

Area of Separation Study

Coalville Urban Area

on behalf of

North West Leicestershire District Council

Issue Version

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Quality Control
Area of Separation Study
Coalville Urban Area

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1 INTRODUCTION

Brief and policy background

- 1.1 North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) requires an assessment of the existing Area of Separation (AoS) that is located with the Coalville Urban Area as defined in the North West Leicestershire Local Plan (2011-2031) and located between Coalville and Whitwick. The location of the AoS is shown on Figures 01-04 and 10-13 within Appendix 3.
- 1.2 The Landscape Partnership Ltd were appointed by NWLDC in July 2018 to carry out the study which has been carried out by a suitably experienced Chartered Landscape Architect.
- 1.3 The aim of the study is to provide a technical assessment of the AoS both in its component parts and overall.
- 1.4 The principle of maintaining some form of physical separation between Coalville and Whitwick has formed part of NWLDC planning policy for a number of decades. Previously this was in the form of a Green Wedge and latterly as an AoS.
- 1.5 Policy En5 in the 2017 Local Plan defines the current extent of the AoS in spatial terms on Inset Map 10 in the Local Plan.
- 1.6 The supporting text for Policy En5 states:

It is important to ensure that individual settlements retain their own character and identity. This is recognised in the Countryside policy (Policy S3) where the potential impact upon the separation between settlements is an important consideration in determining proposals for development. However, in the Coalville Urban Area there are two large, open, undeveloped areas of land which are within the Limits to Development and not subject to the countryside policies, as they are surrounded by built development, but which perform a very important role in maintaining the physical separation between Coalville and Whitwick. Development in this area, if permitted, would result in the physical coalescence of Coalville and Whitwick and the loss of the separate identity of the two settlements. Therefore, these open areas are identified as Areas of Separation and subject to the policy below.

- 1.7 The policy then states:

(1) Land between Coalville and Whitwick, as identified on the Policies Map, is designated as an Area of Separation where only agricultural, forestry, nature conservation, leisure and sport and recreation uses will be allowed. Any other proposed uses will need to demonstrate why they cannot be accommodated elsewhere within the district.

(2) Development will not be permitted which, either individually or cumulatively, would demonstrably adversely affect or diminish the present open and undeveloped character of the area.

- 1.8 The Inspectors Report (October 2017) of the Examination in Public of the North West Leicestershire Local Plan covered the Area of Separation (AoS) at paragraphs 72-83. Extracts from the Inspectors report included:

'73. In contrast with the surrounding built up areas, the Area of Separation is distinctly semi-rural or settlement fringe in character.....

75. With respect to the western AoS, the SFA (Settlement Fringe Analysis) concluded that the character of the area was common to many urban fringes but recognised its importance to the separation of Whitwick, New Swannington, Thornborough and Coalville, despite surrounding built development.

76. With respect to the eastern AoS, the SFA recommended the retention of woodland and the enhancement of gateway rural views between Whitwick and Coalville. At the same time, the SFA did not rule out some level of development, with potential for mitigation.

77. There is very strong local support within Whitwick for the designation of the AoS in the interests of maintaining settlement identity. This approach has previously received qualified support at appeal. The evidence of the Council, in defence of Policy En5, is based on its judgements that the SFA strongly suggests that development opportunities in the western AoS are extremely limited and that, in the eastern AoS, landscape harm would exceed development benefit.

78. On the other hand, the AoS designation is equally strongly opposed by those with development interests, particularly in the eastern area.these objections also address the quality of the evidence on which the boundaries of the AoSs and the constraints of Policy En5 are based.

79. With reference to national policy, AoS is not recognised as a protective designation by the NPPF. However, core principles of the NPPF are that planning should take account of the different roles and characteristics of different areas with reference to their relative environmental value, should deliver conservation of the natural landscape and should identify where development would be inappropriate. The AoSs are different from surrounding areas in their level of built development, topography and landscape and are of recognised local value in avoiding the coalescence of distinct built up areas.

80. Read in isolation, Policy En5 is restrictive and inflexible. However, in permitting rural and recreational land uses, it does not impose a complete ban on development. Nor does it impede development required to meet the housing and employment requirements of the Plan, where these can be accommodated elsewhere within the scope of the Plan Strategy. In the context of the Plan as whole, Policy En5 is justified in its terms, provided the defined boundaries of the AoSs, to which it relates, are also justified on robust evidence.

81. Land within the SFA has been considered for development in previous studies in connection with the former draft Core Strategy, which was withdrawn in 2013. Moreover, whilst the conclusions of the SFA appear robust, they are notably equivocal as to the value of all of the land comprising the AoSs now designated by Policy En5. The local support is plainly heartfelt and genuine. However, this support, and the Council evidence in favour of the designation of the AoSs, is clearly subjective. Moreover, previous appeal decisions and High Court judgments favouring the AoSs are essentially site-specific and do not provide a direct, strategic comparison.

82. It is concluded above that the spatial distribution of new development by the Plan across the Settlement Hierarchy is broadly justified. On balance, I consider there to be overriding merit in the judgement of the Council that the AoSs, as designated, are justified for the life of this Plan, especially taking into account the established commitment to the extensive South East Coalville Urban Extension. Given the AoS designation is justified for the purpose of this Plan, there is no inconsistency between Policy En5 and the aspects of national policy, summarised above, recognising local differences.

83. Importantly though, on the evidence provided to this Examination, there is scope for reconsideration of the detailed boundaries and land uses of the AoSs, in the event that it becomes necessary, at any time in the future, for the Plan to be reviewed in the light of increased development needs.

- 1.9 The Inspector's Report therefore suggested a reconsideration of both the detailed boundaries and the land uses of the AoS.
- 1.10 It should be noted that the new NPPF (July 2018) has removed the list of core planning principles including reference to the '*different roles and characteristics of different areas*'. However, a new equivalent paragraph, 127 makes reference to planning policies and decisions ensuring that development (inter alia) should be, '*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting*.' This approach and wording is considered to demonstrate a similar intent to the core planning principle relied on in the 2012 version of the NPPF.

2 METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

2.1 The study included a desktop review including the following:

- Extent of existing Area of Separation
- Topography of study area
- Land uses within the AoS and adjacent local area
- Landscape Character Areas at the national, county and district scale respectively
- Historic development of settlement based on historic OS plans
- Landscape and heritage designations within the study area
- Relevant Local Planning Policy

Field work

2.2 Field work followed from the collection of data from the desktop study and assessed the characteristics of the AoS by viewing and making informed professional judgements from public locations on local roads, public rights of way and other publicly accessible land. The majority of the field work was carried out in July 2018, with further focused visits in October 2018 and March 2019.

2.3 The desk study, field work and following report assess and provide information at two Stages.

Stage A. Overview of the Area of Separation study area

- Landscape Character Context
- Topographical patterns – ridges, valleys etc.
- Main vegetation blocks
- Landscape Change
- Location of existing built up areas and settlements edge
- Character of settlement/development edge
- Distance between settlements

- Character of undeveloped land between settlements
- Key views into and from the study area

Stage B. Assessment of Land Units

- 2.4 The study area is then sub-divided into smaller land 'units' comprising coherent areas of common landscape character to assess their individual role and functionality within the AoS as a whole. Each unit is assessed against 8 criteria as set out below in paragraph 2.10. The criteria are categorised on a scale from A-E. The definitions for A-E of each criterion are based on a scale from 'A' which is judged to make the least contribution to the purpose of the AoS and 'E' makes the greatest contribution to the AoS. The definitions are set out in Appendix 01.
- 2.5 The scale of land units has been identified as appropriate to the local characteristics and function of the land within the AoS. As a result, while they will have a common character there may be some considerable variation in the scale between units.
- 2.6 The identification and definition of land units is based on a combination of desk study and field work with the final decision based on the identification of a common landscape character and function.
- 2.7 The criteria have been selected to evaluate how land units contribute to the AoS by:
- maintaining the openness of the land,
 - protecting the identity and distinctiveness of the settlements and
 - preventing coalescence.
- 2.8 Coalescence can be defined as, 'the process of coming or growing together to form one thing or system' (Cambridge English Dictionary). On this basis, the concept of coalescence is engaged not only when two settlements physically join, but also as they are perceived as coming closer together as a result of incremental development. Therefore, in the context of the coalescence of settlements, a reduction in the gap between settlements could also be described as part of the process of coalescence and potentially harmful to the identity of the settlements involved and the AoS.
- 2.9 This study focuses on the importance of land units in terms of the role or functionality they play in providing a physical, visual and perceptual separation of settlements. There are two main named settlements which relate to the AoS; Coalville and Whitwick. Their respective settlement patterns mean that the existing built areas are spread out around and between the study area including a number of linear ribbon developments following local roads and related suburban areas. Therefore, due to this characteristic the consideration of separation and coalescence has been considered not just between the two principal settlements of Coalville and Whitwick but also between the different parts of the same

settlement e.g. between development along Hermitage Road and Thornborough Road both of which are in Whitwick parish. However, in the assessment of units the role in separation between different parts of the same settlement carries relatively less weight than the separation between the two main settlements.

- 2.10 The criteria used for Stage B of this study can be classed into three groups: 'Physical', 'Perceptual' and 'Value'. The Physical criteria include the main natural features of an area namely landform/topography and vegetation. The Perceptual criteria relate to how people can view or appreciate an area, whether from public or private locations and how the area relates to established settlement and adjoining land. The Value criteria include how the area is used for recreation and the overall scenic value. Further clarification of the criteria is provided below:

Physical criteria

1. **Topography** - the pattern of landform can reinforce the separation between settlements (e.g. a ridge between settlements) or alternatively it may support linkage (e.g. in a valley landscape with inter-visibility across valley slopes). Alternatively, landform may play a more neutral role (e.g. if the land is broadly level).
2. **Vegetation** - the presence of features such as trees, hedges and woodland which have the effect of screening or enclosure can have a marked influence on the sense of separation provided a unit. Where there is a higher proportion of established woody vegetation this can reinforce and strengthen the sense of separation between settlements. Conversely, when vegetation cover is more limited and the landscape more open the sense of separation is reduced.

Perceptual criteria

3. **Public visibility** - the degree of openness to public view from roads, rights of way and publicly accessible land influences the perceptual role a land unit performs in the locality. Locations with open public views can strongly reveal the openness and sense of separation. Conversely, locations with limited access and/or appreciation of the landscape would have a reduced role. Locations where there is inter-visibility from or between settlements will be of a relatively greater sensitivity.
4. **Private views** – residential views from settlements can form part of a local community's appreciation of the character of the landscape between settlements. Residential locations with open views into the landscape would have a greater connectivity compared to those which are strongly filtered. In addition, locations where there is clear inter-visibility between settlements will be of greater sensitivity.
5. **Contribution to the character and setting of settlements** - the character of an area of land can affect the appreciation of a neighbouring settlement or development (e.g. where properties in a settlement front onto open countryside and there could be a strong historic, visual or functional relationship with the adjacent land). Conversely, physical barriers such as major roads, railway lines

and associated earthworks or where buildings back onto an area may reinforce separation despite the proximity.

6. **Landscape linkage** - the relationship between different land units is an important factor that underlines their combined role in the landscape. These can include physical and/or visual links that form part of a wider composition. In identifying coherent areas of separation, the sum of the individual parts of a landscape may often be greater than the contribution of individual land units in isolation.

Value criteria

7. **Scenic Quality** - the scenic value of an area reflects a combination of elements and factors, both physical and perceptual. Assessing the relative scenic value can also involve balancing of beneficial and adverse features. Areas with a pleasing mix of elements, in good condition and with limited detractors are more likely to be highly valued. The scenic quality may also include panoramic views both within and/or out of the unit where appropriate.
8. **Recreational value** - the degree to which a land unit can be appreciated and enjoyed for recreational use can contribute towards its value for the community. Land that is used for specific purposes e.g. open access land, play areas or playing fields will have a local and community value for recreation. Rights of way provide value, particularly where routes are well maintained and provide convenient links to and between residential areas.

2.11 Within each land unit the above criteria are assessed based on a 5-point scale (A-E) using the definitions set out in Appendix 01. The results are shown in a tabular form providing a 'profile' to illustrate the relative importance of each criteria to the land unit in contributing towards the overall separation of settlements (see Appendix 02).

2.12 In relation to identifying suitable criteria for 'value' there are no suitable landscape based designations within or adjacent to the AoS and for this reason the presence or absence of designations was omitted from the criteria as all units would be rated A. While the study area is within the National Forest and partly within Charnwood Forest Regional Park these designations were not considered to be a reflection of a determining landscape value designations for this study.

