

**NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE
SETTLEMENT FRINGE ASSESSMENT**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

This study has assessed the landscape value of land around settlement fringes of Ashby de la Zouch, Castle Donington, Coalville, Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham. The study identifies help identify the most distinctive landscapes, and those which are important for the setting of settlements.

The second aspect of this study was to undertake a more detailed landscape assessment of the possible future development sites around the settlements identified in the Core Strategy consultation.

This document will provide landscape evidence for the Local Development Framework to help the Council to ensure that the siting of new development, primarily focusing on housing, is where it would have the least adverse effects on the landscape or setting of each settlement.

Method

This assessment has followed best practice guidance. The settlement fringes were divided into suitable parcels and assessed using the following criteria:

Landscape value

- Landscape character
- Representativeness and consistency with wider character
- Remoteness and tranquillity

Visual Quality

- Visual prominence
- Nature of the urban edge
- Distinctive views and setting of the settlement
- Public accessibility

Written descriptions were provided to support each criteria and a score was attributed to each. A scoring system of 4 points (0-3 inclusive) was used to avoid a tendency to aggregate judgements around a 'middle' value.

A summary has been provided within each fringe under the heading 'Scope for Mitigation'. This provides an indication of the ability of the landscape to accommodate change without adverse effects. It summarises what is important within the landscape and describes what type of mitigation might be required to minimise effects or where there is the potential to improve a settlement's setting and appearance within views.

Conclusions

Stage One: Settlement Fringe Analysis

The following table illustrates the scoring given for each of the settlement fringes. The summary of each fringe provided within Scope for Mitigation needs to be reviewed in conjunction with the overall scoring judgement as it provides more information on siting, including areas of the fringe where development should be avoided and any specific landscape enhancements required.

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Ranking	Fringe	Landscape Quality	Visual Quality	Overall Judgement
Ashby de la Zouch				
2	1	5	7	12
5	2	7	7	14
1	3	2	4	6
7	4	6	10	16
8	5	8	10	18
5	6	9	5	14
4	7	5	8	13
2	8	4	8	12
Castle Donington				
4	1	6	9	15
3	2	6	8	14
2	3	4	7	11
1	4	1	2	3
Coalville				
10	1	8	10	18
2	2	2	6	8
1	3	1	5	6
4	4	4	8	12
9	5	7	10	17
7	6	7	9	16
3	7	5	5	10
5	8	6	9	15
5	9	6	9	15
7	10	8	8	16
Ilstock				
3	1	5	6	11
1	2	4	4	8
4	3	7	9	15
2	4	5	5	10
5	5	8	11	19
Kegworth				
1	1	4	5	9
4	2	9	9	18
4	3	8	10	18
2	4	7	6	13
2	5	7	6	13
Measham				
2	1	6	6	12
1	2	3	6	9
2	3	5	7	12
5	4	6	8	14
4	5	4	9	13

Stage 2: Detailed Site Recommendations

Detailed site recommendations are provided for sites around all six settlements which were identified as potential future land allocations within the Core Strategy consultation. Recommendations are provided which consider the key landscape features and identify the important characteristics that should be protected and where possible enhanced or increased as part of each site's landscape framework.

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Judgements have been made regarding whether anticipated mitigation would be achievable for the most favourable sites to be taken forward in the LDF. This is based on ensuring that the key characteristics of the surrounding landscape are protected or enhanced through development on site. Those sites which are most achievable being more favourable options in landscape terms to be taken forward to the LDF than those which are less achievable.

The Table below details the judgements made for each site based on a scoring of high, moderate/high, moderate and low.

Ashby de la Zouch

Site Reference	Site Name	Potential to achieve mitigation
A1	Land to the north of the A511	Low
A2	Land to the south of A511 and north of Nottingham Road	Moderate
A3	Land at Holywell Spring Farm	Moderate
A4	Land to the east and west of Prior Park Road	Low
A5	Land to the west of Prior Park Road	Moderate
A6	Land to the south of Moira Road	Moderate/High
A7	Land at Packington Nook	Low

Castle Donington

Site Reference	Site Name	Potential to achieve mitigation
CD1	Land on the eastern edge of Castle Donington	Moderate
CD2	Land to the south of Park Lane	Moderate

Coalville

Site Reference	Site Name	Potential to achieve mitigation
C1	Northern fringe of Coalville	Low
C2	Western edge of Thringstone and Thornborough/New Swannington	Low
C4	The Farm on Manor Road	High
C5	Land to the south of grange Road (On the edge of Hugglescote)	Low
C6	Southern fringe of Coalville (South of Grange Road)	Low
C9	Land between Coalville and Ravenstone bordering Wash Lane and Church Lane	Low
C10	Land between Coalville and Ravenstone bordering Church Lane	Low
C11	Land on the southern edge of Ravenstone to the rear of properties on Jenny's Lane	High
0	Fringe between New Swannington and Whitwick (Hermitage Road)	Moderate/High
1	Fringe between Hermitage Road, Broom Leys Road and Whitwick (Hall Lane)	Moderate/High
2	Land to the rear of Christ Church on Hotel Street	Moderate
3	Land to the west of Hall Lane	High

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4	Land to the south of Bardon Road	High
5	Land to the south of Bardon Road	High
6	Southern fringe of Coalville	Moderate
7	Field on the western edge of Donington le Heath on Townsend Lane	High
8	Field on the western edge of Donington le Heath to the north of Berryhill Lane	Moderate/High
9	Field on the edge of Coalville	Moderate
10	Field on the edge of Coalville to the west of Wentworth Road	Moderate/High
11	Land off Margaret Street	High
12	Land off Kane Close	High
13	Land to the south of Coalville Lane	Moderate
14	Land to the rear of properties on Main Street	Moderate
15	Land on the southern edge of Ravenstone along Melbourne Road	High

