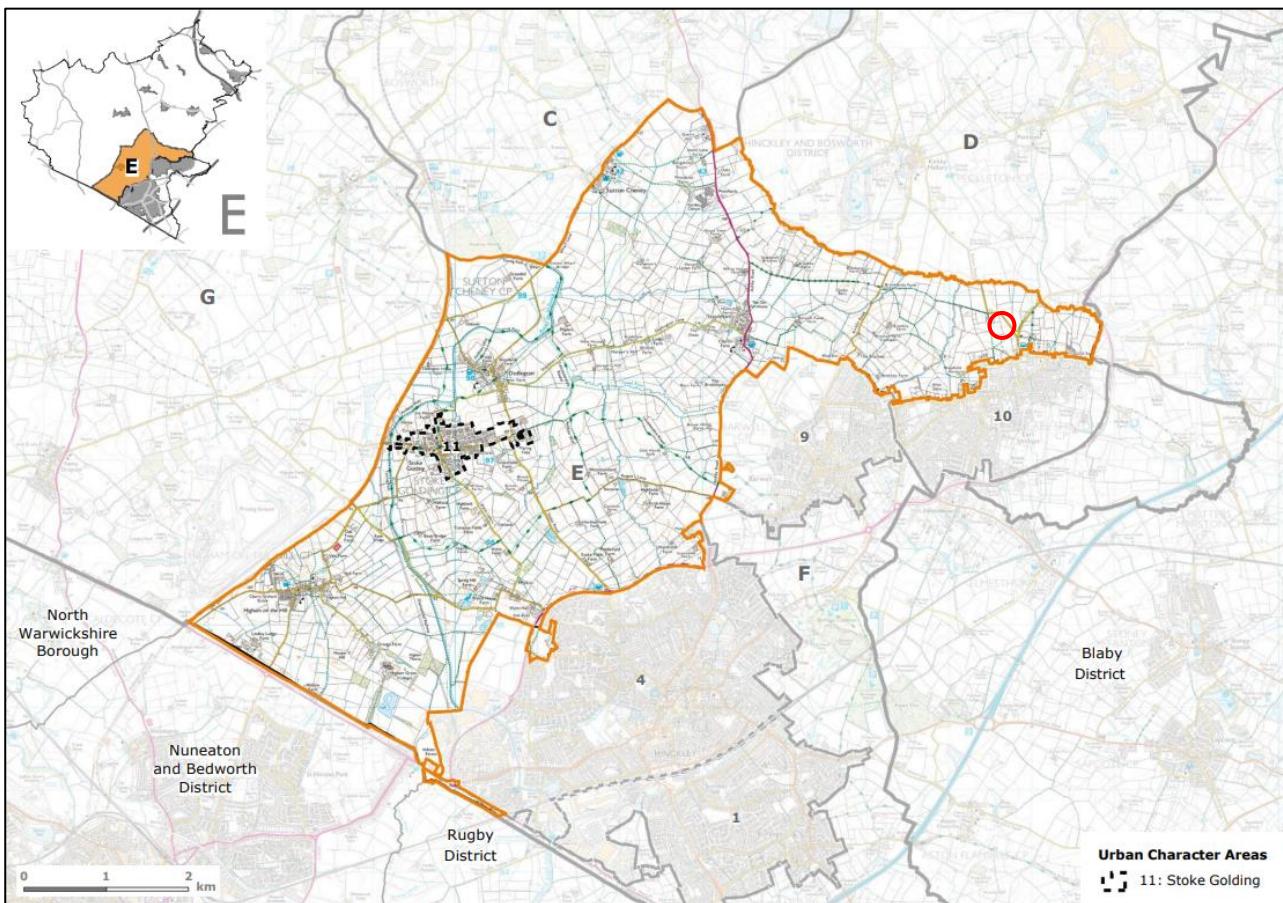


Figure 11: Map of Landscape Character Area E Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland

5.3 Localised Landscape Character

This area is defined by the fields, used for pasture and horse paddocks, all with boundary hedgerows. There is mature tree vegetation along the field boundaries. The fields are medium to small in scale, and are visually disconnected from land to the south, with some mid to long distance views to the north-west, north and east.

5.4 Section Summary

At a national level, the NCA 94: Leicestershire Vales describes an open landscape of gentle clay ridges and valleys, with an overall visual uniformity to the landscape and settlement pattern. Land use characterised by a mixture of pasture and arable agriculture that has developed on the neutral clay soils. Woodland character derived largely from spinneys and copses on the ridges and the more undulating land and from waterside and hedgerow trees and hedgerows. Diverse levels of tranquillity associated with contrasts between busy urban areas and some deeply rural parts. Large settlements dominate the open character of the landscape. Leicester, Lutterworth, Hinckley and Market Harborough and related infrastructure, including major roads, are often visually dominant.

At a county level, the site is located within LCT 'Rolling Farmland' and lies within the LCA 'E – Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland' within the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment'. Key characteristics include undulating arable and pasture farmland with gentle valleys sloping down to the Ashby Canal, Tweed River and associated tributaries; small to medium scale rectilinear field pattern divided by low hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees typical of parliamentary

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enclosure, with smaller pasture fields around settlements, creating a largely unified field pattern and providing continuity with the agricultural pasture; rural settlement pattern with former agricultural villages typically demonstrating a historic core, modern outskirts and sporadic farmsteads on the outer edges, within a strong rural setting.

The localised landscape is relatively contained and its character is influenced by the presence of the pasture and horse paddocks defined by hedgerow boundaries.

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6 SITE APPRAISAL

The site is approximately 5.5ha and comprises of predominantly modified grassland used as grazing pasture. There are hedgerows on all boundaries, with mature trees on the western boundary and south-west corner of the site. Shilton road forms the eastern and northern boundary, an unnamed track forms the western boundary and further pasture fields and a housing development under construction form the southern boundary.

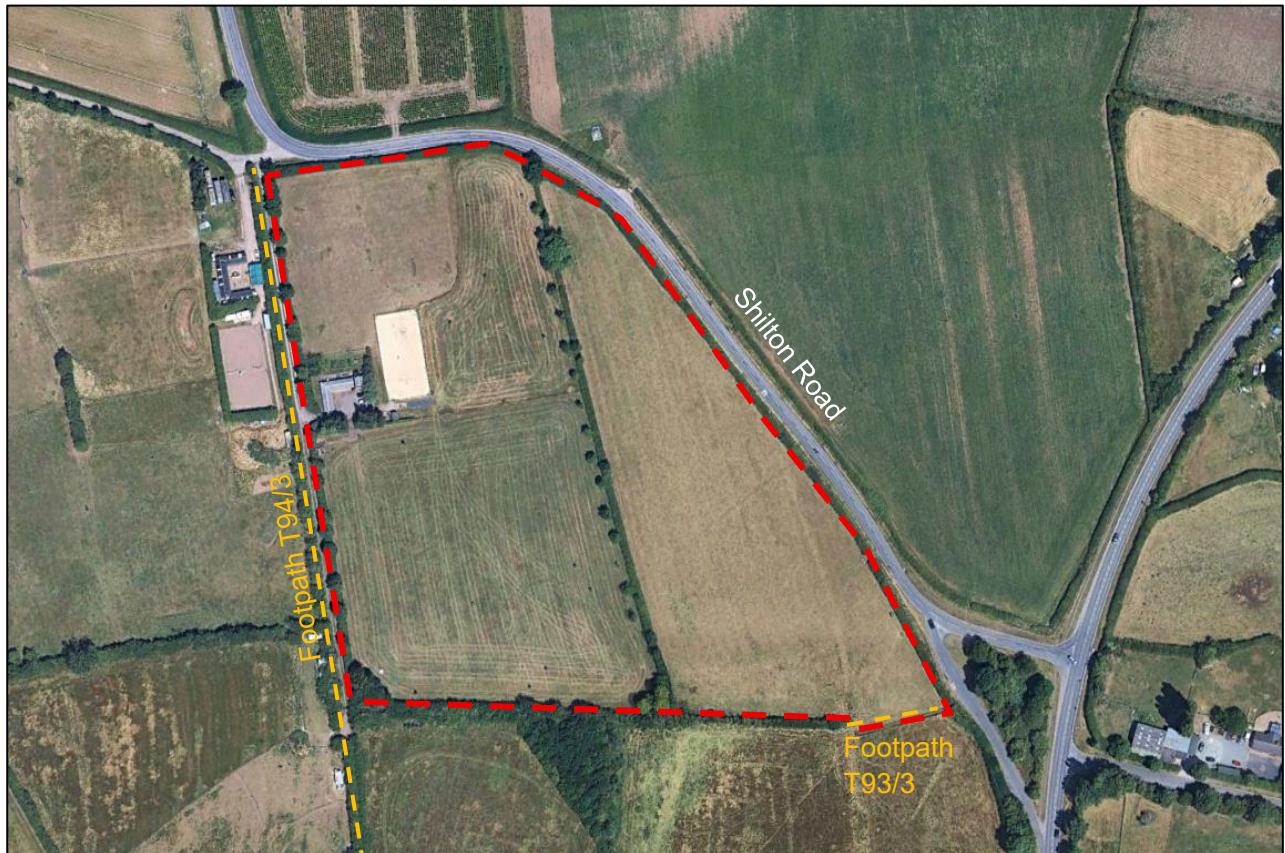


Figure 12: Aerial photograph with site boundary.

6.1.1 Topography

The site is relatively flat, sloping slightly from south to north. The highest point is 99m on the southern boundary and the lowest point is 92m AOD at the north-east corner of the site.

6.1.2 Hydrology

There are no water features on site.

6.1.3 Vegetation

The site is mainly comprised of intensively grazed pasture.

All boundaries have mature hedgerows in place, along with a central hedgerow that divides the site into two distinct pasture parcels. All are predominantly made up of Hawthorn, with Dog Rose, Bramble, Elder, Blackthorn, Holly and Hazel also present.

There are trees present alongside and within the western and central hedgerows. Species include Horse Chestnut, Ash, Silver Birch, Oak, Field Maple, Willow, Whitebeam, Cherry and Scots Pine.

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6.1.4 Settlement and Land Use and Field Pattern

Using historic aerial photos and maps the site has historically been used for pasture, with the site boundaries remaining unchanged and no development taking place.

6.1.5 Access and PRoW

Vehicle access into the site is off the unnamed track (that incorporates Footpath 'T94/3') on the western boundary that leads off Shilton Road, which currently serves as the stable block entrance.

A single footpath, 'T93/3', runs along the southern boundary of the site, entering at the south-east corner off Shilton Road, and then connects to footpath T94/3 to the south of the site.

6.1.6 Inter-visibility

Due to the sites position near the bottom of a gentle sloping hillside and the surrounding mature vegetation, intervisibility with the site is limited to relatively short views to the south towards the northern edge of Earl Shilton. These are typically experienced from the centre of the site away from the boundary hedgerows. Due to the relatively flat topography extending away from Earl Shilton, coupled with mature vegetation, there is no inter-visibility between the site and land to the north, east and west.

6.1.7 The Site

The site is typical of agriculture fields that has been used as grazing pasture and horse paddocks, with established well-defined hedgerows and mature trees along the majority of its boundaries. The western half of the site is influenced by the stable block and paddock, which are adjacent to the site boundary. This gives the western half of the site a stronger relationship with the adjacent paddock and stable block that's immediately to the west of the site. The pasture, hedgerows and mature trees from the centre of the site to the east contribute to the farmland vista when viewed from the east. The site is relatively tranquil, has some scenic quality and is considered to be of **Medium** landscape value.

The site is likely to have some scope to accommodate the type of change proposed by the development without undue effects upon its overall integrity, with the development fitting into the existing field boundaries and is therefore considered to have a **medium** susceptibility.

The Landscape sensitivity of the site is derived from a combination of value and susceptibility and is considered to be **medium** for the site overall.

