Harborough Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape Character Type 2: Elevated Rolling Farmland

Harborough District Council

Prepared by LUC
August 2024

LCT 2: Elevated Rolling Farmland

Figure 1.1: LCT 2: Elevated Rolling Farmland with component Landscape Character Areas

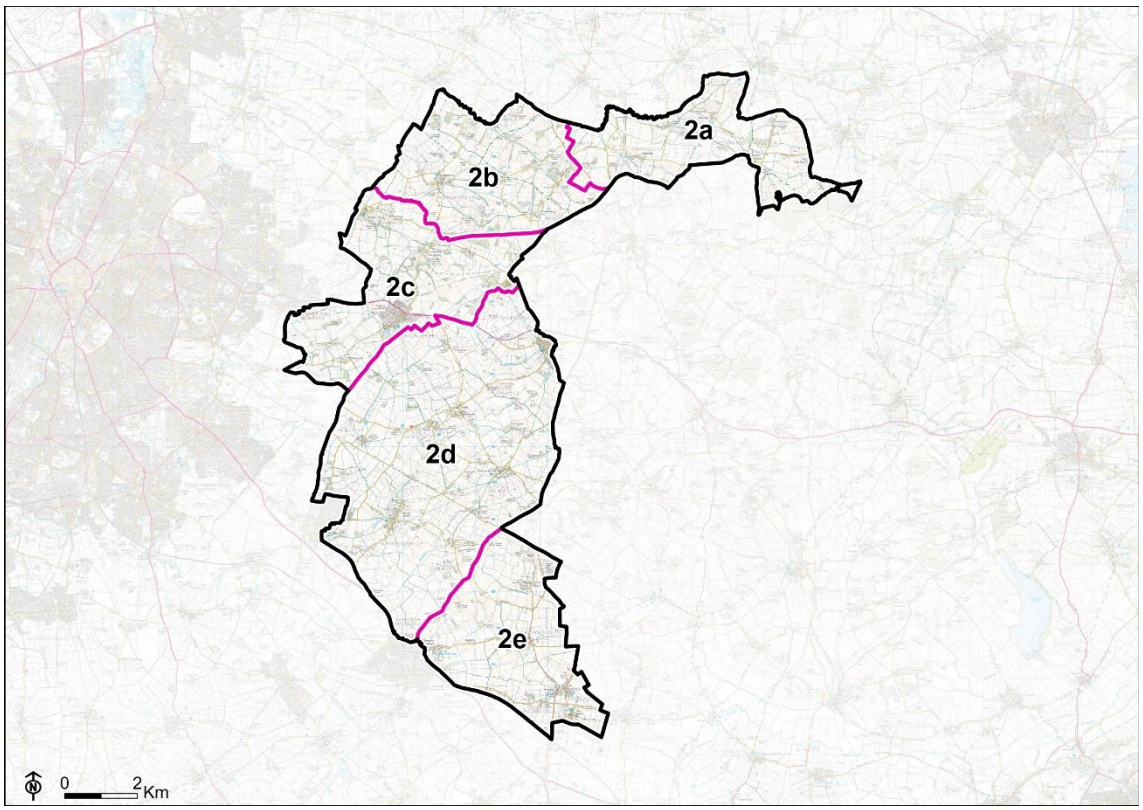
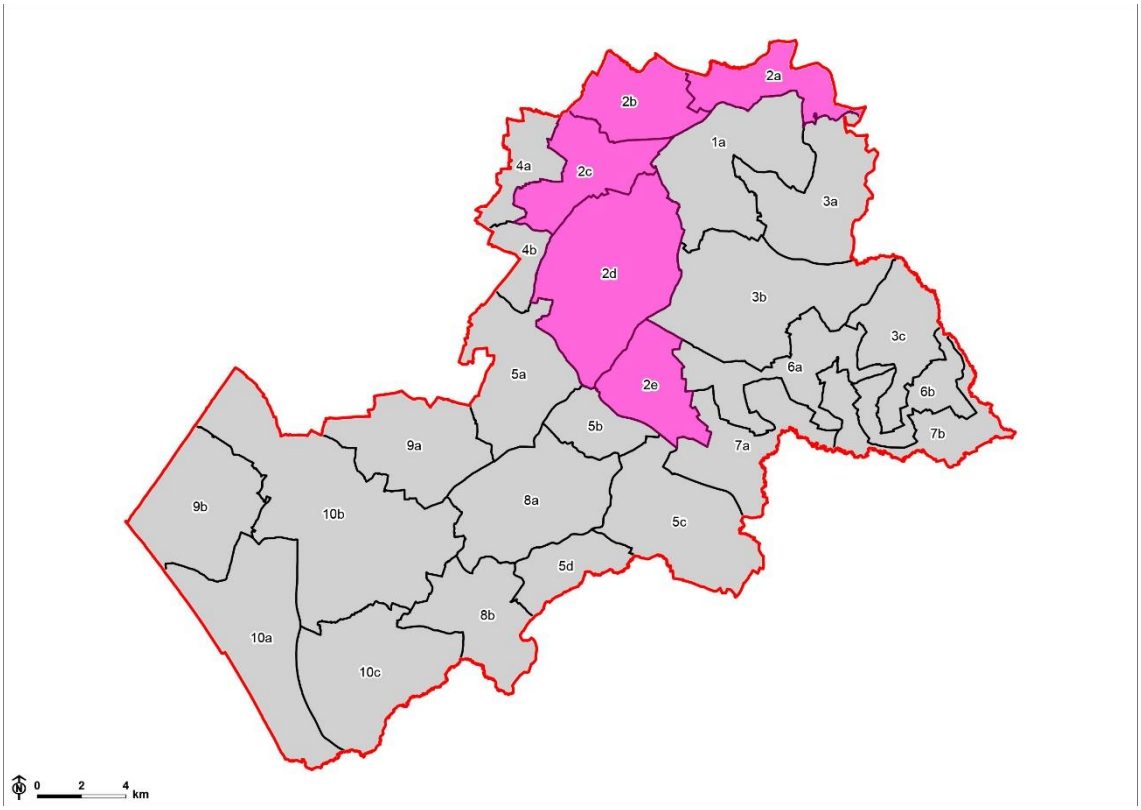


Figure 1.2: Location of LCT 2: Elevated Rolling Farmland within Harborough District



Component Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)

- LCA 2a: Marefield and Owston
- LCA 2b: Hungarton and Lowesby Estates
- LCA 2c: Houghton-on-the-Hill to Keyham
- LCA 2d: Great Glen to Billesdon
- LCA 2e: Shangton to East Langton

Location and Summary

Spanning from the centre to the north of the District, the Rolling Tributary Farmland Landscape Character Type (LCT) is located north and west of the elevated ridge tops of LCT 1, west of the wooded farmland of LCT 3 and the Welland valley of LCT 6 and 7, and to the east of the settled and farmed edge of LCT 4 and settled vale of LCT 5 in the south and west. To the north are the Harborough-Melton and the Harborough-Charnwood district boundaries. The LCT boundary is broadly defined by the gentle rolling landform with tributary valleys and there is continuity in character between this LCT and the neighbouring LCA 15: High Leicestershire Hills within Melton LCA.