Ibstock

Site Reference	Site Name	Potential to achieve mitigation
I1	Land to the east of Ravenstone Road	Low
I2	Land to the north of Highfield House	Moderate
I3	Land to the south of Highfield House	Moderate
I4	Land to the rear of 2 and 4 Ravenstone Road	Moderate
I5	Land to the east of Ravenstone Road	Moderate
I6	Land to the north of Ashby Road	Moderate
I7	Land to the south of Ashby Road	Moderate
I8	Land to the west of Station Road	Moderate
I9	Land to the west of Hinckley Road	Low
I10	Land to the south of St Denys Church	Low
I11	Land to the rear of properties on Legion Drive	Moderate/High
I12	Land to the south of Pretoria Road	Moderate/High
I13	Land to the south of Redlands Estate	High
I14	Land to the rear of properties on Richmond Road	Moderate
I15	Land to the rear of properties on Leicester Road	High

Kegworth

Site Reference	Site Name	Potential to achieve mitigation
K1	Land to the north of the A6	Moderate
K2	Land to the north of station Road	Moderate/High
K3	Land to the south east of Bridge Fields	Low
K4	Land to the north of Ashby Road	Low

Measham

Site Reference	Site Name	Potential to achieve mitigation
M1	Land on Atherstone Road	High
M2	Land to the south of Bosworth Road	High
M3	Land on the western edge of Measham	Low
M4	Land to the north of New Street	High
M5	Land to the north of New Street	Moderate/High

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M6	Land to the west of Ashby Road	Moderate
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Distinction in landscape is created through the interplay between people and place and encompasses all land, not just land designated for its natural beauty. It arises from unique patterns and combinations of different components and elements.

1.2 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into effect in the UK in March 2007. The ELC was the first international convention on landscape and is dedicated exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. It provides an international context for landscape and emphasises its importance alongside biodiversity and cultural heritage. The ELC definition of landscape is:

'Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'.

1.3 Landscape character assessment is an important tool for implementing the ELC within the UK. Landscape character assessment is a decision-making tool which systematically classifies the landscape into distinctive areas based on the interaction between topography, geology, land use, vegetation pattern, and human influence. Its role is to ensure that future change does not undermine the characteristics or features of value within a landscape. Landscape character assessment is an approach that can make a significant contribution to the sustainable objectives of environmental protection; prudent use of natural resources; and maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for present and future generations.

1.4 The majority of North West Leicestershire District has been considered at a district scale in The National Forest Landscape Character Assessment and the whole of the District is covered by Leicestershire's Landscape and Woodland Strategy. This document uses these character assessments and analyses the intrinsic characteristics along the settlement fringes of Ashby de la Zouch, Castle Donington, Coalville, Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham. The location of these settlements is illustrated on Figure 1.

1.5 North West Leicestershire District's landscape is varied and includes the urban areas of Coalville and Ashby de la Zouch. There are a number of other smaller settlements and associated urban fringe landscapes and more rural farmed areas. The area is also noted for its industrial heritage and past coal and clay industries are evident as active workings and restored landscapes.

1.6 The landscape is influenced by a mixture of river valleys associated with the River Trent and River Soar often characterised by power industries, infrastructure with pockets of wetland and grazing pasture. Much of the landscape is more rolling in character with pasture and arable farming. In many places woodland is limited, however the frequent small copses and

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coverts, hedgerow trees and individual trees combine to create a perceived wooded impression. Further away from the larger rural settlements the landscape has a network of smaller villages connected by small rural lanes.

- 1.7 Within the southern part of the District lies Charnwood Forest which is a series of distinctive hills and rocky outcrops often covered by extensive areas of mature woodland. These are prominent within views around Thringstone, Whitwick and Coalville. Close to this landscape are warehouse and industrial areas such as Bardon 21 and a number of quarries such as Bardon Hill Quarry and Stanton under Bardon Quarry. Restored landform with young establishing woodland is common within these areas and across other parts of the District.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 In December 2009, TEP was commissioned by North West Leicestershire District Council to undertake a landscape appraisal of the fringes of the six main settlements within the district: Ashby de la Zouch, Castle Donington, Coalville, Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham. The study has only focused on settlements where the majority of development is likely to take place.
- 2.2 North West Leicestershire District Council is currently preparing its Core Strategy to set out how the district will develop to 2026. Part of this preparation is to establish where new development will be targeted. The district forms part of the Three Cities Growth Point (including Leicester, Nottingham and Derby) and also has to deliver 10,200 homes between 2006 and 2026. The Council needs to find new locations for this development as part of the Local Development Framework. A study carried out by Leicester Shire Economic Partnership identified a potential requirement for between 20-25ha of new employment land to be identified within the District. The Regional Plan also identifies the need for provision of a number of Strategic Freight Rail Interchanges although does not specify locations for these.
- 2.3 This document assesses the landscape value of land around settlement fringes to help establish the most distinctive landscapes, and those which are important for the setting of settlements. This is to ensure that the siting of new allocations, primarily focusing on housing, is where there would be least adverse effect on the more distinctive landscapes or important landscapes for the setting of each settlement.
- 2.4 The second aspect of this study is to undertake a more detailed assessment of the possible future development sites identified around the six settlements as part of the Core Strategy consultation.