6.2 Section Summary

The site is approximately 5.5ha and comprises of predominantly modified grassland used as grazing pasture. The site is relatively flat, sloping slightly from south to north. The highest point is 99m on the southern boundary and the lowest point is 92m AOD at the north-east corner of the site. The site is mainly comprised of intensively grazed pasture. All boundaries have mature hedgerows in place, along with a central hedgerow. There are trees present alongside and within the western and central hedgerows

Vehicle access into the site is off the unnamed track (that incorporates Footpath 'T94/3') on the western boundary. A single footpath, 'T93/3' runs along the southern boundary of the site, entering at the south-east corner. There is no other public access to the site. Due to the sites position near the bottom of a gentle sloping hillside and the surrounding mature vegetation, intervisibility with the site is limited to relatively short views to the south.

Analysis of the main site as a landscape receptor concludes that it is of **medium** sensitivity.

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7 BASELINE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONDITION

7.1 Landscape Receptors

The following table summarises the different landscape features and character receptors that may be affected by the proposals. The sensitivity of landscape receptors has been determined by reference to the baseline assessment of the existing landscape resource.

Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Features			
Trees	High	Medium	Medium/High
Hedgerows	High	Medium	Medium/High
Native Scrub	High	Medium	Medium/High
Grassland - pasture	Low	Low	Low
Grassland - meadow	Medium	Medium	Medium
Buildings	Low	Low	Low
Land Use	Low	High	Medium
Field Pattern	Medium	Medium	Medium
Topography	Very Low	Low	Low
PRoW	Medium	Medium	Medium
Character			
National: NCA 94: Leicestershire Vales	High	High	High
County: LCA Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland	High	High	High
Localised Landscape Character	Medium	Medium	Medium
The Site	Medium	Medium	Medium

Figure 13: Table Summary of Landscape Receptors

7.2 Visual Appraisal

A visual appraisal of the site was undertaken in July 2025 to determine the relationship of the site with its surrounds, the visibility of the site within the wider landscape and the suitability of the site for development and the potential effect this would have on the landscape and visual characteristics of the area.

A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV or viewshed) describes the area from which the proposed development is potentially visible. The desktop study involved creating a 3D terrain model using bare-earth Terrain 5 data, which was used to determine where intervisibility would occur between the ridge of the proposed buildings and a 1.7m high observer in the wider landscape. As bare-earth data is used, the ZTV does not take account of built form or vegetation present within the landscape. The Visual Appraisal Plan in Appendix 2 illustrates the ZTV of the site.

The ZTV demonstrates that based on topography alone the 8m height residential properties would be visible mainly to the north, east and west of the site. It was known that due to the flat topography and surrounding hedgerows and trees that form the field boundaries visibility would be far more constrained. Assessment of visual influence is focused on locations from which the site is most likely to be viewed, i.e., roads, footpaths and residential areas. Within the ZTV potential receptors of visual effects of the development have been identified. Receptors include the public, residents, visitors, and any other potential viewers of the development. Principal Viewpoints are then selected as representative views from receptor locations.

Beyond the 3km area chosen, the visual impacts of the development are not considered likely to be significant. This is due in part to scale and height of the built components of development, the effect of reduced contrast between different landscape textures and colours at increasing distance and the increasing importance of atmospheric conditions in determining the availability of long-distance views. At these distances, the development is likely to be screened by local features such as landform, buildings, and vegetation.

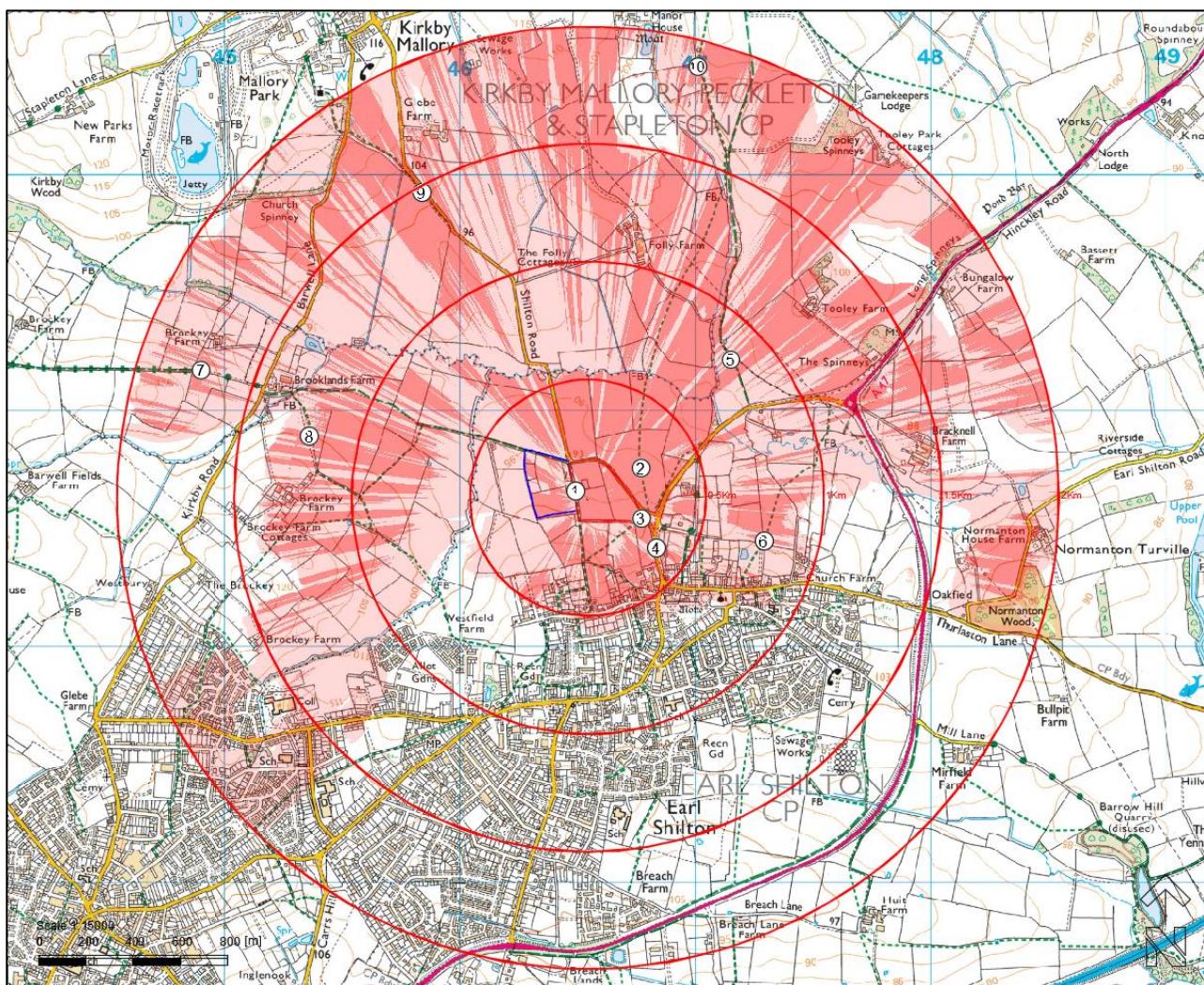


Figure 14 - Extract of Visual Appraisal Plan (see Appendix 2)

In order to represent the nature of identified views, a number of Site Context Photos (SCP) (Nos. 1 – 10 inclusive) were selected. The photographic locations are illustrated on the Visual Appraisal Plan.

It is acknowledged that the SCP's were taken in summer when deciduous vegetation is in leaf. The main visual receptors and representative SCP are listed in the table below.

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Visual Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Footpath T94/3 (SCP1): Footpath users	Low	High	Medium
Footpath T72/6 (SCP2): Footpath users	Medium	High	High
Footpath T93/3 (SCP3): Footpath users	Medium	High	High
Leicester Road (SCP4): Road users	Low	Low	Low
Bridleway T75/1 (SCP5): Bridleway users	Medium	High	High
Footpath T86/1 (SCP6): Footpath users	Medium	High	High
Byway open to all traffic T76A/3 (SCP7): Byway users	Medium	High	High
Footpath U26/3 (SCP8): Footpath users	Medium	High	High
Footpath 'T85/1' (SCP9): Footpath users	Medium	High	High
Footpath 'T72/5' (SCP10): Footpath users	Medium	High	High

Figure 15: Visual Receptors Sensitivity Table

Near Distance Views (0-150m)

Heading north or south on Footpath 'T94/3' (SCP1), footpath users have transient, open view of the entire western site boundary hedgerow. The hedge is approximately 4m high and screens any views into the site. At the centre of the western boundary is a metal vehicle access gate that allows a very limited filtered, oblique view into the centre of the site, with part of the gravel drive and a small section of the pasture field visible.

Travelling south on Footpath 'T72/6' through an arable field, there are transient open views towards the site (SCP2). There is a boundary hedgerow to the field containing the footpath that screens the lower half of the site's own boundary hedgerow. There are no internal views of the site beyond the boundary, with only the canopies of a row of trees the run north south through the site visible above the hedgerow.

Entering the south-east corner of the site is Footpath 'T93/3' (SCP3). From here there are transient open views north-west across the site. The entire eastern pasture field is visible, with the central boundary hedgerow and trees heavily filtering the western pasture field, paddock and stable block.

From the junction of Leicester Road and the entrance to the housing development currently under construction (SCP4), there are transient, limited partial views of northern and eastern parts of the site, with the southern boundary hedgerow and a small off site woodland block screening the west and south-west parts of the site. The sites eastern pasture field is visible (although heavily filtered by construction equipment at the time of the site visit), with the site's central boundary hedgerow and trees heavily filtering views of the north-western half of the site's pasture and paddock.

Middle Distance Views (150m-1km)

Looking south-west towards the site from Bridleway 'T75/1' (SCP5) there are limited transient, filtered views of the east boundary of the site, with part of the pasture at the south-west corner of the site visible above the boundary hedgerows. The sites western boundary trees and trees along the site's central hedgerow are visible in part between the intervening vegetation.

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Looking from Footpath 'T86/1' (SCP6) there are transient, filtered oblique views west towards the site from a limited section of footpath, with only a small part of the eastern site boundary hedgerow and internal pasture at the northern end of the site visible. The majority of the site is screened by intervening vegetation.

Long Distance Views (1km+)

From Byway 'T76A/3' (SCP7) and Footpath 'U26/3' (SCP8) to the north-west of the site, users have no views of the site, as it is screened by intervening vegetation and topography (SCP7).

From Footpath 'T85/1' (SCP9) there is a transient, limited view to the south-east. The site's northern boundary hedgerow is partially visible above intervening vegetation, and there is a partial view of the pasture at the southern end of the site. Due to the distance this forms a very small part of the overall and is not distinguishable from its surrounding.

From Footpath 'T72/5' (SCP10) looking south towards the site there are no views due to the intervening vegetation. Further north, beyond the 3km radius, the site is partially unobscured by intervening vegetation, but due to reduced contrast between landscape textures and colours the site is indistinguishable from the surrounding landscape and forms only a very small part of the view.

7.3 Section Summary

The Visual Appraisal Plan and Site Context Photos 1 to 10 demonstrate that due to the open arable fields with boundary hedgerows, tree belts and relatively flat topography to the north, east and south, the site is visible from a small number of nearby sections of footpaths, roads and bridleway. These views are a mix of open and filtered views of the site's boundary vegetation, with partial views of the pasture and paddock within the site.

Wider views are curtailed by a mix of the surrounding vegetation and topography.

8 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The outline proposals are for a residential development of up to 120 dwellings, including affordable housing, enhanced public right of way, public amenity space and habitat creation.

The scheme would be supported by a robust landscape framework, which would incorporate retention and management of the existing trees and hedgerows, additional native tree, hedgerow and scrub planting to the boundaries, meadow grassland and pond creation.