This LCT is defined by landform associated with narrow tributary streams of the Rivers Soar, Sence, Wreake and Welland and the pattern of historic villages, estates and parkland scattered across the area which are often, but not always, designated. This is a mixed agricultural landscape with a strong rural character and a network of valued habitats, including along riparian corridors. There is a strong sense of openness from elevated areas which afford long-distance views and contrast with the sense of enclosure experienced within valley bottoms.

Representative Photographs

Figure 1.3: LCT 2 representative photograph 1

Figure 1.4: LCT 2 representative photograph 2

Key Characteristics

- An elevated farmed landscape of gentle rolling landform crossed by tributaries in sloping tributary valleys.
- The source of springs and small tributary streams, which feed into the Rivers Soar, Sence, Wreake and Welland.
- Arable fields enclosed by hedgerows with generally strong historic patterns, including some ridge and furrow, alongside pasture.
- Small blocks of woodland which connect to riparian habitats along streams.
- Primarily a landscape of arable farmland, where semi natural habitats include woodlands, riparian trees, grassland and orchards.
- Strong sense of time-depth as the landscape is rich in historic features and assets, including numerous scheduled monuments, conservation areas and registered parks and gardens (RPGs), which include estates and deserted medieval settlements.
- Large number of scattered linear villages and hamlets which have a strong historic character and are connected by a network of winding local lanes, including gated roads and cattle grids and lined with strong avenues of mature trees.
- Rich recreational resources including the National Cycle Network (NCN), public rights of way (PRoW) and local cycle routes and long-distance footpaths, such as the Midshires Way and Leicestershire Round.
- A strong rural character and a relatively high sense of tranquillity which is reduced in the south and west in proximity to the neighbouring settled landscapes.
- Long distance views afforded from the more open and elevated areas, which contrasts to a sense of enclosure along the tributary valley bottoms.

Natural Influences

The LCT is underlain by a bedrock of Triassic to Jurassic mudstone, siltstone, limestone and sandstone. This is overlain with superficial clay, sand and gravel deposits which were deposited during glaciation along river valleys. This varied underlying geology has influenced the varied landforms within this LCT. Across much of the area the soils are loamy and clayey, supporting traditional mixed agricultural land uses.

This varied landform and watercourse network are defining characteristics of the area, which comprises rolling landform with numerous springs feeding tributary valleys of the Rivers Soar, Sence, Wreake and Welland, ranging from approximately 90m AOD at Keyham to 188m AOD at Frisby.

Small woodland blocks are common, set within arable and pastoral fields and connecting parkland landscapes, particularly in the north. These woodland blocks, as well as riparian vegetation along watercourses form green infrastructure corridors and contribute to a strong green infrastructure network. Most woodlands are deciduous however there are occasional coniferous specimens, particularly within parkland landscapes. Pasture is often in the form of gated roads with cattle grids and open grazing, with a sense of elevation and openness. There are limited designated natural heritage features, however other habitats, which are priority habitats, include traditional orchards within settlements and pockets of semi-improved grassland, mesotrophic grassland, lowland meadows and lowland fens. Many of these habitats are also designated as local wildlife sites (LWS), however the overall network is fragmented. Wide field margins and hedgerows (which vary in condition), as well as wide road verges and strong avenues of mature roadside trees and parkland trees contribute to ecological connectivity across the area. Tree species include ash, oak, sycamore and field maple, as well as some coniferous trees and hawthorn hedges.

Cultural Influences

Historic features, provide a strong sense of time depth in places. Numerous designated assets include scheduled monuments, many of which are the sites of medieval villages such as at Frisby and Carlton Curlieu, conservation areas including Hungarton and Billesdon, and particularly in the north, RPGs at Quenby Hall, Lowesby Hall, Baggrave Hall and Langton Hall. Parkland character is evident across the LCT, even outside of the designated RPGs, for example at Illston Grange.

The strong sense of time depth is weakened in places by the amalgamation of former historic field patterns. Although there are still some examples of 19th century planned enclosure (some containing ridge and furrow) in the centre and south of the LCT, much of the area is formed of reorganised piecemeal enclosure with some examples of very large post war fields. These have developed through a process of amalgamation of fields since the mid-19th century and more modern farming practices and are larger in scale and more sinuous in form than the smaller rectilinear enclosure. The parkland character experienced is however still intact and displays a strong sense of time-depth, particularly where there are examples of parkland trees and avenues of trees within a landscape of gated roads and open grazing.

There are a large number of scattered nucleated villages and hamlets, which are often designated as conservation areas, such as Tur Langton, Illston-on-the-Hill and Kings Norton. Villages are often associated with historic estates, such as Lowesby and Church Langton and contain clusters of listed buildings, notably grade II* listed churches and historic houses, such as the Church of St Andrew in Burton Overy and Carlton Curlieu Hall. Typical architectural materials include ironstone, red brick, slate and thatch, as well as examples of mud construction and Flemish bond brickwork. Many of the villages and hamlets have avoided modern expansion and still retain their strong historic character, however there are some examples of mid-20th century expansion development at the larger villages of Houghton-on-the-Hill and Billesdon which dilutes the historic character in these localised areas.

Villages and hamlets are connected by a network of winding local lanes which are lined with strong avenues of mature trees, including oak and ash, which rise and fall with the rolling landform. Gartree Road, a Roman road runs through the centre of the LCT, its straight route evident within the local road network, contrasting with the winding roads. A dismantled railway line, which was once part of the Great Northern and London and North Western Joint Railway but was closed in the mid-20th century, runs east-west and north-south within the northern half of the LCT, with a junction south-west of Marefield. Its former route, marked by vegetation and occasional structures, is still evident within the landscape.

Recreational resources providing connectivity between villages and access to the landscape include Route 63 of the NCN, PRoW including the Midshires Way and Leicestershire Round long-distance footpaths, and local cycle routes. The network generally radiates out from villages.

