

# Landscape Character Assessment

Rugby Borough Council

January 2025



**LEPUS** CONSULTING  
LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, PLANNING & URBAN SUSTAINABILITY



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# Landscape Character Assessment

**Rugby Borough Council**

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Cover photo: View of pastoral land and Ryehill Spinney north of Churchover.

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# Abbreviations

<b>AOD</b>	Above Ordnance Datum
<b>GLVIA</b>	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
<b>ha</b>	Hectares
<b>LCA</b>	Landscape Character Area
<b>LCT</b>	Landscape Character Type
<b>LDU</b>	Landscape Description Unit
<b>LNR</b>	Local Nature Reserve
<b>LPA</b>	Local Planning Authority
<b>m</b>	Metre
<b>NCA</b>	National Character Area
<b>NFI</b>	National Forest Inventory
<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
<b>OS</b>	Ordnance Survey
<b>PPG</b>	Planning Practice Guidance
<b>PRoW</b>	Public Right of Way
<b>RBC</b>	Rugby Borough Council
<b>RSPB</b>	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
<b>SSSI</b>	Site of Special Scientific Interest
<b>TGN</b>	Technical Guidance Note

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## Executive summary

- E1. This report comprises a Landscape Character Assessment to support the preparation of the new Rugby Local Plan. It provides an update to the ‘Landscape Assessment of the Borough of Rugby (Sensitivity and Condition Study)’, carried out by the Living Landscapes Project in conjunction with Warwickshire County Council and Rugby Borough Council in 2006.
- E2. Landscape character may be defined as a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements or characteristics in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.<sup>1</sup>
- E3. Landscape Character Assessment is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive. This process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment.<sup>2</sup> This Landscape Character Assessment is written considering the latest and best guidance.
- E4. Three Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) and eight Landscape Character Types (LCTs) have been identified. Each LCA includes a description, key characteristics, designations and policy, forces for change and landscape guidelines to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness.
- E5. The information included in this Landscape Character Assessment is for the use of a variety of stakeholders including planning applicants, developers, development management officers and neighbourhood development plan groups.
- E6. This Landscape Character Assessment should be used to understand the distinctive landscape qualities of an area to give context to scheme proposals. The prevailing character of the landscape will help to shape the design and layout of development.

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<sup>1</sup> Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types> [Accessed: 24/09/24]

<sup>2</sup> Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types> [Accessed: 24/09/24]



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Appointment and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Lepus Consulting Ltd has been appointed by Rugby Borough Council (RBC) to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment to support the review of the Local Plan.
- 1.1.2 Rugby Borough's current Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted in June 2019. The Council is in the process of reviewing the Local Plan. A Regulation 18 'issues and options' consultation was carried out between November 2023 and February 2024.
- 1.1.3 Lepus Consulting Ltd is a multi-disciplinary environmental assessment and planning practice, based in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, specialising in landscape appraisal and management.