3.0 STUDY OBJECTIVES

3.0 STUDY OBJECTIVES

3.1 The main objectives of this study are:

- To establish the landscape character around the fringes of Ashby de la Zouch, Castle Donington, Coalville, Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham;
- To identify sensitive landscapes to be retained, maintained or enhanced;
- To establish the character and setting of settlements within the landscape, identifying any landmark views or features;
- To help inform decisions about the location and amount of new development across the District;
- To inform the development of policies to secure the provision of new development which respects and contributes to its landscape character setting; and
- To provide information on how development may contribute to enhancements along settlement fringes.

4.0 METHOD

- 4.1 This method has been developed to establish the landscape and visual quality and setting of settlements within the wider landscape and to explore the potential effects on landscape character and the setting of settlements should expansion take place along the urban fringes.
- 4.2 The method comprises three stages: the initial stage is to establish the inherent or intrinsic landscape quality present and the second is to establish the setting of the town and its importance in views within the wider landscape. The final aspect is to review the likely scope for mitigation should the fringe be developed for housing. Housing development along the urban fringe is assumed to be 2 storey houses at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare.
- 4.3 The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with guidance contained in the following publications:
- *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland*, The Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage
 - *Landscape Character Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity*, Swanick C 2004, The Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage
 - *The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment*, Second Edition (Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2002
- 4.4 Each of these documents presents the findings and contemporary best practice approaches to assessing landscape character, landscape sensitivity and capacity of a landscape to accommodate change and assessment of visual effects of development within the landscape.
- 4.5 This assessment has used aspects of all of these documents to assess the landscape and visual quality of the urban fringes and to assess their relative value. One aspect of the study was to identify capacity to accommodate change. The assessment has focused on landscape and visual quality and the scope for mitigation which would be in keeping with existing landscape character. This helps to identify those landscapes of greatest value both in terms of their contribution to wider landscape character and in their relationship and importance in the setting of a settlement.
- 4.6 The assessment includes a basic scoring system of landscape and visual quality. This has been employed to assist in identifying the ranking of sensitivity and capacity to accommodate change associated with housing development. It is a numeric expression of comparative judgement based on the assessment undertaken.

Desk Study

- 4.7 Desk study included a review of available published documentation including national, regional and local planning and relevant landscape

documents including National Character Areas; Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy; the National Forest and Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Assessments; and the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Document.

Field Survey

4.8 Field assessment was undertaken during January 2010 by two experienced Chartered Landscape Architects. The assessment was carried out both by car and on foot from publicly accessible locations. Representative photographs were taken for the urban fringes and have been used to illustrate this report.

4.9 This field assessment included an assessment of how consistent are the landscape characters of the settlement fringes with reported landscape character assessments. An evaluation of landscape and visual quality was undertaken during the field survey.

Evaluation of Landscape and Visual Quality

4.10 The main criteria for assessing landscape value and hence quality are as follows:

- Landscape quality of the landscape surrounding the urban edge; and
- Visual quality and setting of the settlement within the landscape.

4.11 Landscape sensitivity and inherent landscape value is a judgement related to potential or predicted effects on the *landscape resource*. Potential effects on individual elements of landscape, views, visibility, the number and nature of viewers, and scope to mitigate views are considerations in judging sensitivity. The following criteria have been used in reaching a judgement on the landscape sensitivity and in defining the value of the urban fringe of the 6 settlements.

Landscape Quality

4.12 Landscape quality is a judgement on the intactness and condition of a landscape. This is assessed by considering the representation of typical characteristics and the state of repair of individual elements which contribute to those typical characteristics. This has been assessed with reference to the following aspects.

Landscape character of urban fringes

4.13 This includes factual descriptions including historic features, field pattern, amount of tree cover, locally distinctive built form, any trends evident, scale and enclosure of the landscape and nature of the landform. The level of 'intactness' exhibited by landscape features is also reported and how consistently they appear within the landscape. It is the balance and interaction of these features and how they are perceived that contributes to landscape 'attractiveness'. The judgement is made based on scoring of highly attractive (3), attractive (2), pleasant (1) and commonplace (0).

Consistency of landscape character

- 4.14 This assesses the consistency of landscape character along the fringe with the landscape character of the wider area. This is described as the consistency with the landscape character area or landscape type descriptions within published landscape character documents. This is judged as highly consistent (3), mostly consistent (2), some key characteristics present (1), not representative of wider character (0).
- 4.15 However, it should be noted that along urban fringes the landscape can display features that although not consistent with the wider character combine to create an attractive or distinctive landscape. In such cases this will be reported and taken into account when scoring.

Remoteness and tranquillity

- 4.16 This assesses the degree to which a landscape has been influenced by man and relates strongly to the perceptual experience of a landscape. Low noise level, low density of settlement and infrequent roads indicate a tranquil and often rural character, likely to be sensitive and more affected by new development than one that is less remote and already disturbed by busy roads, industry and residential development. This is judged as being: remote (3), peaceful (2), some interruption (1) and not tranquil (0)
- 4.17 When combined the above give an indication of landscape quality and a judgement of whether a landscape requires conservation, enhancement or restoration.

Visual Quality

- 4.18 Visual quality assesses the views, visibility of the urban fringe and the setting of the settlement within the wider landscape. This is an important aspect in identifying the importance of any specific landmark features, gateways and approaches into the settlement. The visual quality has been assessed using the following.