2.13 It is important to recognise that no weighting has been applied to any of the individual criteria but rather the results (as presented in the tables in Appendix 02) show the range of factors that have been considered for each land unit and where they sit in the descriptive scale for each criterion. It is not the intention to add up the entries for each criterion to give an overall numerical 'score'. Rather the tables aim to pictorially inform the descriptive text below each table. However, the relative importance of each criteria may vary between each land unit for a range of reasons e.g. a ridge may in itself make a notable contribution compared to other factors. Therefore, one should consider both the spread of criteria on the scale of factors and the contribution of each criterion.

- 2.14 Where the assessor considered that the land unit does not clearly fall within a single description (A-E) for any criteria then more than one category (A-E) is 'shaded', with the most relevant description ticked in the table.
- 2.15 A descriptive narrative is then provided for each land unit in Appendix 02 covering the following headings:
- Land Unit description including location, size (ha), land use etc
 - Commentary on the profile
 - Contribution to physical separation between settlements
 - Contribution to the identity of settlements
 - Contribution to open character and links with other land units
 - Landscape value
- 2.16 Finally, an overall assessment is made for each land unit on its contribution to the separation of the settlements involved and its importance in preventing coalescence. This is categorised as the land unit providing either: a 'Primary', 'Secondary' or 'Incidental' contribution based on the following definitions:
- **Primary** - the land unit comprises a fundamental component of the openness that separates adjacent settlements in terms of landscape character and visual perception.
 - **Secondary** - the land unit in combination with other units provides an important component of the openness that separates adjacent settlements or different parts of the same settlement in terms of landscape character and visual perception.
 - **Incidental** - the land unit makes a limited contribution to the openness that separates adjacent settlements in terms of landscape character and visual perception.
- 2.17 All three categories are regarded as demonstrating characteristics which merit being included in the AoS. However, it is important to recognise that some units are of relatively greater importance to the AoS and hence the use of the underlined phases above.
- 2.18 Land units that are identified as providing a Primary or Secondary contribution to the sense of separation between settlements are considered to be clearly appropriate for inclusion within the AoS within the Local Plan review.
- 2.19 Land units that are identified as making an Incidental contribution are of more limited importance to the AoS overall e.g. by being well contained or relating more strongly to the settlement edge alone. The

removal of these units from the AoS would not undermine the remainder of the designation should a justified alternative use be identified. However, based on their current land use and functionality it is considered that these units make a contribution albeit limited and should at the current time be retained within the AoS.

2.20 There are a small number of locations where built development has taken place to the fringes of the designated AoS and now form part of the settlement. Therefore, these are recommended for removal from the AoS.

Outputs

2.21 The outputs of the study are:

- An outline of the background and policy context;
- A review of the landscape context as a whole supported by illustrative drawings of: topography, rights of way, vegetation, historic development etc.;
- For each land unit within the AoS an assessment of the 8 criteria and a description of the role of the land unit in relation to the openness of the landscape and identity of the settlements;
- A summary and conclusion setting out the merit in retaining the existing AoS in whole or in part and any specific guidance on potential adjustments to the existing boundaries based on the findings of the study and
- A GIS layer of the land units within the proposed AoS.

3 CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY AREA

- 3.1 The AoS is located within a wider landscape context which has been subject to a number of character studies and assessments ranging from a national to more local scale and as outlined below.

Landscape Character

National Level

- 3.2 The study area is located within National Character Area (NCA) 73 Charnwood which is an extensive area of landscape broadly contained by Leicester, Loughborough, Coalville and Shepshed. The NCA description states that Charnwood is a unique landscape, marked out by its upland qualities, which contrast with the surrounding gentle lowlands. It is formed by mosaic of heathland, farmland, parkland and woodland. The underlying Precambrian geology has given rise to a distinctive area of land characterised by exposures of rugged, rocky outcrops. It is a relatively well wooded landscape, with many areas of mixed, deciduous and coniferous woodlands. It is noted that large villages lie on the southern, western and eastern fringes which would include Whitwick.
- 3.3 Key Characteristic within the NCA of relevance to the study area include:
- Upland qualities, including extensive open summits and distinctive rocky outcrops, rising from the surrounding lowland undulating farmland.
 - Thin, acidic, infertile soils are found on upland slopes; mudstones in the valley bottoms produce a deeper, fertile soil.
 - A well wooded character, with many areas of mixed, deciduous and coniferous woodlands. Large, ancient, pollarded oaks are a feature of country parks.
 - Land use is a distinctive mixture of woodland, predominantly pastoral farmland, heathland and parkland.
- 3.4 While the study area is located fully within NCA 73 Charnwood it shares very few of the key characteristics listed for the NCA e.g. upland qualities, thin acidic soils, well wooded character, pastoral farmland, historic parks, diversity of habitats or traditional buildings in the Charnwood villages. The study area and AoS is therefore at best a transitional area to the outer extent of the core of the Charnwood NCA. In the AoS land use is more dominated by either arable cropping, horse grazing or recreational uses and then largely contained by built development to its edges.
- 3.5 The Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) in the NCA do not really apply to the study area. The only potential exception is within SE04 where the objective is to, 'manage and expand the native

woodlands throughout Charnwood to reinforce the wooded character, to increase the potential for biomass, access and recreation, and to regulate climate change and water quality.' This objective has been supported by additional woodland planting in two locations within the AoS.

Regional Level

- 3.6 At the regional scale the study area is located within Character Type 10d: Forested Ancient Hills as defined within the East Midlands Regional Character Assessment. ¹
- 3.7 The key characteristics listed within the regional study are very similar to those for NCA 73, which is to be expected as the RCA covers the same geographical area as the NCA. In this respect the study area again lies at the fringes of the core of the character area. It is noted that the woodland cover overall in the RCA is much greater than in the neighbouring lowland areas and that it is likely to increase within the western part of the Charnwood Forest that is located in the National Forest. There is evidence that this change has recently taken place within the AoS by the planting of two woodland areas in land units 9 and 13 (see Figure 11).
- 3.8 The RCA description states that during the 20th century the landscape character evolved with an expansion of settlements on the perimeter of the upland areas and loss of open areas, including a change from pasture to arable use. There has also been a loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees as a result of agricultural intensification.
- 3.9 Within the study area there are examples of how the geology of Charnwood Forest has influenced its appearance and character e.g. by the use of the Precambrian rocks within older buildings such as the former village school and in boundary walls within parts of Whitwick.
- 3.10 It is of note that under the built development section on landscape change and management it includes within 'Forces for change' that, '*large-scale modern development is damaging landscape character, creating visual intrusion, resulting in the loss of surrounding landscape features and increasing the risk of coalescence of outlying villages... Proposals also include sustainable urban extensions at Coalville.*' In the 'Shaping the Future' section relating to built development it states, '*the aim should be to protect the character of the landscape, and limit visual impact of any new development by locating it on previously developed land or close to existing settlement.*'
- 3.11 In relation to the forestry and woodland section within landscape change and management the RCA states that, '*new woodland planting would be generally appropriate, making a contribution to increasing the overall woodland coverage in the region and integrating new development into the landscape.*'

¹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5635681403535360>

Indeed, much of this landscape is within The National Forest, which encourages new planting and appropriate management.'

- 3.12 In relation to tourism and leisure, the RCA states that, *'the management of public access should be encouraged, helping to conserve the natural environment, whilst enhancing Charnwood Forest as a recreational and educational resource. This should be undertaken in co-ordination with the sub-regional green infrastructure strategy, using less vulnerable assets to accommodate leisure activities and encouraging sustainable access.'*

County Level

- 3.13 According to the Leicestershire Character Assessment, the AoS study area is located at the junction of two character areas: Charnwood Forest and The Coalfield (see Figure 01). This additional level of detail compared to the NCA and RCA assessments recognises the presence of the coalfield and former collieries within and around the settlement of Coalville.
- 3.14 The description for the Coalfield describes the LCA as, *an area of gently undulating landform, dominated by mixed farmland and the past and present effects of coalmining and clay extraction. It is bounded to the east by the steep rise to Charnwood Forest.The Coalfield character area is distinguished by a denser settlement pattern than almost any other part of Leicestershire. Large former mining villages characterised by 19th century terraced housing follow the main road lines. Roadside groups of cottages are also characteristic. Many towns and villages have recent residential development at their fringes., Although urban and industrial influences are rarely far away, there remains substantial areas of open, mainly arable, farmland. The area has few woodlands but hedges, hedgerow trees and small copses sometimes give a wooded effect locally..... Coalville is the main town but large villages, many with former coalmining associations, are scattered throughout this part of the area. The Bardon 21 warehousing development to the east of Coalville has expanded rapidly onto greenfield sites in recent years. Bardon Quarry lies just outside character area. The views of Bardon Hill and the traffic associated with the quarry are also notable features of this part of the area.*
- 3.15 The description for the Charnwood Forest LCA of the County level identifies very similar characteristics to those at the NCA and RCA level.
- 3.16 Whilst not within the remit of this study, TLPs observation of the study area is that the description for The Coalfield LCA more strongly reflect the characteristics within and around the AoS than the description of the Charnwood Forest does. The boundary drawn between the two LCA's that runs across the AoS does not reflect any marked changes in the field but rather the underlying geology. Clearer evidence of the change to the Charnwood Forest LCA characteristics is found to the north-east where the landform rises more steeply and there is a greater presence of woodland.

District Level

3.17 The Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Assessment was carried out in 2008 to inform the boundary of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park. The geographical scope of the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Assessment extended over the eastern part of the AoS study. The extent of this study extended broadly to the same boundary between The Coalfield and Charnwood Forest as in the County scale study. The remaining area to the west is not covered by the study.

3.18 The Charnwood Forest Regional Park is supported by Policy En4 in the North West Leicestershire Local Plan which states,

(1) Within the Charnwood Forest, the Council will work in partnership with Leicestershire County Council, Charnwood Borough Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and other partners to protect and enhance the landscape, biodiversity, natural history and cultural heritage of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park (CFRP).

(2) Priority will be given to those proposals that: (a) Maintain the traditional working landscape of the forest, particularly those which involve farming or rural diversification or tourism, including green tourism initiatives; and 106 (b) Enhance the biodiversity of the CFRP, consistent with the aims of the Charnwood National Character Area profile (SEO3); and (c) Provide new recreation facilities appropriate to the character of the area; and (d) Provide access to and from the rural areas into and within the Regional Park by non-vehicular means.

(3) Any new development within the CFRP will be expected to respect the character and appearance of area in terms of design and materials used.

3.19 The purpose of the policy is to protect and enhance the landscape and environmental assets of the area. The priority is on supporting the traditional working landscape, enhancing biodiversity, providing new recreation facilities and access by non-vehicular means. Furthermore, any new development should respect the character of the area. The north-east part of the AoS is covered by Policy En4 to the extent as shown on Figure 03.

National Forest

3.20 The whole of the AoS is included within the National Forest as supported by Policy En3 in the 2011-2031 North West Leicestershire Local Plan. The National Forest Area covers an extensive area that extends well outside NWLD. Policy En3 aims to work with the National Forest Company to: *diversify and support the economy in relation to the woodland economy, create an attractive sustainable environment, provide*

a range of leisure opportunities for local communities and visitors; and achieve the National Forest Company's woodland cover target.

New developments within the National Forest will contribute towards the creation of the forest by including provision of tree planting and other landscape areas within them Landscaping does not just include woodland planting and the appropriate mix of landscaping features will depend upon the setting and the opportunities that the site presents.

Within the National Forest new development should ensure that: (a) The siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriately related to its setting within the Forest; and (b) The proposed development respects and does not adversely affect the character and appearance of the National Forest or the wider countryside;...

- 3.21 The National Forest is an important feature from an economic, social and environmental point of view within NWL as evidenced by the above policy. Two land units within the AoS have recently been planted to create woodland features and habitats as part of the National Forest. There is potential for further areas in the AoS to be included in similar schemes.

2010 Settlement Fringe Study

- 3.22 The AoS was included within the 2010 Settlement Fringe study undertaken by TEP. This assessed the rural /urban fringes of a number of the larger settlements within North West Leicestershire, including Coalville. 10 areas were assessed around Coalville, including areas 2 and 3 that covered the extent of the AoS. The study reviewed the various LCA at different scales from National to National Forest scale and also assessed various criteria related to both landscape quality and visual quality.
- 3.23 Within the 2010 study both parts of the AoS were considered to have Moderate/High potential to achieve mitigation that may allow for some development while including mitigation features e.g. retaining view corridors, open space and woodland.