## 1.2 Landscape Character Assessment

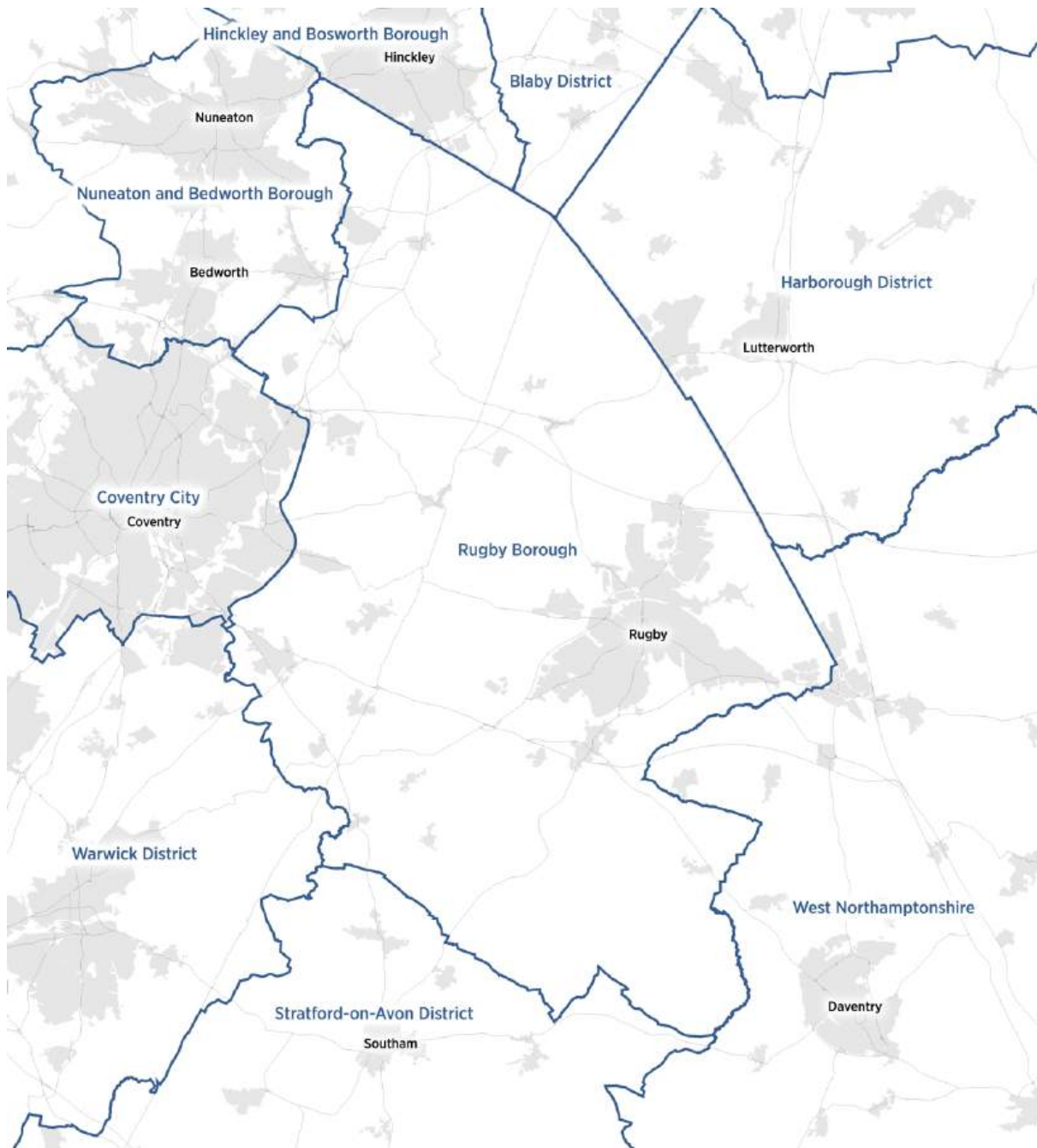
- 1.2.1 Landscape Character Assessment is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive. This process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment<sup>3</sup>.
- 1.2.2 This study provides an update to the 'Landscape Assessment of the Borough of Rugby (Sensitivity and Condition Study)', carried out by the Living Landscapes Project in conjunction with Warwickshire County Council and Rugby Borough Council in 2006.

## 1.3 Geographic context of Rugby


- 1.3.1 The borough of Rugby covers 35,358ha and is located within the county of Warwickshire in the West Midlands region of England. Rugby's northern and eastern boundary meets Hinckley and Bosworth District, Blaby District, Harborough District and West Northamptonshire. The western and southern boundary meets Nuneaton and Bedworth District, Coventry District, Warwick District and Stratford-on-Avon District. A map showing the location of Rugby and surrounding Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) is presented in **Figure 1.1**.
- 1.3.2 Rugby is a market town and also the principal settlement, surrounded by a rural environment comprised of smaller settlements including Binley Woods, Dunchurch, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Stretton-on-Dunsmore, Wolston and Wolvey. Outside the town, the landscape is predominantly agricultural comprising extensive areas of arable land and improved pasture. The borough is characterised by a lowland, gently undulating landscape which is strongly influenced by the River Avon and River Leam. Notable hills across the borough include Bush Hill, Draycote Hill, Hensborough Hill and Walsgrave Hill. Rugby is centrally located in England and benefits from strong road and rail infrastructure. The M6, M45 and M69 motorways and the West Coast Main Line cross through the borough.

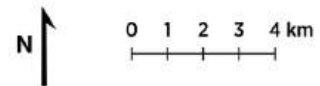
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<sup>3</sup> Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types> [Date Accessed: 20/09/24]



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 Local planning authority boundaries



PROJECT	Rugby Landscape Character Assessment	DRAWN	WE
CLIENT	Rugby Borough Council	CHECKED	ND
TITLE	Local planning authorities	SCALE@A4	1:160000
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Figure 1.1: Rugby Borough and surrounding local planning authorities

## 2 Planning policy

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This study has been undertaken within the context of relevant planning policy. Planning policy and other material considerations are taken from the following:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>4</sup>
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)<sup>5</sup>
- Rugby Borough Local Plan 2011-2031<sup>6</sup>