Visual Prominence of the urban fringe

- 4.19 This aspect assesses views and visual connections with adjacent landscapes, the prominence of the urban fringe within these views and the importance of the receptor. The distance from the settlement edge to the receptor is important as this influences the proportion of the view that would be affected. A landscape isolated from the wider landscape is likely to have lower sensitivity than one which forms a key component or has strong visual connectivity. This is judged as being either high (3), moderate-high (2), moderate-low (1) or low (0). For example a judgement of high includes a fringe which is on a hill, a flat exposed area or has few trees or woodland along its boundaries. It is visible from roads, urban fringes or public rights of way at some considerable distance from the fringe. A judgement of low relates to a fringe which may be within a shallow depression, narrow river valley or surrounded by mature wooded boundaries or by built development and are not visible from surrounding publicly accessible routes and from few private residences and change would potentially have a lower effect on the surrounding landscape.

Nature of the urban edge

- 4.20 This assesses the character of the urban edge and is based upon a judgement that a 'soft' edge mostly screened by mature vegetation is likely to be more sensitive to change than one which has a 'hard' urban edge where there is an abrupt building line. A softer edge would typically result in a more rural and remote character being present and creates a coherent transition between the urban and rural landscape. Soft edges could be altered considerably without careful planning and appropriate mitigation through any new development or expansion of the urban edge. This is judged as: no visible urban edge (3), soft well vegetated urban edge limited views of principally rooflines (2), partially visible urban edge (1) hard urban edge with no screening and open views of buildings (0).

Distinctive views into the settlement and settlement setting

- 4.21 This includes a judgement of distinctive or prominent built structures and landscapes and landmarks; the contribution the area makes to the setting of the settlement and the attractiveness and prominence of such features and setting with views. For example, a church surrounded by trees may be a key feature in views to the settlement edge. This is likely to be more sensitive to change or development which may detract from or reduce its prominence in views than a view which is dominated by urban features or a 'hard' urban edge which could be improved through carefully sited development and landscape framework. This is judged as highly distinctive (3), some distinctive features (2), commonplace or few distinctive features with some detracting features (1), no distinctive views or views dominated by detracting features (0).

Public accessibility

- 4.22 The extent to which the area is currently used by the public can affect its sensitivity and perception of the landscape. Most land use planning regimes consider that public views are of greater value than views from private property. An area with several recreational elements (eg footpaths, bridleways, sports grounds, parks) is likely to be more sensitive than an area which is currently little used by members of the public or has limited or no accessibility. This is judged by considering how many public routes or open spaces cross or pass around the fringe with views across the landscape. Many such views give a score of 3, some routes around the edges or across the fringes with some views across the landscape (2), one route along the edge of the site or across the site with limited views across the fringes (1), no accessibility (0).

Scope for Mitigation

- 4.23 The final aspect of the landscape assessment is the judgement regarding the scope for mitigation that is in keeping with the landscape character and integrity of the setting of the settlement. This is judged on the overall landscape capacity (or sensitivity) and refers to the degree to which a landscape can accommodate change without detrimental effects on its character. This varies with landscape and visual quality and components such as:

- Existing land use
 - The pattern and scale of the landscape
 - Visual enclosure, openness of views, and distribution of visual receptors
 - The value placed on a landscape
 - Extent, type and nature of vegetation present within the area
- 4.24 The above is reported within the landscape and visual quality sections together with their scores. Scope for mitigation provides an indication of the ability of the landscape to accommodate change without adverse effects. It refers to what type of mitigation might be required to minimise effects or where there is the potential to improve a settlement's setting and appearance within views.
- 4.25 Judgements have been made on how achievable potential mitigation would be on the urban fringes. This is based on ensuring that the key characteristics of the surrounding landscape are protected or enhanced through any development along a particular urban fringe. Those fringes where implementation of appropriate mitigation appears most achievable would be most likely to appear more favourable options to consider in the LDF evaluation process in landscape terms than those which are less achievable.
- 4.26 The study has concentrated on the relative value of sites within urban fringe locations and a score is specific to that settlement and this assessment. Scores are not 'transferable' to any other assessments. A higher value judgement of a fringe landscape would not necessarily be considered high when compared to a more rural location. The scoring provides a simple expression of the evaluation of the different landscape and visual elements which contribute to the setting of a settlement and help to distinguish the most distinctive landscapes which are more important to protect. This does not preclude the need for more detailed landscape and visual assessments of any proposed development within the urban fringe location in terms of siting, scale and massing of built development.
- 4.27 The overall sensitivity/capacity for each urban fringe is the combination of the scores of all of the above. Those fringes with the highest scores are judged the least favourable and those with the lowest scores being the most favourable for siting new development.
- 4.28 Any scoring system used for evaluation may suffer from bias or potentially inappropriate results which arise from decisions made in establishing the scoring system and its subsequent application. A scoring system of 4 points (0-3 inclusive) has been used to avoid a tendency to aggregate judgements around a 'middle' value and to seek to make clear judgements (rather than judgements on a wider scale of scores that may tend to give clustering of overall scores).
- 4.29 However it is acknowledged as possible that the scoring system can present results which are not consistent with overall judgement regarding

site capacity. This discrepancy can arise in many situations where scores are applied to express professional judgement. However this can be particularly observed where landscape is considered and the perceptual experience of characteristics, their balance and overall pattern is difficult to capture by 'scoring'.

