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# **Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**

## **The sensitivity of areas of pressure**

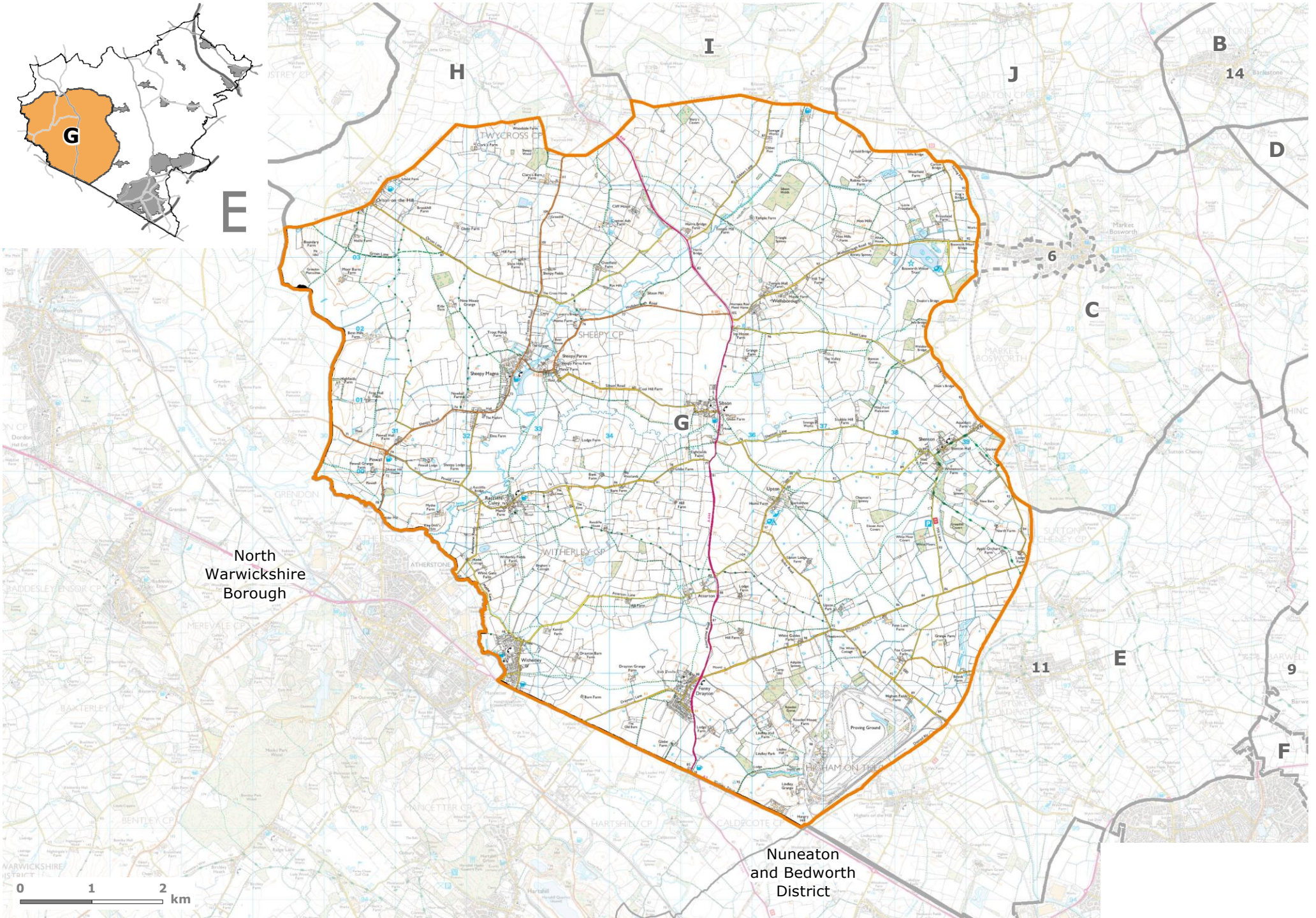
**Final Report**

**Prepared by LUC**

**September 2017**



**LCA G: Sence Lowlands**



# LCA G: SENCE LOWLANDS



## Location and Boundaries

- 5.115 This large character area comprises the flat, low lying land in the west of the borough. The character area is distinct from adjacent areas which rise to the north and east. The area forms the floodplain of the River Sence which runs roughly north south and joins the Anker Valley which lies beyond the borough boundary to the south of the character area.
- *Fenny Drayton*
  - *Ratcliffe Culey*
  - *Sheepy Magna*
  - *Sheepy Parva*
  - *Shenton*
  - *Sibson*
- 5.116 Villages within the character area:
- *Witherley.*

## Key Characteristics

- 1) **Flat to gently rolling lowland vale landscape with rounded clay ridges and shallow valleys giving rise to extensive and open views.**
- 2) **Presence of surface water in rivers and streams (including the River Sence) and frequent streams, field ponds and ditches as well as the visitor attractions of the Ashby Canal, Bosworth Water Park and Marina.**
- 3) **Well-ordered agricultural landscape with a regular pattern of rectilinear fields of typical Parliamentary enclosure lined by low hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees.**
- 4) **A network of rural roads and lanes are lined by ditches and wide grass verges, with the main A444 running north south through the area.**
- 5) **A rural and tranquil character.**
- 6) **Spired and towered churches form prominent landmarks in the open landscape.**
- 7) **A rural dispersed settlement pattern of linear villages, scattered farmsteads and barns.**
- 8) **Small villages with strong sense of place and local vernacular of red brick.**
- 9) **Bosworth Battlefield has strong heritage associations.**



**Landscape Character**

- 5.117 Triassic Mercia Mudstone underlies this area and gives rise to productive clay soils. This is overlaid by patches of fluvioglacial outwash deposits, particularly in the east of the area, evidence of the ice sheets, glacial rivers and lakes that deposited till, sediments (clays), sands and gravels. These areas have poorer drainage and prone to seasonal waterlogging. The topography is gently rolling, although the clay ridges and shallow valleys become virtually flat around the River Sence.
- 5.118 Water is an important feature of the landscape, with the River Sence and its tributary creating wide, flat valleys. Surface water is a common feature in the form of frequent streams and ditches and numerous small ponds which are a distinctive feature. The area around Fen Lane in the south-east of the area is known for locally flooding. The Ashby Canal follows the eastern boundary, providing a valuable recreational resource.
- 5.119 Land use is mostly agriculture. Medium to large sized rectilinear arable and pasture fields with low hedgerows and scattered hedgerow trees testify to the late 18th and 19th century planned enclosure typical of the Midlands. Areas of more irregular field boundaries with more substantial hedgerow trees (piecemeal enclosure) relate to earlier agricultural enclosure of medieval fields, such as between Ratcliffe Culey, Sibson and Atterton. These add variety to the landscape pattern. Features such as trees, hedgerows and buildings add a sense of human scale.
- 5.120 Woodland is sparse and tree cover is generally confined to copses and spinneys on the clay ridges and occasional groups of trees on stream sides. Where woodlands are present they are mainly deciduous; hedgerow trees are often ash and oak.
- 5.121 7KH DUHD LV VWURQJ UXUDO DQG VSDUVHO\ SRSXODWHG ZLWK D VHQVH RI UHPRWHQHVV DZD\ IURP WKH PDLQ URDGV DQG WRZQV. \$ ODFN RI ERWK GHYHORSHPHQW DQG street lighting results in dark night skies except for the area around the A5, Mira, Atherstone and Sheepy Magna. Areas of darkest night skies are in the north-east and east of the area. Roads are rural and characteristically straight with wide verges and ditches.
- 5.122 The Ashby canal is popular with walkers and anglers. Views are generally wide open, across agricultural fields, and buildings such as farms and farm houses are usually extensively visible. The area forms part of views from surrounding higher ground, and from outside the character area e.g. in views south from Twycross Zoo. Church spires and towers form local landmarks, and in the south-west of the area the backdrop of the hills to the west at Oldbury and Hartshill create an important sense of place.
- 5.123 A rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, hamlets and linear villages dispersed across the landscape. Villages are located on the crests of low ridges and remain small. Typically developed from agricultural origins, traditional villages are dominated by a church and large manor house, terraced farm workers cottages further away and farms at the edges, with post-war development beyond. Red brick buildings are prominent landscape features, and occasional timber-framed buildings create local interest. Mira Technology Park in the south east of the area is well-screened by surrounding vegetation.
- 5.124 **Shenton** is a Conservation Area, and has a distinctive agricultural estate character. The river and canal are important features of the landscape setting. Shenton Hall is Grade II\* listed.
- 5.125 **Sibson** is a historic agricultural settlement. Vernacular materials include red brickwork, clay roof tiles and 'eyebrow' dormer windows with gable roofs. It is designated a Conservation Area.
- 5.126 **Witherley** has undergone expansion although the historic core remains and is a Conservation Area.



The spire of St Peter's Church is a local landmark in the countryside around.

5.127 **Fenny Drayton** has grown from an historic village. The built character remains small scale with properties fronting directly onto the roadside.

5.128 **Ratcliffe Culey** is a small village situated on slightly higher ground. It is an historic village with modern development on the outskirts.

5.129 **Sheepy Magna and Sheepy Parva** have grown from historic villages straddling the River Sence. 'Sheepy' derives from the old English meaning *'island or dry ground in the marsh where the sheep graze'*.



### Historical and Cultural Influences

- 5.130 Part of the nationally important Bosworth Battlefield lies within the character area. It is of historic importance as the site of the iconic Battle of Bosworth in 1485 which brought the Tudor dynasty to the throne and saw the last death of an English king in battle. The battlefield remains largely undeveloped and allows understanding of the battle to be appreciated.
- 5.131 Listed buildings including timber framed medieval cottages and late 18<sup>th</sup> century brick farmhouses are distinctive features. Remnants of former parklands at Shenton and Lindley are present in estate character buildings. Evidence of ridge and furrow – a surviving feature of early medieval farming is sometimes visible in pasture fields that have been undisturbed by modern machinery.
- 5.132 A number of Scheduled Monuments indicate nationally important historic features including earthworks near Fenny Drayton, medieval moat and fishponds at Ratcliffe Culey and moated grange near Pinwall, with historic connections to the nearby Merevale Abbey in Warwickshire. A large number of Roman features survive in the landscape around the buried remains of a Roman villa and settlement complex (Manduessedum) adjacent to Witherley and Watling Street Roman Road, extending outside of the borough at Mancetter.
- 5.133 The Ordnance Survey has defined Lindley Hall Farm on the outskirts of Fenny Drayton as the geographical centre of England.

- 5.134 The Ashby Canal, built to connect the coal mining areas north of the borough with the Coventry Canal, is designated a Conservation Area and a reminder of the industrial heritage of the area. It opened in 1798, operating between Ashby Wolds and Market Bosworth, and was linked to the Coventry Canal a few years later.

### Natural Influences

- 5.135 The numerous small field ponds, rivers, streams, and riparian trees and vegetation alongside them, provide valuable semi-natural habitats, including the Ashby Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The diversity of aquatic plants and invertebrates makes this one of the most important water bodies of its type in the East Midlands. Nationally important species include water vole and otter.
- 5.136 Part of the River Sence is a Local Wildlife Site, supporting internationally rare species, including white-clawed crayfish, spined loach and bullhead fish.
- 5.137 There are some excellent examples of neutral grassland e.g. the hay meadows at Sheepy Fields (at The Cross Hands) and Kendall's Meadow (near Dadlington House Farm), both SSSIs. Grass verges are important habitats and some of these are designated Local Wildlife Sites.