Perceptual Influences

This LCT predominantly comprises arable and pastoral farmland interspersed with distinctive parkland which has a strong rural character. The larger fields, particularly at higher elevations, allow for an open character which contrasts with enclosure and intimacy on valley bottoms where vegetation is more abundant. Where there is a sense of openness, particularly at higher elevations, long-distance views are afforded across the rolling farmland, as well as towards the neighbouring districts of Melton and Charnwood in the north. The prominent hill tops of LCT 1 and woodland within LCT 3 are also noticeable in views south and east and often form wooded features on the horizon. Modern influences include overhead power lines and wind turbines which form man-made vertical elements in views.

Parkland, areas of open grazing, mature tree lined roads and church spires within historic villages all contribute to a strong sense of place. Tranquillity levels are varied, with birdsong evident throughout and sounds of grasses rustling. Tranquillity is generally high and light pollution low in the north and east. Tranquillity levels are particularly high within areas of open grazing which

has a slight sense of exposure. Tranquillity is reduced to the west and south, where it is in closer proximity to the settled landscapes of neighbouring LCT 4 and 5 which create light pollution. Development is limited to primarily villages and winding local roads, however there are some examples of larger infrastructure, such as the A47 which crosses east-west across the LCT and the A6 which runs along the southern boundary. Both roads introduce movement and noise into an otherwise peaceful landscape with a sense of relative remoteness. This is a generally balanced landscape, with texture due to the combination of roadside trees, riparian corridors and historic field patterns, including examples of ridge and furrow.

Landscape Character Areas

LCA 2a: Marefield and Owston

Including the settlements of Marefield and Owston.

Figure 1.5: Map of LCA 2a: Marefield and Owston

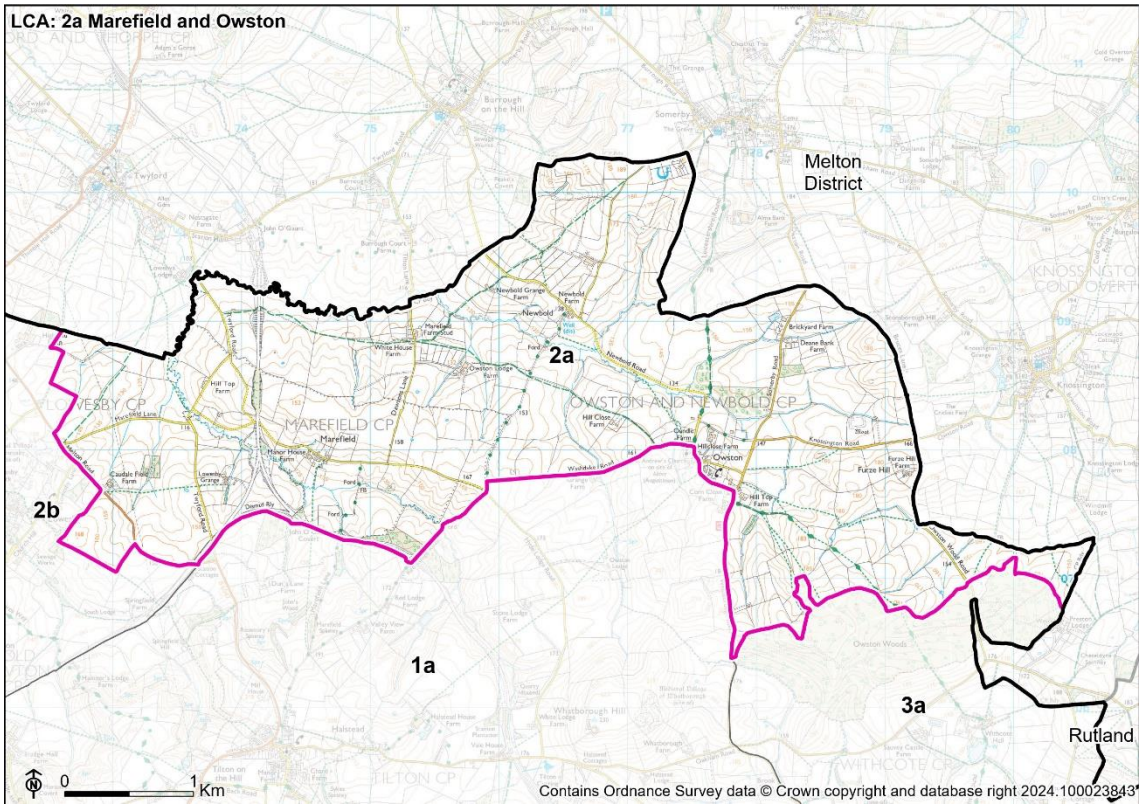


Figure 1.6: LCA 2a representative photograph 1

Figure 1.7: LCA 2a representative photograph 2

This LCA is located in the north-east of the LCT and spans from Lowesby in the west to Owston Woods in the east. The northern boundary comprises the Harborough-Melton district boundary and the southern boundary borders the ridge tops of LCT 1 and the wooded farmland of LCT 3. This LCA forms a continuous character with LCA 15: High Leicestershire Hills within the Melton LCA.

Natural Influences

The valleys associated with tributaries of the River Wreake to the north-west are broader and gentler than elsewhere in the LCT, rising from a low point of approximately 116m AOD in the valley west of Marefield to approximately 180m south-west of Hill Top Farm. Woodland blocks are generally sparse within the arable landscape, with the exception of small blocks of mixed woodland north of Owston, riparian woodland along numerous small unnamed streams which meander through the landscape, and linear woodland which follows the dismantled railway line, particularly south of Marefield. There are limited natural heritage designations within this LCA, except for pockets of mesotrophic grassland designated as LWS to the south-east of Marefield and north-west of Owston. Some hedges have been replaced with post and wire fences, and there is some degradation of hedgerows in the east. In spite of this, linear and riparian woodland, strong roadside hedges, ditches, wide verges and examples of traditional willow weaved fencing contribute to an ecological network.

Cultural Influences

Fields are primarily large and arable, with some smaller scale fields on the edge of settlement, including pockets of horse pasture. Although most of the landscape is 19th century re-organised piecemeal enclosure and very large post war fields formed through amalgamation, there are pockets of 16th/17th century piecemeal enclosure remaining near to the dismantled railway and surrounding Owston. Scheduled monuments contributing to historic landscape value include the medieval village and moated site of North Marefield, the moated grange and enclosure east of Owston and, although largely located within neighbouring LCT 1, the site of Owston Augustinian Abbey which is on the site of the current St Andrews Church, a grade I listed small truncated and spired church built of ironstone. The historic village of Owston, straddling the border with LCT 1, is designated as a conservation area which contains several listed buildings, most notably Manor Farm which is built of white limestone ashlar in an area otherwise primarily built of brick and stone. Although not designated as a conservation area, the small hamlet of Marefield contains a

cluster of listed buildings. Former railway infrastructure is evident along the dismantled railway, in the form of red brick structures and a large brick viaduct, with prominent arches crossing the landscape. As well as PRoW, the Leicestershire Round long-distance footpath crosses through the east of the LCA and local cycle routes follow the rural road network.

