

**Market Harborough Landscape
Character Assessment and Landscape
Capacity Study**

for

Harborough District Council

April 2009

Final Report

Quality control

Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study

for

Harborough District Council

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Landscape Partnership was commissioned in December 2008 to undertake the preparation of an outline Landscape Character Assessment and a Landscape Capacity Study for the rural areas in the vicinity of Market Harborough. The brief for the project required the following main outputs, which will be used to inform the Council's Core Strategy and other Local Development Documents:
- An assessment of the landscape character around the market town of Market Harborough and adjacent villages of Little Bowden and Great Bowden;
 - Identify landscape character sub-areas within the wider Welland Valley landscape character area around Market Harborough, Little Bowden and Great Bowden; and
 - A detailed analysis of the sensitivity of land in and around the edge of Market Harborough, Little Bowden and Great Bowden, and to assess its capacity to accommodate future development, particularly residential
- 1.2 The assessment work has been undertaken in two stages. Stage One involved the identification of Landscape Character Areas within the whole of the study area and the key characteristics present. The areas identified were 'sub areas' of the wider 'Welland Valley' Landscape Character Area, which had already been identified at a County and District level. This stage does not constitute a fully detailed Landscape Character Assessment, but was sufficient to provide context, at an appropriate scale, for Stage Two.
- 1.3 Stage Two involved a more detailed consideration of the landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity of the study area. This was considered at a smaller scale of units based around individual fields, groups of fields or parcels of land. The assessment used a consistent method that evaluated the Land Parcels against a number of criteria, to test both the sensitivity of a unit and its capacity to accept development in the context of the character of the wider landscape within which they are situated. Stage Two considered areas that were closer to the periphery of the existing settlements, as this is where future growth is likely to be targeted i.e. land adjacent to Market Harborough and the nearby villages of Great Bowden and Little Bowden.
- 1.4 This study builds on work undertaken at both the national, county and district scale, as discussed in more detail in section 2 of this report.

2 Context

National Context

- 2.1 The process of landscape characterisation and assessment has been promoted at a national scale in England by the work of the Natural England (formerly Countryside Agency). In tandem with English Nature, parallel approaches were formulated and tested by the Countryside Agency during 1995-97 to derive, on the one hand, a series of Natural Area profiles for the whole of England and, on the other, Countryside Character profiles. While the Natural Area profiles highlighted the distinctive ecology of rural areas, the Countryside Character profiles analysed landscape character in fairly broad-brush terms via the assessment of physical influences, historic and cultural influences, buildings and settlement, land cover and changes in the landscape.
- 2.2 Through this process 159 Character Areas were formulated and published, as 'The Character of England: landscape, wildlife and natural features' (see Figure 1). The detailed descriptions for the areas are included within eight separate volumes with 'Volume 4: East Midlands' being the relevant volume for Market Harborough.



Figure 1 – Countryside Character Areas – National Picture

- 2.3 This national character map defines Market Harborough as lying within or close to the following Character Areas (See Figure 2 and Drawing 01):
- Area 89 Northamptonshire Vales
 - Area 93 High Leicestershire
 - Area 94 Leicestershire Vales

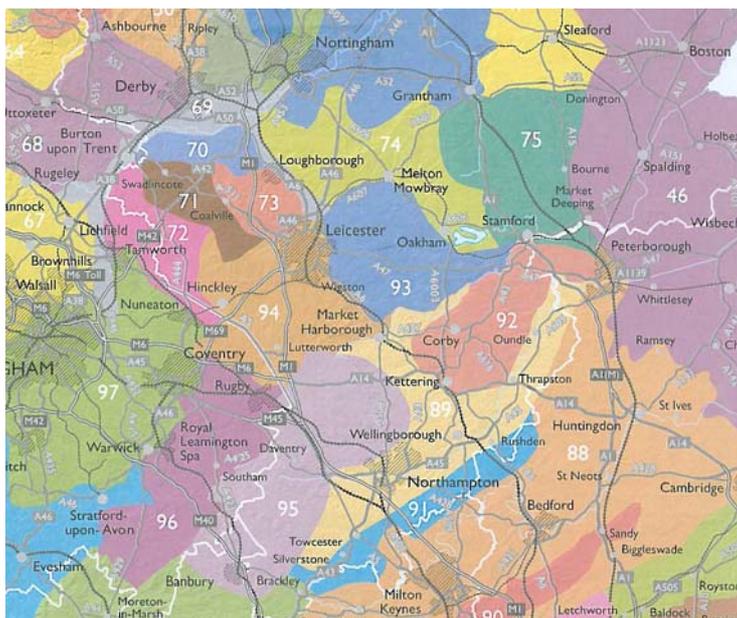


Figure 2 – Countryside Character Areas – Detail around Market Harborough

2.4 Current guidance on carrying out character work is provided in 'Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland' (2002). The approach is currently enshrined as a major planning tool in Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7, 2004). PPS7 sets out some important overarching principles for raising the quality of life and the environment in rural areas, with the 'continued protection of open countryside for the benefit of all.' It sets out that sustainable patterns of development should focus development in or next to existing settlements, while also maximising the benefits of the urban fringe landscapes with leisure opportunities for the local population. In particular two of the Key Principles in PPS7 state:

iv), *'New building in the open countryside away from settlements or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled; the Governments overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all.'* (our emphasis)

vi) *All development in rural areas should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and the local distinctiveness.* (our emphasis)