2017 Landscape Character Study and Landscape Sensitivity Study

- 3.24 The above countywide study was carried out by LUC for Leicestershire County Council. The study involved a review of the LCAs within the county and placed the AoS within both Charnwood Forest and The Coalfield. The former LCA was identified as having a Medium - High sensitivity to change from residential (2-3 storeys) and commercial development (B1 and B2) while the latter was assessed as having a Medium sensitivity to similar types of change.
- 3.25 Various sensitivities were identified for each LCA. Sensitivities for the Coalfield included, *'respect the form and vernacular of existing settlements within the landscape,'* Guidance opportunities for enhancing landscape character included:

- *Retain the pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and incorporate buffer planting to major transport corridors*
- *Seek to conserve and create linkages between areas of woodland and improve habitat connectivity*
- *Explore what scale of new woodland planting would be appropriate within the landscape as part of the National Forest initiative.*
- *Plan for successful integration of potential new development in the landscape through sensitive design and siting ... to enhance sense of place*

4 STUDY AREA

- 4.1 The AoS as defined by Policy En5 and shown on Inset Map 10 in the Local Plan comprises two areas of open land each contained by built development to all sides. In previous studies by NWLDC covering the AoS (when designated as a Green Wedge at the time) the two parts of the current AoS were combined with a larger area to the west and were hence referred to as the Central and East areas. Based on the present extent and location of the two parts of the AoS they are referred to in this report as Area A i.e. the land to the south-east (formerly East) and Area B i.e. land to the north-west (formerly Central) as shown on Figures 01-04 and 10-11.
- 4.2 Area A is bounded by the A511 Stephenson Way to the west, properties along and adjacent to Hermitage Road, Green Lane and George Street to the north, development both along and adjacent to Hall Lane to the east and development fronting Broom Leys Road to the south. The area extends to approximately 112 ha.
- 4.3 Area B is bounded by the A511 Stephenson Way to the south-west, properties on Hermitage Road, Lakeshore Crescent and Grove Road to the south, and properties along Thornborough Road and Church Lane to the north. The area extends to approximately 58 ha.

Topography

- 4.4 The topography of the study area as illustrated by Figure 02 is typically gently undulating and much less pronounced than the higher ground to the east and south east within the core of Charnwood Forest. The AoS reaches its highest point to the south-east of Area A at approximately 167m AOD from where the land slopes gently down to the north-west to an elevation of circa 146m AOD. The landform of the area locally rises to the north-east of Area A leading up towards the edge of Whitwick before then falling back down towards the settlement at George Street and Green Lane. There are opportunities for wider views across the area and beyond to higher ground to the north, east and south.
- 4.5 The topography of Area B is focused around a valley feature of the Grace Dieu Brook that runs from south-west to the north-east. The floor of the valley falls from circa 142m to 135m. The valley sides rise both to the north-west at a maximum of 146m and to the south-east to a similar elevation. Valley slopes vary between 1 in 40 and 1 in 80. Within Area B there are a number of localised artificial topographical landform features relating to the past industrial activity including: those associated with the Hermitage Brick and Terra Cotta Works (which partly occupied the existing amenity lake) and the alignment of the disused Charnwood Forest Railway, where it passes in a more marked cutting leading under Market Place at Whitwick.

Soils

- 4.6 The soils within Area A to the south of the AoS are from the SALOP (511m) series which are based on a reddish till geology, according to the Rothamstead soils data. These soils are a slowly permeable and seasonally waterlogged reddish loamy soil overlying clay. The soils within Area B to the north are from the Hodnet series (572c) which are based on a Permo-Triassic and Carboniferous reddish mudstone, siltstone and sandstone and reflect the historic presence of coalmining. These soils are a fine reddish and coarse loamy soil with slight seasonal waterlogging.

Vegetation

- 4.7 There is a variable extent of tree cover within the study area relating to current and former land uses as illustrated on the aerial photographs at Figures 10 and 11. Within Area A the field structure is largely defined by native hedgerows in a good condition. However, it is noteworthy that there are very few individual field trees within these hedges. There are a number of linear tree belts and areas of established trees and hedgerows vegetation, most notably along the line of the disused mineral railway cycleway which runs from the A511 overbridge up to the approach track leading to the Coalville Rugby Club (Memorial Ground) on Hall Road. This corridor of vegetation includes a number of mature oak trees. Further notable tree belts and linear planting include those: along the A511 Stephenson Way, around and within the Memorial Ground, at Sharpley Avenue Recreation Ground and to the rear of the amenity area and the allotments off George Street/Hall Lane. Two new woodlands, Harold Smalley Wood and Thomas Ashford Wood have been recently planted as part of the National Forest and are located to the northern part of Area A.
- 4.8 Area B of the AoS includes a more variable pattern of vegetation. Established historic hedgerows are present within the area, particularly along the line of field boundaries and access routes and rights of way e.g. Bridle Road (Bridleway 08). A number of these features have been allowed to grow tall and include a few mature hedgerow trees and are mainly located to the north of the brook. A further strong belt of vegetation follows the line of the Grace Dieu Brook eastwards together with trees along either side of the alignment of the former railway line. The belts also include areas of established mature vegetation along the watercourse south of the cemetery. There are a number of mature belts of trees associated with the Hermitage Recreation Ground, and in particular around the amenity lake with further substantial belts of trees within and around the disused municipal golf course to the south-east. A number of tree belts also provide relative enclosure of the adjacent uses e.g. around the allotments on Thornborough Road and the trees within Whitwick Cemetery.

Land-use

- 4.9 The majority of the land-use in Area A comprises agricultural land. At the time of the field work (July 2018) the majority was being used for arable use including a mix of arable cropping and linseed. Further areas, particularly to the south at both Broom Leys Farm and Glebe Farm are used for horse grazing.

There are a few areas of recreational use including the formal private sports pitches of Coalville Rugby Club and the publicly accessible Sharpley Avenue Recreation Ground to the south-east. In the northern part of Area A there is an allotment site and further area of amenity grassland. The two areas of new woodland are located to the north of Area A and will develop into native woodland features, with some limited permissive access.

- 4.10 Land-use in Area B includes more of a mix of recreational uses with formal sports pitches, informal areas, a water body and disused golf course within the Hermitage Recreation Ground. Whitwick Cemetery is located to the north-east of the area and Thornborough Road allotments to the north-west. To the fringes of the area there are a number of smaller paddocks and an area of grazing. The remaining agricultural use comprises three fields on the northern slopes of the valley.

Landscape change

- 4.11 The historic OS plans provided at Figures 05 to 09 illustrate the change in the settlement pattern of Coalville and Whitwick over the last 130 years in the vicinity of the AoS. The current extent of built development has been added to each of the historic plans to illustrate the extent of change between the date of the map and the current situation.
- 4.12 Coalville was established as a Victorian industrial town in a green field location in the 1830s following sinking the main pit in 1826. By the time of the 1887-88 OS plan (see Figure 05) Coalville is centred around the intersection between the High Street and the mainline railway. At this time there were a number of industrial sites including Whitwick Colliery (located to the west of the current A511) Snibston Colliery in the centre of Coalville and a number of brick and tile factories associated with the various railway lines. At this time there was very limited housing to the north-east of Coalville with a number of regular rectilinear fields being present in the areas surrounding the town. The village of Whitwick was concentrated along Market Place, Castle Street and Vicarage Street, with further fragmented linear ribbon development extending along the radiating roads including Silver Street, Hermitage Road and Green Lane. At this time very few of the current houses along Hermitage Road, Thornborough Road and Church Lane were in existence. Whitwick Cemetery and the associated Lodge were present, then set some distance from the village but close to St John's the Baptist Parish church. A small settlement existed at New Swannington centred around the minor road junctions. Glebe Farm and Constable Lane Farm (now Broom Leys Farm) were both present and all the intervening land between Broom Leys and Whitwick comprised a patchwork of agricultural fields.
- 4.13 By 1903-1904 (see Figure 06) further industrialisation had occurred, including the construction of the Charnwood Forest Branch railway line serving both Whitwick Colliery and the Hermitage Brick and Terra Cotta Works. Residential development within Coalville had expanded north of the London Road, including Oxford Street and a new recreation ground at The Park. Within Whitwick some of the ribbon development along Hermitage Road and Silver Street had taken place comprising both

Victorian/Edwardian villas and terraces, some of which included commercial businesses, e.g. a 'hosiery manufactory'.

- 4.14 By 1931-1932 (see Figure 07) a further mineral railway had been constructed to the south of Area A running from the established railway line to the east toward Pedlar Tor Quarry. Development had also taken place to the south of Area A along Broom Leys Road and Meadow Lane in the form of detached and semi-detached houses fronting the road with longer rear gardens. Within Whitwick an Elastic Web Manufacturing factory had been built opposite the cemetery together with further terrace housing along Church Lane to the north of Area B. Within Coalville, there had been further development by this time, e.g. Bakewell Street.
- 4.15 By 1955 (see Figure 08) the first estate development, now forming Sharpley Avenue, was present together with a number of other local authority housing schemes within Whitwick, including locations at both George Street and Hall Lane. By the 1950s many of the previously vacant plots along Hermitage Road had also been infilled to at least one side of the road by either single depth plot or shorter cul-de-sacs e.g. Grove Road. To the south of Area A further infill had also occurred along Broom Leys Road in the intervening years
- 4.16 In the years from 1955 and leading up to 1992-1993 (see Figure 09) there had been extensive development and redevelopment around much of the AoS. Whitwick Colliery reached its peak in 1969/1970 but was closed in the 1980s and redeveloped for Whitwick Business Park. The Brick and Tile Works to the Northern edge of Coalville was also redeveloped for a new Industrial estate off Comet Way and Vulcan Way. The Hermitage Brick and Tile works were also redeveloped forming the core of the Hermitage Recreation Ground. During the same time period the railway running close to the edge of Area A and through Area B was dismantled and Stevenson Way/A511 relief road for Coalville was constructed, which now forms the built edge of Coalville to the east. To the east of Area A extensive residential development took place along Hall Road extending to the south-east edge of Whitwick parish (the line of the mineral railway). Further, infill residential development took place within Whitwick village and along Hermitage Road, Church Lane and Thornborough Road, providing the almost continuous enclosure of development around the AoS that is present today. From the 1950s there was also a degree of field amalgamation and enlargement. This occurred both within Area A and perhaps more notably within Area B with the loss of a number of field boundaries, including many of the distinctive narrow strip fields on the northern side of the valley.

Character of settlements

- 4.17 Coalville and Whitwick both form part of what the adopted local plan refers to as the Coalville Urban Area. Coalville is the largest settlement in NWLDC. The town grew rapidly in the 19th century as a mining and manufacturing town and is seen to be a product of the Industrial Revolution in Leicestershire. The original industries have now ceased and the town contains a number of second generation industrial

sites on the site of former collieries and manufacturing plants. The town centre is focused around the original town with the core of the area being designated a Conservation Area. The landmark building is the clock tower in Memorial Square. Much of the housing stock in the town centre comprises Victorian and early 20th century brick terraces. The town boundary follows the current alignment of the A511 adjacent to the AoS up to the southern extent where it then follows the line of the disused mineral railway/cycleway (see Figure03). Land to the south-east of the Coalville town boundary is largely within the suburb of Greenhill which expanded from the first part of the 20th century along Broom Leys Road, Greenhill Road, Blackwood Road and Meadow Lane and with progressive infill mainly in the second part of the 20th century. The built character of this area is of a lower density and well vegetated appearance. The land now occupied by Broom Leys Farm (Units 1 and 2 in the AoS) is the only undeveloped part of Coalville in this location.

- 4.18 Whitwick is a settlement that has spread considerably within its parish boundary over the centuries which also includes New Swannington. The population is c 8,600 (2011). The village was recorded in the Domesday Book and has a site (but not visible remains) of a motte and bailey castle now designated a Scheduled Monument. The historic core of the village is clustered around Market Place (where a thriving weekly market and annual fair was held), Vicarage Street and Castle Street. The industrial changes from the 19th and 20th century brought about a major expansion and change to the settlement. Much of the housing stock from the 19th century comprises brick terraces along the network of connecting lanes. The early and mid-20th century brought a considerable sub-urban expansion. However, by the late 20th century the network of suitable and available housing land (excluding the AoS) was largely developed which means that the current urban form around the AoS includes very few developments or change over the last 25 years. Furthermore, the linking roads and in particular Hermitage Road and Church Lane are narrow with close frontage development and on road parking creating a congested feel. Other linking roads e.g. Hall Lane and Thornborough Road have building lines set further back and are more sub-urban in character and appearance. More modern development has taken place within Whitwick further to the north, but these areas are set apart from the AoS.

Distance between settlements

- 4.19 The typical distances across the two parts of the AoS are shown on Figure 04. Area A to the south extends to approximately 1300m north-west to south-east and 940m from north-east to the south-west. The smaller valley Area B to the north varies between 520m to 350m in width and with a length along the valley of 1180m.