- 4.30 Where scores appear not to reflect the judgement of capacity apparent to the assessors on site and within written descriptions, these have been reviewed and comparisons made between different settlement edges. Where the judgement remains that a settlement edge's capacity is not accurately represented by the scores, the method acknowledges that this can be stated with reasoning.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Policy

- 5.1 Planning Policy Statement 1: *Delivering Sustainable Development* requires local planning authorities to adopt sustainable principles when writing Local Development Framework policies. It specifically states that high levels of protection should be afforded to the most valued townscapes, wildlife habitats, landscapes and natural resources. It emphasises the importance of good quality design which responds to local context and the protection of the character of the wider countryside within sustainable development proposals.
- 5.2 Planning Policy Statement 7: *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas*, sets out the Government's objectives to ensure that good quality sustainable development respects and enhances the local distinctiveness and intrinsic qualities of the countryside. It confirms the need to protect the open countryside for the benefit of all and to raise the quality of the environment in rural areas.
- 5.3 There are no nationally designated landscapes in the District, such as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. PPS 7 recognises the importance of landscapes outside designations in providing valuable landscapes at the local level. It also stresses that landscape character assessment should be a tool for robust criteria-based policies rather than continuing with rigid often unduly restrictive local designations.

Regional Policy

- The East Midlands Regional Plan (March 2009)
- 5.4 The East Midlands Regional Plan provides a broad development strategy for the East Midlands up to 2026. It incorporates the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and represents the spatial element of the East Midlands Integrated Regional Strategy.
- 5.5 The document establishes regional core objectives, a spatial strategy, topic based priorities and sub-regional strategies for the East Midlands. Topic based priorities include: housing; economy and regeneration; and natural and cultural resources. The policies contained within the RSS are intended to provide the strategic context for policies within Local Development Frameworks, currently in preparation by local planning authorities. The main policies of relevance to this study are:
- Policy 26: Protecting and Enhancing the Region's Natural and Cultural Heritage – Sustainable development should ensure the protection, appropriate management and enhancement of the Region's natural and cultural heritage.
 - Policy 28: Regional Priorities for Environmental and Green Infrastructure – Plan, strategies and future development should ensure the delivery, protection and enhancement of Environmental Infrastructure across the Region. Such infrastructure should

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contribute to a high quality natural and built environment and to the delivery of sustainable communities.

- Policy 30: Regional Priorities for Managing and Increasing Woodland Cover – Local Authorities and statutory environmental bodies should work with other stakeholders to deliver a significant increase in woodland cover in the East Midlands in ways that respect local landscape character and support the implementation of the Regional Plan.
- Policy 31: Priorities for the Management and Enhancement of the Region’s Landscape – Local Development Frameworks should establish criteria based policies to ensure that development proposals respect local landscape character. Plans and strategies should also seek to promote the protection of nationally designated landscapes, the region’s forests and other important ecological and historic assets.

Local policy

North West Leicestershire Local Development Framework (LDF)

- 5.6 In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the current Local Plan is to be replaced by a LDF. Preparation of the LDF has commenced and it will comprise a portfolio of documents covering issues such as housing, employment and retail as well as environment and landscape protection.

North West Leicestershire Local Plan

- 5.7 The Local Plan for North West Leicestershire, published in August 2002, forms part of the statutory development plan for the area. The Local Plan sets out the planning strategy for North West Leicestershire which seeks to balance the need for new housing and further economic regeneration with the protection of natural resources and promotion of a high quality environment.
- 5.8 The policies and proposals of the Local Plan were initially 'saved', to remain in force for a period of three years. The Council applied to the Secretary of State for permission to continue to 'save' the policies and proposals beyond 27 September 2007. Only saved policies have been reviewed within this report.
- 5.9 The Local Plan has numerous policies of relevance to this document, particularly in relation to the protection of local landscape areas and Green Wedge policies to restrict urban expansion within the countryside.
- 5.10 The local landscape is valued and protected by a series of Local Plan policies. There is a general resistance to developments in the countryside or protected landscapes which would have an adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape. Policies of relevance to the landscape are listed below and illustrated on Figure 2.

Green Wedge

5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.11 Three open areas of land between Coalville, Whitwick and Swannington are designated in the Local Plan as Green Wedge. Under Policy E20 new development within the Green Wedge is generally not permitted and land uses mainly comprise agricultural fields, with a number of recreation areas divided by public rights of way and scattered residential development.
- 5.12 Regional guidance refers to the Green Wedge as providing a 'green lung' in urban areas, which should act as a recreational resource and a small area of separation between settlements.
- 5.13 In accordance with proposals made by the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy a review of the existing Green Wedge was undertaken as part of the Local Development Framework process to determine whether this designation is serving its defined function. Following an evaluation of the Green Wedge it was concluded that the criterion was only partly satisfied and that the Green Wedge designation could no longer be justified.
- 5.14 In view of the findings outlined above, the Council's favoured approach for the Core Strategy is to delete reference to the Green Wedge. Furthermore as part of the Core Strategy consultation process the future of the Green Wedge will be considered in respect of balancing issues of public amenity and landscape character against the need for new housing in the Coalville urban area.

Sensitive Areas

- 5.15 Several areas of open space within and close to the edge of settlement boundaries are identified in the Local Plan as Sensitive Areas. These designated sites typically represent areas of adjoining countryside which make a positive contribution to the character of settlements including Measham, Coalville, and Ibstock.
- 5.16 Under Policy E1, development which would adversely affect the open character of a Sensitive Area will not be permitted.

Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside

- 5.17 The following areas have been designated in the Local Plan as Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside:
- Land to the east of Greenhill, Thringstone, Whitwick and Worthington including part of Charnwood Forest;
 - Land in the vicinity of Staunton Harold; and
 - Land at Gospall's Wharf, Snarestone.
- 5.18 Within these designated areas the Council seeks to encourage measures that will protect the attractiveness of the landscape and contribute to its enhancement.
- 5.19 The integrity of these protected landscapes is also preserved by the restriction of development to designs which are considered appropriate to the established character of the designated area.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Separation of Settlements

- 5.20 Within the District a number of settlements lie relatively close to each other and consequently the intervening areas of land are subject to intense pressure for development. To prevent physical coalescence, areas of land between the following settlements has been designated under Policy E21 Separation of Settlements:
- Hugglescote – Ellistown;
 - Ibstock – Heather
 - Coalville – Ravenstone;
 - Donisthorpe – Moira; and
 - Hemington – Castle Donington
- 5.21 Local planning policy seeks to maintain the identity of separate settlements and therefore development will not be permitted if it would result in the significant loss of land that provided a physical separation between built-up areas.
- 5.22 Each fringe within this assessment has been reviewed without reference to their planning policy designation. Judgements are based on the landscape quality of each fringe. Where a fringe is important for separation it is judged by field study rather than pre-existing designations.

National Forest

- 5.23 The National Forest was established in 1990 and extends across the counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire. The boundary of the National Forest stretches across the central part of the District and comprises a mixture of wooded areas, open countryside, towns and villages.
- 5.24 The Countryside Commission published the first National Forest Strategy in November 1994. A revised ten year strategy was published in 2004 and provides a framework within which a wide variety of stakeholders can participate in the creation of a forested landscape linking the remnant ancient forests of Needwood and Charnwood. This strategy indicates the extent and type of planting required in various landscape contexts and advocates a series of planning guidelines for new developments.
- 5.25 The adopted North West Leicestershire Local Plan provides the local planning context for the National Forest initiatives.

6.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER STUDIES

6.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER STUDIES

6.1 This section summarises the current published landscape character information that is available for North West Leicestershire. The Character Areas from the relevant assessments are illustrated on Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6.

6.2 Table 6.1 shows the context of the character areas and which are relevant to each individual settlement. Only Kegworth and Castle Donington are not part of the National Forest. For these settlements the information reported within the County Landscape Character Assessment has been used to establish whether the fringes of each settlement are consistent with the wider reported character. Summaries of the character descriptions for each of the noted character areas is presented at Appendix A.

Table 6.1 Landscape Character Summary Table.

Settlement	National LCA (Figure 3)	Regional LCA (Figure 4)	County LCA (Figure 5)	Local LCA (Figure 6)
Ashby-de-la-Zouch	Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield	Settled Coalfield Farmlands	The Coalfield	Type: Urban/ Urban Fringe, Enclosed Farmland
Castle Donington	Melbourne Parklands; Trent Valley Washlands	Floodplain Valley; Wooded Village Farmlands	Langley Lowlands; Trent Valley	NA
Coalville	Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield; Charnwood	Forested Ancient Hills; Settled Coalfield Farmlands	The Coalfield; Charnwood Forest	Type: Urban/ Urban Fringe, Coalfield Village Farmlands, Enclosed Farmlands
Ibstock	Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield	Settled Coalfield Farmlands; Village Farmlands	The Coalfield	Type: Coalfield Village Farmlands, Wooded Parklands, Urban/ Urban Fringe, Enclosed Farmlands.
Kegworth	Melbourne Parklands; Trent Valley Washlands	Floodplain Valley; Wooded Village Farmlands	Langley Lowlands; Trent Valley	N/A
Measham	Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield; Mease and Sence Lowlands	Settled Coalfield Farmlands; Village Farmlands	Mease/ Sence Lowlands; The Coalfield	Type: Coalfield Village Farmlands, Enclosed Farmlands

6.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER STUDIES

Historic Landscape Characterisation

6.3 The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Programme for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland was carried out by the Community Services Directorate of Leicestershire County Council. It provides a historical picture of the landscape and the sequence of changes that have contributed to the formation of character in the present day landscape. The landscape has been divided into 11 distinct groups:

- Unenclosed Land;
- Enclosed Land;
- Orchards and Allotments;
- Woodland;
- Industrial;
- Extractive;
- Military;
- Ornamental, Parkland and Recreational;
- Settlements;
- Civic and Commercial; and
- Transportation.

6.4 Each group has additional layers for example the Enclosed Land is subdivided into: Irregular Squatter Enclosure; Rectilinear Squatter Enclosure; Paddocks and Closes; Small Assarts; Large Assarts with Sinuous Boundaries; Planned Woodland Clearance; Small Irregular Fields; Piecemeal Enclosure; Re-organised Piecemeal Enclosure; Drained Wetlands; Planned Enclosure; Planned Enclosure Containing Ridge and Furrow; Other Small Rectilinear Fields; Other Large Rectilinear Fields; Large Irregular Fields; Very Large Post War Fields; Tofts and Crofts and Strip Fields. This provides a detailed analysis of the historic formation of field enclosure. This information has been referred to where relevant within the landscape character descriptions within each settlement fringe.

6.5 The Historic Landscape Characterisation is illustrated on Figure 7 and the more detailed sub-layer for the Planned Enclosure Group is illustrated on Figure 8.

7.0 SETTLEMENT FRINGE CHARACTER

7.0 SETTLEMENT FRINGE CHARACTER AND ANALYSIS

- 7.1 This section provides information of the character, intrinsic landscape value and contribution to the setting of the settlement for each fringe. Each fringe is presented as a table and illustrated with photographs. The analysis contains both written justification and rudimentary scoring. The scope for mitigation is also provided.
- 7.2 The fringes are listed below in the order they appear within this section.