The landscape strategy is shown on Weddle's drawing 2042-004.



Figure 16: Extract of drawing 2042-004 Landscape Strategy (see appendix 4)

8.1 Section Summary

The outline proposals are for a residential development of up to 120 dwellings, including affordable housing, enhanced public right of way, public amenity space and habitat creation. The scheme would be supported by a robust landscape framework, which would incorporate retention and management of the existing trees and hedgerows, additional native tree, hedgerow and scrub planting to the boundaries, meadow grassland and pond creation.

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9 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

This section summarises the likely effects of the proposed development on the identified landscape features, published landscape character types, visual receptors, and relevant policies.

The assessment is undertaken for the following operational stages of the development:

- Year 1 (this refers to year 1 of the completed scheme) during winter.
- Year 15 (this refers to year 15 of the completed scheme) during summer.

9.1 Effects on Landscape Features

The effects on landscape features are summarised below:

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Year 1		Year 15	
		Magnitude	Significance / Effect	Magnitude	Significance / Effect
Trees	Medium/High	Very Small	Negligible Adverse	Medium	Moderate Beneficial
Hedgerows	Medium/High	Very Small	Negligible Adverse	Small	Minor Beneficial
Native Scrub	Medium/High	Small	Negligible Beneficial	Small	Minor Beneficial
Grassland - pasture	Low	Small	Major Adverse	Small	Moderate Adverse
Grassland - meadow	Medium	Small	Major Adverse	Small	Moderate Beneficial
Buildings	Low	Medium	Major Adverse	Medium	Major Adverse
Land Use	Medium	Medium	Major Adverse	Medium	Major Adverse
Field Pattern	Medium	Very Small	Negligible Adverse	Medium	Moderate Beneficial
Topography	Low	None	Neutral	None	Neutral
PRoW	Medium	Small	Moderate Adverse	Small	Minor Adverse

Figure 17: Landscape receptors effects table summary

- Trees: Only a small number of existing trees around the stable block and two small trees near the central hedgerow will be removed as part of the proposals to make way for the proposed housing and access roads. As part of the landscaping proposals a significant number of individual trees would be planted around the sites boundaries, along with woodland block planting at key screening points to enhance the existing vegetation. This additional tree planting would mature and increase the boundary screening. Overall, there would be a negligible adverse effect at year 1, due to the removal of a limited number of trees, improving to moderate beneficial at year 15 once the proposed trees have established.
- Hedgerows: Only small sections of the central and eastern boundary hedgerows would be removed to allow for the road access into and within the site. The existing hedgerows along the north, south and western boundaries of the site would remain untouched. In addition, there will be new hedgerow planting added to extend the hedgerow eastwards along the southern boundary and along the proposed central access road. This will mature over time, reinforcing the site boundary and adding additional screening. Overall, there would be a negligible adverse effect at year 1, due to the removal of a

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small section of hedgerows, improving to minor beneficial effect at year 15 once the proposed hedgerows have established.

- The proposal includes the planting of a native scrub set within and around the boundaries of the site in swathes. This will mature over time, reinforcing the site boundaries and adding additional screening. Overall, there will be a negligible beneficial effect at year 1, improving to minor beneficial at year 15 once the additional native scrub planting has established.
- Grassland - Pasture: As part of the proposals all of the grazing pasture will be removed from site. The pasture is of low value and the site only forms only a small part of wider setting of pasture and arable fields. There will be areas of proposed modified grassland as part of the proposals along the access roads, pathways and hedgerows. There would be a major adverse effect at year 1, due to the complete removal of pasture. In the long term, at year 15, the proposed modified grassland will be well established, reducing the effect to moderate adverse.
- Grassland - Meadow: As part of the proposals small localised areas of meadow would be removed from site. The meadow is of medium value and only forms only a small part of the site. There will be area of proposed wildflower grassland as part of the proposals along the access roads, pathways and hedgerows, as well as within a proposed attenuation basin. There would be a major adverse effect at year 1, due to the complete removal of meadow. In the long term, at year 15, the proposed areas of wildflower meadow will be well established, increasing the area of meadow within the site, improving the effect to moderate beneficial.
- Buildings: A single stable block would be removed from near the western boundary of the site. The small block has no architectural or cultural significance, and it does not form a feature in the surrounding landscape. The proposed houses would become a prominent feature of the site once constructed, changing the amount of built form within the site significantly. Overall there would be a major adverse effect at year 1 and 15, with the removal of a small stable block and introduction of residential houses.
- Land use: The land use would change from paddocks and grazing pasture, to residential housing. There would be a complete change in use, resulting in major adverse effect at year 1 and year 15.
- Field Pattern: The existing site's hedgerow boundaries would be largely kept intact, with only a small part of the eastern and central boundary hedgerows removed to allow for the road access into and within the site. The proposed planting would fill in gaps with the existing hedgerow on the southern boundary, and addition tree planting to the other boundaries would strengthen the existing field pattern. Overall there would be a negligible adverse effect at year one, as small sections of the field boundaries would be removed. However, this would improve to Moderate beneficial at year 15 once the proposed hedgerow and tree planting has established to strengthen the field pattern.
- Topography: The proposed scheme would not alter the existing topography, resulting in a neutral effect at year 1 and year 15.
- PRoW: Footpath T93/3 would enter and exit the site at the same locations, but within the site would be re-routed to follow the proposed pedestrian footpaths. The PRoW would be sat within the proposed landscape buffer of native scrub and woodland. This would be a slightly longer and more enclosed route. At year 1 there would be a

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moderate adverse effect at year 1, reducing to minor adverse at year 15 once the path-side native planting establishes and the proposed built form is heavily screened.

Regarding landscape features, the proposed development would have a long-term moderate and minor beneficial effects on the most sensitive and visually apparent features of trees and hedgerows respectively, along with grassland meadow. There would also be moderate and minor beneficial effects on Field pattern and native scrub. There would be major adverse effect on Land use and buildings, a moderate adverse effect on grassland pasture, a minor adverse effects on PRoW and a neutral effect on topography.

9.2 Effects on Landscape Character

The landscape character effects are summarised below:

Landscape Character Receptor	Sensitivity	Year 1		Year 15	
		Magnitude	Significance / Effect	Magnitude	Significance / Effect
National: NCA 94: Leicestershire Vales	High	Very Small	Neutral	Very Small	Neutral
County: LCA Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland	High	Small	Minor adverse	Small	Negligible adverse
Localised Landscape Character	Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Small	Minor Adverse
The Site	Medium	Medium	Major Adverse	Medium	Minor Adverse

Figure 18: Landscape character effects table summary

- National NCA: Due to the scale and relatively low intervisibility the proposal would only have a very small magnitude of effect and not affect any of the key characteristics of the NCA, resulting in a neutral effect at year 1 and year 15.
- County LCA: The proposals would introduce new built form into the landscape. Whilst the LCA is described as being characterised by undulating arable and pasture farmland, these fields are divided by hedgerows and mature hedgerow tree. The site would remove pasture and introduce built form, however it also proposes tree planting and hedgerow enhancements. There would be beneficial impact from the proposed landscape framework, in particular the boundary treatments that will help screen the site, further define field boundaries and reduce the proposals impact on the open farmland and tranquil nature of the surrounding area. Overall, there would be a Minor adverse effect at year 1. This would reduce to negligible adverse at year 15 once the landscape framework has established, screening the proposals and strengthening the field boundary, hedgerow and tree characteristics of the LCA.
- Localised Landscape Character: The presence of a housing would remove pasture from the localised character. The built form would be contained within the existing field boundaries, and could assimilate into the local landscape with limited landscape character effect through the enhancement of the existing boundary hedgerows and trees and the introduction of further screen planting. However the loss of some grazing pasture and the initial increase in visible built form would have a moderate adverse

effect at year 1. By year 15 there this would reduce to a minor adverse effect once the landscape framework establishes and the proposals would be contained and screened.

- The Site: The trees and hedgerow, which are the most important landscape features, would be retained and enhanced with additional native tree, hedgerow and scrub planting. The existing pasture grassland would be removed, and partially replaced by species rich grassland and wet and dry meadow planting. The built form be offset from the site boundary, and with retention of the existing boundary vegetation and the introduction of further planting and landscape buffer, it form would be heavily screened from the surrounding area. Overall, there would be a major adverse effect at year 1 due to the removal of pasture and introduction of built form, reducing to minor adverse effect at year 15 once the tree, hedgerow, scrub and meadow planting establishes.

Regarding landscape character, the proposed development would not adversely affect key characteristics of the published National character area, with a neutral effect in the long-term. At the County level there would be negligible adverse effects in the long term, as the proposal would retain and enhance the trees/tree belt and hedgerows that are important character feature and provides visual screening between the LCA and the proposals. At the localised landscape and site levels, the proposal would initially have a moderate and major adverse effect due to the removal and pasture and introduction of residential built form. These effects would reduce to minor adverse once the landscape framework has established and enhance other local and site characteristics and heavily screen the proposed development.

9.3 Visual Effects

It is acknowledged that the SCP's were taken in summer when deciduous vegetation is in leaf and the visual effects narrative below refers to the 'worst-case' at year 1 of the completed scheme during winter.

The visual effects are summarised below:

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Year 1		Year 15	
		Magnitude	Significance / Effect	Magnitude	Significance / Effect
Footpath T94/3 (SCP1): Footpath users	Medium	Very Small	Negligible Adverse	Very Small	Negligible Beneficial
Footpath T72/6 (SCP2): Footpath users	High	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Medium	Minor Adverse
Footpath T93/3 (SCP3): Footpath users	High	Large	Major Adverse	Large	Moderate Adverse
Leicester Road (SCP4): Road users	Low	Medium	Minor Adverse	Very small	Negligible Adverse
Bridleway T75/1 (SCP5): Bridleway users	High	Medium	Minor Adverse	Small	Negligible Adverse
Footpath T86/1 (SCP6): Footpath users	High	Medium	Minor Adverse	Small	Negligible Adverse
Byway open to all traffic T76A/3 (SCP7): Byway users	High	None	Neutral	None	Neutral
Footpath U26/3 (SCP8): Footpath users	High	Small	Negligible adverse	None	Neutral
Footpath 'T85/1' (SCP9): Footpath users	High	Very Small	Negligible adverse	None	Neutral
Footpath 'T72/5' (SCP10): Footpath users	High	None	Neutral	None	Neutral

Figure 19: Visual effects table summary

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- Looking east from Footpath 'T94/3' (SCP1), footpath users would have transient, open view of the entire western site boundary, with the proposed development screened behind. The only view of the proposed development would be at current site entrance, which is proposed to be infill planted to create a continuous hedgerow along the western boundary. The western boundary would also have further proposed tree planting within the site. Overall, there would be a negligible adverse effect at year 1, with views into the site possible over the infill hedgerow planting. At year 15 this would improve to negligible beneficial once the proposed planting has established to screen views into the site.
- Looking south on Footpath 'T72/6' (SCP2), there would be transient open views towards the proposed development. The proposed residential properties along the eastern edge of the site would be partially visible above the retained eastern boundary hedgerow. The proposals include additional tree planting along the eastern boundary, which would over time filter views of the proposals. Overall, there would be a moderate adverse effect at year 1, reducing to a minor adverse effect at year 15 once the proposed tree planting has established on the eastern boundary.
- From Footpath 'T93/3' (SCP3) there would transient open views towards the proposed development. There would be immediate views of the nearest properties at the south eastern corner of the site. The proposals include an area of planting between the footpath and the residential properties, which over time would heavily filter views of the site. Overall, there would be a major adverse effect at year one due to the complete change in view. At year 15 once the proposed tree, hedgerow and scrub planting has established to enclose the view and also heavily filter the proposed development, there would be a moderate adverse effect.
- From junction of Leicester Road and the entrance to the housing development currently under construction (SCP4) there would be transient, filtered views of the proposed development. The existing southern boundary hedgerow and a small off site woodland block would screen the west and south-west parts of the site, with only the south-eastern corner of the site visible. The housing under construction would also heavily filter views towards the proposed development. Additional tree, hedgerow and scrub planting proposed along the southern boundary would further filter views over time. Overall, there would be a minor adverse at year 1, with the proposals being mainly screened by the existing vegetation and housing under construction. At year 15 once the landscape framework has established on the southern boundary to screen views further, there would be a negligible adverse effect.
- Looking south-west towards the site from Bridleway 'T75/1' (SCP5) there would be transient, filtered views of the proposed development from a limited section of bridleway. The intervening mature trees and field boundary hedgerows, along with the sites eastern boundary hedgerow, would screen low level views. Only the upper halves of the proposed residential properties along the eastern edge of the development would be visible. The proposed tree planting along the eastern boundary between the existing hedgerow and proposed properties would overtime heavily filter views further. Overall, at year 1 there would be a minor adverse effect, reducing to negligible adverse effect at year 15 once the proposed tree planting has matured to heavily filter views.
- Looking east from Footpath 'T86/1' (SCP6) there would be transient, filtered oblique views west towards the proposed development from a limited section of footpath. The intervening mature trees and field boundary hedgerows along with the sites eastern boundary hedgerow would screen low level views, with only the upper halves of the proposed residential properties along the eastern edge of the development visible. The

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proposed tree planting along the eastern boundary between the existing hedgerow and proposed properties would overtime heavily filter views further. Overall, at year 1 there would be a minor adverse effect, reducing to negligible adverse at year 15 once the proposed landscape framework has matured to heavily filter views.