Key views into and from the study area

- 4.20 There are a number of views within and into the study area as shown on Figure 04. A number of identified key or representative views are described below, including where relevant the unit numbers as shown on Figure 12 and described separately within Appendix 02. Views include:

-
- A. A range of views south from the cycleway which runs along the line of the dismantled mineral railway. There are open views from the cycleway over Unit 1. The views are restricted to within Unit 1 and the adjacent development along Broom Leys Road and Coalville Community Hospital but provide an accessible view over the open landscape.
- B. Elevated panoramic views to the north-east and south-east from the cycleway/Footpath 06 which crosses the A511/Stevenson Way. The views include the undeveloped foreground (Units 5 and 8 to the north-east and Unit 1 to the south-east) but also include distant views beyond the AoS up towards the wooded skylines of Forest Rock Wood to the north-east and Bardon Hill to the south-east. These views allow a direct connection with the wider landscape of the Charnwood Forest beyond the AoS.
- C- F. These locations represent the wide-open views from within and across Units 5 and 8 within the core of the AoS. The views reflect the open character of the agricultural landscape to the foreground and middle distance being typically bounded by clipped hedgerows. Many of the views contain views of residential development within Whitwick on the horizon.
- G-H. These locations represent notable public views from within the 1960s to 1970s residential development along Hall Lane. Viewpoint G is a framed view from Tiverton Avenue across the AoS, while Viewpoint H is a further framed view out to the arable landscape when travelling along Hall Lane.
- I. Viewpoint I represents a section of Hall Lane, with residential development only occurring on the east side of the road allowing for open public views directly into the AoS.
- J-K. These viewpoints are from slightly elevated locations from Footpath 04 looking south (J) and south-east (K) over the open character of the AoS. Viewpoint J provides a wide panoramic view from Coalville round to Bardon Hill. It is noted that the foreground has recently been planted with native woodland (Unit 9) and this view will become reduced as the planting establishes. Viewpoint K currently is over arable fields, with the development along Hall Lane relatively prominent in the background.
- L. This viewpoint represents the view from the amenity area to the south-east of Hermitage Road (Unit 12) where there are views both over the AoS and also towards the higher wooded skyline of Bardon Hill in the distance.
- M. This viewpoint represents one of the main public approaches into Hermitage Recreation Ground looking across the Grace Dieu Brook valley and the diverse character of the northern section of the AoS. This includes the ornamental fishing lake, various recreational facilities and the sloping agricultural land to the north-west.

- N. This viewpoint represents views from Bridle Road (Bridleway 08). These include both framed views along the Green Lane and also wider views at a field gate looking south-east across the agricultural slopes and Grace Dieu Brook valley and to the well vegetated slopes within the Hermitage Road Recreation Ground. There are also distant views across and beyond the AoS to the wooded skyline south-east but less so to the south.
 - O. This viewpoint illustrates the more open views from the arable fields on the northern slopes of the valley with the facilities, and blocks of vegetation associated with the Hermitage Recreation Ground being present on the southern valley slopes.
 - P. This viewpoint represents views, both within the Whitwick Cemetery and along Footpath 09. This is a view along the line of the valley with a mix of land uses, including paddocks, arable and woodland, with distant views of some of the larger commercial buildings within Coalville being present amongst woodland planting near and beyond the A511.
 - R. This viewpoint is from the A511 and provides a framed view through the roadside vegetation into the former municipal golf course.
- 4.21 Figure 04 also illustrates a number of other more restricted views into the AoS. These typically occur where there is some public access in the vicinity, but the presence of hedgerows or narrow entry points along rights of way restrict the views into and appreciation of the AoS that lies beyond and behind.

5 SUMMARY OF LAND UNITS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AOS

5.1 The study area was assessed, and 23 land units were identified (as shown on Figure 12) based on common characteristics. The individual returns for each unit are provided in Appendix 02. The main points arising from the assessment of the units are:

Area A – south-east

- a. Eight land units were identified as making a 'Primary' contribution to the openness between the surrounding settlements in Area A. These are Units 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 13.
- b. Units 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13 form the majority of the open agricultural/woodland character and together also comprise the core of the landscape that separates Coalville from Whitwick. These units relate strongly to each other. Any development in these areas would physically and perceptually significantly erode the open characteristics of the AoS and the separation the landscape provides between Coalville and Whitwick.
- c. Units 6, 7 and 13 also provide strong visual relationships between the open land and the adjacent urban areas and hence any new development in these locations would notably reduce the appreciation of the open character and reduce the physical and visual separation between the settlements.
- d. Development to the south-west of Area A along the A511, including Units 5 and 8, would be physically and visually isolated from Whitwick. Furthermore, development in this location would breach the strong containing line of the A511 corridor and lack integration with the settlement of Coalville.
- e. Unit 4 comprises the grounds of Coalville Rugby Club where the land use is primarily open in character as it used for sports pitches. Despite this open internal character, the unit is contained from wider views by belts of mature and semi-mature tree planting to the perimeter. However, the unit still comprises a significant part of the overall AoS between Whitwick and Coalville. Development within the unit would notably erode the sense of separation and lead towards coalescence.
- f. Units 9 and 10 combine to form a locally elevated area of land to the south of Whitwick and which physically and visually separates the village from the open character of the AoS to the south. This land is sensitive to built development as it would notably weaken the existing sense of separation.
- g. Units 9 and 13 have recently largely been planted and their character is in a state of transition. Over time the woodland is likely to mature to form notable features within the AoS. These units are therefore unlikely to be suitable for future development.

-
- h. Four land units in Area A were assessed as making a 'Secondary' contribution to the openness of the land within the defined AoS. These are Units 1, 2, 12 and 14.
 - i. Unit 1 makes an important contribution to the southern part of the AoS. However, this separation is essentially between different parts of the settlement of Coalville, including that fronting Broom Leys Road, A511 and Coalville Community Hospital rather than separating Coalville from Whitwick. The dense vegetation north of the cycleway screens the unit from the majority of the AoS to the north and from any direct connections with Whitwick. Unit 2 is a relatively small area and is visually contained by vegetation but there is a functional link with Unit 1 being part of the same farm. Built development within Units 1 and 2 is likely to have a significant effect on the open character of this part of the AoS and the contribution the land makes to the undeveloped edge of Coalville and most notably as perceived from the recreational route to the north. However, development would have a relatively limited effect on the remainder of the AoS to the north due to the level topography and intervening vegetation in Units 3, 4 and 5.
 - j. Unit 12 comprises part of an accessible amenity area related to Whitwick with the remainder of the open space to the north-west being outside the AoS although functionally being strongly related. The unit includes areas of secondary woodland, which partially contain the influence of adjacent built form. There are also opportunities for wide-ranging views to the south over the AoS. The land unit is therefore considered to make a Secondary contribution and should be safeguarded from further built development. The AoS should be extended in this location to include all of the existing open space up to Hermitage Road.
 - k. Unit 14 comprises the majority of a single field to the north-west of Area A. The unit is relatively contained physically and visually by roadside trees and or hedges. The northern section of the field fronting Hermitage Road is currently excluded from the AoS. Ideally this strip of land closest to Hermitage road area should be incorporated into the AoS to reinforce the separation of settlements. However, residential development has been permitted on this area. In the event that this permission is not implemented then consideration should be given to extending the AoS to include this area. If this area was to be included in the AoS then the land unit should be reclassified as making a Primary contribution due to its undeveloped gateway location. However, if an addition to the AoS up to Hermitage Road is not agreed then Unit 14 (as currently identified) remains an important component of the AoS (albeit of a secondary nature) not least because of its location on the border between Coalville and Whitwick.
 - l. Two units are assessed as being making an 'Incidental' contribution to the openness of the AoS. These are units 3 and 11. Both units comprise recreational land uses and are more closely associated with the adjacent residential areas and visually contained from a wider relationship with the AoS.

- m. Unit 3 relates to the housing on Sharpley Avenue and is well screened from the rest of the AoS by established woodland and scrub.
- n. Unit 11 supports allotments and amenity grassland and is related to Hall Lane and George Street being visually detached from the remainder of the AoS separated by established tree belts to the south-east and south-west.

Area B – north-west

- o. Three land units were assessed as making a 'Primary' contribution to the openness between the surrounding settlement in Area B. These are Units 15, 16 and 17.
- p. Units 15, 16 and 17 comprise the majority of the open agricultural/recreational character in Area B and together form the core of the landscape that separates Coalville from Whitwick and also the two linear parts of Whitwick along Hermitage Road and Church Lane /Thornborough Road. The land use of Units 15 and 17 are quite different but represent opposite sides of the same valley feature that visually draws the character together. The vegetation in both Units 15 and 16 help to screen views of the adjacent urban areas and the A511 corridor. The western part of Unit 16 is more physically and visually contained from Units 15 and 17 and adjacent settlement by landform and established copses within and to the perimeter of the former golf course. The open agricultural landscape within Unit 17 allows for some cross-valley views to the south-east within and beyond the AoS.
- q. Four units were assessed as making a 'Secondary' contribution to the openness of the land within Area B of the AoS. These are Units 20, 21, 22 and 23.
- r. Unit 20 is a remnant linear strip field that runs down the valley slopes. It is visually well enclosed by vegetation with footpaths crossing the land. The narrow form and isolation of the unit makes it unsuitable for development.
- s. Units 21 and 22 to the north-east are also of a smaller scale and physically detached from the core units of Area B (Units 15, 16 and 17). Unit 21 comprises an area of grazing and Unit 22 a cemetery. Both units are closely related to the edge of Whitwick along Church Lane and provide an important part of the separation between two areas of existing development within Whitwick. There are views from the public footpath and within the cemetery to the south-west across the undeveloped character of the AoS with distant glimpses to the industrial development on the edge of Coalville. Any development within the cemetery is highly unlikely due to its current use. Development within Unit 21 is also less suited and would erode the smaller scale urban fringe character of this part of the AoS.

- t. Unit 23 forms part of the well vegetated corridor of the Sustrans Route along the former railway line and Grace Dieu Brook and should be managed in its existing character.
 - u. Two land units 18 and 19 are assessed as making an 'Incidental' contribution to the openness of the AoS.
 - v. Unit 18 comprises allotments and extended garden plots. The landform slopes to the north and away from the main valley. This topographical pattern in association with established tree belts and hedges to the perimeter contain the unit from wider views. In this respect the unit makes a more limited contribution to the AoS. If development on the unit was considered to be acceptable it would have to be set back from the ridgeline and belts of established vegetation retained to restrict adverse effects on the open valley landscape to the south.
 - w. Unit 19 is also located on land that slopes north and towards the housing on Church Lane/Thornborough Road and is equally well contained by mature hedges. In this respect the unit also makes a limited contribution to the AoS. Any potential development should be sensitive to the adjacent housing.
 - x. Two locations within Area B were identified (as shown on Figure 12) within the periphery of the AoS where small residential developments have taken place. These include the residential close of properties at Lakeside View adjacent to Unit 15 and the triangular area north of Unit 21 which includes one dwelling. It is recommended that these areas should be omitted from the AoS and the boundary redrawn to exclude them.
- 5.2 Overall the AoS designation defines two important areas of land (Area A and Area B) separating Coalville and Whitwick. The boundary of the AoS identified in the adopted Local Plan is considered to be appropriate save for the exclusion of two small areas and two minor extensions to Units 12 and 14 as shown on Figure 13.
- 5.3 All the individual land units assessed as forming a 'Primary' Contribution to the AoS are considered to be essential to retaining the physical and visual separation between the settlements and their distinct identity. However, it is recommended that all units assessed as making a 'Primary' or 'Secondary' contribution should be retained within the AoS to prevent the erosion of the AoS as a whole.
- 5.4 The units identified as 'Incidental' are considered to be of more limited importance in maintaining separation, preventing coalescence and supporting the identity of settlements. However, it is recommended that the Incidental units are still retained within the AoS unless and until there is a demonstrable need for development to take place within the AoS that cannot be accommodated elsewhere within the authority. In these circumstances it is recommended that the AoS boundary could

be adjusted to exclude Units 3, 11, 18 and 19 on a case by case basis without a loss in integrity of the AoS.

- 5.5 The most sensitive locations are those where there are physical and/or visual links into, within and across the AoS from public locations on roads and rights of way where the loss of connection to the open landscape would be most harmful. These locations include where: Unit 7 fronts Hall Lane, from Unit 12 (in association with the open space fronting Hermitage Road) and from the various footpaths and bridleways that pass through the AoS.
- 5.6 Public access on rights of way is a beneficial feature through much of the AoS and in particular through much of Area B. Access is more limited through the core to Area A between Hall Road and Green Lane. Improvements to these links would be of benefit to the community.
- 5.7 Landscape enhancements have taken place within the AoS in the last few years including Units 9 and 13 where new woodland have been planted as part of the National Forest. These initiatives will help to reduce the visual impact of existing built development to the edge of the AoS e.g. by Unit 13, restricting views of housing along Hermitage Road. There is scope for further similar enhancements within the AoS.
- 5.8 Any development which is considered to be acceptable, whether a compatible land use for the AoS (as defined in Policy En5) or not, should include comprehensive mitigation as part of any consent to maintain the functionality of the remainder of the AoS. This would need to demonstrate the mitigation would be deliverable and able to prevent weakening the physical or perceived sense of separation which may otherwise lead towards coalescence.