Perceptual Influences

Long distance views are afforded north across the neighbouring district of Melton and south towards the higher landform of LCT 1 and Owston Woods, ancient woodland which is located within LCT 3. An overhead pylon line crosses north-south in the west of the area, which along with views towards a mast south of Tur Langton and masts in LCT 1, introduce vertical features onto the skyline. Although the valley landform is gentler than elsewhere in the LCT, there is still a sense of intimacy and enclosure within the valley bottoms. This is a tranquil landscape which displays some of the darkest skies in the district due to its absence of large settlement and infrastructure. There is a strong network of PRoW radiating out from Owston, providing connectivity with the wider landscape, including the ancient woodland within LCT 3.

LCA 2b: Hungarton and Lowesby Estates

Including the settlements of Hungarton, Lowesby and Cold Newton.

Figure 1.8: Map of LCA 2b: Hungarton and Lowesby Estates

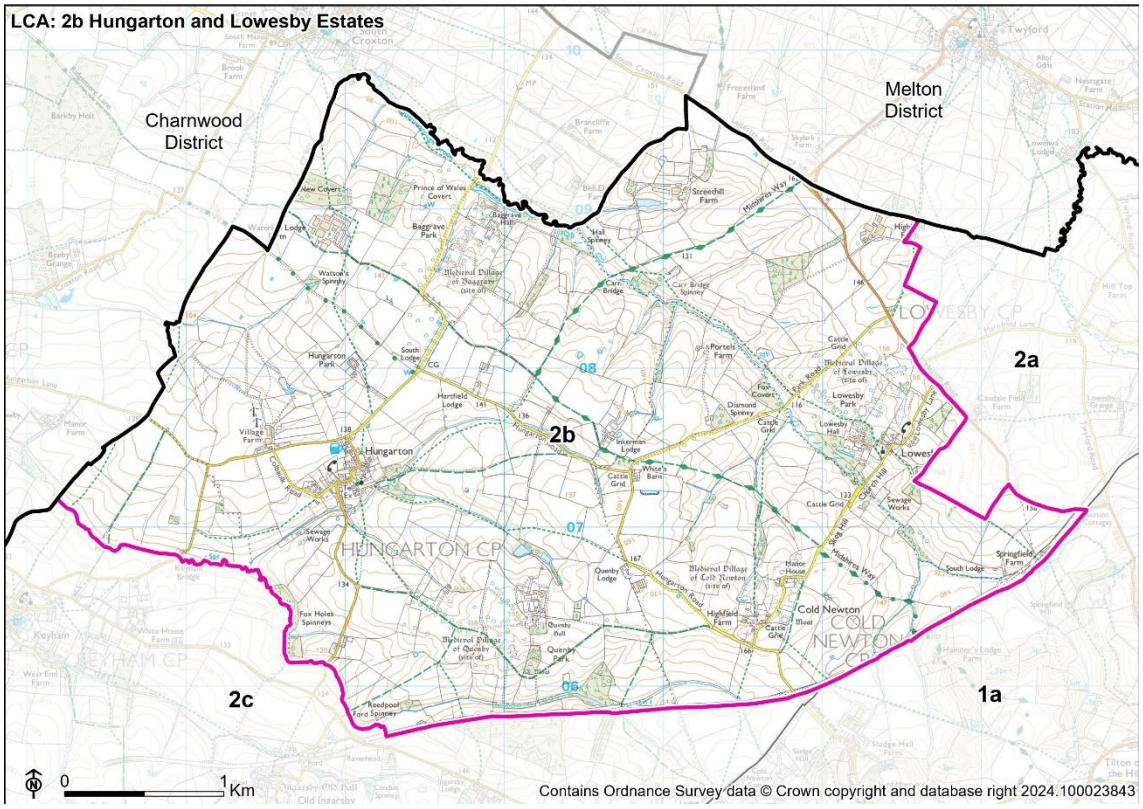


Figure 1.9: LCA 2b representative photograph 1

Figure 1.10: LCA 2b representative photograph 2

This LCA with a strong parkland character is located in the north of the LCT and spans from Barkby Brook in the west to Melton Road and Lowesby in the east. The northern and western boundaries comprise the Harborough-Melton Harborough-Charnwood district boundaries and the south-eastern boundary borders the higher landform of LCT 1. This LCA forms a continuous character with LCA 15: High Leicestershire Hills within the Melton LCA and the High Leicestershire LCA within the Charnwood LCA.

Natural Influences

Valleys are relatively steep in places, such as along Queniborough Brook which runs south-east to north-west through the east of the LCA. The landform rises from a low point of approximately 116m AOD to high points of approximately 170m AOD south of Hungarton Road to the south and approximately 160m AOD along Leicester Road to the north. As well as springs and tributaries, ponds, often associated with parkland estates are also common. Woodland is relatively sparce, however there are small blocks of woodland, often associated with parkland, and riparian trees along streams. Along with parkland trees within historic estates and a relatively intact hedgerow network, particularly along roads where there are avenues of oak and ash trees, these features contribute to the ecological network of the area. Mature specimen conifers are also present within parkland, including wellingtonia and lime trees. There are few natural heritage designations, however there are pockets of mesotrophic grassland designated as LWS and a pocket of wet grassland/swamp along a stream to the south. Ponds and streams are also occasionally designated as LWS's, including a pond and a stream (noted for its eroded earth cliff) at Quenby Park and a stream at Hungarton. Other priority habitats include lowland fens and lowland meadows and an orchard within the village of Lowesby.

Cultural Influences

Parkland is common, set amongst a landscape of primarily re-organised piecemeal enclosure containing arable crops. However, pasture and open grazing with gated roads and cattle grids are common within the parkland. This LCA is rich in heritage assets, including three grade II listed RPGs: at Quenby Park, Lowesby Park and Baggrave Park. These parkland landscapes are associated within large halls which date back to the 16th and 17th century, and display parkland trees, tree avenues, ha-has and formal gardens and comprise listed buildings. A building of note is the grade I listed Quenby Hall which is built in an Elizabethan – Jacobean style and is the origin of stilton cheese. Scheduled monuments are also located within Baggrave Park and Lowesby Park, which are the sites of deserted medieval villages. A shrunken medieval

village, also designated as a scheduled monument is located at Cold Newton. Hungarton and Lowesby are designated as conservation areas and comprise many listed buildings, including the II* listed Church of All Saints in Lowesby and Church of St John the Baptist in Hungarton. Flemish bond brickwork with lighter headers is notable in Hungarton, and the village of Lowesby contains many estate cottages. There is a strong network of local PRoW which connect the estates and villages and run through parkland. Local cycle routes run along the local road network and the Midshires Way long-distance footpath runs through the east of the LCA.