- From Byway 'T76A/3' (SCP7) no views would be possible, with the proposals being screened by the intervening vegetation and topography. There would be no change in the view, resulting in a neutral effect at year 1 and 15.
- From Footpath 'U26/3' (SCP8) there would be transient, filtered views of the proposed development for footpath users. Views of the proposed residential properties would be heavily filtered by intervening vegetation, with only the roofs visible, and would only form a small part of the overall view. The additional landscape framework along the western boundary would increase the screening over time. Overall, at year 1 there would be a negligible adverse effect, reducing to neutral at year 15 once the proposed landscape framework on the western boundary has matured.
- Looking south-east from Footpath 'T85/1' (SCP9) there would be a transient, filtered view of a small section of the proposed development. A small section of the south-west corner of the site would be visible above the existing boundary hedgerow through a gap in the intervening vegetation. This would form a very small part of the overall view and from this distance the proposals would be indistinguishable from the existing housing mass seen beyond the site. The proposed landscape framework on the western boundary once mature would further screen views of the proposed development. Overall there would be a negligible adverse effect at year 1, reducing to neutral at year 15 once the proposed landscape framework has matured.
- Looking south from Footpath 'T72/5' (SCP10) no views would be possible, with the proposals being screened by the intervening vegetation. There would be no change in the view, resulting in a neutral effect at year 1 and 15.

Regarding visual effects, due to the retention of the existing site boundary trees, hedgerows and surrounding relatively flat topography, the proposal would only be visible from a small number of nearby sections of footpaths and bridleways. At year 1 there are negligible and minor adverse visual effects to the local PRoW for the most part, with only major and moderate adverse effects from two viewpoints. There would be a major adverse effect from a section of footpath that passes through the site, and a moderate adverse effect from a section of footpath that has an open view towards the entire eastern boundary of the proposals. In the long-term, when the extensive proposed tree, hedgerow and scrub planting would be established, the effects would in the worst case be minor and moderate adverse from within and in close proximity to the site respectively, and negligible adverse and neutral all other viewpoints.

9.4 Response to Policy

9.4.1 National Policies

The proposed Landscape Framework would provide landscape and biodiversity enhancements in accordance with the NPPF.

9.4.2 Local Policies

The long-term beneficial impacts on the vegetation character elements and strengthening of field boundaries would directly support Local Plan Policy DM6.

9.4.3 Section Summary

The proposed development would respond positively to landscape related policies at National and Local levels. The proposal would not have a long-term adverse effect on important landscape features, national landscape character, historical features, ecologically designated sites, conservation areas and would therefore be in accordance with planning policy related to landscape and visual impacts. In addition, the proposed landscape framework would provide landscape and biodiversity enhancements, with a biodiversity net gain in accordance with local and national policy. There would be very limited adverse effect on the county landscape character area.

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10 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF COMMITTED DEVELOPMENTS

This section summarises the likely cumulative effects of the proposed development when considered with other committed developments (cumulative schemes).

The cumulative assessment assumes a worst case scenario whereby the proposed development and cumulative schemes are all complete at the same time.

10.1 Cumulative Schemes

The following site has been identified as a committed development that may alter the landscape and visual context of the site.

1. Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council – 21/00135/OUT (Residential development for up to 140 dwellings, with public open space, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS) (Outline- access only))

This scheme is located on the south on adjacent farmyard. The site plan is shown below (in grey) and includes a belt of green space along the northern boundary.



Figure 20: Current planning applications shown in grey to the south of the site.

Generally, a cumulative situation is considered not to occur visually in the long-term, as the adjacent scheme will be separated by the landscape framework on its northern boundary, the existing retained

vegetation and the proposed vegetation of this proposed development. Once vegetation has matured both proposals will not be perceived in combination from the surrounding area.

In combination, the scale/extent of the approved scheme and the proposed development will result in an additional minor adverse cumulative landscape effect due to the loss of pasture. However, this would continue to reduce in the long term to negligible adverse once the respective landscaping of the schemes matures and enhances other valued landscape features such as trees, hedgerows and field boundaries.

10.2 Section Summary

The cumulative effects of committed developments alongside the proposed development will have a neutral visual effect in the long term and an additional negligible adverse landscape effect in the long term.

11 CONCLUSION

Giles Stanley Ltd asked Weddle Landscape Design to prepare a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) to support planning application for a residential development at Shilton Road, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire.

The objectives of the LVA are to assess the landscape character of the site and its surroundings and to consider the landscape and visual qualities of the site, its function in the landscape and its contribution to the wider landscape. The work undertaken includes an assessment of the existing landscape features, together with a visual appraisal of the site and its context.

The LVA is used to inform the continued design development of the proposed development and to explain the likely landscape and visual effects that may arise as a result of the proposed development. Therefore, providing sufficient information for decision makers to determine the landscape and visual impact of the development.

Site Context

The site is located off Shilton Road, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire, 13km south-west of Leicester city centre. The dominant vegetation in the surrounding area is agricultural pasture and crops. The field boundaries are typically hedgerows with scattered trees. There are small scattered woodland blocks to the north-west, north and east of the site. Within a 3km radius of the site there are several brooks, streams, ponds and lakes. The site lies within the centre of a very shallow valley that runs west to east. The topography gently undulates to the north and south, with no prominent topographical features in the surrounding area. Earl Shilton is the major settlement in the surrounding area and extends to the south-west where it meets Barwell. These settlements are typically residential, with industrial and commercial properties mixed within.

Regarding nearby designations, there are no statutory landscape designations within 3km of the site; the closest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is 'Croft and Huncote Quarry SSSI', approx. 5km to the south-east; Regarding historic designations with 3km of the site there are 2 Grade II* Listed buildings, 25 Grade II listed buildings and a single Grade I listed building; The closest conservation areas to the site are to the south-west, with the nearest 'Earl Shilton Area' approximately 1.2km to the south-west; The public rights of way (PRoW) in the local area are a mix of Bridleways and footpaths. The Bridleways are generally located to the north and south of Earl Shilton, with Bridleway 'T95/3' running west from the north-west corner of the site. There is a network of footpaths surrounding and within Earl Shilton, with a footpath 'T94' running along the length of the western boundary connecting Earl Shilton with Shilton Road

Landscape Character

At a national level, the NCA 94: Leicestershire Vales describes an open landscape of gentle clay ridges and valleys, with an overall visual uniformity to the landscape and settlement pattern. Land use characterised by a mixture of pasture and arable agriculture that has developed on the neutral clay soils. Woodland character derived largely from spinneys and copses on the ridges and the more undulating land and from waterside and hedgerow trees and hedgerows. Diverse levels of tranquillity associated with contrasts between busy urban areas and some deeply rural parts. Large settlements dominate the open character of the landscape. Leicester, Lutterworth, Hinckley and Market Harborough and related infrastructure, including major roads, are often visually dominant.

At a county level, the site is located within LCT 'Rolling Farmland' and lies within the LCA 'E – Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland' within the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment'. Key characteristics include undulating arable and pasture farmland with gentle valleys sloping down to the Ashby Canal, Tweed River and associated tributaries; small to medium scale

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rectilinear field pattern divided by low hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees typical of parliamentary enclosure, with smaller pasture fields around settlements, creating a largely unified field pattern and providing continuity with the agricultural pasture; rural settlement pattern with former agricultural villages typically demonstrating a historic core, modern outskirts and sporadic farmsteads on the outer edges, within a strong rural setting.

The localised landscape is relatively contained and its character is influenced by the presence of the pasture and horse paddocks defined by hedgerow boundaries.

The Site

The site is approximately 5.5ha and comprises of predominantly modified grassland used as grazing pasture. The site is relatively flat, sloping slightly from south to north. The highest point is 99m on the southern boundary and the lowest point is 92m AOD at the north-east corner of the site. The site is mainly comprised of intensively grazed pasture. All boundaries have mature hedgerows in place, along with a central hedgerow. There are trees present alongside and within the western and central hedgerows

Vehicle access into the site is off the unnamed track (that incorporates Footpath 'T94/3') on the western boundary. A single footpath, 'T93/3' runs along the southern boundary of the site, entering at the south-east corner. There is no other public access to the site. Due to the site's position near the bottom of a gentle sloping hillside and the surrounding mature vegetation, intervisibility with the site is limited to relatively short views to the south.

Analysis of the main site as a landscape receptor concludes that it is of **medium** sensitivity.

Visibility of the Site

The Visual Appraisal Plan and Site Context Photos 1 to 10 demonstrate that due to the open arable fields with boundary hedgerows, tree belts and relatively flat topography to the north, east and south, the site is visible from a small number of nearby sections of footpaths, roads and bridleway. These views are a mix of open and filtered views of the site's boundary vegetation, with partial views of the pasture and paddock within the site.

Wider views are curtailed by a mix of the surrounding vegetation and topography.

The Proposed Development

The outline proposals are for a residential development of up to 120 dwellings, including affordable housing, enhanced public right of way, public amenity space and habitat creation. The scheme would be supported by a robust landscape framework, which would incorporate retention and management of the existing trees and hedgerows, additional native tree, hedgerow and scrub planting to the boundaries, meadow grassland and pond creation.

Landscape and Visual Effects

Regarding landscape features, the proposed development would have a long-term moderate and minor beneficial effects on the most sensitive and visually apparent features of trees and hedgerows respectively, along with grassland meadow. There would also be moderate and minor beneficial effects on Field pattern and native scrub. There would be major adverse effect on Land use and buildings, a moderate adverse effect on grassland pasture, a minor adverse effects on PRoW and a neutral effect on topography.

Regarding landscape character, the proposed development would not adversely affect key characteristics of the published National character area, with a neutral effect in the long-term. At the County level there would be negligible adverse effects in the long term, as the proposal would retain and enhance the trees/tree belt and hedgerows that are important character feature and provides visual screening between the LCA and the proposals. At the localised landscape and site levels, the proposal would initially have a moderate and major adverse effect due to the removal and pasture and introduction of residential built form. These effects would reduce to minor adverse once the landscape framework has established and enhance other local and site characteristics and heavily screen the proposed development.