Area of Separation Study

Coalville Urban Area

on behalf of

North West Leicestershire District Council

Appendix 1 - Land Unit Criteria

July 2019

Appendix 01

Table A – Area of Separation Criteria

NB. Where a circumstance does not fit clearly within one category (A – E) more than one may be shaded on the profile table to show the range with the one most appropriate ticked

Criteria	Factors to measure criteria (where A makes the least contribution and E makes the most contribution to the Area of Separation)
Physical Criteria	
Topography	A= Landform strongly reinforces connectivity between settlements e.g. opposite steep valley slopes B= Landform reinforces connectivity between settlements C= Landform plays a neutral role in separation – flat/minimal variation in levels D= Rolling /undulating landform provides some separation between settlements E= Landform provides full separation between settlements e.g. ridge
Vegetation	A= Largely open with minimal vegetation B= Limited enclosure by poor/low hedges with few or no trees C= Moderately enclosed by vegetation – medium scale clipped hedges and hedgerow trees, small woodlands, fragmented shelterbelts D= Semi-enclosed by mature vegetation - tall hedges, tree-belts or woodland E= Dense pattern of mature vegetation providing enclosure– tall hedges, tree-belts or woodland
Perceptual criteria	
Public visibility	A= Well contained from public views and indication of minimal usage B= Generally well-contained from public views and or indication of limited usage C= Partially contained from public views with indication of moderate usage D= Moderately open to public views with indication of moderate/high usage E= Very open to public views with indication of high usage
Private views	A= Well-contained from private views on the edge of settlements B= Generally well contained from private views on the edge of settlements C= Partially contained from private views on the edge of settlements D= Moderately open to private views on the edge of settlements E= Very open to a number of private views on the edge of settlements
Contribution to the character and setting of settlements	A= Unit makes a very limited contribution to the character of the adjacent settlement/s B= Unit makes a limited contribution to the character of the adjacent settlement/s C= Unit makes moderate contribution to the character of the adjacent settlement/s D= Unit makes notable contribution to the character of the adjacent settlement/s E= Unit makes major contribution to the character of the adjacent settlement/s
Landscape Linkage	A= Unit is isolated from other units B= Unit has limited physical or visual linkage to other units C= Unit has moderate physical or visual linkage to other units D= Unit has moderately strong physical or visual linkage to other units E= Units has strong physical or visual linkage to other units

Appendix 01

Table A – Area of Separation Criteria

Criteria	Factors to measure criteria (where A makes the least contribution and E makes the most contribution to the Area of Separation)	
Value Criteria		
Scenic Quality	A=	Unit is a low scenic value with a relatively high number of detractors
	B=	Unit is of moderate to low scenic value with a moderate number of detractors
	C=	Unit is of moderate scenic value with few detractors
	D=	Unit is of moderate to high scenic value
	E=	Unit is of high scenic value
Recreational Value	A=	Unit has no specific recreational value e.g. no facilities, access or rights-of-way
	B=	Units has a moderate to low recreational value with limited facilities
	C=	Unit has a moderate recreational value
	D=	Unit has a moderate to high recreational value
	E=	Unit as a high recreational value with a number of facilities and/or evidence of high use

Area of Separation Study

Coalville Urban Area

on behalf of

North West Leicestershire District Council

Appendix 2 - Land Unit Returns

July 2019

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 1**

Size = 11.48 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the majority of Broomleys Farm to the south of the dismantled railway and north of the properties fronting Broom Leys Road. The unit includes the recreational route on the line of the former railway due to its strong visual relationship with the rest of the unit. The unit is bounded to the east by Coalville Community Hospital and to the west by Unit 2, which also forms part of Broomleys Farm. The land-use comprises horse paddocks and a small working farm that also supports a livery business. The land unit has been identified based on its common characteristics and relatively open and unified character.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation			√		
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views			√		
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage		√			
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value			√		

Commentary on profile

The unit occupies an area of gently undulating ground which slopes from east to west between approximately 162 and 159m AOD. The land slopes at typically 1 in 100 and there is a localised area of higher ground to the north east of the unit, which provides some limited containment from some viewpoints. The field units are divided by a combination of established hedgerows, but mainly post and rail fences of poor appearance. There is one internal, hedgerow that runs north-south and contains a number of mature trees which provides some localised visual and physical separation. Despite the general lack of notable internal subdivision, there is a strong hedgerow to the west of the unit on the boundary with Unit 2 and also a substantive area of mature vegetation to and beyond the northern boundary following the line of the former mineral railway which now forms a recreational route. To the southern boundary there are intermittent sections of vegetation to the rear gardens of the properties on Broom Leys Road. Public visibility is principally from views on the recreational route that runs to the north on the former mineral railway from where there are open views across the unit. Glimpsed views are also present from Footpath 06. Private views are more limited and relate to the individual houses that back onto the site to the south and also views from Coalville Community Hospital to the east which is relatively elevated to the site.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

It is considered that the land unit forms an important part of the retained physical gap and separation between the urban area of Coalville west of the A511 and the suburban development of Broom Leys Road/Greenhill to the south and east. The impression provided by the unit is still one of open undeveloped land extending between these two distinct parts of the built area despite both technically being within Coalville.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Contribution to the identity of settlements

It is considered that the unit makes no material contribution to the character of Whitwick due to the enclosure by vegetation to the north. However, the unit makes a notable contribution to the landscape setting of the Broom Leys Road area of Coalville. There are some continuous open views southwards from the recreational route that follows the northern boundary and also from the overbridge across the A511 extending first over the land unit, then to the well-vegetated residential area of Greenhill and eventually up towards Bardon Hill. In these views the open aspect across the unit combined with the sylvan character around Greenhill helps to maintain a mature landscape setting for the edge of the settlement. When viewed from Broom Leys Road while there are a few filtered and brief glimpses into the unit there are no notable views due to the presence of largely continuous ribbon development along the road.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit makes a notable contribution to the open character of the undeveloped land to the south of the disused mineral railway and up to the edge of the development on Broom Leys Road. There are strong links with the adjacent Unit 2 to the west being part of the same farm. However, visual and perceptual links to other units to the north are generally precluded by the density of intervening vegetation. In this respect Units 1 and 2 have an important relationship to Coalville but a reduced relationship with Whitwick.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic value due to the relatively open views across paddocks and with established hedges and tree groups to sections of the perimeter and one internal hedgerow. The majority of the land unit provides no public recreational use although the recreational route to the northern boundary provides a well-used link between Coalville and Whitwick/Greenhill. The livery stables and horse paddocks provide private recreational use. As result the recreational value is considered to be moderate.

Overall contribution to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

Primary

Secondary ✓

Incidental

The land unit makes an important contribution to the open undeveloped and rural fringe character to the edge of Coalville including the Broom Leys Road and Greenhill areas. However, the unit makes a more limited contribution the separation of Coalville from Whitwick and for this reason it is assessed as making a Secondary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 2**

Size = 1.98 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18 and 26/10/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the single triangular shaped and most westerly field associated with Broomleys Farm located east of A511 Stephenson Way and north of the properties fronting Broom Leys Road and sharing its third boundary with Unit 1. The land-use is currently laid to horse pasture while also used for a mix of other seasonal activities.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)			√		
	Private Views			√		
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage		√			
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value		√			

Commentary on profile

The topography is broadly flat ranging by 2m from 158 -160m AOD. The unit is bounded by vegetation to the three sides. There is a mature hedgerow with hedgerow trees to the western boundary with the A511 and also strong hedgerow with individual trees to much of the eastern boundary adjacent to Unit 1. The southern boundary comprises a number of residential properties that back onto the land which include long gardens and a number of established trees and areas of shrubbery. As a result, the unit feels well enclosed. Footpath 06 runs along the eastern boundary of the unit providing open views throughout. There are intermittent private views from the residential properties to the southern boundary, at the access point from Broom Leys Farm and filtered views in the winter months from the A511.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is a relatively small parcel of land which makes a small contribution towards the physical separation between settlements.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

Due to the size of the unit and its location it makes a modest contribution towards the identity of settlements. The core of Coalville is located to the west of the A511 and the unit makes no noteworthy contribution this part of the town. However, there is a limited contribution to the properties to the rear of Broom Leys Road which is appreciated from the public footpath which passes through the unit.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

There are some limited links with Unit 1 to the east but minimal other linkage to any other units within the Area of Separation. Elevated views from the A511 cycleway overbridge are relatively restricted over this triangular field by dense hedges and tree cover.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Land Unit No = 3

Size = 2.85 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the area of open space known as Sharpley Avenue Playing Fields. The north-west boundary is marked by the line of the dismantled mineral railway, the eastern boundary by the housing on Sharpley Avenue and to the south by the rear of Coalville Community Hospital and houses on Broom Leys Road/Meadow Lane. The land-use comprises a public amenity area which contains a play area, skateboard park, surface footpaths, amenity grass areas and established secondary woodland.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)					√
	Private Views				√	
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage	√				
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value				√	

Commentary on profile

The landform is broadly level ranging from 165-168m AOD. The unit is very well enclosed by established secondary vegetation to the south, west and north west boundaries. The woodland areas to the south of the site extend to circa 100m in depth with established vegetation occupying approximately one third of the unit in total. There is vegetation to the northern boundary with Unit 4 comprising areas of dense scrub and establishing trees. The site is fully open to public views as it forms part of a community open space facility. Footpath 019A which runs from Broom Leys up to Perran Avenue also passes through the unit. However, due to the strong level of vegetative containment to the north and west there are no views from outside to the north or west within the adjacent parts of the Area of Separation. There are private views from the properties on Sharpley Avenue to the north-east of the unit where close boarded timber fencing to rear gardens marks the boundary. Most of the open views from the adjacent housing are from first floor windows.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit occupies a relatively small area directly adjacent to Sharpley Avenue and at 180m in width comprises only a small part of the physical separation between existing settlements.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit makes a contribution to the immediate character of Sharpley Avenue. However, this relationship is restricted as the properties back onto the open space with access provided via a short length of roadway with no frontage development. This arrangement of existing built form tends to make the area feel tucked away. The unit makes no notable contribution to the character and identity of Coalville or Whitwick and only a locally and limited contribution to the local area of Greenhill.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit makes a limited contribution to the open character of the Area of Separation with few links to adjacent Unit 4 which is largely separated by established vegetation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Landscape value**

The unit is not affected by any landscape designation but is considered to be of moderate scenic value due to the relatively open views across the amenity areas and surrounding established woodland. The land unit is fully accessible and provides a valuable public facility with play facilities and informal recreation opportunities as well as the link between Coalville and Whitwick/Greenhill along the line of the disused railway. As result the recreational value is considered to be high.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary

Secondary

Incidental ✓

While the land unit is an area of public open space it makes a limited contribution to the separation of Coalville from Whitwick due to its small scale, land use and the physical containment and separation from adjacent land units. For these reasons it is assessed as making an Incidental contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Land Unit No = 4

Size = 3.73Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the Memorial Ground home to Coalville Rugby Football Club. The land is bounded to the south by the line of the dismantled railway, to the east by the edge of Hall Lane/Whitwick and to the north and west by two established field boundaries within the core of the Area of Separation. The grounds contain playing fields accommodating four rugby pitches with the first-team pitch located closest to the clubhouse to the east of the unit. There are areas of car parking and hard standing closer to the eastern boundary and these areas are currently used for car boot sales. A tree-lined access track leads to the grounds from Hall Lane, although this lies outside the Area of Separation.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation					√
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)		√			
	Private Views	√				
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage		√			
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality		√			
	Recreational Value				√	

Commentary on profile

The landform falls gently from east to west ranging from a height of circa 167m AOD down to the lowest part the site on the southern boundary at circa 160m AOD. There is also a surface water drainage pond to the lower lying part of the site to the south which drains the sports pitches and provides some wildlife interest. The pitches and parking areas are subdivided by two internal hedgerows which formed part of the historic hedgerow pattern present on the 1887-88 OS map. The perimeter of the unit has been planted with native trees and shrubs to form semi-mature perimeter belts approximately 15 to 20m in depth around the whole of the site. These serve to visually contain the presence of the sports pitches from most perimeter views. There are some glimpsed views from the Units 1 and 3 to the south. In addition, there are local views at the site access point from Footpath 019A. There are no private views from houses to the rugby club due to the containment provide by vegetation. There are floodlights around the first-team pitch would bring some localised visual intrusion when in use.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit extends to approximately 600m at its maximum distance from east to west which is approximately three quarters of the distance of the gap between Coalville/A511 and Whitwick. Therefore, the unit makes a significant contribution towards the physical separation between these two settlements.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

Due to the way in which the rugby club grounds are contained by established vegetation the land use makes a limited contribution to the identity and character of Whitwick. The presence of the perimeter and internal vegetation means that residents from Hall Lane, Whitwick and users of the rights of way in the vicinity are not visually aware of the sportsground apart from when the floodlights are in use.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 5**