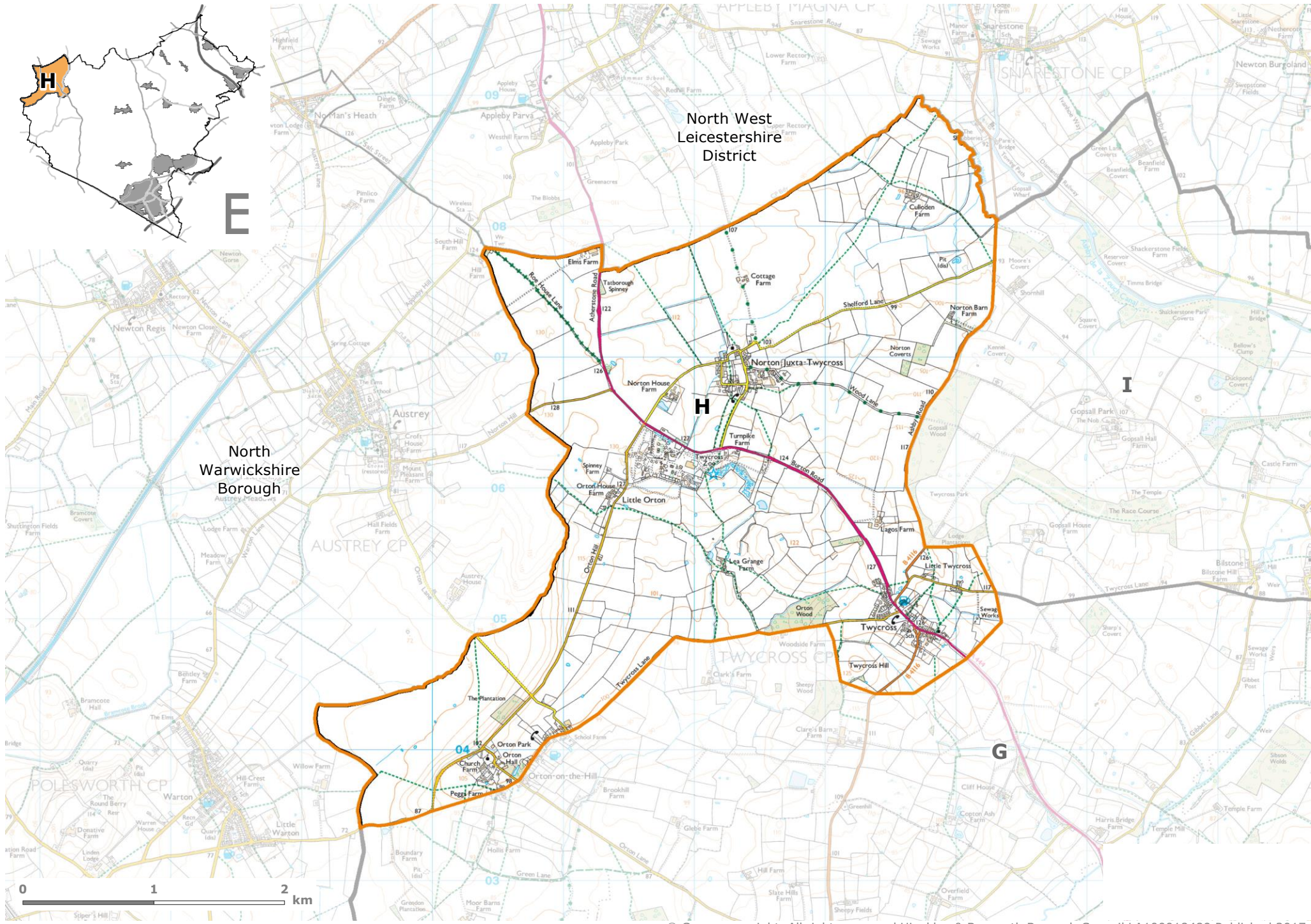
### Key Sensitivities and Values

- 1) Rural character with a lack of significant intrusions or light pollution resulting in a sense of 'remoteness' and tranquility.
- 2) Dispersed settlement pattern of small historic villages with a strong sense of local distinctiveness and attractive local vernacular of red brick and historic buildings.
- 3) Recreational value of the area for walking and cycling, as well as local visitor attractions of Bosworth Water Park and Ashby Canal.
- 4) The Ashby Canal is a valued landscape asset, particularly as a recreation and biodiversity resource as well as a reminder of the area's industrial heritage.
- 5) Biodiversity value of the grass verges and species-rich grassland which is important in this area which is increasingly dominated by agricultural intensification.
- 6) The relatively intact field boundary pattern, areas of remnant ridge and furrow and medieval field pattern and the hedgerows with hedgerow trees which add texture and interest to the landscape.
- 7) Church spires and towers which form distinctive landmarks in a rural setting, and are prominent in extensive views across the landscape.
- 8) Historic value associated with the combination of significant historic features, most notably the nationally important Bosworth Battlefield and Roman settlement of Manduessedum, as well as industrial heritage associated with the Canal, and numerous historic buildings.

### Landscape Strategies

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Retain hedgerows and replace hedgerow trees to ensure continuation when they reach the end of their life. Encourage the use of traditional 'Midlands-style' hedgelaying.</li> <li>2) Conserve the open rural views including views to church spires and towers in their rural setting.</li> <li>3) Retain areas of tranquillity and rural character, ensuring that development in such areas respects the rural context.</li> <li>4) Promote recreational and cultural opportunities associated with the battlefield.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5) Conserve the areas of semi natural neutral grassland and seek opportunities to extend and link this habitat. Retain the wide grass verges for biodiversity and enhance species diversity within them where possible.</li> <li>6) Respect and enhance the strong character of the villages, ensuring new development complements existing context with regards to scale, form, materials and boundary features.</li> <li>7) Maintain and enhance the recreational assets including rights of way network and canal. Maintain positive management of the Ashby Canal and seek opportunities to extend and enhance areas of wetland habitat.</li> </ol> |
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LCA H: Twycross Open Farmland





# LCA H: TWYXCROSS OPEN FARMLAND



## Location and Boundaries

5.138 A relatively small character area in the north western part of the Borough. It comprises the slightly elevated farmland which rises above the surrounding lowland of LCA G: Sence Valley Lowland, to the south and contrasts with the more wooded parkland landscape of LCA I: Gopsall Parkland to the east. There are extensive views out to the vale/ lowland landscapes to the north

and west and, reputedly encompassing four counties.

5.139 Villages within the character area:

- *Norton Juxta Twycross*
- *Twycross*
- *Orton on the Hill*

## Key Characteristics

- 1) **Elevated plateau farmland which rises above surrounding lowland vales.**
- 2) **Distant panoramic views over the surrounding lowland landscape.**
- 3) **A generally open landscape but with mature trees surrounding the small settlements.**
- 4) **Occasional areas of deciduous woodland, some of which are ancient such as Orton Wood providing visual and historic interest and valuable habitats.**
- 5) **Hedgerows, scattered hedgerow trees and ditches line field boundaries and rural lanes.**
- 6) **Rural, 'remote' character away from the main A444 road which cuts across the character area.**
- 7) **A rural dispersed settlement pattern of nucleated hilltop villages, isolated farmsteads and barns.**
- 8) **Traditional small villages at Norton Juxta Twycross, Twycross, Little Orton and Orton on the Hill, with historic origins and distinctive red brick vernacular.**
- 9) **Small pasture fields surround farmsteads and settlements, with their continuous hedgerows reinforcing the rural character of the villages.**
- 10) **Twycross Zoo is an important visitor attraction.**



### Landscape Character

- 5.140 Triassic Mercia Mudstones underlie this area, with deposits of glacial till and fluvioglacial deposits on the broad ridgeline extending from Twycross to Little Orton on the A444. Soils are productive clay and fine loamy which support arable agriculture in large fields on the ridgetop.
- 5.141 The elevated landscape of the character area contrasts markedly with the flat lowland of the surrounding landscape (the Sence Lowlands to the south and the broad vale to the north in North West Leicestershire). The upper course of the River Mease springs from the north-eastern part of the area, continuing north outside the borough into the North West Leicestershire vale.
- 5.142 Land use is predominantly agricultural fields of a mixture of arable and pasture. Field sizes are medium to large, with some very large arable fields on the lower ground to the north and south-west. Smaller pasture fields surrounding farmsteads and settlements provide important visual interest, as do hedgerows and hedgerow trees bordering roads and field boundaries.
- 5.143 Trees and vegetation surrounding settlements and farmsteads help to visually integrate built form into the landscape and give a feeling of enclosure within the villages such as Orton on the Hill. Occasional woodland blocks (e.g. 'The Plantations' near Orton on the Hill) and remnant hedgerow trees form features in distant views.
- 5.144 Overall this is a relatively large scale, open plateau-like landscape with extensive, distant and at times dramatic, panoramic views giving a feeling of exposure and vastness. Extensive views to the north across the vale landscape are particularly notable from many locations including Orton Hill, the A444 and near Norton Juxta-
- Twycross. Views to the south include the wide vista from Twycross Zoo.
- 5.145 Existing development is limited to small villages and Twycross Zoo, and the area feels rural and 'remote' despite the presence of the main A444 road introducing noise and movement locally. A lack of both development and street lighting results in extensively dark and very dark skies across the area except for the area around Twycross Zoo and Twycross. Roads (except the A444) are rural with wide verges, ditches and hedges alongside. A good network of public footpaths allow access across the landscape. Twycross Zoo is an important visitor attraction.
- 5.146 Villages developed from agricultural origins. They are small scale and attractive with a variety of materials, trees and open spaces providing a sense of texture and visual interest. Building materials include brick, timber, clay tiles and stone churches – of which the spires and towers create local landmarks. Farms and former farm buildings are also important features of the landscape, some of which are listed.
- 5.147 **Norton Juxta Twycross** is an historic village with a Grade II\* listed church.
- 5.148 **Twycross** village was once part of the nearby Gopsall Estate. It is designated a Conservation Area and has a number of listed buildings including medieval Grade I listed church with distinctive tower.
- 5.149 **Orton on the Hill** is situated on the top of a high ridge. Its medieval Grade I listed church spire is distinctive in views from the approach along Orton Lane to the east. It is a designated Conservation Area.



### Historical and Cultural Influences

- 5.150 A moated site and fishponds in Twycross Conservation Area is designated a Scheduled Monument.
- 5.151 Twycross was a Gopsall estate village and there are a number of surviving vernacular estate cottages characterised by two storey, simple plan forms with steeply pitched roofs and details such as hood mouldings and eyebrow dormer windows. The church in Twycross contains stained glass dating from about 1145 which was brought to England from Paris.
- 5.152 Norton is believed to be derived from North Tun, Tun being the Anglo-Saxon for settlement.
- 5.153 Orton on the Hill has a long history. The first Orton Hall is thought to have been built around 1115 and at some period is thought to have belonged to the Knights Templar. The Manor, consisting of the Hall, the church, the village and much of the surrounding land was given to Merivale Abbey in 1148. The Cistercian monks organised the land into a number of granges which included Le

Grange, now Lea Grange, Pinwall, Newhouse and Moor, now Moorbarne. Today they are outlying farms encircling Orton and the wider area.

- 5.154 The Historic Landscape Characterisation notes an area of small assarts between Orton Wood and Twycross Zoo, potentially reflecting medieval woodland clearance. Likely to be associated with the ancient woodland at Orton Wood, this is a feature of local interest.

### Natural Influences

- 5.155 Orton Wood is an ancient semi-natural woodland. Other blocks of deciduous woodland in the area include the Norton Coverts and woodland at Orton on the Hill, and provide important nature conservation interest.
- 5.156 Hedgerows at Twycross Zoo are designated a Local Wildlife Site.
- 5.157 Deciduous woodland such as The Plantations, Norton Coverts and on the edges of villages provides valuable habitats.