Regarding visual effects, due to the retention of the existing site boundary trees, hedgerows and surrounding relatively flat topography, the proposal would only be visible from a small number of nearby sections of footpaths and bridleways. At year 1 there are negligible and minor adverse visual effects to the local PRoW for the most part, with only major and moderate adverse effects from two viewpoints. There would be a major adverse effect from a section of footpath that passes through the site, and a moderate adverse effect from a section of footpath that has an open view towards the entire eastern boundary of the proposals. In the long-term, when the extensive proposed tree, hedgerow and scrub planting would be established, the effects would in the worst case be minor and moderate adverse from within and in close proximity to the site respectively, and negligible adverse and neutral all other viewpoints.

Response to Landscape Related Planning Policy

The proposed development would respond positively to landscape related policies at National and Local levels. The proposal would not have a long-term adverse effect on important landscape features, national landscape character, historical features, ecologically designated sites, conservation areas and would therefore be in accordance with planning policy related to landscape and visual impacts. In addition, the proposed landscape framework would provide landscape and biodiversity enhancements, with a biodiversity net gain in accordance with local and national policy. There would be very limited adverse effect on the county landscape character area.

Cumulative Effects of Permitted Development

The cumulative effects of committed developments alongside the proposed development will have a neutral visual effect in the long term and an additional negligible adverse landscape effect in the long term.

Overall Summary

The proposed residential development is considered to be sited suitably within the landscape and in the long-term would have a limited impact on the character of the surrounding landscape.

Due to the retention of the existing site boundary vegetation and the surrounding relatively flat topography, combined with additional boundary and screen planting, the small number of adverse effects are very localised. Adverse visual effects would only be experienced from the PRoW on the southern boundary of the site and from a small number of nearby receptors to the south and east of the site. There would be adverse landscape effects on land use and grassland pasture due to its replacement with residential buildings.

The slight harm on the immediate landscape and visual character would need to be balanced against the benefits of the providing new homes within the area.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: LVA Methodology

Appendix 2: Visual Appraisal Plan and Site Context Photographs

Appendix 3: Published Landscape Character Extracts

Appendix 4: Drawing 2042-004 Landscape Masterplan

APPENDIX 1: LVA METHODOLOGY

1.0 Introduction

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment methodology is based on 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition, 2013), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. Impacts examined as part of the assessment process fall into the following two categories:

- Landscape impacts. This part of the assessment deals with impacts on the landscape resource. The landscape resource is examined in terms of features, character, quality, value and resulting sensitivity to change. Impacts are then analysed in relation to these factors.
- Visual impacts. This part of the assessment deals with impacts on views of the landscape and examines public perception of landscape change. Potential visual receptors with views of the proposed development are identified and their sensitivity examined. Impacts are then analysed in relation to the nature and sensitivity of these views.

The existing landscape and visual circumstances at the development site are examined, to establish baseline conditions. Impacts of the proposed development can then be examined against this baseline. After potential impacts are identified, these are addressed through alterations to the development proposals to avoid, reduce or mitigate against and adverse impacts can then be addressed.

This methodology is adapted to the specific nature and landscape context of different development projects, with different elements of the various areas of analysis being more or less important.

2.0 Baseline Studies

The purpose of baseline studies are to identify the existing landscape features, characteristics, potential visual receptors and the way in which the landscape is experienced. The following are typically undertaken as part of the baseline studies:

- Identification of the extents of the study area. The extent of this is based on professional judgement and may vary depending on the type of development proposed.
- A desktop study of patterns and scale of landform, land use and built development, relevant current planning policy (including landscape designations) and landscape character publications. This provides guidance on the general landscape character of the surrounding area.
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).
- Identification of potential representative viewpoints within the study area. The viewpoints chosen are not intended to be exhaustive but rather to build up a picture of the areas from which the proposed development is potentially visible.
- Site visits to public viewpoints to determine the likely visibility of the development.

3.0 Assessment of Landscape Effects

The GLVIA 3 in Paragraph 5.1 states that:

"An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource."

In order to assess the landscape effects, the sensitivity of the landscape receptor and the magnitude of effect experienced as a result of the Proposed Development is assessed.

Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

The sensitivity of a landscape receptor is a combination of the value of the landscape receptor and the susceptibility of the landscape receptor to the type of change proposed, using professional judgement.

Landscape Value

The GLVIA 3 Glossary defines landscape value as:

"The relevant value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a variety of reasons"

Landscapes, including their character and features, may be designated at a range of levels (international, national, county and local level), examples of which are set out in **Error! Reference source not found..**

Level	Description
High	Features or areas likely to be of international or national importance, designated at national or international level
Medium	Features or areas likely to be of county or borough importance, designated at county or borough level
Low	Features likely to be of importance to the local community but have little or no wider recognition of their value, and are not designated
Very Low	Features or areas with little or no evidence of being valued by the community, and are not designated.

Table A1: Landscape Value - Designations

The assessment of value is based on a combination of the importance of landscape-related planning designations and the following attributes:

- Landscape quality (condition): the measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical landscape character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
- Scenic quality: the extent that the landscape receptor appeals to the visual senses.
- Perceptual aspects: the extent that the landscape receptor is recognised for its perceptual qualities (e.g. remoteness or tranquillity).
- Rarity: the presence of unusual elements or features.
- Representativeness: the presence of particularly characteristic features.
- Recreation: the extent that recreational activities contribute to the landscape receptor; and
- Association: the extent that cultural or historical associations contribute to the landscape receptor.

The overall value for each landscape receptor is categorised as High, Medium, Low or Very Low.

Landscape Susceptibility

The GLVIA 3 Glossary defines landscape susceptibility as:

"The ability of a defined landscape...receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences"

The following criteria is taken into consideration in the assessment of landscape susceptibility, although not all criteria are equally applicable or important within a given landscape / type of development proposed:

- Landform;
- Pattern/Complexity;
- Composition;
- Landcover; and
- Relationship of a given landscape area to any existing settlements or developments.

Landscape susceptibility of the character of the landscape / of the features is categorised as High, Medium or Low, as set out in **Error! Reference source not found.**. Landscape susceptibility can also be considered in the context of the capacity of landscape / landscape features to accommodate change. A landscape / landscape feature of low susceptibility would have a high capacity to accommodate change, and a landscape / landscape feature of high susceptibility would have a low capacity to accommodate change.

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	The receptor is likely to have little scope to accommodate the type of change proposed without undue effects upon its overall integrity.
Medium	The receptor is likely to have some scope to accommodate the type of change proposed without undue effects upon its overall integrity.
Low	The receptor is likely to be able to accommodate the type of change proposed with little or no effect upon its overall integrity.

Table A2: Landscape Susceptibility

Based on the combination of value and susceptibility, an assessment of landscape sensitivity is reached, defined as High, Medium and Low as shown in Table A3.

Sensitivity	Criteria
High	A landscape receptor of potentially international or national importance. The landscape features and character are the basis for designation and are likely to be largely intact and in a good condition with little scope to accommodate the type of change proposed without undue effects upon its overall integrity.
Medium	A landscape receptor that is potentially valued at a county level. The landscape may be in reasonably good condition with some scope to accommodate the type of change proposed without undue effects upon its overall integrity.
Low	A landscape receptor that may or may not be valued at a local level and may comprise a number of detracting elements. The landscape may be in a poor condition and can accommodate the type of change proposed with little or no effect upon its overall integrity.

Table A3: Landscape Sensitivity (Value + Susceptibility)

Landscape Magnitude of Effect

The landscape magnitude of effect is informed by judgements about the size and extent of the change brought about by the Proposed Development both in terms of the existing landscape character and landscape elements / features and the addition of new landscape elements / features, and its duration and reversibility as shown in Table A4.

Magnitude	Criteria
Large	Total alteration to the existing landscape receptor; may affect an extensive area.
Medium	Partial alteration to the existing landscape receptor; may affect a wide area.
Small	Slight alteration to the existing landscape receptor; may affect a restricted area.
Very Small	Very slight alteration to the existing landscape receptor; may affect a limited area.
None	No change to the existing landscape receptor.

Table A4: Landscape Magnitude of Effect

4.0 Assessment of Visual Effects

The GLVIA 3 Paragraph 6.1 states that:

"An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity."

In order to assess the visual effects, the sensitivity of the visual receptor and the magnitude of effect experienced as a result of the Proposed Development is assessed.

Viewpoint Selection

In order to assess the effects on visual receptors, a selection of publicly accessible viewpoints is made, which could include representative viewpoints (e.g. representing views of users of a particular footpath) and specific viewpoints (e.g. a key view from a specific visitor attraction).

Views are categorised as either near distance, medium distance or long distance with the relevant distance's dependant on the size and nature of the development, based on professional judgement. The type of view is typically described firstly as transient (i.e. in passing) or fixed (i.e. from a static location) and then in relation to being filtered (i.e. through intervening vegetation), oblique (i.e. not within the direct field of view), or open (i.e. uninterrupted).

Photographs of representative viewpoints are taken at eye level with a focal length of 35mm (equivalent to 50mm on a conventional 35mm camera), to create the view which is generally accepted as being closest to that seen by the human eye, in accordance with the Landscape Institute Advice Technical Guidance Note 06/19 'Visual Representation of development proposals', September 2019'. The photographs used are intended only to give an indication of the view discussed and are not a substitute for visiting the site in person.

Panoramic views consisting of photographs taken by the criteria outlined above are merged together using computer software. No other photographic manipulation is undertaken.

Due to the infinite number of possible viewpoints to choose from, those chosen are done so on the basis of their location in relation to the site and landform. These are further reduced to concentrate on those receptors that are identified as being of 'high' or 'very high' sensitivity. Beyond the area chosen, the visual impacts of the development are not considered likely to be significant. At these distances, the development is likely to be screened by local features, such as landform, buildings and vegetation or become a recessive element within the landscape.

A brief description of the existing land use of the area is provided and includes reference to existing settlements, transport routes and vegetation cover, as well as local landscape designations, elements of cultural and heritage value and local landmarks or tourist destinations. These factors combine to provide an understanding of landscape value and sensitivity, and an indication of particular key views and viewpoints that are available to visual receptors and therefore are to be included in the visual assessment.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

The sensitivity of a visual receptor is a consideration of the value of the view and the susceptibility of the visual receptor to the type of change proposed, using professional judgement, as set out in Table A5 and A6 respectively.

Level	Value
High	View from a location that is likely to be of national importance, either designated or with national cultural associations, where the view obtained forms an important part of the experience.
Medium	View from a location that is likely to be of local importance, either designated or with local cultural associations, where the view obtained forms part of the experience.
Low	View from a location that is not designated, with minimal or no cultural associations.

Table A5: Visual Value

Level	Susceptibility
High	People at their place of residence; People engaged in outdoor recreation, including users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), whose attention is likely to be focused on the landscape; and People travelling along recognised scenic routes or where their appreciation of the view contributes to the amenity experience of their journey.
Medium	People engaged in outdoor sport and recreation, where their appreciation of their surroundings is incidental to their enjoyment; and People travelling on secondary roads or country lanes, rail or other transport routes.
Low	People travelling on major roads; People at their place of work.

Table A6: Visual Susceptibility

Based on the combination of value and susceptibility, an assessment of visual sensitivity is reached, defined as High, Medium and Low as shown in Table A7.

Sensitivity	Criteria
High	Typically a view from a location that is likely to be of national importance, where the view obtained forms an important part of the experience. The receptor may be a person in their place of residence / engaged in outdoor recreation using local public rights of ways.
Medium	Typically a view from a location that is likely to be of local importance. The receptor may be engaged in outdoor sport or travelling secondary roads or country lanes.
Low	Typically a view from a location that has no cultural associations or designations. The receptor may be travelling a major road or at their place of work.