Size = 6.4 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18 and 26/10/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the buildings at Glebe Farm and the three areas of grazing associated with the farm. The unit is bounded by the A511 to the west, the line of the former dismantled railway to the south and by arable fields to the north and east. The land use comprises a number of horse-grazed paddocks. A number of agricultural buildings are located alongside the farm, including the Glebe Von Wood Kennels.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation			√		
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views		√			
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage			√		
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality		√			
	Recreational Value			√		

Commentary on profile

The landform is very gently sloping from circa 159m AOD in the south to 155m AOD in the north with a typical gradient of circa 1 in 100. Vegetation to the western boundary with the A511 comprises a relatively strong hedgerow and tree line. Retained hedgerows within and around the unit are mainly native and in a moderate condition, but with some intermittent sections and lengths of unsympathetic conifers closer to Glebe Farm buildings. The southern boundary is marked by dense vegetation associated with the cycleway overbridge and the line of disused railway. Public views of the land unit are clearly available from two rights of way across the site; Footpath 03 that runs from Coalville to Green Lane and Footpath 06 that runs parallel with the A511. There are also panoramic elevated views from the A511 overbridge over Unit 5 and then further across the Area of Separation up to the higher ground within Charnwood Forest. There are also filtered views from the A511 in the winter months. The only private views of the unit are from Glebe Farm and the neighbouring cottages on Green Lane.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit forms the western part of Area A extending up to 200m in depth which equates to about a quarter of the distance between Coalville/A511 and properties off Hall Lane within Whitwick to the east. The Stephenson Way/A511 corridor also forms a notable physical boundary between Coalville and the Area of Separation.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The section of Coalville to the west of the A511 comprises the Long Lane development (built around the turn of the 21st century) and Whitwick Business Park (although not in Whitwick) on Stenson Road. The character and form of both developments is inward looking backing onto the A511, which forms an additional barrier to Stephenson Way and the Area of Separation to the east. The land unit forms part of the wider open agricultural area that occupies the majority of Area A. The paddocks are relatively contained in views from the east of the Area of Separation. However, the appreciation of the openness is immediately gained from

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

the rights of way within the unit after leaving Coalville and crossing the A511. In this respect the unit and the associated vegetation contribute to providing a rural and open character close to the edge of the town.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit has strong links with Unit 8, with which together forms a substantial part of the large scale open rural character in the centre of the Area A of the Area of Separation and to a lesser extent with Units 1, 2 and 4 which are more contained by vegetation.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate to low scenic quality due to the presence of a number of detractors including the functional agricultural buildings/kennels at Glebe Farm and relatively poor condition of some of the boundary fences and hedges. The existing rights of way provide some recreational value and links between Coalville and Whitwick. As a result, the recreational value is considered to be moderate.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= **Primary** ✓ Secondary Incidental

The unit is in a slightly degraded condition but makes an important contribution to the functionality of the Area of Separation in combination with Unit 8. The unit is also clearly distinct from Coalville both physically and in terms of land use. For these reasons the unit is assessed as making a Primary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 6**

Size = 13.81 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises three arable fields to the west of the established residential development off Hall Lane including Tiverton Avenue and Mickleden Green. The southern boundary is formed by the perimeter of Coalville Rugby club while the western boundary is marked by an established hedgerow.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation		√			
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)		√			
	Private Views				√	
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage					√
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value	√				

Commentary on profile

Landform gently falls from east to west from approximately 167m AOD to 158m AOD. The modest fall in landform would suggest there would be views across the Area Separation to the west. However, there are limited opportunities for public views to the west due to the extent of private housing that backs on the unit, subtle changes in landform and presence of hedgerows. The three fields (and formerly 5 fields from at least 1955) are internally marked by the established clipped hedgerows. Semi-mature vegetation forms a strong physical and visual boundary to the south adjacent to the Coalville Rugby club while to the rear of the residential properties on Tiverton Avenue and Stainsdale Green there is no notable boundary vegetation, which makes the housing a prominent and unsympathetic feature both at close quarters and also from greater distances to the west. There are limited public views of the land unit with the main opportunity being along Tiverton Avenue, where a cycle route runs close to the corner of the unit, although the internal hedgerows contain most views to within the first field. Views back from Green Lane are also partly filtered by the slightly rising ground and the boundary hedgerows.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit occupies a distance of up to 400m which comprises approximately half the width of the Area of Separation from east to west between Tiverton Avenue and the A511/Coalville. In this respect the unit comprises an important part of the physical separation between Whitwick and Coalville which is emphasised by the open character of the Area of Separation at this point.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit demonstrates an open rural character which extends directly up to the relatively harsh residential development on Tiverton Avenue and Stainsdale Green. This interface provides an attractive outlook from the residential areas of Whitwick, but the rural character is diminished by the lack of any notable softening at the unit's eastern boundary. The unit makes a limited contribution to the identity and setting of Coalville.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 7**

Size = 6.4 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises an area of arable land to the west of Hall Lane, Whitwick. The north-west and western boundaries are marked by established hedgerows. Land use comprises three arable fields.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		√			
	Vegetation		√			
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)					√
	Private Views					√
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value	√				

Commentary on profile

The landform slopes in the form of a gentle bowl up from Hall Lane at its lowest point at circa 156m AOD to the west and north to 159m AOD. This local topography pattern in combination with the hedgerows to the south-west of the unit restricts views beyond the unit to the west. The unit is bounded by a mix of clipped hedges and tall hedges to each of the field units. The taller hedges are present along a section of Hall Lane north of Rosslyn Road and also to the north-west boundary adjacent to Unit 11. The southern section of Hall Lane to the south-east has a more open aspect with no hedging but intermittent trees within the highway verge. This open aspect from Hall Lane is distinctive in relation to the Area of Separation since it is the most open section of public road to the east, where there are public views into the open and undeveloped character of the Area of Separation and also across towards Coalville to the west. The views into the rural character of Unit 7 can be appreciated both when directly adjacent to the unit and also on the approach along Hall Lane (to the south-east) when travelling in a north-west direction. There are also a number of private views from houses fronting or adjacent Hall Lane which can also see into and across this unit.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit occupies circa 180m of the 980m of the width of the Area of Separation between Hall Lane and the A511/Coalville. In this respect the unit comprises an important part of the physical separation between Whitwick and Coalville but relatively less in distance terms in comparison to the adjacent Unit 6.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit provides an open rural character which extends directly up to Hall Lane, with a mix of tall hedges and a significant section of open frontage. This interface provides a unique (for the Area Separation) and attractive outlook from both a length of well used public road and residential areas to appreciate the rural character of the Area of Separation. The distinct identity of this part of Whitwick is reinforced by this arrangement area. The unit makes a limited contribution to the identity and setting of Coalville due to the distance, slightly rising intervening ground and presence of local hedgerows.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 8**

Size = 33.56 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18 and 26/10/18

Land Unit Description

The Unit comprises an extensive area of open agricultural land to the centre of the Area of Separation. This extends from the A511 and boundary of Coalville in the west across Green Lane and towards Whitwick and Units 6 and 7 to the east. The land-use is all currently arable under a linseed crop, which could form part of a crop rotation process.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation		√			
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views			√		
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage					√
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value		√			

Commentary on profile

The landform gently slopes from the east to west within the unit from approximately 158m to 151m AOD together with local undulations to the north following Green Lane in a minor valley. The vegetation pattern within the unit is formed by a number of established clipped hedgerows that follow the traditional field pattern of the area. Since the 1950s a number of the original hedgerows have been removed, although the broad structure largely remains. There are very few individual trees within the hedgerows which notably adds to the character. There are a pair of brick built semi-detached terrace style cottages (Forest View) located within the centre of the area on Green Lane. Public views of the unit are concentrated on locations along Green Lane/Footpath 03. However, due to the height of the hedgerow views are seasonally restricted to the field gates and open sections of the Lane. There are also views from a section of Footpath 06 which runs parallel and closer to the A511. In a number of locations there are expansive views over the unit and adjacent areas, and also further east and south up to the wooded higher ground associated with Charnwood Forest. This includes filtered views through hedgerows in the winter months along the A511. Private views either relate to those at the cottages on Green Lane within the unit or more distant views principally from properties to the edge of Whitwick e.g. along Hermitage Road and Hall Lane.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit comprises the single largest component of the Area of Separation extending approximately 800m across a 950m width of the land that separates Whitwick and Coalville/A511 between east and west. Therefore, the unit comprises a fundamental component of the Area of Separation.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit exhibits a large-scale rural character within the Area of Separation that helps to define the distinctiveness and separation of the settlements of Whitwick and Coalville from each other. The land associated with the unit and adjacent Units 5, 6, 7, 9, 13 and 14 up to the built edge create a rural character that is distinct from both the more urban character of Coalville and the extended industrial village character of Whitwick.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Land Unit No = 9

Size = 5.99 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises an area of gently rising ground that has recently largely been planted with a mix of native trees and shrubs and areas of meadow as part of the National Forest. The area also contains a SuDS feature for surface water drainage adjacent to Green Lane. The unit is bounded by Green Lane to the west, arable land to the south-east and by grassland and arable land to the north and east within Units 7, 8 and 10.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography				√	
	Vegetation			√		
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views	√				
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value			√		

Commentary on profile

The landform forms part of a local area of high ground which falls from circa 156m AOD at the north-east of the unit down to circa 149m AOD to the south west of the unit in the location of the SuDS. The single field (previously enlarged from two fields present in 1903) is bounded by the established native hedgerow to the perimeter. There are a few individual trees to the north and north-east perimeter and also a seasonal pond to the north-east corner. The unit has been largely planted with native trees and shrubs during the last three years. The plantation is fenced off from the public to benefit wildlife and conservation. The plantation forms part of the National Forest initiative and has been named after Thomas Ashford of Whitwick who was awarded the Victoria Cross for services of gallantry during the Anglo Afghan War in 1880. Other parts of the field have been sown to meadow grass. A substantive SuDS basin (130x40m) is present adjacent to Green Lane. Public views of the unit are visible from Footpath 04 which runs within the northern boundary of the unit. From this footpath there are currently open views to the south of the unit, over much of Area A of the Area of Separation, and with wide panoramic views beyond towards Coalville up to Bardon Hill and Charnwood Forest. There are also views to the unit from Green Lane, travelling northwards. Private views are generally from a distance and include the cottages at Forest View and properties along Hall Lane.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is approximately 300m x 220m in size and occupies approximately a third of the distance between Hall Lane Whitwick and A511/Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The land unit is located on gently rising ground to the south of the closest properties along Green Lane and George Street, Whitwick. Despite the relatively modest rise in landform the topography and the associated hedgerows help to contain views towards and from Whitwick to the north. The young woodland planting will establish and mature to create a notable woodland feature which will add to the character of this part of the Area of Separation and further visually separate Whitwick from the open land to the south and west.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 10**

Size = 3.56 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises two fields of rough grassland bounded by mature hedges on locally elevated ground to the south of properties within Whitwick along Green Lane and George Street.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography					√
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)			√		
	Private Views			√		
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage		√			
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value			√		

Commentary on profile

The landform slopes from the south-east corner down to the west from approximately 158m AOD to 148m AOD on Green Lane. Slopes typically vary between 1 in 20 and 1 in 25 which represents a relatively steep gradient for the locality. The two fields are subdivided by relatively tall overgrown hedges with a number of individual trees. There is a clipped hedge at the interface with Green Lane and a boundary of back garden fences from the properties Green Lane. Footpath 04 passes through the eastern corner of the two fields allowing for public views of the unit. There are a few other informal footpaths both across and around the two fields that link with Whitwick village. There are also public views from Green Lane up to the rising ground. From the elevated section of Footpath 04, there are some long-distance views to the north-west extending as far as the Peak District on a clear day. Private views are from properties that either front or back onto the land unit along Green Lane and George Street.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is closely related to the edge of Whitwick and occupies an area of approximately 200m x 250m. While this is not a large unit the rising ground and associated vegetation combine to provide clear sense of separation from Whitwick village in views from the south. In this respect the unit plays an important role in providing a clear sense of separation of Whitwick from Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The rising ground of the unit relates most clearly to the existing residential development directly adjacent on Green Lane and George Street. The undeveloped nature of the land helps to reinforce the small scale 19th and early 20th century character of the village in this location which nestles at the foot of the slopes. From the more elevated section of the unit, the distant views extend over and beyond Whitwick which is largely contained within mature tree cover. Along Green Lane there are few individual properties and short runs of Victorian terraces which reflect a relatively historic character.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 11**

Size = 1.8 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises an area of land adjacent to the built edge of Whitwick backing onto properties along Hall Lane to the east and George Street to the north. The northern part of the site comprises the Walker Flats Allotments which are managed by the Whitwick Parish Council, and an additional area of informal amenity space to the south.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)			√		
	Private Views					√
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage	√				
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value					√