Perceptual Influences

Long distance views are afforded north across the neighbouring districts of Melton and Charnwood and south towards the higher landform of LCT 1 which forms a wooded horizon in views. There is a sense of enclosure on the valley bottom, particularly where riparian vegetation limits views, however there is a sense of openness within parkland. The parkland features, estate character, including estate fencing, and long-distance views create a strong sense of place. There is also a strong sense of tranquillity and rural character within this landscape, due to the sense of elevation and openness, absence of traffic noise and light pollution and the historic character of the villages and parkland is retained due to its absence of modern development. However, the overhead line within neighbouring LCA 2a is visible to the east and wind turbines at Village Farm in the west introduce vertical features onto the skyline.

LCA 2c: Houghton-on-the-Hill to Keyham

Including Keyham and Houghton-on-the-Hill.

Figure 1.11: Map of LCA 2c: Houghton-on-the-Hill to Keyham

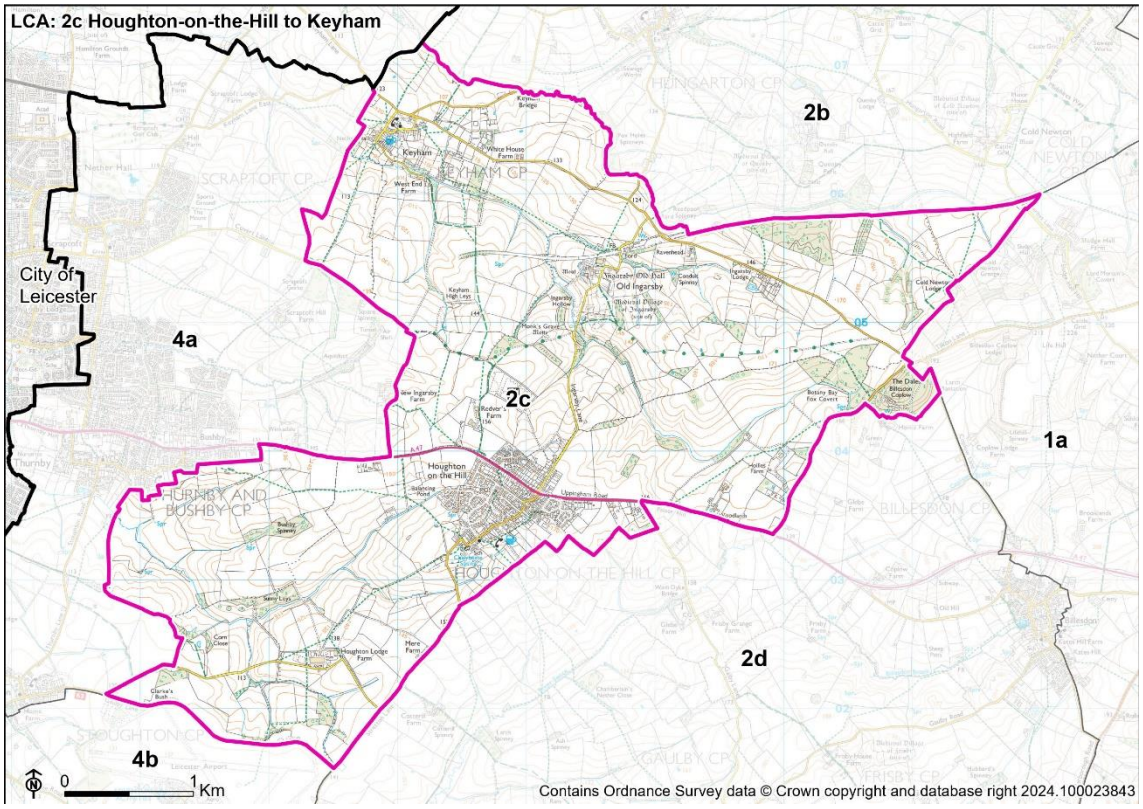


Figure 1.12: LCA 2c representative photograph 1

Figure 1.13: LCA 2c representative photograph 2

This LCA is located in the centre of the LCT, and spans from Houghton-on-the-Hill to Keyham, between the ridge tops of LCT 1 to the east and settled and farmed edge of Leicester to the west. LCA 2b to the north and LCA 2d to the south both have strong parkland characteristics which are not present in this landscape.

Natural Influences

Landform is rolling, generally increasing in height from low points at approximately 100m AOD adjacent to Keyham, rising to high points of between 140-180m AOD further east. It is strongly influenced by the narrow tributaries of the River Soar in sometimes steeply sloping valleys. Landcover comprises generally arable fields, with some pasture in the valley bottoms. Fields are bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. The predominant tree species include ash, horse chestnut, field maple and elder. Deciduous woodlands are located alongside streams and on steeper slopes. Woodland includes some larger woodlands such as Botany Bay Fox Covert and Billesdon Coplow, and is often designated as priority habitats, as are orchards on the edge of villages. Natural heritage designations are limited to LWS which include mesatrophic grassland with scrub and wet grassland at Quenby Hall Estate Scrub, further mesatrophic grassland at Keyham Meadow and south of Bushby, and woodland at Bushby Spinney.

Cultural Influences

Field patterns are predominantly 19th century re-organised piecemeal enclosure, with a small amount of small irregular fields around Ingarsby Old Hall. East of Keyham are examples of planned enclosure, including some fields containing ridge and furrow, which contribute to the time-depth of the landscape, as does 16th/17th century piecemeal enclosure west and south of Houghton-on-the-Hill. Amalgamation of fields east of Houghton-on-the-Hill has resulted in some very large post-war fields in this area. Settlement includes isolated farmsteads and the elevated hilltop villages of Keyham and Houghton-on-the-Hill, generally well-integrated into the landscape by trees. Both villages have conservation area designations with clusters of listed buildings, including the grade II* listed Church of All Saints in Keyham and Church of St Catharine in Houghton-on-the-Hill, indicative of their historic nature. Keyham appears secluded due to the presence of trees to the north of the village associated with Keyham Old Hall. Houghton-on-the-Hill is a large village which has experienced much 20th century development to the north of the historic linear settlement.