Table A7: Visual Sensitivity (Value + Susceptibility)

Visual Magnitude of Effect

In the evaluation of the effects on views and the visual amenity of the identified receptors, the magnitude of visual effect is typically described with reference to:

- The scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition;
- The duration and nature of the effect, whether temporary or permanent, intermittent or continuous;
- The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
- The distance of the viewer from the Proposed Development; and
- The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.

The magnitude of visual effect classifications are set out in Table A8.

Magnitude	Criteria
Large	The proposals will cause a pronounced or complete change or contrast to the existing view, resulting in the loss or addition of features that will substantially alter the composition of the view.
Medium	The proposals will cause a noticeable change or contrast in the view, resulting from the loss or addition of features in the view and will noticeably alter the composition of the view.
Small	The proposals will cause an unobtrusive change or contrast in the view, which would not materially alter the composition of the view.
Very Small	The proposals will cause a barely perceptible change or contrast in the view, which would not materially alter the composition of the view.
None	No change discernible in the view.

Table A8: Visual Magnitude of Effect

5.0 Significance of Effects

In order to draw conclusions about the significance of landscape or visual effects, the combination of the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of effects are considered for the Proposed Development at Year 1 and Year 15.

Significance is a combination of the magnitude and the sensitivity of the receptor. Impacts of greater magnitude are likely to be more significant. Significance will also depend on the sensitivity of the landscape to change, assessed in the baseline analysis.

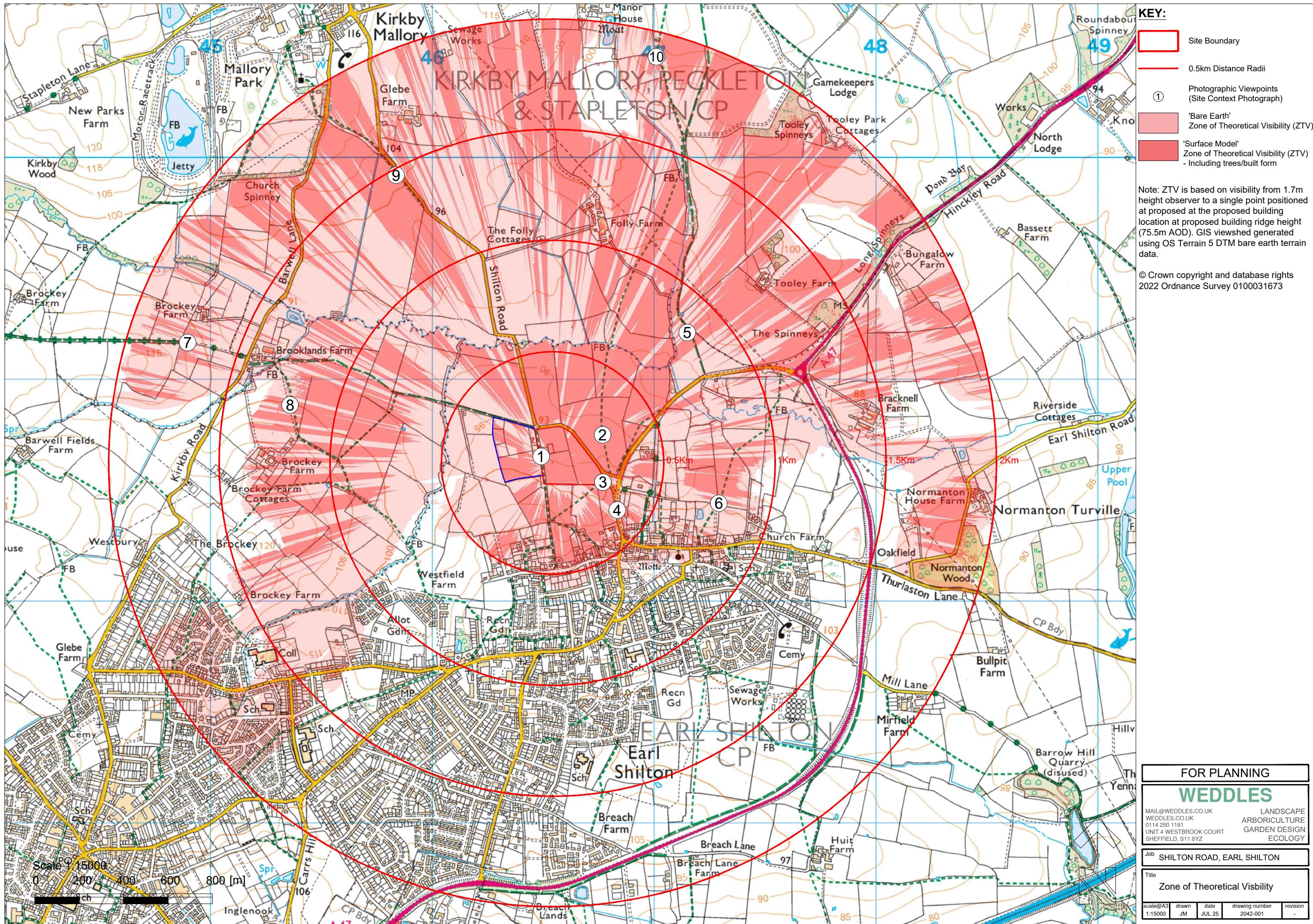
Effect	Landscape
Major Beneficial	Alterations that result in a considerable / total and distinct improvement of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be restored or reintroduced as part of the Proposed Development.
Moderate Beneficial	Alterations that result in a partial improvement of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be largely restored or reintroduced.
Minor Beneficial	Alterations that result in a slight improvement of the existing landscape resource. Characteristic features would be partially restored.
Negligible Beneficial	Alterations that result in a very slight improvement to the existing landscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.
Neutral	No alteration to any of the components that contribute to the existing landscape resource.
Negligible Adverse	Alterations that result in a very slight deterioration to the existing landscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.
Minor Adverse	Alterations that result in a slight deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Characteristic features would be partially lost.
Moderate Adverse	Alterations that result in a partial deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be largely lost.
Major Adverse	Alterations that result in a considerable / total and distinct deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be wholly lost.

Table A9: Landscape Effects Criteria

Effect	Visual
Major Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a pronounced improvement in the existing view.
Moderate Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable improvement in the existing view.
Minor Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a limited improvement in the existing view.
Negligible Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view.
Neutral	No change to the existing view.
Negligible Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view.
Minor Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a limited deterioration in the existing view.
Moderate Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable deterioration in the existing view.
Major Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a pronounced deterioration in the existing view.

Table A101: Visual Effects Criteria

APPENDIX 2: VISUAL APPRAISAL PLAN AND SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPHS



APPENDIX 3: PUBLISHED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER EXTRACTS

Introduction & Summary

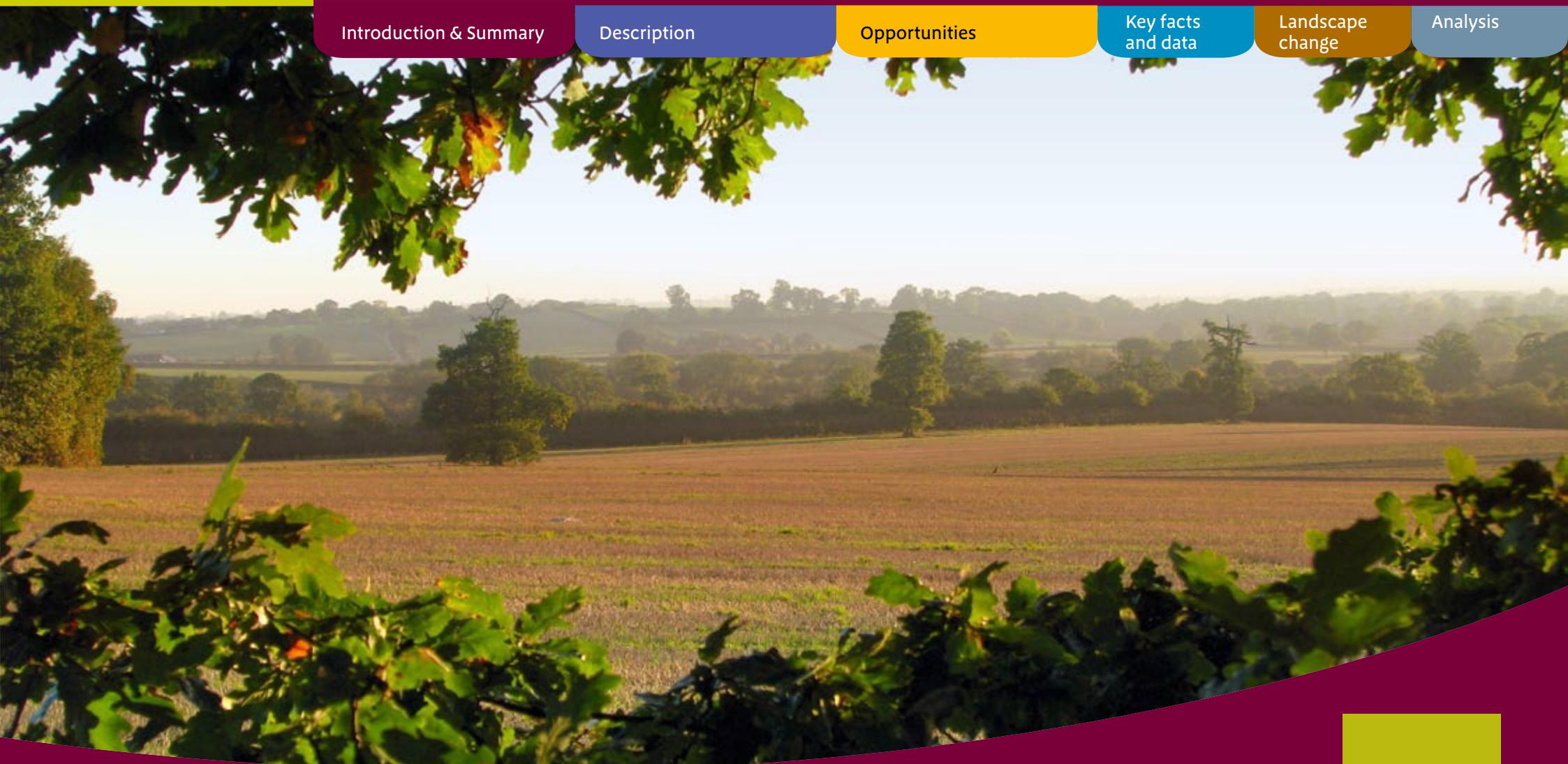
Description

Opportunities

Key facts
and data

Landscape
change

Analysis



Introduction

As part of Natural England's responsibilities as set out in the Natural Environment White Paper¹, Biodiversity 2020² and the European Landscape Convention³, we are revising profiles for England's 159 National Character Areas (NCAs). These are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.

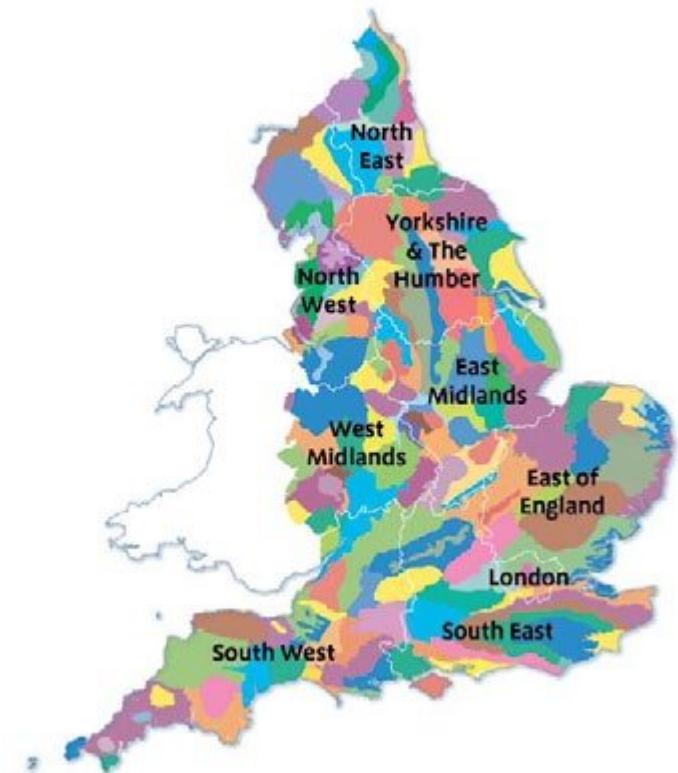
NCA profiles are guidance documents which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change.