Commentary on profile

The landform falls from a high point to the south at circa 160m AOD down to the edge of Whitwick at 154m AOD to the north adjacent to George Street. The open amenity land to the south is bounded by a strong belt of established trees to both the south-east and south-west, which restrict views from the wider landscape. Footpath 04 runs through the southern corner of the amenity area and then follows a poorly maintained route onto Hall Lane. There are open views from properties adjacent to the unit principally on Hall Lane but also on George Street.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is a relatively small being circa 180m x 90m and closely relates to the edge of the adjacent part of Whitwick. The unit does not provide any notable separation from Coalville or other outlying parts of Whitwick. The mature trees to the south-east and south-west reinforce the close association with Whitwick and relative detachment from the wider Area of Separation.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit adds to the suburban village edge character of Whitwick with land uses that reflect the adjacent residential areas rather than the more open rural uses to the south.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit internally provides an open character. However, the land is relatively small, directly adjacent to the edge of Whitwick on two sides and contained by established trees to the remaining two sides next to the wider open landscape. There are few visual links with adjacent areas, particularly in the summer months when the trees are in leaf. In the winter months there would be filtered views to Units 7 and 10. Therefore, the unit makes a small contribution to the overall open character of the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 12**

Size = 0.93 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises an area of informal open space. The amenity uses extend beyond the defined Area of Separation to the north-west up to Hermitage Road including an equipped play area. The unit contains areas of semi-natural vegetation to the east which back onto properties on Green Lane. Blocks of prominent and visually unsympathetic three-storey townhouses are located adjacent to the northern boundary.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		√			
	Vegetation			√		
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)					√
	Private Views					√
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value				√	

Commentary on profile

The landform is broadly level at between 150 and 152m AOD within the unit but occupies an area of locally elevated ground which falls gently to the south towards Green Lane and more steeply to the north across Hermitage Road a gradient of circa 1 in 25. The south-west boundary is marked by a clipped hedgerow and areas of secondary woodland are associated with the eastern part of the land. The land is fully open to public access with wide ranging public views across the unit. There are also outward views to the south towards the prominent wooded skyline of Bardon Hill both from within the unit and also from the frontage of the open space on Hermitage Road. Views are also available at the entrance gate into the young woodland of Unit 13. There are a number of clear views from adjacent housing including the three storey town houses on Weavers Close.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is a small area of land c 100 x 130m in extent and is closely associated with the edge of Whitwick and Hermitage Road and Weavers Close in particular. It plays a limited role in the separation between Whitwick and Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The land use for informal recreation provides part of the local setting to the adjacent residential areas. In this respect the character of the land relates directly to the existing settlement rather than the neighbouring agricultural land and young woodland. However, the unit in combination with the associated open land beyond the designated Area of Separation leading towards Hermitage Road provides opportunities for some views directly into and across the Area of Separation from the surrounding urban area. Therefore, this unit provides for an important connection to the open agricultural landscape of Area of Separation to the south and also distant views to Bardon Hill.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

There are links with adjacent Units 13 and 8 and visual links much further to the south and outside the Area of Separation. The unit relates most strongly with the remaining part of the open space outside the

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Land Unit No = 13

Size = 8.41 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises two fields of former arable land that have recently been planted with a mix of native trees and shrubs and areas of wildflower meadow as part of the National Forest. The unit is bounded to the north-west by the rear of properties on Hermitage Road, Unit 14 to the south-west and by areas of retained agricultural land within Unit 8 to the south-east. There is also a boundary with the amenity area of Unit 12 to the north-east.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation			√		
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)			√		
	Private Views				√	
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value			√		

Commentary on profile

The landform falls from circa 152m AOD at the north-east down to circa 148m AOD in the south-west. The two field units (previously enlarged from three fields present in 1903) are bounded by established native hedgerows to most of the perimeter. There are four individual trees to the southern boundary of the eastern field and a number of other trees along the boundary and within rear gardens of the properties backing onto the land along Hermitage Road. The unit has been largely planted with native trees and shrubs during the last three years. The plantation is fenced off from the public, but a permissive footpath route has been provided within and through the young woodland connecting the amenity area off Hermitage Road/Weavers Close with Footpath 06 to the south-west. The plantation forms part of the National Forest initiative and has been named after Harold Smalley resident of Whitwick who was a Japanese prisoner of war during World War II and later died at the age of 101. Other parts of the woodland margins have been sown to meadow grass. Public views of the unit are available from the amenity area to the north-east, to a limited extent on Footpath 06 and most notably from the permissive path that passes through the unit. There are some more distant views of the unit from Green Lane towards the roofscape of the houses along Hermitage Road, but the land within Unit 13 is not visible. Private views are principally from the rear of properties on Hermitage Road with other elevated views from the three-storey townhouses on Weavers Close.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is approximately 450 x 200m in size and occupies a location close to the parish boundary (which follows the A511) between Whitwick and Coalville. Therefore, while built development along Hermitage Road all but joins with Coalville at the A511 this land unit provides an important part of the separation between the two settlements.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 14** Size = 1.95 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18, 26/10/18 and 14/3/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the majority of a single rectangular field of rough grass to the west of the Area of Separation. The unit lies adjacent to the A511 and Coalville/Whitwick parish boundary to the west, close to Hermitage Road to the north and the area of new woodland planting to the east. A section of the field fronting Hermitage Road to a depth of approximately 45m is excluded from the designated Area of Separation.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)			√		
	Private Views		√			
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage			√		
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value		√			

Commentary on profile

The landform falls relatively steeply from 150m AOD in the south-east down to 145m AOD in the north-west at Hermitage Road at a gradient of circa 1 in 30. The unit is enclosed by mature hedges to three sides and by trees and hedges along the A511 to the remaining boundary to the west. This combination of landform and vegetation creates a relatively separate character from Units 8 and 13. However, this section of the field closer to Hermitage Road that is excluded from the Area of Separation is not marked by any feature on the ground and is essentially part of the same land unit in character terms. There are open public views from a section of Footpath 06 which runs from Hermitage Road to the south-west and parallel to the A511. This route also connects with the permissive path through the new woodland of Unit 13. There are filtered views in the winter months into and across the unit from the A511 between roadside tree belts. Private views are restricted to the terrace properties fronting Hermitage Road to the north of the unit and these are partly screened by the mature hedge on the road frontage (located outside the land unit) which largely restricts similar public views into the unit from street level.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is a relatively small area of land circa 225 x 95m in extent within Whitwick parish but located very close to the parish boundary between Whitwick and Coalville which follows the A511. The land relates to the open landscape to the east within Whitwick.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit forms the larger part of the last remaining undeveloped field which marks the end of the settlement of Whitwick along Hermitage Road before reaching the A511 and Coalville. The section of the field outside the designated Area of Separation is a short break in the built road frontage (c 70m in width) and while there are limited views into the unit or across the Area of Separation this undeveloped break is important preventing coalescence between Coalville and Whitwick and maintaining the separate identity of the two settlements. There is a case to extend the Area of Separation up to Hermitage Road to include the whole field to reinforce the separation of settlements and prevent coalescence. However, since the time of the

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 15**

Size = 14.23 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the majority of Hermitage Recreation Ground which is an important recreational facility for Whitwick and the whole of the Coalville Urban Area and beyond. The facilities include: a 3G all-weather pitch, play area, sports pitches, putting green, fishing lake, model railway and parking. In addition, there are areas of informal amenity land, tree planting, footpaths and cycle routes. The Hermitage Leisure Centre is located to the east and adjacent to the Recreation Ground but is located outside the Area of Separation. The unit is bound by the rear of properties on Hermitage Road, Grove Road and Lakeshore Crescent to the south, Silver Street and the Leisure centre to the east, the cycleway to the north and the disused municipal golf course (Unit 16) to the west.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		√			
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)					√
	Private Views				√	
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value					√

Commentary on profile

The unit occupies the southern sloping sides of the shallow valley of the Grace Dieu Brook that forms the principal feature of Area B of the Area of Separation. Levels slope from 145m AOD in the south close to Hermitage Road down to c 138m AOD along the course of the stream. Sections of the valley slopes are relatively gentle e.g. across the sports pitches to the east while in other locations the landform is more varied, having been altered by past industrial activity e.g. in the location of the fishing lake which was part of the former Hermitage Brick and Terra Cotta tile factory works. The lake is a notable component of the unit and includes some steeper side slopes and a central island. The valley slopes are visible from the opposite northern slopes of the valley, most noticeably from Unit 17. The recreation ground includes a number of belts of established trees. The majority of these are located on the steeper side slopes around the lake and on the island and also in copses to the rear of properties on Hermitage Road. There are remnant hedges and tree lines that surround and sub-divide the playing pitches to the east and provide screening of the adjacent housing areas to the south. The mature secondary woodland along the disused railway/cycleway provides a strong vegetated boundary to the north closer to the stream. The recreation ground is fully open to public use and therefore public views are widespread throughout including from the cycleway. Private views are concentrated along the southern boundary from adjacent properties with a number of these houses having open and elevated views overlooking the park.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The recreation ground forms a substantive part of Area B of the Area of Separation being c 750 x 225m in extent and covering most to the southern valley sides. The unit therefore occupies approximately a quarter part of Area B of the Area of Separation, which also equates to up to half the width of the open land between the existing built development on Hermitage Road, Thornborough Road/Church Lane and leading towards Coalville.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Land Unit No = 16

Size = 11.68 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18 and 14/3/18

Land Unit Description

The unit largely comprises the extent of the former municipal golf course that has ceased to operate but is still maintained as areas of mown grass and woodland planting between the former fairways. The unit also includes three small fields to the west and roadside planting along the A511. The unit is bound by A511 to the south, Thornborough Road to the west, Hermitage Road to the east and Units, 15 and 17, to the north. The Bridle Road right of way cuts through the unit to the south-east and provides the boundary with Unit 17 to the west.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views		√			
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage			√		
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value			√		

Commentary on profile

The landform typically gently slopes from south-west to north-east leading into the Grace Dieu Brook valley with levels varying between 145m AOB and 140m AOD. There are areas to the north-west and towards the A511 where there are steeper banks around the edge of the former golf course, including where land rises up to the Bridle Road and Thornborough Road. In terms of vegetation there are extensive areas of woodland planting adjacent to the A511/Stephenson Way which largely provide screening from the main road and the adjacent industrial areas to the south, apart from a short break circa 50m wide. There are further areas of dense native planting and hedging on the cutting slopes close to Bridle Road and Thornborough Road including around the three small field units. Linear copses of trees planted between fairways of the golf course have also established within the unit to provide internal compartmentalisation of the openness and to soften the impact of houses along Hermitage Road. Bridle Road (Bridleway 08) runs as a green lane through the unit with established hedgerows and individual hedgerow trees to either side of the route. There are relatively open, public views of the unit from the rights of way including Bridleway 08, Footpath 09 and for a short section of the A511. Access over the south-west of the golf course is not encouraged but is available to the north-east of Bridle Road and to the north-west. There are limited private views over the unit with the closest properties being on Hermitage Road and cottages on Thornborough Road. Views are typically from rear gardens and are generally contained by established vegetation.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The former golf course occupies an L-shaped piece of land that extends from 540m and 240m on the longest axes of the unit. The unit is located at the south-west extent of Area B of the Area of Separation and provides an important physical separation between the adjacent industrial and commercial areas beyond the A511 to the west and south within Coalville and the open character of the remainder of the Area of Separation to the north-east.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 17**

Size = 18.61 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises three irregular shaped arable fields to the north-east facing slopes of the Grace Dieu Brook valley. The fields have experienced considerable enlargement since 1955 with the loss of the internal field boundaries, which historically comprised narrow strip fields running down valley slopes. The unit is bounded by Bridle Road to the south-west, the rear of properties fronting Thornborough Road to the north-west, Grace Dieu Brook to the south-east and Unit 20 to the north-east.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		√			
	Vegetation		√			
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views			√		
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value		√			

Commentary on profile

The unit occupies the northern sides of the shallow valley of the Grace Dieu Brook that forms Area B of the Area of Separation. Levels range from 149m AOD in the north-west close to Thornborough Road down to circa 138m AOD along the course of the stream within the valley. The valley slopes vary from circa 1 in 40 to less than 1 in 100 (closer to Thornborough Road). The steeper valley sides are partly visible from the opposite sides of the valley within Hermitage Recreation Ground (Unit 15). The fields are mainly bounded by native hedges of variable height some being taller with associated trees while the two internal hedges are clipped. There is a strong line of riparian trees along the brook. Public views are available from the three rights of way, Footpaths 09, 10 and 11 that pass through the unit and provide links to Bridle Road, Thornborough Road, Church Lane and Hermitage Recreation Ground. The routes pass both across open fields and along field edges. Lengths of Footpath 11 are poorly maintained within Units 17 and 18 and infrequently used at least in the summer months due to the presence of tall crops e.g. sweetcorn. There are also cross valley views to the east from Bridleway 08 and from Thornborough Road where Footpath 10 enters the unit. Private views are concentrated along the northern boundary where properties along Thornborough Road back onto the unit.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is a large component of the northern part of the Area of Separation being circa 575 x 480m in extent and covering approximately two thirds of the northern valley sides and up to two thirds of the width between Hermitage Road and Thornborough Road/Church Lane. The unit is therefore an important component in providing the physical separation between the existing development along Hermitage Road and Thornborough Road which are both parts of Whitwick parish. The unit also comprises large part of the land separating existing development along Church Road and Thornborough Road from Coalville to the south-west.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 18**