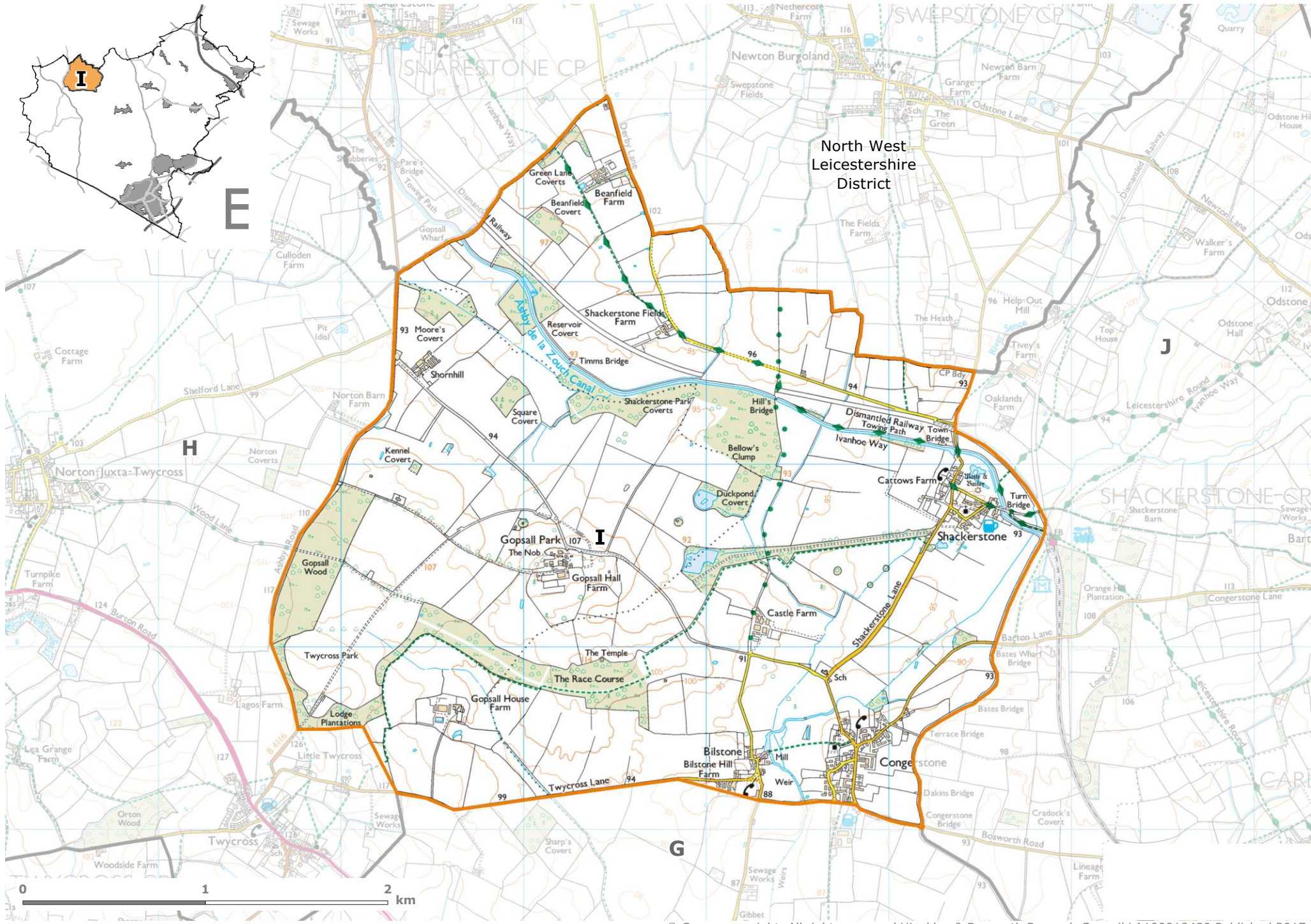
### Key Sensitivities and Values

- 1) Areas of smaller fields, surrounding farmsteads and settlements provide valuable visual interest, as do areas of potential medieval assarts around Orton Wood.
- 2) Hedgerows, hedgerow trees bordering field boundaries, roadsides and mature trees around settlements help to integrate buildings into the landscape, providing biodiversity and visual interest.
- 3) Ancient woodland at Orton Wood and the wider network of trees and hedgerows around it provide visual interest and a sense of history, as well as other deciduous woodland such as The Plantations and Norton Coverts which provide valuable habitats.
- 4) The rural and remote character of the area and limited development which results in dark night skies across much of the area.
- 5) Distinctive rural character of the villages with strong local vernacular.
- 6) Church spires and towers which form distinctive landmarks in a rural setting, and are prominent in extensive views across the landscape.
- 7) The extensive, distant views across the open rural landscape means that any change/development has the potential to be widely visible from this area and views from surrounding counties.

### Landscape Strategies

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Retain hedgerows and replace hedgerow trees to ensure they are replaced when they reach the end of their life.</li> <li>2) Encourage the use of traditional 'Midlands-style' hedgelaying to manage hedgerows, improving their structure and biodiversity value and strengthening landscape character.</li> <li>3) Retain this area of remoteness, rural character and dark night skies, ensuring that development respects the rural context.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4) Conserve field patterns of historic or visual interest such as the potential medieval assarts around Orton Wood ancient woodland.</li> <li>5) Respect and enhance the strong character of the villages, ensuring new development complements existing context with regards to scale, form, materials and boundary features.</li> </ol> |
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# LCA I: Gopsall Parkland



# LCA I: GOPSALL PARKLAND



## Location and Boundaries

- .1 The small Gopsall Parkland character area is located in the north-west of the borough, between the area which rises to form LCA H: Twycross Open Farmland to the west and LCA J: Barton Village Farmlands to the east, and north of LCA C: Bosworth Parkland. It is characterised by its
- estate landscape with a greater extent of woodland cover compared to surrounding areas.
- .159 Villages within the character area:
- *Shackerstone*
  - *Congerstone*

## Key Characteristics

- 1) **Flat to gently undulating farmland/estate land including former parkland landscape.**
- 2) **Large blocks and belts of woodland, smaller coverts and mature specimen trees associated with the parkland, plus mixed hedgerows create a wooded, enclosed character.**
- 3) **A rural and peaceful character with development limited to scattered farm buildings and the small historic settlements of Bilstone, Congerstone and Shackerstone are well-integrated into the landscape by vegetation and the small scale of buildings.**
- 4) **The estate farmland is managed through a number of large farms**
- 5) **Historic hamlets and villages with attractive red brick buildings, estate cottages and stone churches, have a strong relationship with the surrounding agricultural landscape.**
- 6) **Ashby Canal, built to link the coalfield to the north to the Coventry Canal, cuts across the northern part of the Estate.**
- 7) **Few roads cross the estate, although it is accessible via public rights of way including the Ivanhoe Way.**
- 8) **Former historic parkland of Gopsall, a grand Georgian house with cultural associations to the composer Handel, now demolished.**



**Landscape Character**

- .160 Landform across the character area is relatively low lying and flat to gently undulating and with occasional hills around Gopsall Hall Farm and Twycross Park in the west of the area. It forms part of the Sence river valley, which flows through the eastern part of the character area. The underlying bedrock consists of Mercia mudstone, overlaid by clays, with patches of sand and gravel on the higher ground, and alluvium along the watercourses. The soils in the area are typical of a river valley landscape, and include stoneless clayey soils and deep permeable coarse loamy soils, variably affected by groundwater. These are mixed with the reddish fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils with slowly permeable sub soils, prone to seasonal waterlogging.
- .161 This is a medium scale landscape, with a pattern of regular similar sized medium fields subdivided by hedgerows and hedgerow trees, plus large enclosing belts and blocks of woodland as well as regularly spaced avenue trees along roads.
- .16 The area is characterised by features associated with the former parkland including mature specimen trees and significant areas of woodland. The estate farmland is managed as pasture, with small sections of estate fencing boundaries, although there are also large areas of barbed wire fencing. The ruins of the Handel temple are one of the few surviving elements, and stand on a low wooded ridge on the north edge of the Race Course wood, and is publicly accessible via a footpath from Shackerstone.
- .16 This is a rural and tranquil landscape, with limited accessibility other than rights of way through the parkland and connections to the Ashby Canal. There are few roads, with only minor roads and lanes connecting local villages contributing to the sense of 'remoteness'. Roads are lined by hedges, ditches and narrow grass verges. The lack of street lighting, modern development and few intrusions gives rise to dark night skies across the whole of the area, with the exception of the larger village of Congerstone in the south-east.
- .164 The Ashby Canal is a notable feature in the north of the area. It has visual charm, meandering peacefully through the quiet pastoral landscape and provides a valuable recreational facility, used for boating, fishing and walking along the towing path, part of which is the Ivanhoe Way.
- .16 The gentle undulations allow for expansive views, with vistas created between areas of mature trees and woodland.
- .166 The small settlements of Shackerstone, Congerstone and Bilstone are estate villages closely associated with the Gopsall Estate. The villages have loose-knit forms and an open character which provide a strong relationship with the surrounding countryside. Surviving farm buildings and estate-style cottages have a sense of unity in form and materials. Local vernacular details includes the use of red brick, clay tile and slate roofs, brick boundary walls and the use of eyebrow dormer windows. Outside the villages are large farms associated with the Estate (e.g. Gopsall Hall Farm and Gopsall House Farm) and smaller scattered farmsteads.
- .167 **Shackerstone:** Shackerstone is a Conservation Area. The Turn Bridges over the Ashby Canal form entrances to the village and provide exceptional views of the church, (a local landmark), and the surrounding countryside.
- .168 **Congerstone:** Congerstone is a Conservation Area and a small former farming settlement associated with the Gopsall Estate.



**Historical and Cultural Influences**

- .169 Gopsall Hall was a grand Georgian house built in 1750 by Charles Jennens, although there had been a manor at Gopsall since the Norman Conquest. The surrounding park covered almost 1000 acres and featured two lakes, a walled garden, a Chinese boathouse and the famous Handel Temple. During the Second World War the house was used as a military base; it was abandoned and most of the buildings demolished in 1951. All that remains today apart from the bare outline of the former parkland and avenues of trees are sections of the walled garden, an underground reservoir, the gatehouse at Shackerstone and the ruins of the Handel Temple. Gopsall Park Farm was built over most of the original site.
- .170 The Gopsall estate contained a number of notable artworks by artists including Van Dyke, Poussin and Rembrandt.
- .171 Handel was a frequent visitor to Gopsall and it is said that he composed some of 'The Messiah' in the temple. The ruins of the Handel Temple (now Grade II listed) are publicly accessible via a footpath from Shackerstone.
- .17 The Ashby Canal, built to connect the coal mining areas north of the borough with the Coventry Canal, is designated a Conservation Area and a reminder of the industrial heritage of the area. It opened in 1798, operating between Ashby Wolds and Market Bosworth, and was linked to the Coventry Canal a few years later.
- .17 The Battlefield Line is the last remaining part of the former Ashby and Nuneaton Joint Railway which was opened in 1873 and runs between Shackerstone, Market Bosworth and Shenton. Shackerstone Station is the headquarters of the railway and is also part of the Ashby Canal Conservation Area.
- .174 A motte and associated earthworks (Scheduled Monument) is a feature of the landscape near Shackerstone.

**Natural Influences**

- .17 The section of the Ashby Canal that crosses through the character area has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and provides a valuable semi-natural habitat. The diversity of aquatic plants and invertebrates makes this one of the most important water bodies of its type in the East Midlands. Nationally important species include water vole and otter. The River Sence is designated a Local Wildlife Site.
- .176 Gopsall Wood is ancient woodland and elsewhere within the character area large areas of deciduous woodland, copses and trees are important features for biodiversity locally.