Building materials include red brick (some painted white), slate, Swithland slate and thatch, with some mud, stone and timber frames which creates a strong local vernacular. Roads between villages are country lanes, which are rolling in places and with a strong sense of enclosure due to the landform within valleys such as on Ingarsby Lane. These lanes contrast with the A47 which adds noise and movement to the landscape. The sense of time depth is generally moderate in areas with strong historic field patterns, however this is stronger around Ingarsby Old Hall, which is associated with a moated site and deserted medieval village at Old Ingarsby, both designated as scheduled monuments. Former railway infrastructure is evident along the dismantled railway, in the form of red brick structures north of Ingarsby Old Hall. A network of PRoW and small number of local cycle routes provide connectivity between villages and access to the landscape.

Perceptual Influences

Views are generally open across rolling arable farmland towards undeveloped horizons, which contrasts with more intimate pastoral character with a stronger sense of enclosure within valleys. The church spire at Houghton-on-the-Hill forms a landmark on the horizon. Perceptions of tranquillity and dark skies are eroded in proximity to settlements and the A47 where there is noise and movement from traffic. A solar farm north of Houghton-on-the-Hill introduces a modern human influence into an otherwise rural landscape.

LCA 2d: Great Glen to Billesdon

Including Billesdon, Gaulby, Little Stretton, Illston on the Hill and Burton Overy.

Figure 1.14: Map of LCA 2d: Great Glen to Billesdon

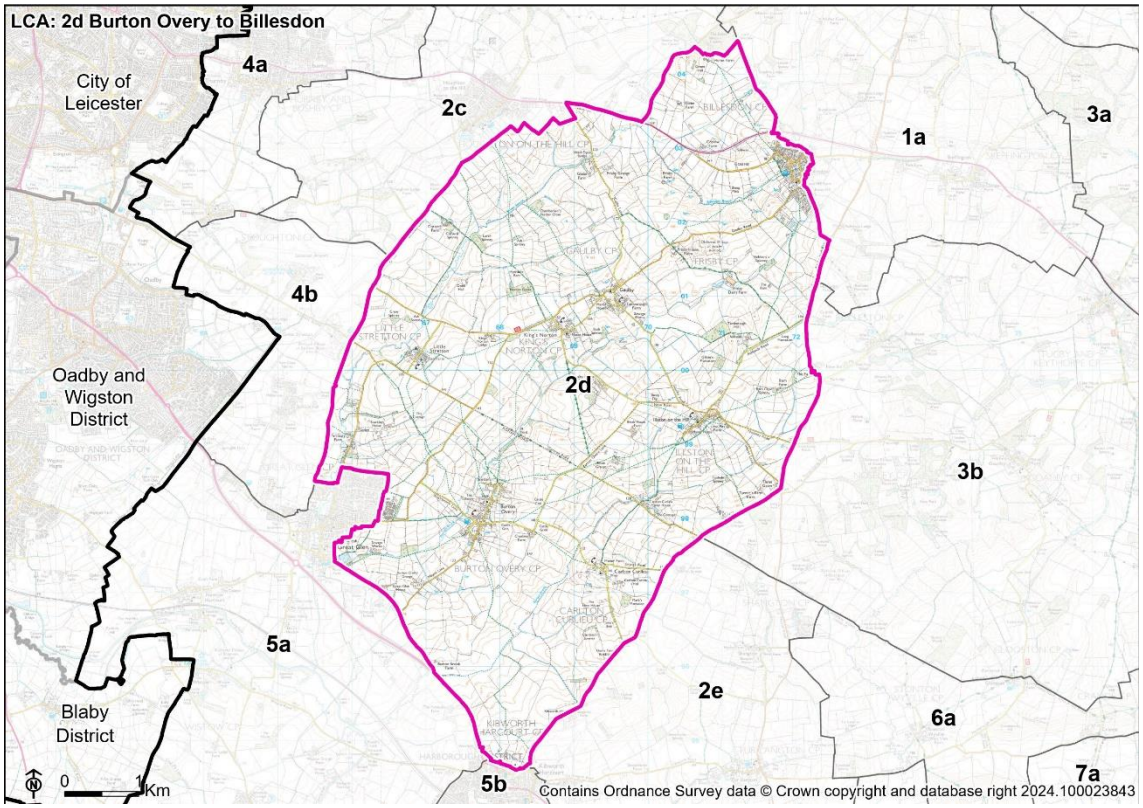


Figure 1.15: LCA 2d representative photograph 1

Figure 1.16: LCA 2d representative photograph 2

This LCA is located in the centre of the LCT and spans from Kibworth in the south (in neighbouring LCT 5) to Billesdon. It lies between the ridge tops of LCT 1 to the east and settled and farmed edge of Leicester to the west and differs from its neighbours of LCA 2c to the north and LCA 2e to the south by its slightly more open and elevated character.

Natural Influences

Gently rolling elevated landform with high points of approximately 190m AOD at the boundary with LCT 3 and north of Frisby House Farm, falling to approximately 100m AOD north of Great Glen. The landform contains the gently sloping river valleys of the River Sence and its tributaries including Coplow Brook, Billesdon Brook and Burton Brook, broadly flowing in a north-east to south-west direction. Landcover is a combination of pasture grazed by cows and sheep, including some open areas with parkland character, and arable fields enclosed by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. In places there are post and wire fences. Tree species include ash, oak, horse chestnut and lime, occasionally in formal avenues along roadsides. Priority habitats include small blocks of woodland often adjacent to watercourses or associated with parkland, orchards on the edge of villages and fragments of good quality semi-improved grassland and lowland meadow along the River Sence and Burton Brook respectively. Numerous and diverse scattered LWS include mature trees north and west of Billesdon, a pond, reed bed, species rich grassland, woodland and scrub at Billesdon Woodland Pool Nature Reserve, species rich hedgerows and hedgerow trees north of Gaulby and along Gartree Road Roman Road, a stream and woodland at Bath Spinney, mesatrophic grassland including at Stackley House and north of Carlton Road and wetland habitats associated with the River Sence west of Stretton Road. Whilst scattered, these diverse LWS combine with woodland blocks, wide road verges and hedgerows to contribute to the ecological network.