Size = 3.31 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the Thornborough Road Allotments (managed by Whitwick Parish Council) and two areas of extended garden/paddock plots to the rear of houses on Thornborough Road. There is a copse of birch trees and a triangular area of rough grassland to the south-east of the allotments. The unit is bounded by Thornborough Road frontage and the rear gardens of properties fronting Thornborough Road to the north-west and then by Unit 17 to the remaining three sides.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography				√	
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)		√			
	Private Views	√				
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage	√				
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value				√	

Commentary on profile

The land slopes at a typical gradient of 1 in 30 from the crest of the valley slopes to the south-east at c 148m AOD northwards to c 140m AOD on Thornborough Road. This change in level and orientation means that the land faces north and the slopes are more contained from the Grace Dieu Brook valley landscape to the south. In this respect the land faces more towards the existing development on Thornborough Road. The unit is generally well contained by vegetation including tall mature hedges around the garden plots and taller trees around the allotments. The most open aspect is to Thornborough Road which is bounded by a clipped hedge and two mature trees. Public views are restricted to those from Thornborough Road and on the Footpath 11 to the south-east. There are no views to the extended garden plots. Private views are available for the allotment holders and from residences opposite although a number of these properties are single storey and set back from the road.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is c 200 x 180m in extent and represents a relatively small parcel of land. The unit is primarily orientated towards the properties on Thornborough Road and hence fulfils less of a function of physical separation between settlements by making an incursion into the Area of Separation. However, at a local scale the unit does provide an undeveloped break along a built frontage of Thornborough Road.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit represents one of the few undeveloped gaps along Thornborough Road that can be seen by the public. However, the visible part of land comprises allotments occupied by a large number of temporary structures including sheds, fences and shelters. There are no distant views beyond the unit into the valley to the south, with the southern section of the unit marked by a belt of trees to the skyline. The current land-use therefore provides a typical urban fringe/suburban feature within the context of existing ribbon housing rather than making a notable contribution to the Area of Separation. The garden/plotland to the rear of properties on Thornborough Road is largely hidden from view and makes a limited contribution to the

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 19**

Size = 1.98 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises two small paddocks, stabling and a ménage to the north-west of the Area of Separation. The area is bounded by properties on both Church Lane and Thornborough Road to the north and west and the length of mature hedgerow to the southern boundary, within Unit 17.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography				√	
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)	√				
	Private Views				√	
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage		√			
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value	√				

Commentary on profile

The topography slopes from a high point in the south-east at approximately 144m AOD to the north and west down to 140m AOD at the rear of the residential properties that back onto the unit on Thornborough Road and Church Lane. The southern boundary of the unit represents a local crest from the valley to the south and the land unit slopes gently back towards Church Lane and Thornborough Road. Gradients are typically 1 in 40. The unit is bounded by tall established hedgerows and established trees to the south and east which contain views into the unit from the valley to the south. There is an established conifer hedgerow which sub-divides the unit into two. The boundaries to rear gardens that back onto the unit are of variable height and type some benefiting from views onto the paddocks and others being more enclosed. Public views of the unit are very limited and although Footpath 10 passes outside the southern boundary views into the land are precluded by the density of the hedgerow apart from at one field gate to the south-east corner. Private views relate to properties along Thornborough Road and Church Lane.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is relatively small being approximately 240m in length and 90m in width. It plays a negligible role in the physical separation of settlements and its position and orientation relates to the rear of a group of established neighbouring residential properties. Due to the narrowness of the unit the land plays no notable part in separating the two parts of Whitwick along Church Lane and Hermitage Road and plays no material part in the separation from Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The two paddocks make a small contribution to the identity of this part of the settlement. The unit is not readily perceived from public viewpoints and therefore the contribution is limited to the setting of the rear of a number of private properties that back onto the land.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 20**

Size = 0.81 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises a narrow strip of grassland that is strongly contained by established hedges and leads down the valley slopes towards a stream.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		√			
	Vegetation					√
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views	√				
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage			√		
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value			√		

Commentary on profile

The land falls from approximately 144m AOD in the west to 138m AOD in the east. The gradients are approximately 1 in 50 from the upper slopes down towards the Grace Dieu Brook. The field also exhibits evidence of ridge and furrow running down the slope following the long field boundaries. The field is enclosed by tall mature hedges to all sides including mature trees to the south-east in the valley bottom. Public views are available from Footpaths 9 and 10 that pass through the unit. There are no notable private views due the enclosure by hedging.

Contribution to physical separation settlements

The unit is a remnant narrow strip field approximately 30m wide and 230m long. The unit forms a narrow finger of land that extends approximately two-thirds of the distance between the two areas of the settlement of Whitwick and therefore represents a small but characterful part of the physical separation.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit represents a residual part of the historic character on this side of the valley. The field was typical of a number of the linear strip fields that ran down the valley slopes (as illustrated on old OS maps - Figures 05-08 in Appendices to the main report). This pattern reflects both the original open cultivated fields and the later enclosure by hedgerows that supported livestock. Therefore, the existing character makes a contribution to the understanding and identity of settlement pattern in this locality by the retention of some previous patterns of land use and structure close to the edge of the built area along Church Lane.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit is entirely free of built development or structures and therefore despite its small size contributes to the open character of the area which is readily perceived from users of the rights of way that cross the area. There are physical links via rights-of-way to Units 17 and 21 adjacent to the area. There are views down the unit to the mature vegetation in Unit 23 and also long views across the area from the edge of the cemetery in Unit 22.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with some attractive features including established native hedges and views leading down towards a stream corridor. There are two public footpaths which cross the site and hence the recreational value is considered to be medium.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary

Secondary ✓

Incidental

This narrow linear unit is small but physically well contained from adjacent units. It provides a historically characterful yet modest part of the Area of Separation. For these reasons the unit is assessed as making a Secondary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Land Unit No = 21

Size = 2.77 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises a number of grazed paddocks to the north-east of the Area of Separation. The area is bounded by Unit 20 to the south, the cemetery to the east and the rear of properties fronting Church Lane to the north.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		√			
	Vegetation			√		
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)			√		
	Private Views				√	
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value		√			

Commentary on profile

The topography slopes gently from the north at approximately 142m AOD down towards the stream corridor to the south-east at approximately 136m AOD. The northern of the two fields contains evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation within the structure of a former narrow strip field. The unit is variably enclosed by established hedgerows some of which are fragmented. There are strong hedgerows to the south-west boundary and lines of mature trees to the south-east boundary with the stream corridor. There are open views from Footpath 09 which passes through the unit up to Church Lane adjacent to the cemetery. Private views relate to properties fronting Church Lane.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is located close to one of the narrower edges of the Area of Separation and relates quite strongly to both the adjacent established residential development to the north and also mature vegetation following the stream corridor. The width of the unit is approximately 200m running down the valley slopes and a similar dimension along the valley slopes. In this part of the valley Unit 21 occupies half of the width of the Area of Separation between the development on Church Lane and the housing south of Hermitage Recreation Ground at Lakeshore Crescent and Grove Road. In this respect the unit makes an important contribution to the physical separation between these two parts of Whitwick. The unit also makes a notable contribution to the visual separation of Whitwick from Coalville in views looking south-west along the valley on Footpath 09 and at the cemetery towards Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

In common with the character of the adjacent Unit 20 the unit represents a residual part of the historic character on this side of the valley. The fields units are largely retained but in poorer condition. This pattern reflects both the original open cultivated fields and later enclosure by hedgerows that supported livestock. Therefore, the existing character makes a contribution to the understanding and history and identity of the settlement pattern in this locality by the retention of some previous patterns of land use and structure close to the edge of the built area along Church Lane.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 22**

Size = 2.69 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises Whitwick Cemetery, which dates from the Victorian period. The grounds are well maintained and contain a network of internal roads and surfaced footpaths and regularly arranged gravestones. The original cemetery is approximately square in shape and fronts Church Lane being accessed by a formal lychgate with a stonewall marking the boundary and cemetery Lodge adjacent to the entrance. A more recent extension has taken place to the south-west occupying part of the former paddocks that previously would have formed part of Unit 21.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		√			
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views			√		
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value		√			

Commentary on profile

The landform slopes from Church Lane at approximately 146m AOD down to the south corner at approximately 136m AOD. To the edge of the cemetery, closest to the stream the land falls more steeply down to the Grace Dieu Brook. The cemetery contains a number of mature trees including lime trees to the northern perimeter and specimen yews and cedars within the original burial ground. The planting to the southern boundary on the stream corridor is both dense and tall. There are some areas of ornamental planting to the entrance and fringes of the graves. This cemetery is publicly accessible at main entrance gate during daylight hours. There are a few private views from the rear of the properties adjacent to the cemetery.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The current extent of the cemetery is approximately 120m from north-west to south-east and 200 m from north-east to south-west. At this narrow part of the Area of Separation the cemetery represents an important part of the physical separation between two parts of Whitwick. However, the unit makes no material contribution to the physical separation between Whitwick and Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The cemetery represents an accessible and visible area of open space at the edge of the built-up area along Church Lane, Whitwick. There are framed distant views: from Church Lane, both from within the cemetery and also from the track that leads towards Footpath 09 on the northern boundary. At the time that the cemetery was first established there were no houses in the vicinity, but it has now become partially absorbed within the urban fabric along Church Lane and forms a typical component of the Victorian and early 20th century settlement character along the road. Furthermore, the location of the cemetery on relatively elevated ground allows for views to the south-west providing visual connections to the wider, undeveloped landscape within the Area of Separation. In this respect the unit makes a relatively strong

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

contribution to the identity of the settlement since it both relates to the urban streetscape and provides visual connection to the undeveloped landscape.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The cemetery makes a notable contribution to the open character of the Area of Separation. Although the site is a formal burial ground the character is nevertheless open and attractive. There are strong visual links from the unit towards Units 21, 20 and 17 and as far as Unit 16 beyond which the industrial estates of Coalville can be seen in the distance. The mature vegetation with Unit 23 forms a string feature to the south-east.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with some attractive features including specimen trees and native woodland adding to the character. There are no public footpaths through the cemetery, although Footpath 09 passes outside to the northern boundary. The cemetery is not generally used for recreation, but it provides a space for quiet reflection and hence the recreational value is considered to be low to medium.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary

Secondary ✓

Incidental

The unit is relatively well enclosed from the remainder of the Area of Separation apart from Unit 21. The unit comprises an important and characterful part of the separation between two parts of Whitwick but has a more limited influence on the separation from Coalville. For these reasons the unit is assessed as making a Secondary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 23**

Size = 2.12 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises a linear character area composed of a section of the former Charnwood Forest Railway and a length of the Grace Dieu Brook watercourse.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography				√	
	Vegetation					√
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)					√
	Private Views		√			
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value					√

Commentary on profile

The landform comprises the narrow artificial earthworks corridor of the former railway cutting with some steep side slopes. The base of the former railway line falls very gradually around 138m AOD. The more natural course of the Grace Dieu Brook flows to the north-west and parallel to the former railway line. The whole corridor is strongly vegetated by a mix of native regenerating woodland both on the cuttings of the former railway and also within the floodplain of the stream corridor. The railway corridor now provides a section of Sustrans Route 52 - Bosworth Trail. This route is well used by cyclists and pedestrians and provides views along the enclosed character of the corridor. There are limited private views into this corridor, although there are properties backing onto the stream fronting Church Lane.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit represents a linear feature circa 420m in length and 50m in width between two sections of Whitwick located on Church Lane and Silver Street. In isolation the corridor provides a narrow but important part of this separating character with the vegetation being equally if not more important than the physical distance. The Unit makes no notable contribution to the separation from Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The wooded character of the corridor combines two important features of the natural and historic character of Whitwick which have been retained and enhanced for amenity, biodiversity and recreational use. The presence of the corridor provides strength to the identity of the settlement of Whitwick as a whole.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The character of the unit is enclosed and therefore there is a limited contribution to the open character. However, this part of the corridor links to further sections of the Bosworth Trail to the west and east and the associated vegetation of the route very reinforces the rural fringe character of the Area of Separation. In this respect the unit links with adjacent Units 15, 17, 20, 21 and 22.