Kegworth (illustrated on Figure 9)

- Fringe 1: Northern fringe along Long Lane
- Fringe 2: Eastern fringe to the south of Station Road
- Fringe 3: Southern fringe between Whatton Road and London Road
- Fringe 4: South western fringe to the south of Ashby Road
- Fringe: 5 North western fringe between Ashby Road and Derby Road

Castle Donington (illustrated on Figure 10)

- Fringe 1: North eastern edge of Castle Donington
- Fringe 2: Southern and eastern edge of Castle Donington
- Fringe 3: Southern and western edge of Castle Donington
- Fringe 4: North western edge of Castle Donington

Ashby de la Zouch (illustrated on Figure 11)

- Fringe 1: North eastern edge of Ashby de la Zouch
- Fringe 2: Urban fringe to the east of Ashby and north of Nottingham Road
- Fringe 3: Land to the north of the A42 and south of Nottingham Road
- Fringe 4: Land to the south of Ashby and A511
- Fringe 5: Land to the south of Ashby bordering Packington Nook Lane
- Fringe 6: Western fringe of Ashby to the north of Willesley Lane
- Fringe 7: Western fringe of Ashby bordering either side of Moira Road
- Fringe 8: North western fringe of Ashby close to Holywell Spring Farm extending to the A511

Coalville (illustrated on Figure 12)

- Fringe 1: Western edge of Thringstone and New Swannington
- Fringe 2: Fringe between New Swannington and Whitwick
- Fringe 3: Fringe between Hermitage Road, Broom Leys Road and Whitwick (Hall Lane)
- Fringe 4: Southern fringe of Coalville
- Fringe 5: Fringe between Donington le Heath, Hugglescote and Coalville
- Fringe 6: Southern fringe of Donington le Heath and Hugglescote
- Fringe 7: South western fringe of Coalville
- Fringe 8: Western fringe of Coalville/Swannington
- Fringe 9: Northern fringe of Coalville
- Fringe 10: South western fringe of Coalville south of Leicester Road/Standard Hill

Measham (illustrated on Figure 13)

- Fringe 1: South western fringe of Measham

7.0 SETTLEMENT FRINGE CHARACTER

Fringe 2: South eastern fringe of Measham to the south of Bosworth Road

Fringe 3: South eastern fringe of Measham

Fringe 4: Northern fringe of Measham

Fringe 5: South western fringe of Measham

Ibstock (illustrated on Figure 14)

Fringe 1: Northern fringe of Ibstock

Fringe 2: Western fringe of Ibstock

Fringe 3: South western fringe of Ibstock

Fringe 4: South eastern fringe of Ibstock

Fringe 5: Southern fringe of Ibstock

8.0 SITE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

8.0 SITE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 This section provides detailed recommendations for each of the sites around the six settlements which were identified as potential future land allocations within the Local Development Framework. Each site sheet includes a brief site description, detailed recommendations relating to existing landscape features, setting of the settlement, sensitive landscapes and landscapes requiring enhancement.

8.2 Each sheet is supported by a simple map which details the landscape features to be retained, sensitive landscapes, areas of landscape enhancement, landmark features and key views.

8.3 A summary is provided which describes how achievable the mitigation might be if a site was developed. This potential is assessed on a 4 point scale of High, Moderate-High, Moderate or Low. Sites which have a 'High' or 'Moderate-High' score being more favourable to be taken forward in the LDF than those which have 'Moderate' or 'Low' scores. The scores for each site are illustrated as follows:

- Figure 15: Ashby de la Zouch
- Figure 16: Castle Donington
- Figure 17: Coalville
- Figure 18: Ibstock
- Figure 19: Kegworth
- Figure 20: Measham

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 This study was undertaken to provide evidence to inform North West Leicestershire District Council's Local Development Framework (LDF). It is also intended to help spatial decisions on the locations of new development around settlement fringes based upon landscape quality and contribution of the landscape in the setting of settlements.

9.2 The six settlements reviewed as part of this study were: Ashby de la Zouch, Castle Donington, Coalville, Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham.

Stage One – Settlement Fringe Analysis

9.3 The desk-based aspect of this study analysed available GIS mapped data and published policy and landscape character documents to establish the landscape context of the settlement fringes and identify what elements are considered of value. This included reviewing the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC). The information in the HLC report has been taken into consideration in the assessment of the landscape character undertaken through this project. The historic landscape such as field patterns and parkland where evident was considered in the desk study and field assessment and reported within each Fringe analysis.

9.4 The field survey established how consistent the landscape character within each fringe was with the reported descriptions and with the wider landscape. It appraised the aesthetic aspects and visual interaction between landscape features which are not evident from desk based study.

9.5 Each Fringe Analysis identifies the landscape character of the fringe, how consistent it is with the wider character and the tranquillity of the landscape to provide judgements on Landscape Quality. It also analyses the fringes visual prominence, nature of the urban edge, landmark views and setting of the settlement and public access to establish Visual Quality. Finally a judgement is provided on the scope for mitigation and how achievable it would be whilst retaining or enhancing the existing landscape character.