County Council Context

2.5 The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1996 to 2016 (adopted in 2005) embraced the concept of landscape character assessment through Strategy Policy 8 and paragraphs 2.40 - 2.42, with reference to PPS7. The Structure Plan also referred to the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy, which was adopted as supplementary planning guidance and essentially defined the current county scale character areas. This Strategy is therefore of relevance to Harborough District. The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy identifies eighteen Landscape Character Areas (see Figure 3) within the whole of Leicestershire and Rutland, of which Market Harborough falls within or is close to the following Landscape Character Areas:

- Welland Valley
- Laughton Hills
- Lutterworth Lowlands
- High Leicestershire

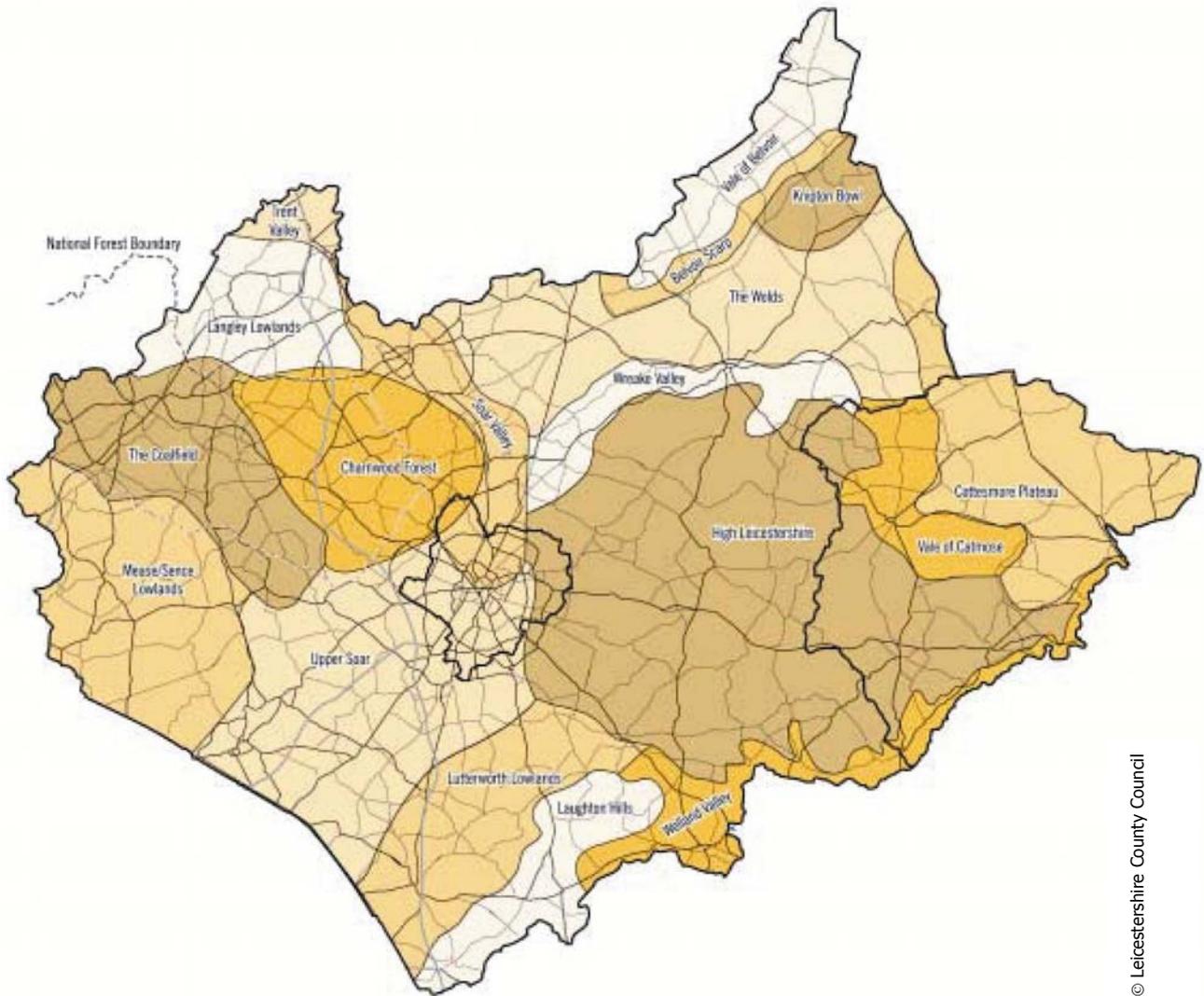


Figure 3 - Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy

Local Context

2.6 In order to assist with policy development, Harborough District Council commissioned a Landscape Character Assessment of the whole district, which was completed in September 2007. This study identified five different Landscape Character Areas (see Figure 4 and Drawing 01), based on those defined in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy:

- Welland Valley
- Laughton Hills
- Lutterworth Lowlands
- High Leicestershire
- Upper Soar



Figure 4 – Harborough District Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.7 Within the District Landscape Character Assessment, each Landscape Character Area is described and Key Characteristics are defined. The capacity of the landscape to accommodate change is then discussed and key issues facing the integrity of the character area are identified. Market Harborough falls entirely within the Welland Valley Landscape Character Area (see Appendix A for full Character Area description).
- 2.8 Within the Harborough District Local Plan, as Adopted in April 2001, a large area of the open countryside within Harborough District is designated an Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside under saved Policy EV/4 (see Drawing 01). This area is intended to prevent proposals that would 'adversely affect the character and appearance of the landscape'. In relation to Market Harborough, land to the north of Market Harborough and Great Bowden is designated as an as Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside, as is land to the east of Market Harborough and the A6.
- 2.9 The Harborough District Local Plan also contains saved Policy EV/3, which relates to Separation Areas. These areas are designated to prevent coalescence of settlements (see Drawing 01). Within these areas, development that would 'adversely affect the predominantly open character of the land' or 'result in a reduction in the existing open land separating the settlements concerned' will not be permitted. Land between Market Harborough and Great Bowden is covered by this designation.