Cultural Influences

Fields are generally 19th century planned enclosure and re-organised piecemeal enclosure. Pockets of 16th/17th century piecemeal enclosure are retained in proximity to villages such as south of Houghton-on-the Hill, west of Billesdon and surrounding Burton Overy. There is evidence of amalgamation resulting in very large post-war fields in the valley of the River Sence and Burton Brook. Settlement comprises small, historic linear villages often located on hill-tops such as Gaulby and Illston-on-the-Hill. Historic village cores with

limited modern development are often designated by conservation areas, including at Billesdon, Gaulby, King's Norton, Illston-on-the-Hill, Burton Overy and Carlton Curlieu. Conservation areas contain scattered listed buildings, most notably the grade I listed white limestone Church of St John the Baptist and Fortrey Tomb in the churchyard at King's Norton. Church spires are prominent landmarks in the wider landscape. Billesdon is notable as a larger settlement which has a more nucleated form with visible modern development on the edges. Building materials include red bricks, slate, ironstone, Swithland slate and some examples of timber frame and thatch which creates a strong local vernacular. Historic designations include scheduled monuments where there are medieval manorial fishponds in Burton Overy, and south of Carlton Curlieu where there are remains of a medieval village. Parkland is present, for example at Illston Grange, a Victorian house subsequently demolished in 1927. Parkland features include formal avenues of trees along rural lanes, open grazing with parkland trees, and parkland features including a ha-ha abutting the church yard at Illston-on-the-Hill, although un-designated. Distinctive white painted fingerpost signage provides a sense of cohesion throughout the area and strengthens the parkland character. The combination of historic villages, rural gated roads and parkland characteristics combine with historic field patterns to create a strong sense of time-depth. A network of PRoW and small number of local cycle routes, as well as NCN Route 63 provide connectivity between villages and access to the landscape.

Perceptual Influences

Views are generally open in character and across pastoral farmland or arable fields towards distant, undeveloped horizons with a sense of elevation, particularly when looking west towards lower landforms. Within valleys, there is a greater sense of enclosure as views are contained by gently rising landform and riparian vegetation. Dark skies are moderate, becoming stronger in the east away from urban lighting in Leicester. Perceptions of tranquillity are also generally moderate, with localised lower perceptions in proximity to the A47 west of Billesdon which adds noise and movement to the landscape. Elsewhere, audible noises include birdsong and rustling leaves. Visual intrusions are generally limited. This is a harmonious and unified landscape that

feels textured and well-composed due to the combination of pasture, arable fields, scattered villages and the strong parkland character.

LCA 2e: Shangton to East Langton

Including Shangton, Tur Langton, Church Langton and East Langton.

Figure 1.17: Map of LCA 2e: Shangton to East Langton

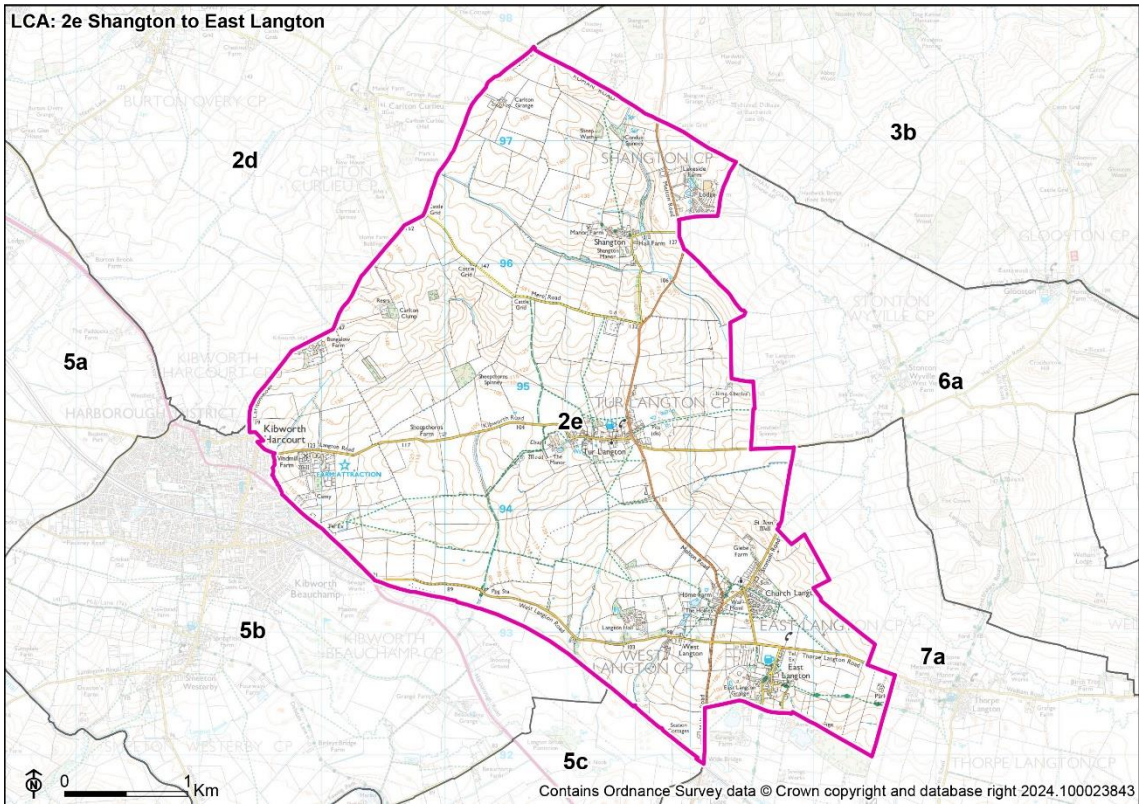


Figure 1.18: LCA 2e representative photograph 1

Figure 1.19: LCA 2e representative photograph 2

This LCA is located in the south of the LCT between the eastern edge of Kibworth Harcourt and East Langton. The north-eastern boundary indicates the transition to rolling wooded farmland, with the valley slopes and floodplain of the River Welland to the east and south and the settled vale to the south-west.

Natural Influences

Gently rolling landform rising from approximately 80m AOD at the boundary with LCT 7, the river valley floodplain, to high points of approximately 150-160m AOD along Kibworth Road. The narrow tributaries of the River Welland sit in gently sloping, relatively broad valleys. Ponds are occasionally scattered through the landscape for example at Hall Farm, Shangton. Landcover is generally medium to large scale arable fields bound with hawthorn hedgerows and occasional oak, ash, sycamore and maple hedgerow trees. Pasture grazed by sheep is found in the valley bottoms. In places hedgerows are fragmented and occasionally fields are enclosed by post and wire fencing. The ecological network comprises small woodlands in valleys and occasionally on hilltops, traditional orchards on the edges of Shangton and East Langton, and a small number of LWS including a pond south-west of Tur Langton, species rich hedgerows on West Langton Road and Melton Road, mature ash trees on Thorpe Langton Road and Mesotrophic grassland north of Tur Langton and at Kibworth Cemetery.

Cultural Influences

Fields are generally of 19th century planned enclosure and re-organised piecemeal enclosure. North-east of Tur Langton there is evidence of ridge and furrow within the planned enclosure. Amalgamation and hedgerow removal has resulted in some very large post-war fields south-east of Tur Langton. Settlement comprises generally small, linear and nucleated historic settlements which appear nestled into the landscape within trees. Farmsteads are rare, however there are a small number such as Bungalow Farm. Several villages are designated by conservation areas with clusters of listed buildings including at Tur Langton, Church Langton and East Langton. Traditional building materials include red brick, ironstone, thatch and exposed timber which create a strong local vernacular. They are linked by a network of rural lanes, with wide verges, hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Cattle grids add to the rural character of the lanes. Occasionally the planting is more formal with avenues of trees alongside roadside hedgerows. These lanes with strong rural character contrast

with the A6 and the Midland Mainline, which has prominent overhead line equipment add localised noise and movement. Time depth is provided through the historic villages, the presence of designated parkland at Langton Hall and the course of a Roman road along the boundary with LCT 3. South-west of Tur Langton time depth is particularly strong, due to the presence of two scheduled monuments – associated with medieval manorial earthworks and gardens, a 13th century chapel, as well as an undesignated moat. A limited network of PRoW, including a small part of the Leicestershire Round long-distance footpath, and the local cycle network provide access to the landscape, although this is particularly sparse in proximity to Shangton.

Perceptual Influences

Views are often long-distance across the rolling farmland, towards undeveloped, treed skylines, including towards woodland within LCT 3. Church spires, including at Tur Langton, and a windmill east of Kibworth Harcourt are distinctive landmark features. To the south, views into LCAs 5b, 5a and 7a are wide and open, with a sense of elevation over the neighbouring lower landform, including over Kibworth Harcourt and Kibworth Beauchamp which appear within trees nestled in the valley landform in LCA 5b. More modern infrastructure is generally limited to distant pylons on the horizon to both the north and south. The rolling arable fields provide a simple rural character. The sense of tranquillity and dark skies are generally moderate, although both are eroded in proximity to Kibworth Harcourt, the railway and the A6. Away from these urban elements birdsong and grasses are audible.

Landscape Character Type Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Gently undulating landform which provides interest and contrasting openness and enclosure within the landscape.
- Network of streams with riparian trees or wet woodland in gently sloping valleys which shape the landform and contribute towards ecological connectivity.
- Historic field patterns, including examples of ridge and furrow which provide a strong sense of time depth.
- Hedgerows, hedgerow trees, blocks of woodland, scattered village edge orchards, and isolated LWS including designations for grassland or lowland meadows which contribute to the ecological network.
- Sense of time depth associated with parkland (some designated as RPG) and scheduled monuments including deserted medieval settlements.
- Dispersed settlement pattern of villages which have historic cores marked by conservation areas.
- Network of winding rural lanes, including gated roads and cattle grids, linking villages and contributing to the generally strong rural character.
- Network of PRoW, NCN, local cycle routes and long-distance footpaths providing connectivity and access to the landscape.
- Generally strong rural character with strong sense of tranquillity and dark skies.
- Contrasting open views from elevated locations and enclosed, more intimate views within valleys.

Landscape Strategy

The strategy for the Rolling Tributary Farmland LCT is to conserve the strong rural character and sense of time depth, and enhance.

Guidance

Landscape Management

- Protect and manage the streams and watercourses for the benefit of flood alleviation and biodiversity.
- Manage the rivers and the adjacent land to ensure good water quality for the benefit of wildlife, addressing issues such as agricultural run-off.
- Ensure in-field ponds are retained for their biodiversity value and sense of time-depth they provide to the landscape.
- Protect, enhance and extend woodland, including wet woodlands, associated with streams and linear woodland along the dismantled railway, including through providing new habitats and strengthening hedgerows to enhance ecological connectivity between woodlands.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods, linking areas of woodland, riparian corridors and waterbodies and Sites designated for their natural value where possible to improve ecological connectivity.
- Identify, monitor and manage any effects of pests and diseases on trees and woodland. Replace trees lost with species appropriate to the site conditions and likely to withstand the effects of climate change in the future.
- When planting new trees, ensure they are resilient species, in appropriate locations and with adequate management and maintenance methods in place to ensure resilient and robust woodlands for the future.

- Protect and maintain valued semi-natural habitats, including mesotrophic grassland and lowland meadows. Manage scrub to protect the species rich grassland communities. Explore options to expand or create habitats and create/maintain linkages between habitats where feasible.
- Conserve traditional orchards for their historic and biodiversity value.
- Conserve and enhance hedgerows as an important habitat.
- Protect the rural pastoral character of the wooded farmland through continued livestock grazing and avoiding a spread of suburban influences which are experienced within the neighbouring LCT 4.
- Protect the historic field patterns, particularly where there are ridge and furrows. Protect and appropriately manage the cultural heritage features, such as scheduled monuments, conservation areas and RPGs, to preserve the sense of history.
- Promote further interpretation of the rich cultural associations and historic assets, such as deserted medieval settlements and parkland, where this would not be at odds with the conservation of these assets.
- Protect and manage the integrity of the designed parkland landscapes and their component heritage features, particularly those which are absent of extensive formal designation, and consider in potential future designations.
- Protect the relative tranquillity of the area which provides a respite from nearby urban areas.
- Promote, maintain and seek to link up existing rights of way.

Development Management

- Avoid locating development (including buildings, tall structures such as masts and pylons, and solar PV panels) in proximity to elevated valley tops and in locations where they can be viewed from higher land and would be visually prominent within the landscape, despite the presence

of existing precedent. Use existing hedgerows, trees and woodland to screen development.

- Ensure development is appropriate to the rural character of this landscape, particularly away from settlement and on more open and elevated landscapes. If located near to existing settlement, ensure that it is appropriate to the historic character and local vernacular.
- Avoid construction of large-scale buildings which will be widely prominent within the landscape (particularly those with a height above the tree-line).
- Plan for the improved integration of existing urban edges.
- Manage change arising from future development or farm diversification to ensure it can be accommodated without detriment to the valued attributes and sense of place.
- Conserve the pattern of small historic nucleated villages and retain separation between settlements.
- Retain the character of the rural lanes and gated roads to avoid an urbanising influence on the rural landscape.
- Retain the high levels of tranquillity within this LCT and screen any visual or audible effects of existing or new intrusive features where appropriate.
- Protect the unifying local vernacular of the area which includes ironstone, red brick, slate and thatch. New development or conversions should retain some local character by incorporating traditional building styles and materials where possible.
- Utilise trees and woodland to screen major transport routes to reduce their visual and audial impacts.
- Ensure any future development helps to preserve and improve the green infrastructure corridors formed by woodland and rivers, reinforcing positive connections between this area and neighbouring urban areas.

- Plan for increased enjoyment of the landscape through increased public access to landscape features such as the dismantled railway and parkland.
- Protect dark skies by preventing and positively reducing artificial light pollution.

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