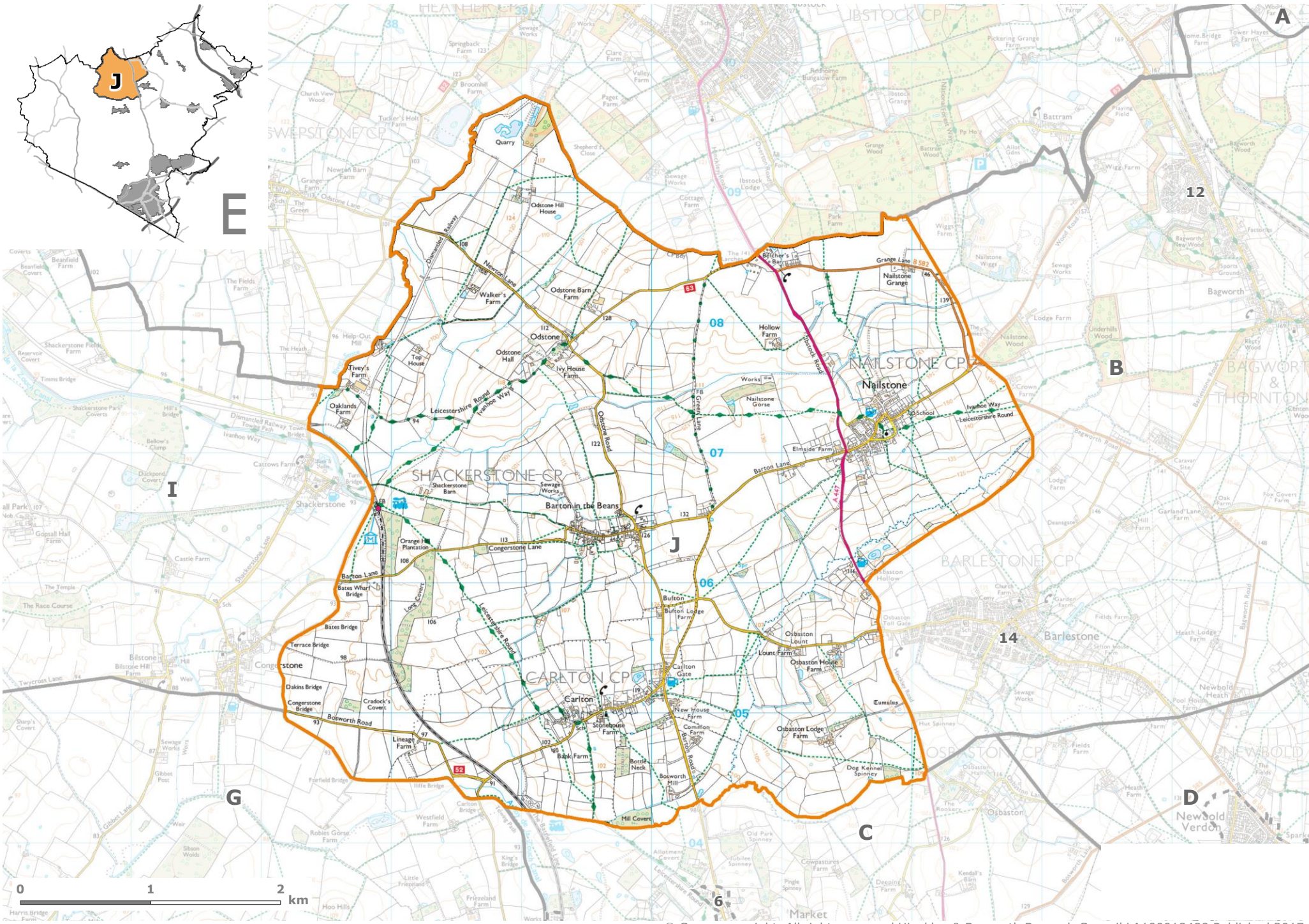
**Key Sensitivities and Values**

- 1) The surviving parkland features which are reminders of the former Gopsall estate provide local identity and history although the parkland character is fragmented. Mature parkland trees and avenues are distinctive features. Associations with Handel the composer are valued.
- 2) Rural character with a lack of intrusions and extensive dark night skies resulting in a sense of 'remoteness' and tranquility. The rural settlement pattern of small linear villages and scattered farmsteads provide continuity with their agricultural origins.
- 3) Mature trees, ancient woodland and hedgerows are an important habitat for many species including bats and birds and provide landscape structure.
- 4) The Ashby Canal is a valued landscape asset, particularly as a recreation and biodiversity resource as well as a reminder of the areas industrial heritage.
- 5) Recreational value of the Ashby Canal, also a visitor destination. The Battlefield Line Railway and Shackerstone train station provide educational, cultural and historic interest, as well as a tourist attraction.
- 6) Intact estate character of the villages which are valued for their vernacular architecture including buildings of local historic interest associated with the Gopsall estate. The rural setting of the villages is sensitive to change as a result of development.
- 7) Views of church spires and towers which form distinctive landmarks in a rural setting.

**Landscape Strategies**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Encourage the use of traditional 'Midlands-style' hedgelaying to manage hedgerows, improving their structure and biodiversity value and strengthening landscape character.</li> <li>2) Conserve areas of rural character, tranquillity and dark night skies.</li> <li>3) Respect and enhance the strong character of the villages, ensuring new development complements existing context with regards to scale, form, materials and boundary features.</li> <li>4) Maintain and enhance the recreational assets including rights of way network and canal. Maintain positive management of the Ashby</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5) Canal and seek opportunities to extend and enhance areas of wetland habitat.</li> <li>6) Protect and enhance views to key landmarks such as churches and buildings.</li> <li>7) Opportunity for future restoration and reinforcement of the parkland landscape</li> <li>8) Promote the cultural associations with Handel and the Gopsall estate for example through promoted walks and in combination with landscape restoration.</li> <li>9) Retain existing woodland and promote further woodland planting to reinforce the historic pattern.</li> </ul> |
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# LCA J: Barton Village Farmlands



# LCA J: BARTON VILLAGE FARMLANDS



## Location and Boundaries

- .177 This character area is located centrally in the north of the Borough to the east of the more wooded landscape of Gopsall Parkland and slightly elevated above Bosworth Parkland to the south. The western boundary is formed by the Ashby Canal and the eastern boundary by the A447 and B582 which mark a transition to higher ground of the Charnwood Fringe Hills to the east.
- .178 The northern part of this area lies within the National Forest which extends north into North West Leicestershire district.
- .179 Villages within the character area:
- *Nailstone*
  - *Barton in the Beans*
  - *Carlton*
  - *Odstone*

## Key Characteristics

- 1) **Undulating landform which rises to the east.**
- 2) **Mix of arable and pasture farmland.**
- 3) **Vegetated character as a result of individual trees, small copses and scattered trees within mixed hedgerows.**
- 4) **Regular pattern of medium sized fields which are smaller around settlements, including potential areas of ridge and furrow.**
- 5) **Rural, tranquil character with areas of little light pollution.**
- 6) **Few main roads with rural lanes lined by ditches, hedgerows and grass verges with little or no street lighting.**
- 7) **Small linear hilltop villages of Carlton, Barton in the Beans, Odstone and Nailstone which are well-integrated into the landscape and surrounded by vegetation creating an overall harmonious landscape pattern.**
- 8) **The church spire of Nailstone church which is a distinctive landmark on a wooded horizon.**
- 9) **Long distance footpaths and public rights of way pass through the area providing recreational amenity.**
- 10) **Visitor attractions including the Battlefield Line and Ashby Canal enable appreciation of the landscape and provide evidence of the history of the area.**



### Landscape Character

- .180 The Triassic Mercia Mudstone is overlain with superficial glacial deposits of till and areas of sand and gravel on the higher ground, and alluvium along the Sence and its tributary streams. Soils consist of reddish, fine loamy or fine silty, clayey soils which are prone to seasonal waterlogging. The villages and the better quality agricultural land are located on the areas of higher ground. The upper reaches of the River Sence and its tributaries flow south-westwards through the character area within gently sloping valleys, creating an appearance of an overall gently undulating landscape which becomes more rolling as the land rises to the east towards the Charnwood Fringe.
- .181 Land use is predominantly mixed farmland, mainly arable with some pasture, and occasional woodland and copses subdividing fields. Field sizes are medium to small and generally form a regular pattern. This in combination with frequent mature vegetation creates a sense of enclosure and a regular yet fairly complex landscape framework. Open views are possible although visibility can be limited by woodland and undulating landform. Trees are generally found in copses or small blocks of woodland but are also frequent within hedgerows or along roadsides, increasing the impression of general tree cover.
- .18 This is a quiet, rural landscape with few modern intrusions. The main traffic route is the A447, but the majority of routes which cross the area are minor roads, lined by hedges, ditches and grass verges. The lack of major roads and settlements results in overall sense of tranquillity and there are large areas with little light pollution, particularly in the west of the area between Barton in the Beans and Shackerstone.
- .183 The area is well served by a network of public footpaths and bridleways (e.g. Green Lane) connecting to the Leicestershire Round and Ivanhoe Way. The National Forest stretches into the northern part of the area and provides a wider recreational resource. The Ashby Canal provides a valuable recreational resource, popular with walkers and anglers, and the Battlefield Line also crosses through the area with a station at Shackerstone (within the adjacent LCA I: Gopsall Parkland), and is a popular visitor attraction.
- .184 Churches are key landmarks, often extensively visible in views across the rural landscape. The church spire in Nailstone on the highest ground is a particularly distinctive landmark, as well as the brick church tower in Carlton. There are extensive views in all directions from the higher ground in the north-east of the character area near Belcher's Bar, including north to Ibstock and south-west towards Odstone.
- .18 Settlement comprises linear hilltop villages and dispersed farms or barns; clusters of red brick buildings surrounded by trees and vegetation on higher ground overlooking open fields are characteristic features. Farmhouses and farmstead layouts demonstrate the agricultural origins of the villages.
- .186 **Nailstone** is a former Gopsall estate village which retains a historic street pattern and strong sense of local identity related to the estate and village community which can still be seen in the historic buildings, green space and rich townscape features such as characteristic eyebrow dormer windows. Despite housing mine-workers for the nearby mine in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, it has retained a rural character and relationship to its agricultural origins with many surviving historic farmhouses and traditional farmhouse layouts. It is also a designated Conservation Area.
- .187 **Carlton:** Carlton is a linear village with estate character red brick buildings.
- .188 **Barton-in-the-Beans:** is a hamlet with a vernacular of red brick buildings and low brick walls.
- .189 **Odstone:** is a rural hamlet centred around a hilltop crossroads. Odstone Hall is set within mature trees and is largely hidden from view.



### Historical and Cultural Influences

- .190 Historic patterns of piecemeal enclosure are evident in the smaller field patterns surrounding settlements, most notably Carlton, Barton in the Beans and Nailstone. These intact areas of late 16th and early 17th century field systems provide historical time depth and visual interest. Pastoral fields undisturbed by modern machinery also potentially have remnant medieval patterns of ridge and furrow.
- .191 The Ashby Canal, built to connect the coal mining areas north of the borough with the Coventry Canal, is designated a Conservation Area and a reminder of the industrial heritage of the area. It opened in 1798, operating between Ashby Wolds and Market Bosworth, and was linked to the Coventry Canal a few years later. Nailstone became part of the Gopsall Hall estate which was constructed around 1750, with the estate funding the construction of many properties in the village. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century coal mining was a principle source of employment in Nailstone and its surroundings. However, the village appears relatively untouched by the effects of the coal mining industry whilst the agricultural legacy is still highly evident in the form of estate buildings.
- .19 The Battlefield Line crosses through the western part of the character area and is the last remaining part of the former Ashby and Nuneaton Joint Railway. It was opened in 1873 and runs between Shackerstone, Market Bosworth and Shenton.
- .19 The Baptist Chapel in Barton in the Beans is one of the many listed buildings within the character area. It is Grade II listed of red and yellow brick chequer with slate roof. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Barton in the Beans was an important centre for the Baptist church and the minister at Barton was the notable clockmaker Samuel Deacon.

### Natural Influences

- .194 The Ashby Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) provides a valuable semi-natural habitat.

The diversity of aquatic plants and invertebrates makes this one of the most important water bodies of its type in the East Midlands. Nationally important species include water vole and otter.

- .19 A few small Local Wildlife Sites are present including a stream and pond at Spinney Grange, Carlton and Nailstone Pond. Other watercourses such as the upper part of the River Sence and its tributary streams, provide riparian habitats.
- .196 Scattered woodlands, copses, trees and hedgerows provide further habitat diversity.

### Key Sensitivities and Values

- 1) The small to medium size of the landscape pattern and remnant fields with ridge and furrow evident are likely to be sensitive to larger scale developments and removal of hedgerows.
- 2) The rural, tranquil character of the landscape and settlements, and lack of light pollution across the west of the area.
- 3) The Ashby Canal is a valued landscape asset, particularly as a recreation and biodiversity resource as well as a reminder of the areas industrial heritage
- 4) The historic character as a result of the settlement pattern of dispersed, small, nucleated villages on low ridges constructed in characteristic red brick with slate or clay tile roofs.
- 5) The scattered woodlands, copses, trees and hedges which increase biodiversity and visual amenity value across the character area.
- 6) Rural agricultural setting to villages and the extensive rural views from them.
- 7) Church spires such as All Saints Church, Nailstone, and church towers form distinctive landmarks, and extensive views of them in a rural setting.

### Landscape Strategies

- 1) Support the vision of the National Forest Strategy – to unify the forest area by planting native and mixed-species woodland to link to Charnwood National Character Area – as well as for areas beyond the National Forest boundary, encouraging connecting and enhancing habitats such as hedgerows, tree planting, farm woodlands and lowland meadows.
- 2) Respect and enhance the strong character of the villages, ensuring new development complements existing context with regards to scale, form, materials and boundary features.
- 3) Maintain rural views including to church spires and towers and the rural setting.
- 4) Maintain and enhance the recreational assets including rights of way network and canal. Maintain positive management of the Ashby Canal and seek opportunities to extend and enhance areas of wetland habitat. Conserve the enclosed small-scale field pattern by protecting and enhancing the hedgerow network and hedgerow trees and conserve extant areas of ridge and furrow.