Each profile includes a description of the natural and cultural features that shape our landscapes, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics and ecosystem services. Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) are suggested, which draw on this integrated information. The SEOs offer guidance on the critical issues, which could help to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future.

NCA profiles are working documents which draw on current evidence and knowledge. We will aim to refresh and update them periodically as new information becomes available to us.

We would like to hear how useful the NCA profiles are to you. You can contact the NCA team by emailing ncaprofiles@naturalengland.org.uk

National Character Areas map



¹ The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature, Defra (2011; URL: www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf)

² Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services, Defra (2011; URL: www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf)

³ European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe (2000; URL: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm>)

Summary

Leicestershire Vales National Character Area (NCA) shares many characteristics with the neighbouring Northamptonshire Vales NCA. The Leicestershire Vales extend between the town of Hinckley in the west to Leicester in the north-east and southwards towards Market Harborough and Lutterworth. This is a large, relatively open, uniform landscape composed of low-lying clay vales interrupted by a range of varied river valleys. Its sense of place comes less from its overall landform and more from its visually dominant settlements and views towards surrounding higher ground. The city of Leicester dominates the north-eastern corner of the NCA.

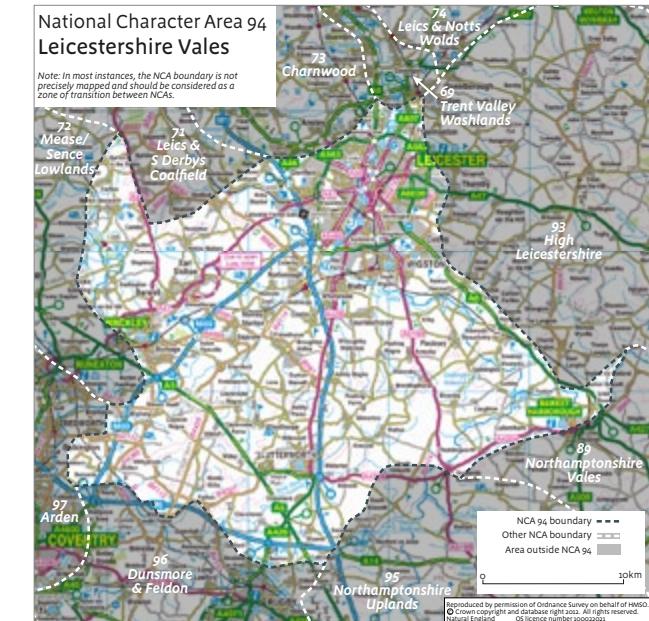
Other large- to medium-sized settlements include the towns of Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Hinckley, with many attractive small towns, villages and buildings and features of historic interest in between. The north of the area has a predominance of settlements and a general lack of tranquillity; this contrasts strongly with the distinctly more rural feel in the southern part of the area, where a mixture of arable and pastoral farmland is found.

Country houses, historic designed parkland, waterside trees and meadows are common throughout. The area is rich in historic character, with country houses, parkland and surviving examples of ridge and furrow. There are numerous features and sites of historic interest such as the site of the Battle of Bosworth, near the village of Sutton Cheney, which is of national significance. It attracts many thousands of visitors each year as the location where the Wars of the Roses concluded.

Major road networks that traverse the area include motorways, notably the M1 and the M69. Other main roads include the A6 and the A5, both of which have ancient origins.

Other than the historic environment, most of the ecosystem services within this NCA are locally beneficial, but its river valleys – especially the River Soar and its tributaries – provide regional benefits for water flow and water quality.

There are ongoing challenges in this area, principally development growth of the city of Leicester and many of the smaller towns which has an impact on the rural parts of this NCA. However, development also provides opportunities to raise design standards, strengthen sense of place and increase resilience of some habitats, by improving habitat connectivity and networks through associated green infrastructure provision.



Statements of Environmental Opportunity

SEO 1: Protect and appropriately manage the strong historic character and heritage and the geological assets within the rural and urban landscapes, maintaining the evidence of past land use and connections between agriculture, settlement pattern and topography, as well as the significant places and events that took place within the area, so that the area can be enjoyed by all. Ensure that development is fully integrated into and informed by the landscape.

SEO 2: Manage, conserve and enhance the woodlands, hedgerows, streams and rivers – particularly the rivers Soar, Sence, Swift and Welland – in both rural and urban areas, to enhance biodiversity and recreation opportunities; improve water quality, flow and availability; benefit soil quality; and limit soil erosion.

SEO 3: Increase, manage and enhance the recreational assets, principally the rights of way network, country parks such as Watermead and historic linear features such as the canals. Improve access to these assets and the open countryside from the city of Leicester and surrounding rural communities and provide green infrastructure to help improve people's health and wellbeing.

SEO 4: Create new habitats where opportunities exist, such as woodlands and wetlands at old gravel extraction sites, to extend, link or buffer areas of existing habitat to reduce the impacts of fragmentation. Manage existing grassland, woodlands, coverts and spinneys that contribute to sense of place, enhancing biodiversity resilience and habitat networks.



There are several large to medium sized settlements such as Lutterworth with many buildings and features of historic interest.

Description

Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

Leicestershire Vales National Character Area (NCA) consists of low-lying clay vales and river valleys and shares many characteristics with Northamptonshire Vales NCA to the south-east. The town of Market Harborough nestles between the Northamptonshire and Leicestershire Vales NCAs and the A4303 runs along the border. To the north-east lies the higher ground of High Leicestershire NCA, and further north lie Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield NCA and Charnwood NCA, which rise quite steeply from the low-lying land north-west of Leicester. To the north-west of the NCA there is a more gradual transition to the flat, glacial till-dominated edge of the Mease/Sence Lowlands NCA, while to the south-west there is an equally gradual transition to Dunsmore and Feldon NCA and Arden NCA. The Northamptonshire Uplands and Northamptonshire Vales NCAs are to the south.

The area is split geologically into two areas, with the western half underlain by the Mercia Mudstone Group and the eastern half by the Lias Group. The latter continues into the neighbouring Northamptonshire Vales NCA.

The main rivers are the Soar, Sence, Swift and Welland. The River Swift runs out of the area in the south-west into the neighbouring Dunsmore and Feldon NCA. The Soar is fed by the Wreake in the north-west, and the River Sence flows into the area in the south-east. The slightly higher ground around Market Harborough separates the Soar and Welland catchments. Saddington Reservoir provides water for the Grand Union Canal, the 'Leicester Line' of which runs



The Grand Union Canal. The 'Leicester Line' runs north from Norton Junction to Leicester where it joins the River Soar to provide a link to the River Trent and to the Trent and Mersey Canal.

north from Norton Junction in the Northamptonshire Uplands NCA to Leicester, where it joins the River Soar to provide a link to the River Trent and to the Trent and Mersey Canal.

Expansive views into the area are afforded from the fringes of the elevated clay wolds, with the large settlements of Leicester, Hinckley and Market Harborough dominating the views.

The M1 cuts through the middle of the NCA, linking London with the North, and the M69 links the NCA with Dunsmore and Feldon, and Arden in Warwickshire. The A5, historically known as the Roman road of Watling Street, and the Fosse Way (the Bath to Lincoln road) are strategic routes through the area, linking London with Holyhead in Wales and linking Bath to Lincoln. Rail routes run north-south through Leicester, going south to Kettering, Bedford, Luton and London; and north to Derby, Nottingham, Sheffield and Leeds. Junctions north of Leicester station go east to Peterborough and Cambridge and west to Nuneaton and Birmingham.

The area also includes part of the 160-kilometre Leicestershire Round trail, which links several NCAs including Charnwood and High Leicestershire, and National Cycle Routes 6 (London to the Lake District) and 63 (Burton upon Trent to Wisbech in Cambridgeshire).



Improved management of the rivers Soar, Sence, Swift and Welland could enhance biodiversity and improve the water quality, flow and availability.

Key characteristics

- An open landscape of gentle clay ridges and valleys underlain by Mercia Mudstone and Lias groups bedrock but with an extensive cover of superficial deposits occasionally giving rise to moderately steep scarp slopes. There is an overall visual uniformity to the landscape and settlement pattern.
- Land use characterised by a mixture of pasture and arable agriculture that has developed on the neutral clay soils.



The NCA's woodland character is derived largely from spinneys and copses on the ridges and more undulating land and hedgerow trees and hedgerows.

- Distinctive river valley of the Soar and Swift, with flat flood plains and gravel terraces together with tributaries including the Sence. Riverside meadows and waterside trees and shrubs are common, along with waterbodies resulting from gravel extraction.
- Woodland character derived largely from spinneys and copses on the ridges and the more undulating land and from waterside and hedgerow trees and hedgerows. The density, height and pattern of hedgerows varies throughout.
- Diverse levels of tranquillity associated with contrasts between busy urban areas and some deeply rural parts. Large settlements dominate the open character of the landscape. Leicester, Lutterworth, Hinckley and Market Harborough and related infrastructure, including major roads, are often visually dominant.
- Frequent small towns and large villages often characterised by red brick buildings and attractive stone buildings in older village centres and eastern towns and villages. Frequent, imposing spired churches are also characteristic, together with fine examples of individual historic buildings.
- Rich and varied historic landscape, with the nationally important Bosworth Battlefield near Sutton Cheney, prominent historic parklands and country houses, ridge-and-furrow earthworks and important medieval settlement remains, for example at Wistow Hall, Gumley, Knaptoft and Peatling Magna.