9.6 The table below provides a summary of the overall scores for each settlement and ranks the fringes in terms of their preference for locating development. However it should be noted that the summary of the fringe provided within Scope for Mitigation needs to be reviewed in conjunction with the overall scoring judgement as it provides more information on siting, including areas of the fringe where development should be avoided.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

TABLE 9.1: Summary of Fringe Judgements

Ranking	Fringe	Landscape Quality	Visual Quality	Overall Judgement
Ashby de la Zouch				
2	1	5	7	12
5	2	7	7	14
1	3	2	4	6
7	4	6	10	16
8	5	8	10	18
5	6	9	5	14
4	7	5	8	13
2	8	4	8	12
Castle Donington				
4	1	6	9	15
3	2	6	8	14
2	3	4	7	11
1	4	1	2	3
Coalville				
10	1	8	10	18
2	2	2	6	8
1	3	1	5	6
4	4	4	8	12
9	5	7	10	17
7	6	7	9	16
3	7	5	5	10
5	8	6	9	15
5	9	6	9	15
7	10	8	8	16
Ibstock				
3	1	5	6	11
1	2	4	4	8
4	3	7	9	15
2	4	5	5	10
5	5	8	11	19
Kegworth				
1	1	4	5	9
4	2	9	9	18
4	3	8	10	18
2	4	7	6	13
2	5	7	6	13
Measham				
2	1	6	6	12
1	2	3	6	9
2	3	5	7	12
5	4	6	8	14
4	5	4	9	13

Stage Two – Detailed Site Assessment

This aspect of the study provided detailed recommendations for sites identified within the Core Strategy consultation. The sites reviewed were those around each of the six settlements assessed in Stage 1. Recommendations were supported by a map which highlighted sensitive landscapes; areas for landscape enhancement; key views; landmarks and landscape features to be retained. A

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

written judgement on how achievable mitigation might be accompanied the recommendations. A score was also provided. Table 9.2 below provides a summary of the judgements made for each site. This scores for each settlement are illustrated on Figures 15 to 20.

Table 9.2 Summary of Site Specific Recommendations

Ashby de la Zouch

Site Reference	Site Name	Potential to achieve mitigation
A1	Land to the north of the A511	Low
A2	Land to the south of A511 and north of Nottingham Road	Moderate
A3	Land at Holywell Spring Farm	Moderate
A4	Land to the east and west of Prior Park Road	Low
A5	Land to the west of Prior Park Road	Moderate
A6	Land to the south of Moira Road	Moderate/High
A7	Land at Packington Nook	Low

Castle Donington

Site Reference	Site Name	Potential to achieve mitigation
CD1	Land on the eastern edge of Castle Donington	Moderate
CD2	Land to the south of Park Lane	Moderate

Coalville

Site Reference	Site Name	Potential to achieve mitigation
C1	Northern fringe of Coalville	Low
C2	Western edge of Thringstone and Thornborough/New Swannington	Low
C4	The Farm on Manor Road	High
C5	Land to the south of grange Road (On the edge of Hugglescote)	Low
C6	Southern fringe of Coalville (South of Grange Road)	Low
C9	Land between Coalville and Ravenstone bordering Wash Lane and Church Lane	Low
C10	Land between Coalville and Ravenstone bordering Church Lane	Low
C11	Land on the southern edge of Ravenstone to the rear of properties on Jenny's Lane	High
0	Fringe between New Swannington and Whitwick (Hermitage Road)	Moderate/High
1	Fringe between Hermitage Road, Broom Leys Road and Whitwick (Hall Lane)	Moderate/High
2	Land to the rear of Christ Church on Hotel Street	Moderate
3	Land to the west of Hall Lane	High
4	Land to the south of Bardon Road	High
5	Land to the south of Bardon Road	High
6	Southern fringe of Coalville	Moderate
7	Field on the western edge of Donington le Heath	High

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

	on Townsend Lane	
8	Field on the western edge of Donington le Heath to the north of Berryhill Lane	Moderate/High
9	Field on the edge of Coalville	Moderate
10	Field on the edge of Coalville to the west of Wentworth Road	Moderate/High
11	Land off Margaret Street	High
12	Land off Kane Close	High
13	Land to the south of Coalville Lane	Moderate
14	Land to the rear of properties on Main Street	Moderate
15	Land on the southern edge of Ravenstone along Melbourne Road	High

Ibstock

Site Reference	Site Name	Potential to achieve mitigation
I1	Land to the east of Ravenstone Road	Low
I2	Land to the north of Highfield House	Moderate
I3	Land to the south of Highfield House	Moderate
I4	Land to the rear of 2 and 4 Ravenstone Road	Moderate
I5	Land to the east of Ravenstone Road	Moderate
I6	Land to the north of Ashby Road	Moderate
I7	Land to the south of Ashby Road	Moderate
I8	Land to the west of Station Road	Moderate
I9	Land to the west of Hinckley Road	Low
I10	Land to the south of St Denys Church	Low
I11	Land to the rear of properties on Legion Drive	Moderate/High
I12	Land to the south of Pretoria Road	Moderate/High
I13	Land to the south of Redlands Estate	High
I14	Land to the rear of properties on Richmond Road	Moderate
I15	Land to the rear of properties on Leicester Road	High

Kegworth

Site Reference	Site Name	Potential to achieve mitigation
K1	Land to the north of the A6	Moderate
K2	Land to the north of station Road	Moderate/High
K3	Land to the south east of Bridge Fields	Low
K4	Land to the north of Ashby Road	Low

Measham

Site Reference	Site Name	Potential to achieve mitigation
M1	Land on Atherstone Road	High
M2	Land to the south of Bosworth Road	High
M3	Land on the western edge of Measham	Low
M4	Land to the north of New Street	High
M5	Land to the north of New Street	Moderate/High
M6	Land to the west of Ashby Road	Moderate