Surrounding Authorities

- 2.10 The southern edge of Market Harborough abuts the county boundary of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. Northamptonshire County Council has carried out a three-strand process to

develop their Environmental Character Map, based on separate studies of ecological character, historic environment and current landscape character. The Current Landscape Character Assessment (January 2006) was undertaken for the whole county but at a scale appropriate for use in individual districts. The character areas and boundaries within the Northamptonshire work have been considered as part of this study in order that where possible there is cross authority consistency. The Current Landscape Character Assessment identifies six character types and seven character areas adjacent to the Market Harborough (see Figure 5 and Drawing 01), which are:

Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes

- 4f Kettering and Wellingborough Slopes

Clay Plateau

- 5a Naesby Plateau

Wooded Clay Plateau

- 7a Geddington Chase

Undulating Hills and Valleys

- 13d Cottesbrooke and Arthingworth
- 13e Stoke Albany and Ashley

Farmed Scarp Slopes

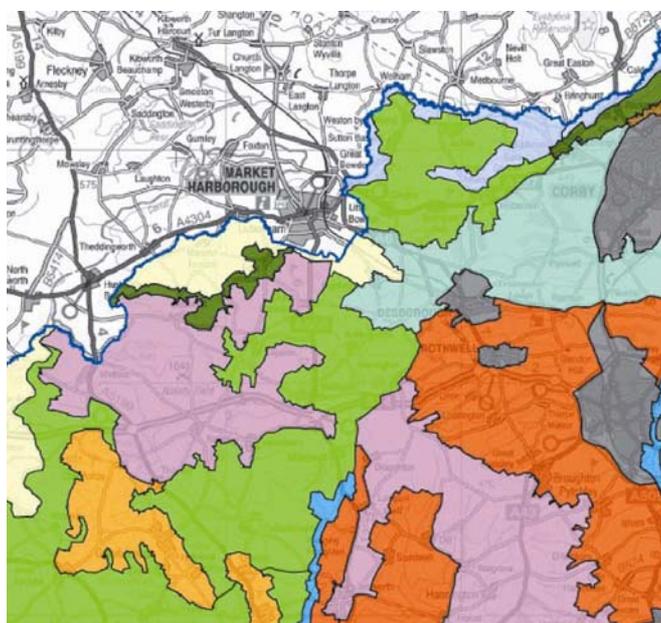
- 15a Hothorpe Hills to Great Oxendon

Broad River Valley Floodplain

- 18i The Welland – Market Harborough to Cottingham

Broad Unwooded Vale

- 19c Welland Vale



© River Nene Regional Park

Figure 5 – Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.11 The land immediately to the south of Market Harborough falls within Daventry District. Within the Northamptonshire County Structure Plan, and subsequently in the Daventry District Local Plan as Adopted in 1997, most of this land is designated as an Area of Special Landscape (see Drawing 01). A corridor between Market Harborough and Desborough, along the railway line, is excluded

from this designation. The relevant policy in the Structure Plan has not been saved during the production of LDF documents, but Policy EN1 (Areas of Special Landscape) of the Daventry District Local Plan has been saved until replacement Development Plan Documents have been Adopted.

3 Landscape Character Assessment – Methodology

- 3.1 The methodology used is based on the national guidance found in 'Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland' (2002) and the other associated Topic Papers. The precise approach was also determined to meet the requirements of Harborough District Council in the development of their Local Development Documents.

Briefing

- 3.2 Following the award of the contract, an initial briefing meeting was held between staff at Harborough District Council and key members of the consultant's project team to refine the project brief and programme.

Project Administration

- 3.3 The project was monitored throughout the contract period by officers within the LDF team at Harborough District Council. Monitoring included the use of the following:

- progress meetings
- liaison by phone
- work programme
- correspondence - by letter, fax and e-mail

Desk Based Stage

- 3.4 The initial stage of the Landscape Character Assessment involved the assessment of the study area using the existing Harborough District Landscape Character Areas and Level 1 scale Landscape Description Units (LDUs). LDUs are distinct and relatively homogenous units of land, each defined by a series of definitive attributes, so called because they define the extent of each spatial unit. This is subdivision at a national/regional scale in accordance with the Joint Character Map of England combining both Landscape Character Regions and Natural Areas and is provided as a desk based analysis by the Countryside Agency as their National Typology. Level 1 LDUs provide a framework for analysis at a finer grain.

Field Survey

- 3.5 The field survey provides the opportunity to undertake a number of key tasks, including:
- incorporating the visual/aesthetic/perceptual dimension
 - recording the condition of the landscape, including both the ecological and cultural aspects
 - identifying and refining Character Areas boundaries
 - assessing any particular qualities, and/or problems in areas of particular pressure or sensitivity
 - note distinctive features, local materials , plant species etc.
- 3.6 The survey form was developed and designed to ensure that a structured, consistent recording of information was possible. Character and condition information is collected in distinct sections, in a mixture of guided responses as well in sections of free text to provide greater opportunity for description. The study area was systematically appraised by a survey team, who considered each group of fields beyond the boundary of Market Harborough in turn. Field survey record sheets were used to record data. A sample of the two-page pro forma used is included as Appendix B. Additional notes and photographic records supplemented the use of forms. Both notes and photographs informed the process of drafting a description of and illustrating each character area in the final report.
- 3.7 Urban areas, as currently identified in the saved Policy HS/8 'Limits to Development', were not surveyed but the interface of Market Harborough and the surrounding villages with the rural areas has been considered. The field survey was carried out in January 2009, visiting all land identified within the study area boundary provided by Harborough District Council. The survey team

consisted of a team of at least two, including a Chartered Landscape Architect, who was responsible for drafting the text and defining the boundaries of each landscape character area surveyed. A moderation process was built in, to ensure consistency of appraisal across the study area.

The characterisation process

- 3.8 Following on from the desk study and fieldwork coherent Landscape Character Areas were identified, against the wider LDU framework. For most people, landscape is strongly associated with place and Character Areas can provide an appropriate vehicle for presenting countryside information to a public audience. In this study eleven Character Areas were identified to form the main units of the landscape in the vicinity of Market Harborough, subdividing the broader Welland Valley Character Area identified in the previous District-wide study. Aspects of each sub area are also reflected in the character areas statements in section 4.

Boundaries

- 3.9 It should be recognised that although the drawing of boundary lines on a plan is an inevitable part of the process, this does not always mean that landscape character is dramatically different to either side of each and every line. Landscape character can suddenly change, e.g. at the interface of an historic parkland, at the foot of a steep scarp slope or at a settlement edge, but often there is a more gradual transition. In such cases the boundary line marks more a watershed of character, where the balance of the defining elements has shifted from one landscape type to another.
- 3.10 It should also be appreciated when viewing the GIS version of the landscape character areas, that the lines are digitised against a 1:10,000 base and at a scale of accuracy of c.1:2,500. This level of detail can infer that a decision has been made about which side of a road a change in landscape character occurs or whether one particular house is included in an area or not. In practice a reasonable decision has been made on the basis of the available OS data, existing boundary information and the fieldwork data and survey sheets, but will be subject to change over time and cannot in every instance be regarded as definitive, but rather as indicative of a transition.

Landscape Character Areas

- 3.11 Landscape Character Areas have been defined using the survey data from the fieldwork. The Landscape Character Areas are identified on a series of maps both as hard copy plans and digitally using GIS (ArcView 9.3). The Landscape Character Areas are as follows (see Drawing 02):
- 1 Foxton to Great Bowden Slopes
 - 2 Burnmill Farm Scarp Slopes
 - 3 Welland Valley North
 - 4 Lodge Farm Valley Slopes
 - 5 Clack Hill Ridge
 - 6 Jordan Valley Slopes (North and South)
 - 7 Jordan Valley Bottom
 - 8 Welland Valley West
 - 9 Mill Hill Undulating Claylands
 - 10 Airfield Farm Plateau
 - 11 Grand Union Canal Corridor
- 3.12 For each of the identified Landscape Character Areas, a brief description has been prepared and the key characteristics identified (see Section 4). These form the context the next stage of work, relating to Landscape Capacity, as described in Section 5.

- 3.13 As part of the description of the Character Areas, a 'Condition and Strength of Character Matrix' has been included. In order to assess any landscape's potential ability to adapt to change without losing its intrinsic character, it is necessary to analyse the functional integrity or condition of the landscape and compare this with the strength of character as demonstrated by the more permanent or robust elements of the landscape. Landscape condition is determined from an evaluation of the relative state (poor/moderate/good) of elements within the landscape that are subject to change, such as survival of hedgerows, extent and impact of built development. Strength of character is determined from an evaluation of the impact of relatively stable factors, such as landform, pattern of land cover, the continuity of an historic pattern, the degree of visibility and its rarity.
- 3.14 Six factors were considered for condition and six different factors were considered for strength of character in relation to each area (see matrix for any area). Each factor was evaluated in the field, with a record made on the survey sheet against a three-point scale and entered in the matrix table. Values for the factors on each axis were then aggregated and a majority total applied.
- 3.15 The resulting intersection on the matrix derived the general strategy for each Landscape Character Area. For example where a landscape area is assessed overall as in good 'condition' but only moderate 'strength of character' the strategy will be to 'conserve and strengthen', see Figure 6 below. Once this primary strategy is established, an approximation of the sensitivity of the landscape can also be applied (see Drawing 03), based on the five colour codings from high to low sensitivity indicated below.

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		

Figure 6 - Landscape Strategy Matrix

	=	High Sensitivity
	=	Moderate / High Sensitivity
	=	Moderate Sensitivity
	=	Moderate / Low Sensitivity
	=	Low Sensitivity

4 Landscape Character Assessment – Market Harborough Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Character Areas are shown on Drawing 02.

4.1 Foxton to Great Bowden Slopes

Location

This area is located to the north of Market Harborough, running from the village of Foxton in the west to the village of Great Bowden in the east.

Key Characteristics

- Pronounced north facing slopes, with localised undulations
- Part of the broad valley of Langton Brook
- Predominantly pastoral farmland, particularly smaller fields close to settlement
- Large arable fields on flatter ground
- Strong hedgerows with trees, particularly around Foxton and Great Bowden
- Well vegetated villages with village greens at Foxton and Great Bowden
- Vernacular brick buildings with slate roofs, as well as occasional thatched stone buildings
- Good footpath network

Distinctive Features

- The Grand Union Canal
- Norman Church at Foxton
- Historic industrial works near Gallow Hill, including brick chimney
- Tributary of the Langton Brook
- Foxton and Great Bowden Conservation Areas
- Village greens in Great Bowden



From Leicester Lane, east of Great Bowden, looking north west

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
S1 Impact of landform* S2 Impact of landcover* S3 Historic pattern* S4 Tranquillity S5 Distinctiveness/rarity S6 Visual unity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Discordant Frequent Incoherent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Moderate Unusual Coherent	Dominant /Prominent Dominant/ Prominent Dominant/ Prominent Tranquil Unique/rare Unified
Totals * Prime character categories if tie	1	1	4
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
C1 Landcover Change C2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* C3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* C4 Management of semi-natural habitats C5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) C6 Impact of built development*	Widespread Over mature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread / Linked Good Intact Low
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	1	0	5

MATRIX	Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
		Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
		Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
			Weak	Moderate	Strong
			Strength of Character		



From Leicester Lane, east of Great Bowden, looking south east

4.2 Burnmill Farm Scarp Slopes

Location

This area is located around the northern edge of Market Harborough, providing separation from Great Bowden. The Grand Union Canal forms the north western boundary of the area.

Key Characteristics

- Visually prominent steep scarp slope
- Narrow plateau area adjacent to the edge of Market Harborough
- Panoramic views from escarpment to north
- Pastoral farmland, of variable field size, predominantly grazed by sheep
- Occasional arable fields
- Intact ridge and furrow systems on much of the slopes
- Tree belts, including evergreens, form prominent skyline feature
- Largely undeveloped with occasional isolated farmsteads
- Grand Union Canal corridor well vegetated

Distinctive Features

- Grand Union Canal and associated structures
- Mill Mound
- Covered reservoir off Burnmill Road



From B6047, north of Market Harborough, looking east

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
S1 Impact of landform* S2 Impact of landcover* S3 Historic pattern* S4 Tranquillity S5 Distinctiveness/rarity S6 Visual unity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Discordant Frequent Incoherent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Moderate Unusual Coherent	Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Dominant/ Prominent Tranquil Unique/rare Unified
Totals * Prime character categories if tie	1	2	4
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
C1 Landcover Change C2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* C3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* C4 Management of semi-natural habitats C5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) C6 Impact of built development*	Widespread Over mature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/ Linked Good Intact Low
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	1	0	5

MATRIX

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		



From footpath close to Burnmill Road, north of Great Bowden, looking north east

4.3 Welland Valley North

Location

The Welland Valley North is situated to the north east of Market Harborough. The river forms the boundary between Harborough District and Kettering Borough in Northamptonshire.

Key Characteristics

- Broad, flat valley of River Welland
- Pasture and flood meadows along banks of river
- Field units vary in size
- Isolated farm buildings the only development within the area
- Few roads or footpaths through area
- Intact ridge and furrow systems visible in many locations
- Visually influenced by commercial development on the northern edge of Market Harborough

Distinctive Features

- Dismantled railway line
- Rows of pollarded willows
- Angular road alignment
- Laid hedgerows



From Welham Road, north east of Great Bowden, looking east

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
S1 Impact of landform* S2 Impact of landcover* S3 Historic pattern* S4 Tranquillity S5 Distinctiveness/rarity S6 Visual unity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Discordant Frequent Incoherent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Moderate Unusual Coherent	Dominant/ Prominent Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Tranquil Unique/rare Unified
Totals * Prime character categories if tie	1	3	2
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
C1 Landcover Change C2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* C3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* C4 Management of semi-natural habitats C5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) C6 Impact of built development*	Widespread Over mature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/Linked Good Intact Low
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	1	2	3

MATRIX

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		



From Rockingham Road, north east of Market Harborough, looking north west

4.4 Lodge Farm Valley Slopes

Location

This area is located to the east of Market Harborough, adjacent to the boundary with Kettering Borough. The A6 separates the area from Market Harborough.

Key Characteristics

- Predominantly arable landscape
- Gently sloping towards a tributary of the River Welland
- Pasture along banks of river, grazed by sheep
- Hedgerows are heavily clipped or have been removed and replaced with post and wire fences
- Large farm buildings and associated clutter are a noticeable intrusion
- A6 and Market Harborough generally screened by planting from within the area

Distinctive Features

- Poplars around Lodge Farm
- A6 corridor
- Tributary of the River Welland
- Ridge and furrow



From Harborough Road, west of Dingley, looking south west

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
S1 Impact of landform* S2 Impact of landcover* S3 Historic pattern* S4 Tranquillity S5 Distinctiveness/rarity S6 Visual unity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Discordant Frequent Incoherent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Moderate Unusual Coherent	Dominant/ Prominent Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Tranquil Unique/rare Unified
Totals * Prime character categories if tie	0	5	1
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
C1 Landcover Change C2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* C3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* C4 Management of semi-natural habitats C5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) C6 Impact of built development*	Widespread Over mature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/Linked Good Intact Low
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	4	2	0

MATRIX

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		

4.5 Clack Hill Ridge

Location

This area is located to the east of Market Harborough, adjacent to the boundary with Kettering Borough. The A6 bisects the area, with Kettering Road also running from the A6 into Market Harborough.

Key Characteristics

- Elevated ridgeline and views towards Market Harborough and High Leicestershire
- Small to medium pastoral fields with evidence of ridge and furrow
- Large arable fields further from Market Harborough
- Large woodland blocks a feature, particularly as the ridgeline enters Northamptonshire
- Number of ponds
- More domestic scale with ornamental planting immediately adjacent to Market Harborough

Distinctive Features

- Triangulation point on top of Clack Hill
- Ridge and furrow
- Overhead power lines
- Area of former quarrying north of Kettering Road
- A6
- Overstone House



From bridleway adjacent to A6, east of Market Harborough, looking east

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
S1 Impact of landform* S2 Impact of landcover* S3 Historic pattern* S4 Tranquillity S5 Distinctiveness/rarity S6 Visual unity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Discordant Frequent Incoherent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Moderate Unusual Coherent	Dominant/ Prominent Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Tranquil Unique/rare Unified
Totals * Prime character categories if tie	1	3	2
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
C1 Landcover Change C2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* C3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* C4 Management of semi-natural habitats C5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) C6 Impact of built development*	Widespread Over mature Relic Poor Declining/ Relic High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/Linked Good Intact Low
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	5	1	0

MATRIX

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		



From bridleway between Clack Hill and A6, south east of Market Harborough, looking north

4.6 Jordan Valley Slopes (North and South)

Location

This area is located to the south east of Market Harborough and is split in two by the floodplain corridor of the River Jordan. The railway line and Braybrooke Road run through the northern slopes, and the Brampton Valley Way also passes through the southern most part of the area.

Key Characteristics

- Gently sloping landform is part of the broad valley sides of River Jordan
- Predominantly large arable fields, with occasional smaller pastoral fields
- Hedgerows infrequent and typically low with little variety
- Some field trees, particularly north of River Jordan
- Strong visual influence of Market Harborough and transport corridors, particularly new commercial development to the south of Market Harborough
- Tributaries of the River Jordan gently meander through area
- Many ponds present

Distinctive Features

- Landforms that may be former quarrying east of Glebe Road
- Overhead cables
- Brampton Valley Way cycleway along line of dismantled railway
- Riparian vegetation along tributary of River Jordan
- Mainline railway (London to Leeds)
- Fishing Lake



From Brampton Valley Way, south of Market Harborough, looking north east (over the Jordan Valley)

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
S1 Impact of landform* S2 Impact of landcover* S3 Historic pattern* S4 Tranquillity S5 Distinctiveness/rarity S6 Visual unity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Discordant Frequent Incoherent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Moderate Unusual Coherent	Dominant/Prominent Dominant/ Prominent Dominant/Prominent Tranquil Unique/rare Unified
Totals * Prime character categories if tie	2	3	1
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
C1 Landcover Change C2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* C3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* C4 Management of semi-natural habitats C5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) C6 Impact of built development*	Widespread Over mature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/ Linked Good Intact Low
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	3	1	2

MATRIX

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		



From Clack Hill, south east of Market Harborough, looking south

4.7 Jordan Valley Bottom

Location

This area is located to the south east of Market Harborough. Braybrooke Road forms the northern edge of the area.

Key Characteristics

- Mix of arable and pastoral landuses
- Tree belts along Braybrooke Road
- Mature willows in unfarmed strip along river
- Changes in landform adjacent to eastern edge of Market Harborough create a defined flood plain
- Little impact of Market Harborough on area
- Much vegetation is becoming overmature
- River Jordan gently meanders through area

Distinctive Features

- Small bluffs adjacent to Market Harborough
- Ponds
- Pines along Braybrooke Road



From Braybrooke Road, south of Market Harborough, looking west

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
S1 Impact of landform* S2 Impact of landcover* S3 Historic pattern* S4 Tranquillity S5 Distinctiveness/rarity S6 Visual unity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Discordant Frequent Incoherent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Moderate Unusual Coherent	Dominant/Prominent Dominant/ Prominent Dominant/Prominent Tranquil Unique/rare Unified
Totals * Prime character categories if tie	0	4	2
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
C1 Landcover Change C2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* C3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* C4 Management of semi-natural habitats C5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) C6 Impact of built development*	Widespread Over mature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/ Linked Good Intact Low
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	2	1	3

MATRIX

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		



From Braybrooke Road, south of Market Harborough, looking south

4.8 Welland Valley West

Location

The Welland Valley West is situated to the south west of Market Harborough. The river itself forms the boundary between Harborough District and Daventry District in Northamptonshire.

Key Characteristics

- Broad, flat valley of River Welland
- Arable farmland along banks of river, varying in size
- Mature willows and other trees in unfarmed strip along river
- Some pasture, grazed by sheep
- Heavily influenced by housing in Market Harborough and Lubenham
- River Welland gently meanders through area
- Vegetable picking and packing equipment

Distinctive Features

- Old Hall moated site Lubenham
- Polytunnels
- Fishing lake
- Gracelands mobile home park
- Dismantled railway line



From bridleway past Farndon Fields Farm, south west of Market Harborough, looking north

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
S1 Impact of landform* S2 Impact of landcover* S3 Historic pattern* S4 Tranquillity S5 Distinctiveness/rarity S6 Visual unity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Discordant Frequent Incoherent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Moderate Unusual Coherent	Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Tranquil Unique/rare Unified
Totals * Prime character categories if tie	0	5	1
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
C1 Landcover Change C2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* C3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* C4 Management of semi-natural habitats C5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) C6 Impact of built development*	Widespread Over mature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/ Linked Good Intact Low
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	1	2	3

MATRIX

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		



From public footpath between A4304, west of Market Harborough, looking south west (from Mill Hill Undulating Claylands)

4.9 Mill Hill Undulating Claylands

Location

This area is located to the west of Market Harborough and north east of Lubenham. The A4304 from Market Harborough to Lubenham forms the southern boundary of the character area and a tributary of the River Welland forms the eastern boundary.

Key Characteristics

- Strongly undulating, rounded landform
- Heavy clay soils
- Predominantly arable landscape with medium to large fields
- Small woodland blocks and copses of deciduous plantations
- Low clipped hedgerows
- Extensive views from isolated footpath over hills including towards Market Harborough
- Relatively little access to and through area

Distinctive Features

- Mast on Mill Hill
- Copses on top of hills
- Numerous springs and small ponds



From public footpath between A4304, west of Market Harborough, looking north

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
S1 Impact of landform* S2 Impact of landcover* S3 Historic pattern* S4 Tranquillity S5 Distinctiveness/rarity S6 Visual unity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Discordant Frequent Incoherent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Moderate Unusual Coherent	Dominant /Prominent Dominant/ Prominent Dominant/Prominent Tranquil Unique/rare Unified
Totals * Prime character categories if tie	2	0	4
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
C1 Landcover Change C2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* C3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* C4 Management of semi-natural habitats C5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) C6 Impact of built development*	Widespread Over mature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/Linked Good Intact Low
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	1	5	0

MATRIX

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		



From public footpath north of Lubbenham, looking west

4.10 Airfield Farm Plateau

Location

This area is located to the north west of Market Harborough. The B6047 runs north south through the area and Leicester Lane/Gallow Field Road run east west.

Key Characteristics

- Large scale open plateau
- Large arable fields with very few field boundaries
- Site of former airfield
- Intrusion of built development into rural landscape, particularly around Airfield Farm, HMP Gartree and White Lodge, including, poultry sheds, clay pigeon shooting, off-road track and caravan park
- Extensive views towards area e.g. views of prison

Distinctive Features

- HMP Gartree
- Poultry sheds



From public B6047, north west of Market Harborough, looking west

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
S1 Impact of landform* S2 Impact of landcover* S3 Historic pattern* S4 Tranquillity S5 Distinctiveness/rarity S6 Visual unity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Discordant Frequent Incoherent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Moderate Unusual Coherent	Dominant/ Prominent Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Tranquil Unique/rare Unified
Totals * Prime character categories if tie	1	3	2
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
C1 Landcover Change C2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* C3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* C4 Management of semi-natural habitats C5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) C6 Impact of built development*	Widespread Over mature Relic Poor Declining/ Relic High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/Linked Good Intact Low
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	5	1	0

MATRIX

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		



From public B6047, north west of Market Harborough, looking north west

4.11 Grand Union Canal Corridor

Location

This area is located to the west of Market Harborough, immediately adjacent to the urban edge. The Grand Union Canal forms the eastern boundary of the area and a tributary of the River Welland the western boundary.

Key Characteristics

- Grand Union Canal and associated tow path
- Heavily vegetated boundaries to housing in Market Harborough, the Canal and a tributary of the River Welland
- Pasture and arable fields between river and canal
- Some pony paddocks
- Encroachment of domestic back gardens into pasture at southern edge

Distinctive Features

- Grand Union Canal
- Tributary of the River Welland



From footbridge over Grand Union Canal, north west of Market Harborough, looking south

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
S1 Impact of landform* S2 Impact of landcover* S3 Historic pattern* S4 Tranquillity S5 Distinctiveness/rarity S6 Visual unity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Discordant Frequent Incoherent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Moderate Unusual Coherent	Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Tranquil Unique/ rare Unified
Totals * Prime character categories if tie	0	4	2
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
C1 Landcover Change C2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* C3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* C4 Management of semi-natural habitats C5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) C6 Impact of built development*	Widespread Over mature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/ Linked Good Intact Low
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	0	5	1

MATRIX

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		

5 Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

- 5.1 The methodology to assess the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development, while respecting its character, is based on the guidance in Topic Paper 6 – 'Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity'. This paper forms part of the Countryside Agency and Scottish Heritage 'Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland'. Topic Paper 6 also reflects the thinking in the publication, 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' 2002.
- 5.2 The methodology developed for this study adopts the following premise that:
"existing landscape features+ visual sensitivity = Overall Landscape Sensitivity"
- 5.3 A number of criteria have been selected to identify both existing landscape features and visual sensitivities. These criteria reflect both the national guidance in Topic Paper 6 and the particular circumstances for the rural landscape around Market Harborough.
- 5.4 The criteria were grouped into primary factors (representing features that are more permanent in the landscape, such as landform) and secondary factors (representing features that are of a more temporary or transient nature).
- 5.5 The following criteria have been selected to reflect existing landscape features:
- slope analysis (primary)
 - vegetation enclosure (primary)
 - the complexity and scale of the landscape (secondary)
 - the condition of the landscape (secondary)
- 5.6 The following criteria have been selected to reflect visual sensitivity:
- openness to public view (secondary)
 - openness to private views (secondary)
 - relationship with existing urban built form (primary)
 - prevention of coalescence (primary)
 - scope to mitigate the development (primary)
- 5.7 It is recognised that Topic Paper 6 makes reference to a wider range of factors within what is termed Landscape Character Sensitivity. However, in the context of this assessment it is assumed that these topics are covered elsewhere by the District Council e.g. nature conservation and cultural heritage features. It is considered that for the purpose of this assessment the main relevant existing landscape and visual factors are addressed in the above categories.
- 5.8 The Overall Landscape Sensitivity provides an evaluation of the sensitivity of a land parcel in broad strategic terms. In order to assess the Overall Landscape Capacity of a land parcel, landscape value was added to the equation, as follows.
"Overall Landscape Sensitivity + Landscape Value = Overall Landscape Capacity"
- 5.9 In the absence of any specific stakeholder consultation, the landscape value of the land parcels was assessed by considering proximity to landscape designations. In Harborough District this takes the form of an Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside. In adjacent Northamptonshire, the designation Special Landscape Areas has also been used.
- 5.10 To effectively assess the landscape capacity of a site, an assumption is made as to the form that the potential development will take. For the purposes of this study it is assumed that development will include in the main 2-3 storey residential development. Employment areas will comprise 2-3 storey buildings. It is not anticipated that there will be any taller structures in the assessment unless otherwise stated in the detailed Land Parcel Sheets.

- 5.11 Each site was assessed against the criteria noted above, using a 5-point scale from A to E (guided by a definitions/descriptions that have been devised for this particular study to reflect local characteristics). These definitions are contained in Table A below.
- 5.12 The criteria were then scored, with 5 points being awarded to A's (the most suitable for development) and 1 point to E's (the least suitable for development). The scores were totalled for each Land Parcel to provide both a Landscape Sensitivity Profile and a Landscape Capacity Profile. Parcels with an overall higher score are considered to be relatively less sensitive to change and to also have a relatively higher capacity. The total score is then allocated an Overall Capacity value by using the following range. The bandings between categories have been defined based on the range of scores achieved in the study area.
- 15 – 19 = Low Landscape Capacity
 - 20 – 24 = Medium Low Landscape Capacity
 - 25 – 29 = Medium Landscape Capacity
 - 30 – 34 = Medium High Landscape Capacity
 - 35 – 39 = High Landscape Capacity
- 5.13 It should be emphasized that no absolute conclusion should be drawn from the numerical totals. The influence of individual criteria in a given Land Parcel and in the context of the wider Landscape Character should also be given due consideration. There may be individual criteria, particularly where they are primary criteria and in the 'E' category, where it is possible that development may be incompatible unless it can be effectively mitigated. It is important that the overall spread and balance of the profiles is fully considered rather than just the total Landscape Capacity value. In other words, each proposal will still need to be considered on its merits. To aid these considerations a commentary of the key points has been provided for each land parcel.

Table A

Criteria group	Criteria	Measurement of criteria	Comments
Existing Landscape Features	Slope analysis	A= Plateau (away from edge) B= Rolling /undulating landform providing some enclosure C= Tributary valleys/lower valley slopes/floodplain edge D= Valley floor/floodplain E= Elevated landforms, plateau edge, ridges and prominent slopes on valley sides with limited enclosure	
	Enclosure by vegetation	A= Enclosed by mature vegetation – extensive treebelts/woodland B= Semi-enclosed by vegetation - moderate woodland cover, good quality tall hedgerows/ hedgerows with hedgerow trees C= Fragmented vegetation - scattered small woodlands, fragmented shelterbelts and/or hedgerows D= Limited/poor hedges (with no trees) and/or isolated copses E= Largely open with minimal vegetation	
	Complexity/ Scale	A= Extensive simple landscape with single land uses B= Large scale landscape with limited land use and variety C= Large or medium scale landscape with variations in pattern, texture and scale D= Small or medium scale landscape with a variety in pattern, texture and scale E= Intimate and organic landscape with a richness in pattern, texture and scale	
	Landscape Character Quality/ Condition	A= Area of weak character in a poor condition B= Area of weak character in a moderate condition or of a moderate character in a weak condition C= Area of weak character in a good condition or of a moderate character in a moderate condition or of a strong character in a poor condition D= Area of moderate character in a good condition or of a strong character in a moderate condition E= Area of strong character in a good condition	

Criteria group	Criteria	Measurement of criteria	Comments
Visual Factors	Openness to public view	<p>A= Site is well contained from public views</p> <p>B= Site is generally well contained from public views</p> <p>C= Site is partially contained from public views</p> <p>D= Site is moderately open to public views</p> <p>E= Site is very open to public views</p>	<p>Public views will include views from Roads, Rights of Way and public open space. The evaluation considers a summer and winter evaluation. However due to the time of the study the summer evaluation was estimated based on the character of the vegetation. This criteria is also considered in association with 'Scope to mitigate the development' criteria.</p> <p>Score will depend on the extent of the visibility from all the site perimeters and the rights of way through site.</p>
	Openness to private view	<p>A= Site is well contained from private views</p> <p>B= Site is generally well contained from private views</p> <p>C= Site is partially contained from private views</p> <p>D= Site is moderately open to private views</p> <p>E= Site is very open to private views</p>	<p>This relates to private views from residential properties. The evaluation considers a summer and winter evaluation. However due to the time of the study the summer evaluation was estimated based on the character of the vegetation. This criteria is also considered in association with 'Scope to mitigate the development' criteria.</p> <p>The score will depend on the extent of the visibility from all the site perimeters.</p>
	Relationship with existing urban built form	<p>A= Location where built development will form a natural extension of an adjacent part of urban fabric</p> <p>B= Location where built development will form some close associations with the existing parts of urban fabric</p> <p>C= Location where built development will form some moderate associations with existing urban fabric</p> <p>D= Location where built development will only form some limited associations with the existing urban fabric due to major obstacles</p> <p>E= Location where development will be isolated from and not form any relationship with existing urban fabric</p>	

Criteria group	Criteria	Measurement of criteria	Comments
	Prevention of coalescence	<p>A= Development would not compromise any separation</p> <p>B= Development would have slight impact on separation</p> <p>C= Development would have moderate impact on separation</p> <p>D= Development would significantly compromise separation</p> <p>E= Development would cause complete coalescence</p>	
Potential Landscape Features	Scope to mitigate the development	<p>A= Good scope to provide mitigation in the short to medium term in harmony with existing landscape pattern</p> <p>B= Good scope to provide mitigation in the medium term and in keeping with existing landscape pattern</p> <p>C= Moderate scope to provide mitigation in the medium term broadly in keeping with existing landscape pattern</p> <p>D= Limited scope to provide adequate mitigation in keeping with the existing landscape in the medium term</p> <p>E= Very limited scope to provide adequate mitigation in the medium to long term</p>	This is an assessment based on landscape character, aesthetic factors - scale, enclosure, pattern, movement – overall visibility of site and consideration of existing viewpoints
Landscape Value	Local Landscape Designations	<p>A= Location where built development will have no impact</p> <p>B= Location where built development will have slight impact</p> <p>C= Location where built development will have moderate impact</p> <p>D= Location where built development is adjacent to designated area, and /or will have high impact</p> <p>E= Location fully within a designated area of landscape value</p>	This criteria is used as a proxy for Landscape Value in the absence of specific stakeholder consultation, and includes consideration of local landscape designations (Areas of Particularly Attractive Landscape and Special Landscape Areas)