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Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

The sensitivity of areas of pressure

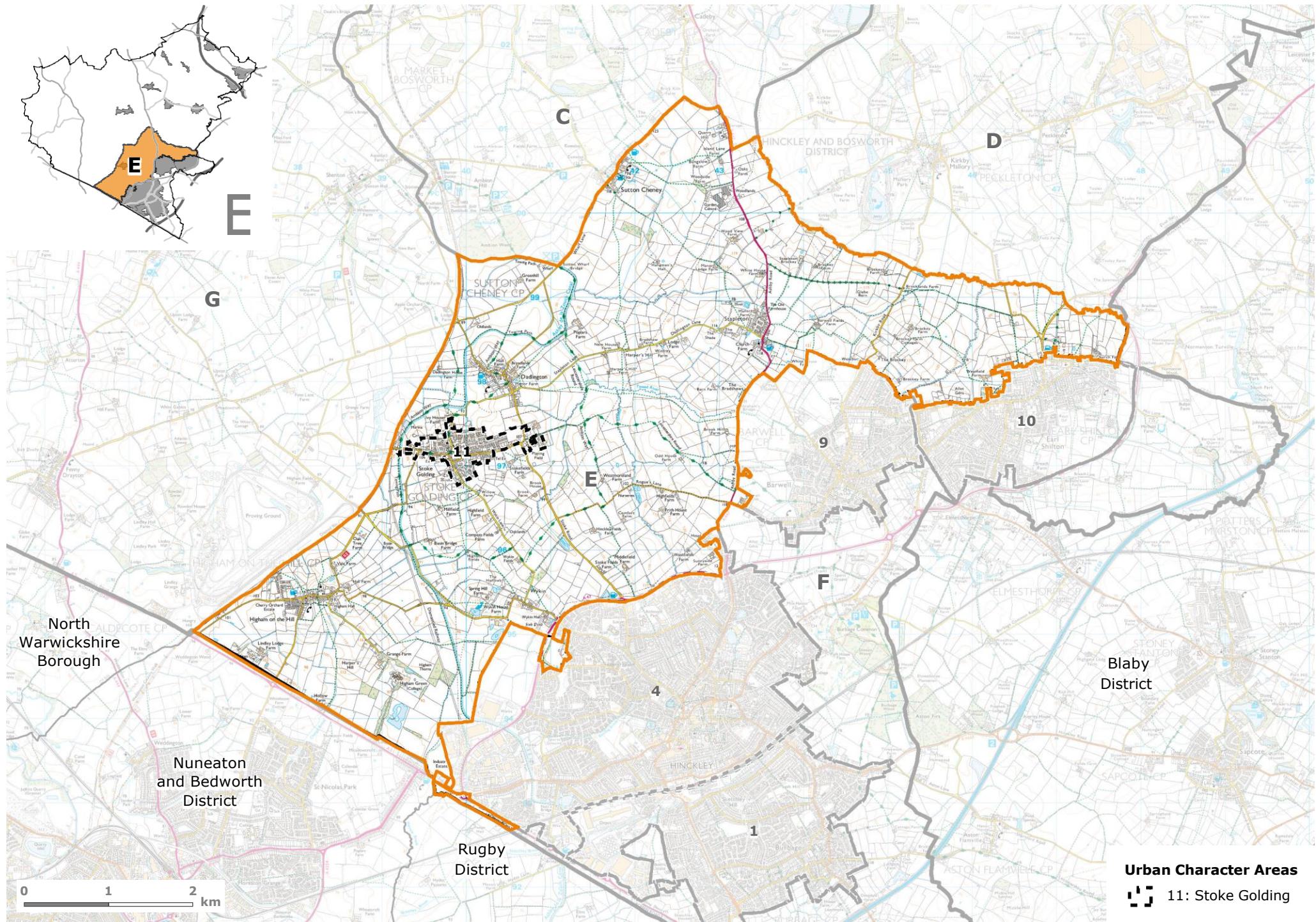
Final Report

Prepared by LUC

September 2017



LCA E: Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland



LCA E: STOKE GOLING ROLLING FARMLAND



Location and Boundaries

5.78 The character area is located to the north of Hinckley, Burbage, Earl Shilton and Barwell in the south of the Borough. It comprises the undulating farmland between the lower land of LCA G: Sence Lowlands to the west, the more elevated land of LCA D: Newbold and Desford Rolling Farmland to the north east and the parkland of LCA C: Bosworth Parkland to the north.

5.79 Villages within the character area:

- *Stoke Golding*
- *Higham on the Hill*
- *Dadlington*
- *Stapleton*

Key Characteristics

- 1) **Undulating arable and pasture farmland with gentle valleys sloping down to the Ashby Canal, Tweed River and associated tributaries.**
- 2) **Small to medium scale rectilinear field pattern divided by low hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees typical of parliamentary enclosure, with smaller pasture fields around settlements, creating a largely unified field pattern and providing continuity with the agricultural past.**
- 3) **Rural settlement pattern with former agricultural villages typically demonstrating a historic core, modern outskirts and sporadic farmsteads on the outer edges, within a strong rural setting.**
- 4) **Historic villages occupying higher ground with attractive red brick cottages fronting onto the road and connected by rural lanes with grass verges and well-maintained hedgerows.**
- 5) **Church spires and towers within villages in and around the character area form distinctive landmarks on the skyline.**
- 6) **Associations with the Battle of Bosworth, particularly at Crown Hill in Stoke Golding.**
- 7) **Ashby Canal has affiliations with coal mining that has influenced the landscape over the years and is designated as a conservation area. It is now important for biodiversity and tourism.**



Landscape Character

The area is characterised by Triassic Mercia Mudstone overlain by glaciofluvial and glacial deposits on areas of higher ground including at Stoke Golding and other small villages. Alluvium is also found in relation to the Tweed River and its tributaries which flow through the lower, flatter land creating a gently undulating landscape. Soils are made up of mainly slowly permeable, fine loamy soils with some calcareous clayey soils in the east. Reddish fine loamy/clayey soils which are more seasonally waterlogged predominate in the west. The Ashby Canal runs through the character area between Sutton Wharf Bridge near Sutton Cheney and Hinckley.

- 1 Land cover is characterised by a mix of arable and pasture farmland arranged in small to medium scale fields in a simple regular pattern. Areas containing more irregular (curved or dog-leg) field shapes are likely to be post medieval field systems which add visual and historic interest to the landscape. These are present, for example, north of Stapleton (east of the A447), north of Hinckley around Rogue's Lane and between Stapleton and Barwell. Smaller fields are often found around settlements which can contain species-rich grassland where not given over to agricultural intensification and mature trees valuable for biodiversity. Tree cover in the wider character area is formed of mature trees within low hedgerows frequently define field boundaries, and occasional woodland clumps along small watercourses give the area a relatively wooded appearance.
- 5.8 Despite its proximity to the built up area of Hinckley, the area has a rural character, with little light pollution – particularly in the north of the area away from the main towns.
- 5.8 The landscape is easily accessible with a number of public footpaths linking the settlements and canal including the Leicestershire Round long distance footpath and Ambion Way recreation

route. Electricity pylons transect the landscape and solar farms also occupy two relatively large areas south of Stoke Golding. These are generally well-integrated in the landscape amongst mature vegetation and subtle changes in landform and so have limited influence on the predominantly rural landscape.

- 5.84 Hedgerows with trees and occasional woodland copses add visual interest to an otherwise open landscape. Occasional long distance views can be obtained from the high points across agricultural fields to distant horizons. Church spires form distinctive landmarks, for example the Church of St Margaret of Antioch at Stoke Golding from north of Higham on the Hill.
- 5.85 The settlement pattern is rural: villages occupy higher land, many of which developed from former farming communities and retain agricultural influences. Villages such as Stoke Golding and Higham on the Hill have a strong sense of place and form attractive features in views across the landscape, with red brick farmhouses and cottages and attractive stone buildings in older village centres focussed around spired churches. Working farms, including some modern complexes, are situated around the settlement edge along primary routes in and out of the village. Settlements are connecting by (sometimes winding) country lanes and are lined by grass verges and low hedgerows which provide a rural setting and sense of unity to the landscape.
- 5.86 The settlement edges of Barwell and Earl Shilton are relatively well-integrated along their northern edges. Between Barwell and Hinckley however, the built form of Barwell is prominent occupying the hilltop and slopes.
- 5.87 **Stoke Golding** is the largest of the villages in the area overlooking the undulating countryside and is characterised by former farm buildings. It is designated as a Conservation Area. Stoke Golding



is described further within the separate Urban Character Area.

- 5. **Higham on the Hill** is a small village comprising attractive red brick cottages with blue brick detailing. New development has occurred to the north and appears incongruous to the village core due to the use of modern building materials.
- 5. 9 **Dadlington** is a small linear village consisting of large red brick buildings set back from the road and a large farm complex at the centre. It has physical connections with Stoke Golding, being located only a short distance away.
- 5.90 **Stapleton** is characterised by small, red brick bungalows arranged in a grid pattern with farmsteads situated around the outer edges of the village.

Historical and Cultural Influences

- 5.91 Part of the nationally important Bosworth Battlefield lies within the character area. It is of historic importance as the site of the iconic Battle of Bosworth in 1485 which brought the Tudor dynasty to the throne and saw the last death of an English king in battle. The battlefield remains largely undeveloped and allows understanding of the battle to be appreciated.
- 5.9 Stoke Golding has strong connections to the Battle of Bosworth. Crown Hill, to the north-west of Stoke Golding is known as the location where Henry VII was crowned King of England following his victory.
- 5.9 The Ashby Canal, built to connect the coal mining areas north of the borough with the Coventry Canal, is designated a Conservation Area and a reminder of the industrial heritage of the area. It opened in 1798, operating between Ashby Wolds and Market Bosworth, and was linked to the Coventry Canal a few years later.

- 5.94 A square moated site at Stapleton is designated a Scheduled Monument. It forms one of two original moats that were built in the area and survives in relatively good condition.
- 5.95 Earthworks and buried remains of a Saxon burial mound are located adjacent to the medieval farmstead at Park House on the edge of Stoke Golding, also designated a Scheduled Monument.
- 5.96 Higham on the Hill is home to the only complete Norman tower in the south of Leicestershire whilst its peal of bells includes the Armada bell cast by Thomas Newcombe in 1589.
- 5.97 Many isolated farmsteads are scattered throughout the landscape and are likely to have been built in the 18th and 19th century following the enclosing of the previously-open fields.

- 5.9 Tooley Park which was part of Leicester Forest was known as Shilton Park and its estate comprised some 600 acres on which a magnificent mansion stood.

Natural Influences

- 5.99 Sporadic areas of deciduous woodland punctuate the small watercourses flowing through the landscape.
- 5. Hedgerows and other linear features provide valuable linkages to other habitats. Mature trees, both individual trees and as integral part of hedgerows are important for biodiversity in the area in the context of limited woodland cover. There are possible veteran trees around Dadlington and Stoke Golding
- 5.101 Little Fields Farm Meadow and the meadow and pond at Brook Farm contain communities of mesotrophic grassland and are designated as Local Wildlife Sites.

Key Sensitivities and Values

- 1) The rural character of the landscape, despite its proximity to urban areas, and areas with little light pollution – particularly in the north of the area which create a relative sense of tranquillity compared to some other parts of the borough.
- 2) The gap between Stoke Golding and Dadlington is important in retaining the 'village' character and distinctiveness of the settlements.
- 3) Low hedgerows and mature trees are important elements because of the relatively low level of woodland in the landscape and their role in defining historic field patterns.
- 4) Distinctive character and local vernacular of the villages, including red brick and traditional buildings with links to the agricultural history of the settlements. Former farmhouses and landmark buildings contribute to the sense of place and provide historic time depth.
- 5) Historic value and associations with the nearby Bosworth Battlefield.
- 6) The Ashby Canal is a valued landscape asset, particularly as a recreation and biodiversity resource as well as a reminder of the areas industrial heritage
- 7) Footpaths including popular recreational routes provide connections with the wider landscape.
- 8) Uncluttered rural views of church spires are sensitive to change and are valued for the sense of local distinctiveness they provide.

Landscape Strategies

- 1) Encourage the use of traditional 'Midlands-style' hedgelaying to manage hedgerows, improving their structure and biodiversity value and strengthening landscape character.
- 2) Maintain the rural character of the landscape. Ensure development is fully integrated into and informed by the landscape with its rural, harmonious pattern of small villages which are well-integrated in the landscape, and local vernacular styles and materials. Conserve the rural gap between Stoke Golding and Dadlington.
- 3) The Sustainable Urban Extension to the north of Barwell should aim to create a distinct new and contemporary identity and character(s) whilst responding to the existing context.
- 4) Maintain views to church spires and towers e.g. on the wooded skyline at Stoke Golding and long distance views to other churches in surrounding villages. Conserve rural views and setting of settlements.
- 5) Maintain and enhance the recreational assets including rights of way network and canal.
- 6) Maintain positive management of the Ashby Canal and seek opportunities to extend and enhance areas of wetland habitat.
- 7) Create new and conserve existing notable habitats, in particular deciduous woodland and mesotrophic grassland.
- 8) Encourage tree planting to regenerate mature/veteran trees as they come to the end of their lives.
- 9) Improve the integration of settlement edges such as north of Barwell, e.g. with planting and use of materials appropriate to the rural character.

APPENDIX 4: DRAWING 2042-004 LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN