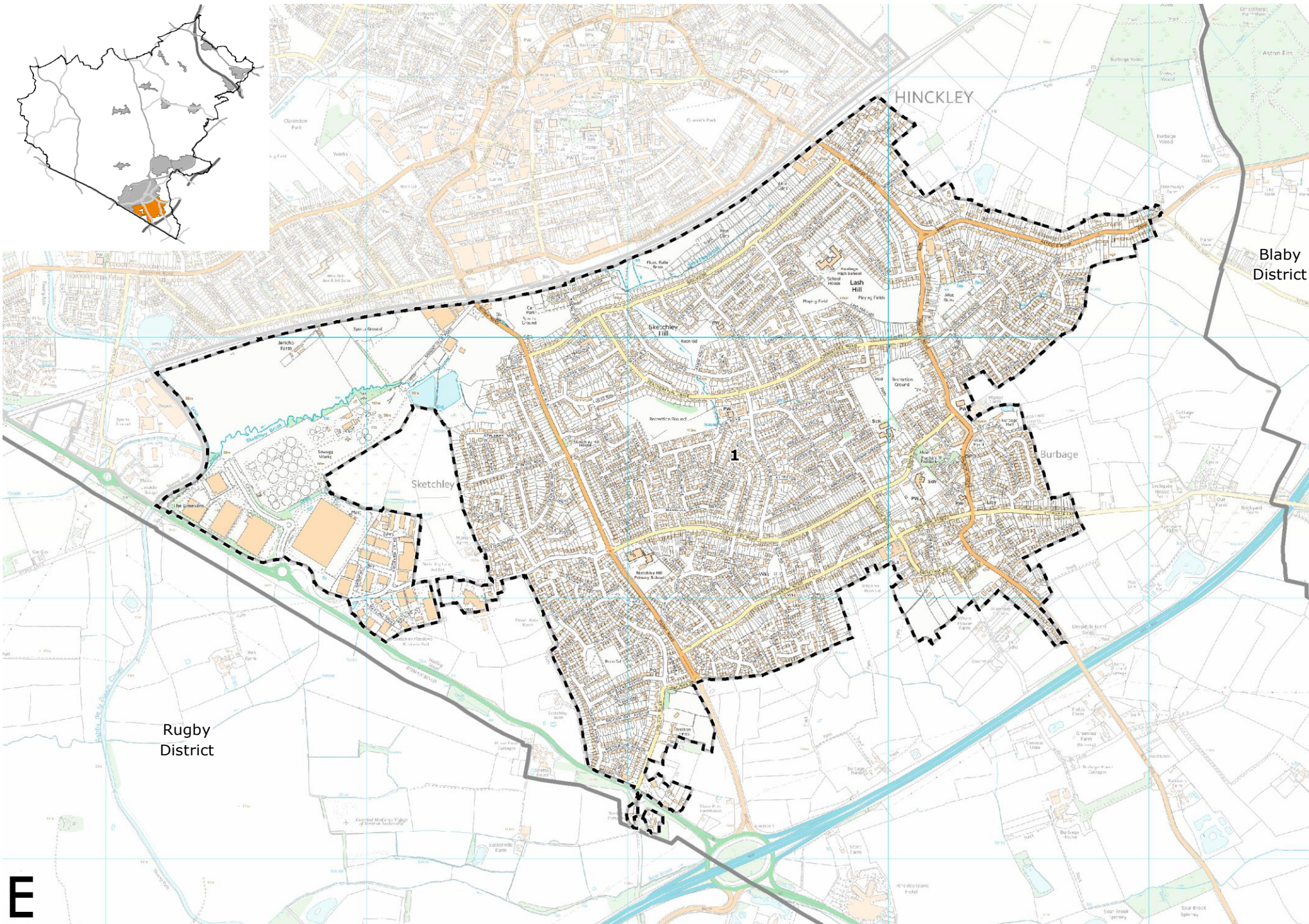
## **6) URBAN CHARACTER AREA ASSESSMENTS**

6.1 This section describes the urban and townscape character of the fourteen principal settlements within Hinckley and Bosworth (the borough's urban areas and key rural centres). In each case it addresses the historic designations, landmark buildings and general architectural styles. Based upon this analysis, key characteristics are identified, together with recommended management strategies intended to protect and promote local distinctiveness and unique townscape qualities.

6. The Urban Character Areas are as follows:

- 1) Burbage**
- 2) Desford**
- 3) Groby**
- 4) Hinckley**
- 5) Markfield**
- 6) Market Bosworth**
- 7) Newbold Verdon**
- 8) Ratby**
- 9) Barwell**
- 10) Earl Shilton**
- 11) Stoke Golding**
- 12) Bagworth**
- 13) Thornton**
- 14) Barlestone**

# UCA 1: Burbage



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# UCA 1: BURBAGE



## Location and Setting

6. Burbage is located in the south-east of the borough, separated from Hinckley to the north by the Leicester to Nuneaton railway line. Burbage is situated on the same ridgeline as the nearby urban areas of Hinckley, Barwell and Earl Shilton, although more recent development has extended

to the lower lying land towards the outskirts of Hinckley to the north-west. Agricultural fields to the south and east provide a strong rural setting to the settlement.

6.4 Burbage lies to the north of LCA F: Burbage Common Rolling Farmland.

## Key Characteristics

- 1) **Ridgetop settlement with a defined and distinctive historic settlement core.**
- 2) **Village character which is enhanced by the proximity to countryside to the south east and rural character of the streetscape around Burbage Hall.**
- 3) **Small terraced cottages and Victorian town houses mixed with grand three storey buildings.**
- 4) **Interesting historic buildings of red brick and render and with locally distinctive details.**
- 5) **Sense of enclosure as a result of buildings fronting directly onto the pavement or boundary walls.**
- 6) **St Catherine's Church forms a landmark feature.**
- 7) **Mature trees and open green spaces add a sense of space and texture.**



### Townscape Character

6. Burbage has expanded from a small linear farming village, with a historic core along Church Street and the church. Although only separated from Hinckley by the railway line, Burbage has a separate and distinctive character.
- 6.6 The historic core remains intact, and is designated a Conservation Area. Its focus is St Catherine's Church (built in 1842 and Grade II\* listed) with many attractive historic buildings of two to three storeys on the surrounding streets providing a distinctive sense of place. It retains a 'village' character, with the church, mature trees and stone boundary walls providing a strong identity. The well-defined square at the south of Church Street is lined by a number of important and listed buildings including the grand Constitutional Club, Manor Farm and several timber framed buildings. The interface of the buildings with the streetscape creates an important definition to the space, providing a variety of heights, roof details and elevation features which alongside mature trees, cobbles and other traditional paving create interest.
- 6.7 Aston Lane is an important feature of the streetscape, with the raised footway reducing the width of the street and the rural character increasingly influenced by mature trees and grass verges providing a transition to the rural countryside beyond to the south-east. Burbage Hall is located along the lane, and is a fine two storey early 18<sup>th</sup> century building standing in its own grounds. High brick walls frame the Old Grange and Burbage Hall. Grange Farm House is an attractive 16<sup>th</sup>- early 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed house with important historical features including an oriel window and bow window.
- 6.8 The Horsepool and the War Memorial triangle are locally distinctive features, surrounded by traditional terraced cottages and intermittent mature trees. These areas are lined by traditional terraced cottages which either front directly onto the street or where buildings are set back from the street, enclosure is usually provided by low brick boundary walks, iron railings or privet hedges to continue the strong enclosure.
- 6.9 Further from the historic core, Victorian town houses are present as detached, semi-detached or short terraces.
- 6.10 The relatively low density of the built form and prominence of gardens enhances the suburban/village feel of the settlement. Clear routeways through the settlement create a legible environment. Land use is primarily residential and there is a quiet, picturesque character to the settlement that is distinctly different from Hinckley to the north.
- 6.11 More recent development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has expanded the settlement to the north towards Hinckley, mostly consisting of standard housing estates. The majority of growth in Burbage occurred due to post war housing demand. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century a series of residential programmes turned the rural community into a suburb of Hinckley.
- 6.1 Key views in the area are of St Catherine's church, and landmarks include the war memorial on Church Street. The Congregational Chapel is also a focal point for key views. Views are often framed by trees.
- 6.1 Elements which detract from the character of the settlement include modern additions and alterations in the Conservation Area not in keeping with the character of the area because of their materials, style, form or appearance, such as upvc windows, ancillary buildings and garages. Overhead wires and occasional modern shop fronts may also have a detrimental effect on the streetscape, particularly within the Conservation Area. There are areas of typical anonymous housing estates between Burbage and the railway line adjacent to Hinckley.
- Materials and Local vernacular**
- 6.14 Typical traditional cottages in Burbage are terraces of two storeys with simple appearance, pitched roofs and a variation in roof and eaves levels



adding significant character to the streetscape. Buildings usually front directly onto the street, providing a strong sense of enclosure. Grander buildings are often three stories, creating variety in scale of the streetscape, and shop fronts are generally in keeping.

- 6.1 Roofs are characterised by either Swithland slate, Welsh slate or in a few instances, clay roof tiles. External walls are red brick with occasionally render finishes to the walls. Windows vary in size, and are mainly of timber and set regularly across the facades.
- 6.16 Architectural details add local interest and distinctiveness to buildings, and where these historic features have been retained they contribute to the character of the area.
- 6.17 Boundary materials are typically low brick walls or hedges, and streetscape materials such as granite kerbs and cast iron gullies add to the character.

### Green Spaces

- 6.18 Trees and green spaces are an intrinsic part of the character of Burbage, ensuring it retains a 'village' feel. The churchyard, moathouse site and areas of trees and open space help create this village character along Church Street and Grove Road.
- 6.19 Key groups of trees include the mature trees of Moat House and the Horsepool together with trees in the churchyard. Together with wide grass verges they contribute to the rural and suburban character of the area.
- 6.0 Open countryside abuts the core of the village to the east, further enhancing rural character.
- 6.1 A number of public rights of way connect the settlement to the surrounding countryside, including the Leicestershire Round long distance footpath.

### Historical and Cultural Influences

- 6.2 Burbage village remained a small farming community for centuries. During the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the hosiery industry was introduced and became a major employer in the

village. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century there were a large number of framework knitters in the community. However, the domestic industry began to decline due to the rise of factory production.

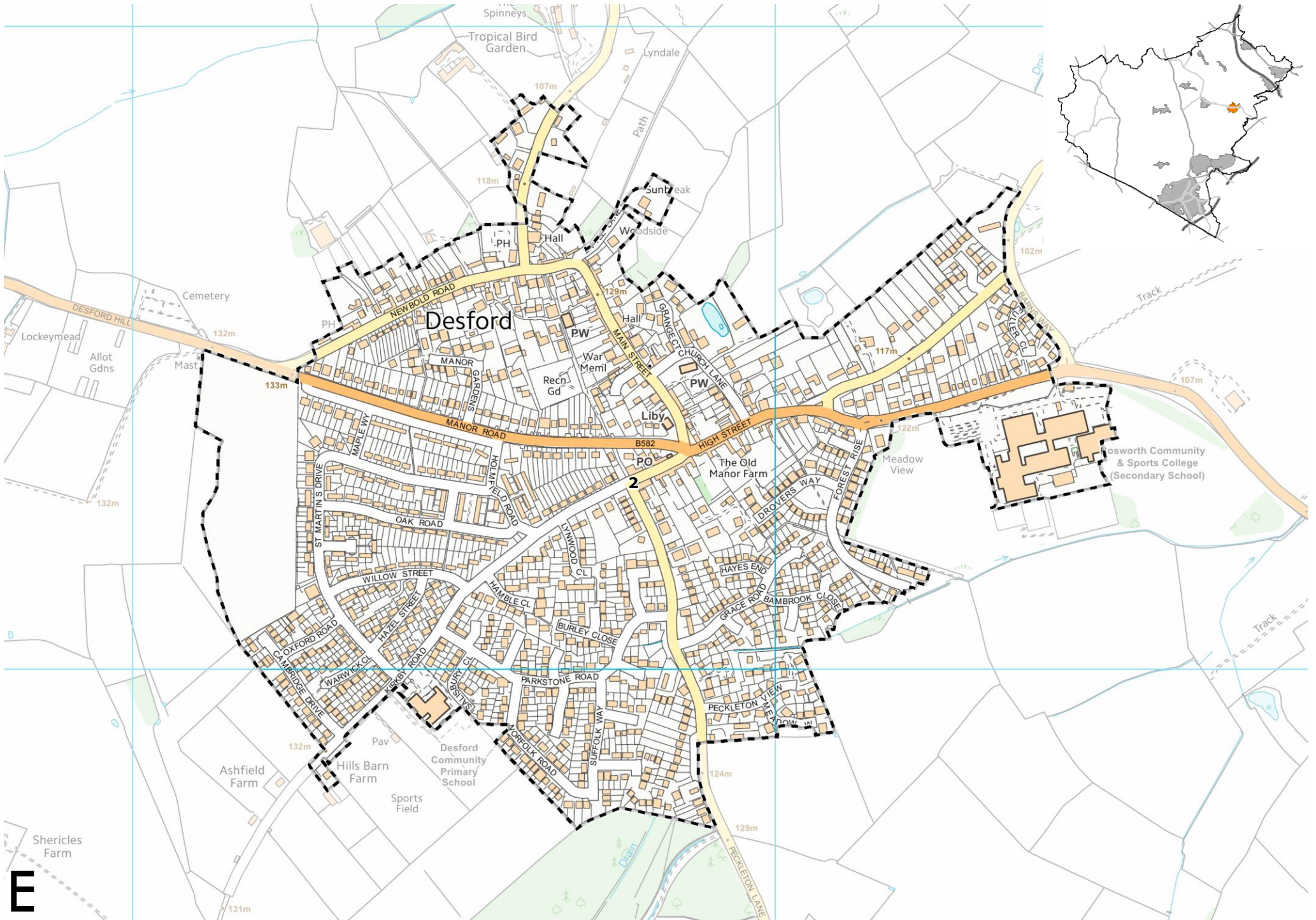
- 6.2 The Conservation Area marks the historic core of the original village of Burbage, focussed on the church, the area around Moat House and the Rectory together with the cluster of cottages around Horsepool and Pilgrim's Gate. There are a number of listed buildings including Burbage Hall, the Constitutional Club, the church and Old Grange, and a number of cottages. Many of the buildings date from the 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries

### Key Sensitivities and Values

- 1) The rural setting of Burbage provided by the countryside to the south-east of the settlement and the transition of Aston Lane with strong sense of place.
- 2) The unified character of the historic core as a result of the combination of attractive historic buildings, trees and streetscape.
- 3) The harmonious pattern of two to three storey buildings and their boundaries which interface with the streetscape providing a strong sense of enclosure.
- 4) St Catherine's church forming a key landmark in views into and out of the settlement.
- 5) Horsepool and the war memorial providing interesting features and a sense of history and local distinctiveness.
- 6) Mature trees and open green spaces are valued for the texture and interest they provide as well as creating a 'village' character to the settlement.
- 7) Strong local vernacular of red brick as well as distinctive buildings valued for their strength of character and sense of place, many of which are listed.
- 8) Public rights of way including the Leicestershire Round which are valued for their recreation opportunities and connection to the countryside.

### Townscape Strategies

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prioritise local distinctiveness in every element of change and future development. Ensure that new development is carefully designed to respect its surroundings and setting, avoiding anonymous suburban style developments.</li> <li>2) Retain and enhance traditional or historic features and materials where possible e.g. during building renovations.</li> <li>3) Retain trees and open spaces wherever possible, and encourage planting of more trees of appropriate species to replenish stock as it comes to the end of its life.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4) Ensure the distinctive character of Burbage is maintained and enhanced, maintaining the separate identity from Hinckley.</li> <li>5) Enhance the recreation and green infrastructure links with the countryside to the south and east.</li> <li>6) Seek to enhance the landscape structure which separates the settlement from the M69 corridor.</li> <li>7) Retain the rural setting and views to the church spire on an uncluttered horizon.</li> </ol> |
|---|---|



## UCA 2: DESFORD



### Location and Setting

6.24 Desford is situated in the eastern part of the Borough at the intersection of roads linking Kirby Muxloe, Newbold Verdon, Thornton and Thurlaston.

6.2 It is located on a steep, east facing slope in an open expanse of farmland with tree planting along property boundaries forming a relatively soft

settlement edge. The large Caterpillar logistics park is located a short distance to the south and is generally contained by landform and screening planting.

6.26 Desford lies within LCA D: Newbold and Desford Rolling Farmland.

### Key Characteristics

- 1) **A compact nucleated settlement with the historic core on the northern edge.**
- 2) **Built form of largely two storey terraced cottages, often with prominent red brick chimneys and small subdivided windows.**
- 3) **Residential properties from the 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century surround the central core whilst the 1940s – 1950s dwellings extend to the south.**
- 4) **Mixed building materials used include red brick, rough cast rendering and slate roofing, with some timber framed thatched buildings.**
- 5) **The Church of St Martin forms a local landmark with its distinctive spire.**
- 6) **Minimal frontages and narrow lanes create a small compact streetscape which then opens out to a later, wider street pattern with winding cul-de-sacs within the twentieth century development areas.**



### Townscape Character

- 6.27 Desford is a compact nucleated settlement with the historic core located on the northern edge, designated as a Conservation Area. This area is defined by the old village core surrounding Main Street, Church Lane and High Street and includes buildings of many periods and styles.
- 6.28 A medieval street pattern survives, with subtle changes in direction as well as a network of jitties, once providing access to the neighbouring countryside. Narrow streets are lined by small terraced cottages and large detached cottages. Main Street and Newbold Road are partially cut into the landform which has resulted in an asymmetrical streetscape. Buildings level with the pavement on one side of the road contrast with adjacent properties accessed from steps, raised pavements and brick retaining walls. Properties were built along Main Street, often within large green spaces and mature planting.
- 6.29 There are several listed buildings within the old historic core. The Parish Church of St. Martin originates from the 13th century and its spire creates a local landmark. There are several buildings such as the Malt Houses, the Old Manor House, the Grange and Ivy House, all of which are grade II or II\* listed. One of the most significant and oldest surviving buildings is the Old Manor House, in the High Street which was constructed in 1640 for Thomas Muxloe. It is an impressive dwelling with gables and a grand entrance porch faced with stone.
- 6.0 The majority of development occurred during the late 1940s and early 50s with red brick terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings rapidly being built post war. These follow a variety of architectural styles with the majority following winding cul-de-sacs.
- 6.1 Building styles are typically varied and reflect the historic development of the village. Low, shallow buildings are characterised by medieval timber frames with brick extensions and steeply pitched gable roofs punctured by brick chimneys, though facades have been subject to superficial alterations over the years. Victorian feature buildings are of regular design, high quality materials and are usually two rooms deep with steeply pitched gabled roofs parallel to the street, whilst post war properties are predominantly bungalows with shallow pitched roofs and adjoining double garages set in larger plots of ground.
- 6.3 Similar to nearby villages, Desford grew out of a farming village as a result of a thriving hosiery industry which later diversified into mining. Desford Colliery, approximately two miles north of the village, was closed in 1984 although a commemorative half colliery wheel serves as a memorial within the village. Today local industry provides employment at Newtown Unthank, and at Caterpillar on a major site between Desford and Peckleton.
- 6.3 Modern extensions around the fringes of the village are more exposed and lack cohesion with the historic core and rest of the settlement. Winding country lanes with low clipped hedgerows and grass verges create a rural setting to Desford. This is reinforced by long views out from the settlement edge over rolling farmland with wind turbines present in views to the north.

### Materials and Local vernacular

- 6.34 Red brick is the predominant building material in the historic core, apart from St Martin's Church which is formed of stone. There are a number of other styles and materials evident in the village including rough cast rendering and slate, with the occasional use of other materials such as stone, thatch, clay roof tiles and timber framing.

### Green Spaces

- 6.3 The open space around St. Martin's Church provides a welcome contrast in the otherwise relatively enclosed streetscape of Main Street. This area is mostly defined by mature sycamore trees



whilst an avenue of semi-mature conifer trees frames a narrow pathway through the graveyard. The Pickard Recreation Ground is situated within the urban grain and provides a small rectilinear expanse of amenity grassland defined by mature trees in each corner. This is accessed only by a few jitties which creates a quiet recreational area, enclosed by houses on each side.

#### Historical and Cultural Influences

- 6.36 The village of Desford is believed to be of Anglo-Saxon origin with the earliest written record in the Domesday Book of Deresford or Diresford. There are signs of Romano- British occupation with the remains of two kilns found on the demolition site of The Manor House.
- 6.37 Prior to the 1700s, employment in the village was predominantly agriculture-based until the

Industrial Revolution and the village contained a small agricultural community of farmhouses with associated strip fields, remains of which are evident in the ridge and furrow in the nearby fields.

- 6.38 Following the end of the Second World War, the village altered dramatically expanding to the southwest and virtually doubling in size. Since then, the village has undergone further expansion with new housing being focussed around the settlement edge serving a large commuter population.
- 6.39 Desford was subject to a great fire in 1657 which engulfed several dwellings, barns, stables and valuables. After a village petition, Oliver Cromwell sought charity from Christians across the country to aid with the repair works.



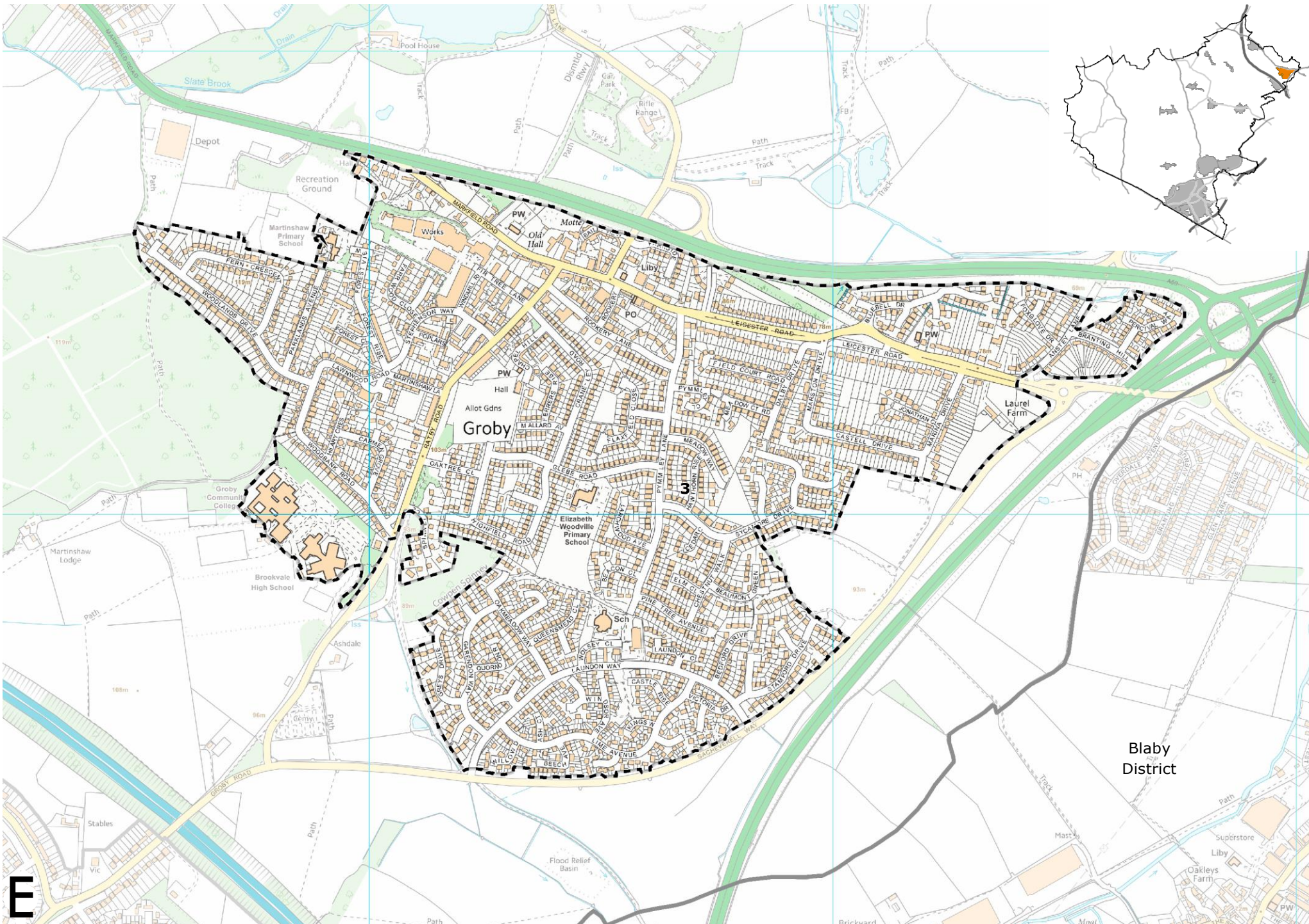
### Key Sensitivities and Values

- 1) The historic character of small terraced cottages and large detached cottages arranged in a medieval street pattern and connected by an extensive network of jitties provides sense of place and a link to the past.
- 2) Medieval, Georgian and Victorian building styles and materials contribute to the visual amenity and provide a sense of historic time depth.
- 3) The colliery wheel at the centre of the village provides continuity to the landscape's industrial past and provides a link with other nearby mining settlements.
- 4) Small pockets of enclosed green space providing intimate areas within the enclosed built form and contribute to the recreational value.
- 5) Distinctive asymmetrical streetscape largely influenced by the hilltop topography and historic buildings such as the Old Manor House on the High Street.
- 6) The Parish Church of St Martin which forms a local landmark and focal point at the centre of the historic core.
- 7) Occasional open views of the countryside which provide a reminder of the settlement's origins as an agricultural settlement

### Townscape Strategies

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Retain listed buildings and buildings of local interest wherever possible.</li> </ol>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4) Encourage proposals to provide landscape enhancements, including tree planting, to the settlement edge.</li> </ol>                     |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) Ensure any new development respects the rural setting of the village and the Conservation Area in terms of siting, scale, design and materials used.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5) Enhance pedestrian links between adjacent villages and consider potential as key gateways to the National Forest.</li> </ol>           |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Retain and enhance important views of the church and other key visual buildings and spaces in the Conservation Area.</li> </ol>                                 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6) Build upon and improve Desford's sense of place and individual identity through sensitive design and appropriate materials.</li> </ol> |

# UCA 3: Groby



# UCA 3: GROBY



## Location and Setting

6.40 Groby is situated to the north east of the Borough, just north of Junction 21a of the M1 motorway and separated from Leicester by the Rothley Brook. The A50 and the A46 largely define the extent of the village to the north and east respectively.

6.41 It is set low in the landscape with the Rothley Brook floodplain to the south. To the north, the

topography gently rises and becomes more wooded. Groby Pool and Martinshaw Wood are distinct features on the northern and western settlement fringes respectively.

6.4 Groby is situated within LCA A: Charnwood Forest.

## Key Characteristics

- 1) **Low lying and rural setting which rises up to the north west. The settlement is defined by the A50 and A46 dual carriageways.**
- 2) **Distinctive historic core with traditional building materials and intimate walled spaces.**
- 3) **Building materials within the central core tend to be of local origin with bold red brick or local granite often combined with exposed timber framework and slate roofs.**
- 4) **Modern expansion extends the settlement to the south and east and is dominated by bungalows, detached and semi-detached dwellings, sometimes of anonymous styling.**
- 5) **Strong sense of enclosure from surrounding trees and road corridors but unfolding views of the Groby Parish Church Tower from within the settlement.**



### Townscape Character

6.4 Groby is a large village with origins as a former agricultural settlement. The historic, nucleated core remains largely intact and is designated a Conservation Area. It is located in the north of the settlement, around the junction of Leicester Road, Markfield Road, and Ratby Road centred around Groby Parish Church, the Old Groby Hall and the Earl of Stamford Arms. The village expanded slowly along Leicester Road and Ratby Road as the local quarries were established and up to the early 1930s. The village then followed a similar growth pattern to that of the surrounding villages of Ratby and Markfield, with rapid expansion from the 1960s onwards which more than tripled the size of the original settlement. This took the village boundary out to its current extent defined by the A50 and A46, to the north and east resulting in an unbalanced pattern with little cohesion to the central area.

6.44 The historic core which has a linear nature, sits on rising land. The presence of rural cottage architecture, the use of traditional building materials and intimate walled spaces create a stark contrast to the high density, two storey modern housing around the edges of the village. Markfield Road is formed of a terrace of small cottages lining the southern side of the road with stone walls and mature trees opposite. The walls are a key unifying feature of the core and create a sense of intimacy along the narrow road. Building density is generally high, although areas of open space and allotments create a more open character in places. Buildings range from small cottages, to two and three storey properties of mixed styles in the historic core and larger buildings such as the village hall and the Old Hall.

6.4 There are few clear views to the village due to the containment provided by the major road corridors to the north, east and south as well as Martinshaw Wood to the west. The Church of St Philip and St James is built on rising ground which allows for unfolding views of the Church Tower from along Leicester Road although slightly impeded by the presence of street furniture in the foreground.

Views out over the roofscape can be obtained from this higher land to the rolling farmland beyond. Wind turbines can be seen on the skyline and are feature of the surrounding landscape. The Old Hall is also a feature on the skyline in local views despite being lower.

6.46 In views from the settlement edge, the A50 is clearly visible which forms a detracting feature on the northern fringe, and together with other nearby major transport corridors create considerable road noise throughout the village.

6.47 Detracting features include insensitive alterations and modern infill further up the hill. The character of Leicester Road and Ratby Road have also been influenced by modernising additions although small groups of historic stone buildings still remain including the Earl of Stamford Arms.

### Materials and Local vernacular

6.48 Buildings with the historic core of the village largely range from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. Building materials include randomly coursed Groby and Mountsorrel granite, red brick detailing and Swithland slate roofing. Alternatively timber framed buildings can be seen with red brick infill, slate and occasionally thatch roofing. Frontages have predominantly small stone walled gardens, although some older buildings within the centre of the village front directly onto the street.

6.49 Modern development within the village mainly constructed in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century often fails to respect local themes and predominantly comprise of red brick and a mix of slate and clay tile roofs. The built form includes bungalows, semi-detached and detached dwellings open with small front and rear gardens.

### Green Spaces

6.0 There are many small areas of public open space within the 20<sup>th</sup> century development areas and these typically comprise expanses of amenity grassland with mature trees around the perimeter.

# LCA I: GOPSALL PARKLAND



## Location and Boundaries

- .1 The small Gopsall Parkland character area is located in the north-west of the borough, between the area which rises to form LCA H: Twycross Open Farmland to the west and LCA J: Barton Village Farmlands to the east, and north of LCA C: Bosworth Parkland. It is characterised by its
- estate landscape with a greater extent of woodland cover compared to surrounding areas.
- .159 Villages within the character area:
- *Shackerstone*
  - *Congerstone*

## Key Characteristics

- 1) **Flat to gently undulating farmland/estate land including former parkland landscape.**
- 2) **Large blocks and belts of woodland, smaller coverts and mature specimen trees associated with the parkland, plus mixed hedgerows create a wooded, enclosed character.**
- 3) **A rural and peaceful character with development limited to scattered farm buildings and the small historic settlements of Bilstone, Congerstone and Shackerstone are well-integrated into the landscape by vegetation and the small scale of buildings.**
- 4) **The estate farmland is managed through a number of large farms**
- 5) **Historic hamlets and villages with attractive red brick buildings, estate cottages and stone churches, have a strong relationship with the surrounding agricultural landscape.**
- 6) **Ashby Canal, built to link the coalfield to the north to the Coventry Canal, cuts across the northern part of the Estate.**
- 7) **Few roads cross the estate, although it is accessible via public rights of way including the Ivanhoe Way.**
- 8) **Former historic parkland of Gopsall, a grand Georgian house with cultural associations to the composer Handel, now demolished.**



**Landscape Character**

- 5.160 Landform across the character area is relatively low lying and flat to gently undulating and with occasional hills around Gopsall Hall Farm and Twycross Park in the west of the area. It forms part of the Sence river valley, which flows through the eastern part of the character area. The underlying bedrock consists of Mercia mudstone, overlaid by clays, with patches of sand and gravel on the higher ground, and alluvium along the watercourses. The soils in the area are typical of a river valley landscape, and include stoneless clayey soils and deep permeable coarse loamy soils, variably affected by groundwater. These are mixed with the reddish fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils with slowly permeable sub soils, prone to seasonal waterlogging.
- 5.161 This is a medium scale landscape, with a pattern of regular similar sized medium fields subdivided by hedgerows and hedgerow trees, plus large enclosing belts and blocks of woodland as well as regularly spaced avenue trees along roads.
- 5.16 The area is characterised by features associated with the former parkland including mature specimen trees and significant areas of woodland. The estate farmland is managed as pasture, with small sections of estate fencing boundaries, although there are also large areas of barbed wire fencing. The ruins of the Handel temple are one of the few surviving elements, and stand on a low wooded ridge on the north edge of the Race Course wood, and is publicly accessible via a footpath from Shackerstone.
- 5.16 This is a rural and tranquil landscape, with limited accessibility other than rights of way through the parkland and connections to the Ashby Canal. There are few roads, with only minor roads and lanes connecting local villages contributing to the sense of 'remoteness'. Roads are lined by hedges, ditches and narrow grass verges. The lack of street lighting, modern development and few intrusions gives rise to dark night skies across the whole of the area, with the exception of the larger village of Congerstone in the south-east.
- 5.164 The Ashby Canal is a notable feature in the north of the area. It has visual charm, meandering peacefully through the quiet pastoral landscape and provides a valuable recreational facility, used for boating, fishing and walking along the towing path, part of which is the Ivanhoe Way.
- 5.165 The gentle undulations allow for expansive views, with vistas created between areas of mature trees and woodland.
- 5.166 The small settlements of Shackerstone, Congerstone and Bilstone are estate villages closely associated with the Gopsall Estate. The villages have loose-knit forms and an open character which provide a strong relationship with the surrounding countryside. Surviving farm buildings and estate-style cottages have a sense of unity in form and materials. Local vernacular details includes the use of red brick, clay tile and slate roofs, brick boundary walls and the use of eyebrow dormer windows. Outside the villages are large farms associated with the Estate (e.g. Gopsall Hall Farm and Gopsall House Farm) and smaller scattered farmsteads.
- 5.167 **Shackerstone:** Shackerstone is a Conservation Area. The Turn Bridges over the Ashby Canal form entrances to the village and provide exceptional views of the church, (a local landmark), and the surrounding countryside.
- 5.168 **Congerstone:** Congerstone is a Conservation Area and a small former farming settlement associated with the Gopsall Estate.



**Historical and Cultural Influences**

- 5.169 Gopsall Hall was a grand Georgian house built in 1750 by Charles Jennens, although there had been a manor at Gopsall since the Norman Conquest. The surrounding park covered almost 1000 acres and featured two lakes, a walled garden, a Chinese boathouse and the famous Handel Temple. During the Second World War the house was used as a military base; it was abandoned and most of the buildings demolished in 1951. All that remains today apart from the bare outline of the former parkland and avenues of trees are sections of the walled garden, an underground reservoir, the gatehouse at Shackerstone and the ruins of the Handel Temple. Gopsall Park Farm was built over most of the original site.
- 5.170 The Gopsall estate contained a number of notable artworks by artists including Van Dyke, Poussin and Rembrandt.
- 5.171 Handel was a frequent visitor to Gopsall and it is said that he composed some of 'The Messiah' in the temple. The ruins of the Handel Temple (now Grade II listed) are publicly accessible via a footpath from Shackerstone.
- 5.17 The Ashby Canal, built to connect the coal mining areas north of the borough with the Coventry Canal, is designated a Conservation Area and a reminder of the industrial heritage of the area. It opened in 1798, operating between Ashby Wolds and Market Bosworth, and was linked to the Coventry Canal a few years later.
- 5.17 The Battlefield Line is the last remaining part of the former Ashby and Nuneaton Joint Railway which was opened in 1873 and runs between Shackerstone, Market Bosworth and Shenton. Shackerstone Station is the headquarters of the railway and is also part of the Ashby Canal Conservation Area.
- 5.174 A motte and associated earthworks (Scheduled Monument) is a feature of the landscape near Shackerstone.

**Natural Influences**

- 5.175 The section of the Ashby Canal that crosses through the character area has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and provides a valuable semi-natural habitat. The diversity of aquatic plants and invertebrates makes this one of the most important water bodies of its type in the East Midlands. Nationally important species include water vole and otter. The River Sence is designated a Local Wildlife Site.
- 5.176 Gopsall Wood is ancient woodland and elsewhere within the character area large areas of deciduous woodland, copses and trees are important features for biodiversity locally.

**Key Sensitivities and Values**

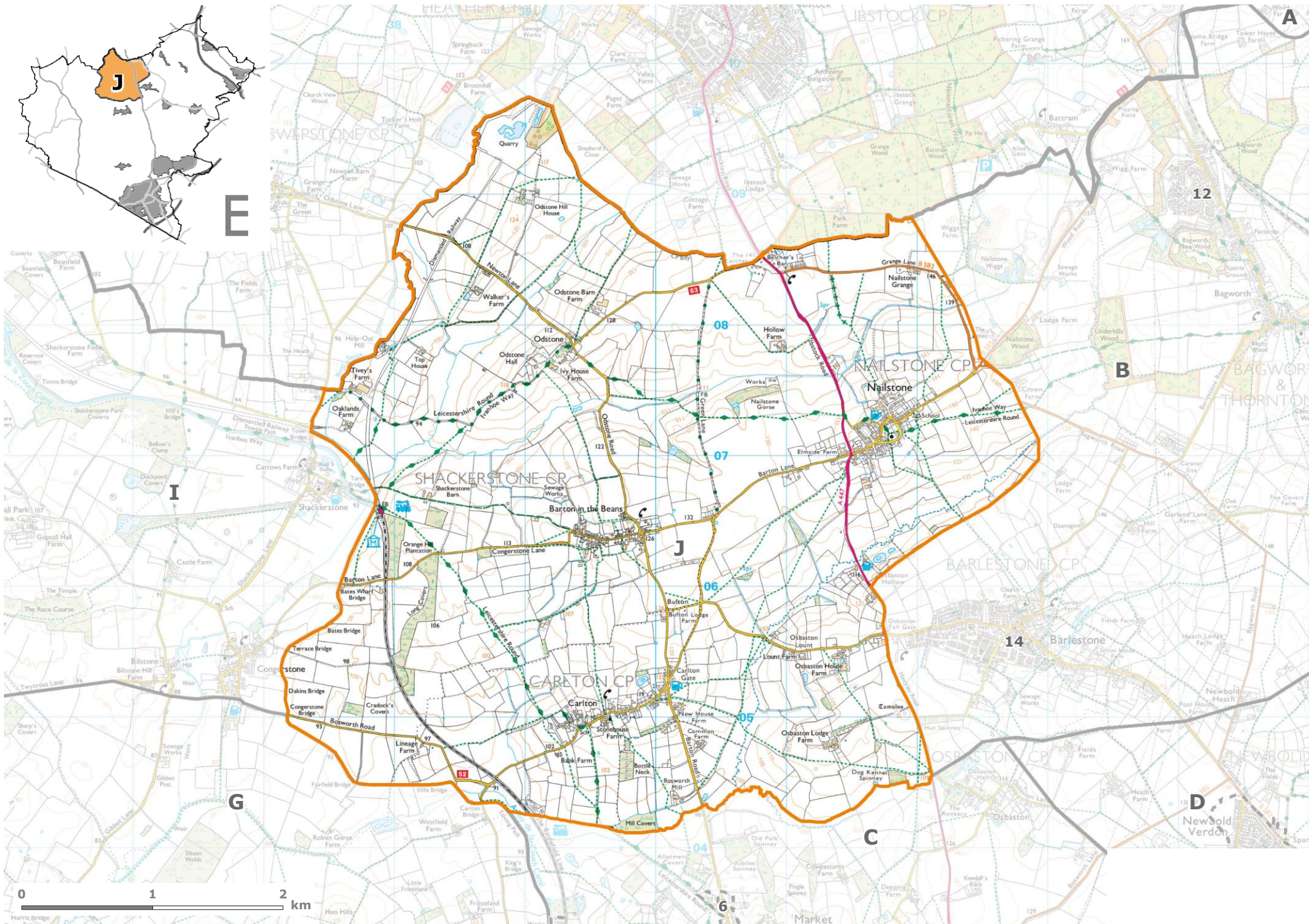
- 1) The surviving parkland features which are reminders of the former Gopsall estate provide local identity and history although the parkland character is fragmented. Mature parkland trees and avenues are distinctive features. Associations with Handel the composer are valued.
- 2) Rural character with a lack of intrusions and extensive dark night skies resulting in a sense of 'remoteness' and tranquility. The rural settlement pattern of small linear villages and scattered farmsteads provide continuity with their agricultural origins.
- 3) Mature trees, ancient woodland and hedgerows are an important habitat for many species including bats and birds and provide landscape structure.
- 4) The Ashby Canal is a valued landscape asset, particularly as a recreation and biodiversity resource as well as a reminder of the areas industrial heritage.
- 5) Recreational value of the Ashby Canal, also a visitor destination. The Battlefield Line Railway and Shackerstone train station provide educational, cultural and historic interest, as well as a tourist attraction.
- 6) Intact estate character of the villages which are valued for their vernacular architecture including buildings of local historic interest associated with the Gopsall estate. The rural setting of the villages is sensitive to change as a result of development.
- 7) Views of church spires and towers which form distinctive landmarks in a rural setting.

**Landscape Strategies**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Encourage the use of traditional 'Midlands-style' hedgelaying to manage hedgerows, improving their structure and biodiversity value and strengthening landscape character.</li> <li>2) Conserve areas of rural character, tranquillity and dark night skies.</li> <li>3) Respect and enhance the strong character of the villages, ensuring new development complements existing context with regards to scale, form, materials and boundary features.</li> <li>4) Maintain and enhance the recreational assets including rights of way network and canal. Maintain positive management of the Ashby</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5) Canal and seek opportunities to extend and enhance areas of wetland habitat.</li> <li>6) Protect and enhance views to key landmarks such as churches and buildings.</li> <li>7) Opportunity for future restoration and reinforcement of the parkland landscape</li> <li>8) Promote the cultural associations with Handel and the Gopsall estate for example through promoted walks and in combination with landscape restoration.</li> <li>9) Retain existing woodland and promote further woodland planting to reinforce the historic pattern.</li> </ul> |
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# LCA J: Barton Village Farmlands



# LCA J: BARTON VILLAGE FARMLANDS



## Location and Boundaries

- 5.177 This character area is located centrally in the north of the Borough to the east of the more wooded landscape of Gopsall Parkland and slightly elevated above Bosworth Parkland to the south. The western boundary is formed by the Ashby Canal and the eastern boundary by the A447 and B582 which mark a transition to higher ground of the Charnwood Fringe Hills to the east.
- 5.178 The northern part of this area lies within the National Forest which extends north into North West Leicestershire district.
- 5.179 Villages within the character area:
- *Nailstone*
  - *Barton in the Beans*
  - *Carlton*
  - *Odstone*

## Key Characteristics

- 1) **Undulating landform which rises to the east.**
- 2) **Mix of arable and pasture farmland.**
- 3) **Vegetated character as a result of individual trees, small copses and scattered trees within mixed hedgerows.**
- 4) **Regular pattern of medium sized fields which are smaller around settlements, including potential areas of ridge and furrow.**
- 5) **Rural, tranquil character with areas of little light pollution.**
- 6) **Few main roads with rural lanes lined by ditches, hedgerows and grass verges with little or no street lighting.**
- 7) **Small linear hilltop villages of Carlton, Barton in the Beans, Odstone and Nailstone which are well-integrated into the landscape and surrounded by vegetation creating an overall harmonious landscape pattern.**
- 8) **The church spire of Nailstone church which is a distinctive landmark on a wooded horizon.**
- 9) **Long distance footpaths and public rights of way pass through the area providing recreational amenity.**
- 10) **Visitor attractions including the Battlefield Line and Ashby Canal enable appreciation of the landscape and provide evidence of the history of the area.**



**Landscape Character**

- 5.180 The Triassic Mercia Mudstone is overlain with superficial glacial deposits of till and areas of sand and gravel on the higher ground, and alluvium along the Sence and its tributary streams. Soils consist of reddish, fine loamy or fine silty, clayey soils which are prone to seasonal waterlogging. The villages and the better quality agricultural land are located on the areas of higher ground. The upper reaches of the River Sence and its tributaries flow south-westwards through the character area within gently sloping valleys, creating an appearance of an overall gently undulating landscape which becomes more rolling as the land rises to the east towards the Charnwood Fringe.
- 5.181 Land use is predominantly mixed farmland, mainly arable with some pasture, and occasional woodland and copses subdividing fields. Field sizes are medium to small and generally form a regular pattern. This in combination with frequent mature vegetation creates a sense of enclosure and a regular yet fairly complex landscape framework. Open views are possible although visibility can be limited by woodland and undulating landform. Trees are generally found in copses or small blocks of woodland but are also frequent within hedgerows or along roadsides, increasing the impression of general tree cover.
- 5.18 This is a quiet, rural landscape with few modern intrusions. The main traffic route is the A447, but the majority of routes which cross the area are minor roads, lined by hedges, ditches and grass verges. The lack of major roads and settlements results in overall sense of tranquillity and there are large areas with little light pollution, particularly in the west of the area between Barton in the Beans and Shackerstone.
- 5.183 The area is well served by a network of public footpaths and bridleways (e.g. Green Lane) connecting to the Leicestershire Round and Ivanhoe Way. The National Forest stretches into the northern part of the area and provides a wider recreational resource. The Ashby Canal provides a valuable recreational resource, popular with walkers and anglers, and the Battlefield Line also crosses through the area with a station at Shackerstone (within the adjacent LCA I: Gopsall Parkland), and is a popular visitor attraction.
- 5.184 Churches are key landmarks, often extensively visible in views across the rural landscape. The church spire in Nailstone on the highest ground is a particularly distinctive landmark, as well as the brick church tower in Carlton. There are extensive views in all directions from the higher ground in the north-east of the character area near Belcher's Bar, including north to Ibstock and south-west towards Odstone.
- 5.185 Settlement comprises linear hilltop villages and dispersed farms or barns; clusters of red brick buildings surrounded by trees and vegetation on higher ground overlooking open fields are characteristic features. Farmhouses and farmstead layouts demonstrate the agricultural origins of the villages.
- 5.186 **Nailstone** is a former Gopsall estate village which retains a historic street pattern and strong sense of local identity related to the estate and village community which can still be seen in the historic buildings, green space and rich townscape features such as characteristic eyebrow dormer windows. Despite housing mine-workers for the nearby mine in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, it has retained a rural character and relationship to its agricultural origins with many surviving historic farmhouses and traditional farmhouse layouts. It is also a designated Conservation Area.
- 5.187 **Carlton:** Carlton is a linear village with estate character red brick buildings.
- 5.188 **Barton-in-the-Beans:** is a hamlet with a vernacular of red brick buildings and low brick walls.
- 5.189 **Odstone:** is a rural hamlet centred around a hilltop crossroads. Odstone Hall is set within mature trees and is largely hidden from view.



### Historical and Cultural Influences

- 5.190 Historic patterns of piecemeal enclosure are evident in the smaller field patterns surrounding settlements, most notably Carlton, Barton in the Beans and Nailstone. These intact areas of late 16th and early 17th century field systems provide historical time depth and visual interest. Pastoral fields undisturbed by modern machinery also potentially have remnant medieval patterns of ridge and furrow.
- 5.191 The Ashby Canal, built to connect the coal mining areas north of the borough with the Coventry Canal, is designated a Conservation Area and a reminder of the industrial heritage of the area. It opened in 1798, operating between Ashby Wolds and Market Bosworth, and was linked to the Coventry Canal a few years later. Nailstone became part of the Gopsall Hall estate which was constructed around 1750, with the estate funding the construction of many properties in the village. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century coal mining was a principle source of employment in Nailstone and its surroundings. However, the village appears relatively untouched by the effects of the coal mining industry whilst the agricultural legacy is still highly evident in the form of estate buildings.
- 5.19 The Battlefield Line crosses through the western part of the character area and is the last remaining part of the former Ashby and Nuneaton Joint Railway. It was opened in 1873 and runs between Shackerstone, Market Bosworth and Shenton.
- 5.19 The Baptist Chapel in Barton in the Beans is one of the many listed buildings within the character area. It is Grade II listed of red and yellow brick chequer with slate roof. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Barton in the Beans was an important centre for the Baptist church and the minister at Barton was the notable clockmaker Samuel Deacon.

### Natural Influences

- 5.194 The Ashby Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) provides a valuable semi-natural habitat.

The diversity of aquatic plants and invertebrates makes this one of the most important water bodies of its type in the East Midlands. Nationally important species include water vole and otter.

- 5.195 A few small Local Wildlife Sites are present including a stream and pond at Spinney Grange, Carlton and Nailstone Pond. Other watercourses such as the upper part of the River Sence and its tributary streams, provide riparian habitats.
- 5.196 Scattered woodlands, copses, trees and hedgerows provide further habitat diversity.

### Key Sensitivities and Values

- 1) The small to medium size of the landscape pattern and remnant fields with ridge and furrow evident are likely to be sensitive to larger scale developments and removal of hedgerows.
- 2) The rural, tranquil character of the landscape and settlements, and lack of light pollution across the west of the area.
- 3) The Ashby Canal is a valued landscape asset, particularly as a recreation and biodiversity resource as well as a reminder of the areas industrial heritage
- 4) The historic character as a result of the settlement pattern of dispersed, small, nucleated villages on low ridges constructed in characteristic red brick with slate or clay tile roofs.
- 5) The scattered woodlands, copses, trees and hedges which increase biodiversity and visual amenity value across the character area.
- 6) Rural agricultural setting to villages and the extensive rural views from them.
- 7) Church spires such as All Saints Church, Nailstone, and church towers form distinctive landmarks, and extensive views of them in a rural setting.

### Landscape Strategies

- 1) Support the vision of the National Forest Strategy – to unify the forest area by planting native and mixed-species woodland to link to Charnwood National Character Area – as well as for areas beyond the National Forest boundary, encouraging connecting and enhancing habitats such as hedgerows, tree planting, farm woodlands and lowland meadows.
- 2) Respect and enhance the strong character of the villages, ensuring new development complements existing context with regards to scale, form, materials and boundary features.
- 3) Maintain rural views including to church spires and towers and the rural setting.
- 4) Maintain and enhance the recreational assets including rights of way network and canal. Maintain positive management of the Ashby Canal and seek opportunities to extend and enhance areas of wetland habitat. Conserve the enclosed small-scale field pattern by protecting and enhancing the hedgerow network and hedgerow trees and conserve extant areas of ridge and furrow.