2.1.2 Further details of these planning policies are provided below.

### 2.2 National Planning Policy Framework

2.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) acts as guidance for local planning authorities, both in plan preparation and making decisions about planning applications. The environmental objective of the NPPF is:

*“to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”*

2.2.2 NPPF paragraphs relevant to landscape character are set out in **Table 2.1**.

**Table 2.1:** NPPF paragraphs relevant to landscape character

<b>Paragraph 135</b>	<i>“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: ...c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);”</i>
<b>Paragraph 187</b>	<i>“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: ...a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan). ...b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.”</i>

<sup>4</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (2024) Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Accessed 17/12/24]

<sup>5</sup> Planning Practice Guidance (2021) Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance> [Accessed on 24/09/24]

<sup>6</sup> Rugby Borough Council (2019) Local Plan 2011-2031. Available at: <https://www.rugby.gov.uk/w/local-plan-2011-2031> [Accessed 24/09/24]

## 2.3 Planning Practice Guidance

2.3.1 The Government publishes Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)<sup>7</sup> to accompany the NPPF. In relation to landscape matters, the Natural Environment PPG provides broad guidance primarily relating to the development of local planning policy and accompanying evidence.

2.3.2 Landscape matters are included as part of the guidance on the natural environment, specifically information about how policies can conserve and enhance landscapes and how the character of landscapes can be assessed.<sup>8</sup>

## 2.4 Rugby Borough Local Plan 2011-2031

2.4.1 Rugby Borough's current Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted in June 2019<sup>9</sup>. The Council is in the process of reviewing the Local Plan. A regulation 18 'issues and options' consultation was carried out between November 2023 and February 2024. Policies from the adopted Local Plan 2011-2031 relating to Landscape Character Assessment are set out below.

### Policy NE3: Landscape Protection and Enhancement

*"New development which positively contributes to landscape character will be permitted.*

*Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:*

- *Integrate landscape planning into the design of development at an early stage;*
- *Consider its landscape context, including the local distinctiveness of the different natural and historic landscapes and character, including tranquillity;*
- *Relate well to local topography and built form and enhance key landscape features, ensuring their long term management and maintenance;*
- *Identify likely visual impacts on the local landscape and townscape and its immediate setting and undertakes appropriate landscaping to reduce these impacts;*
- *Aim to either conserve, enhance or restore important landscape features in accordance with the latest local and national guidance;*
- *Address the importance of habitat biodiversity features, including aged and veteran trees, woodland and hedges and their contribution to landscape character, where possible enhancing and expanding these features through means such as buffering and reconnecting fragmented areas; and*
- *Are sensitive to an area's capacity to change, acknowledge cumulative effects and guard against the potential for coalescence between existing settlements."*

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<sup>7</sup> Planning Practice Guidance (2021) Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance> [Accessed on 17/12/24]

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2018 to 2021) and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. PPG. Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment> [Accessed 17/12/24]

<sup>9</sup> Rugby Borough Council (2019) Local Plan 2011-2031. Available at: <https://www.rugby.gov.uk/w/local-plan-2011-2031> [Accessed 24/09/24]

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### **Policy SDC3: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment**

*“Development will be supported that sustains and enhances the significance of the Borough’s heritage assets including listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, archaeology, historic landscapes and townscapes.*

*Development affecting the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset and its setting will be expected to preserve or enhance its significance.*

#### **a) Understand the Asset**

*Applications with the potential to affect the significance of a heritage asset will be required to provide sufficient information and assessment (such as desk-based appraisals, field evaluation, and historic building reports) of the impacts of the proposal on the significance of heritage assets and their setting.*

*The Warwickshire Historic Environment Record, the Borough’s Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans, the Local List of non-designated heritage assets, the Warwickshire Historic Towns Study and Historic Landscape Characterisation Study are examples of sources of information that will be used to inform the consideration of future development including potential conservation and enhancement measures.*

#### **b) Conserve the Asset**

*Great weight will be given to the conservation of the Borough’s designated heritage assets. Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset must be justified. Proposals causing substantial harm to designated heritage assets will need to demonstrate that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits sufficient to outweigh the harm or loss. Alternatively it must be demonstrated that all of the following apply:*

- *The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- *No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- *Conservation by grant funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- *The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

*Where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.*

*In weighing applications that affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.*

*Non-designated archaeological sites of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments should be considered subject to the criteria for designated heritage assets.”*

# 3 Landscape Character Assessment Methodology

## 3.1 Overview

3.1.1 Landscape Character Assessment is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive (see **Figure 3.1**). This process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment<sup>10</sup>.

3.1.2 The methodology for this study has been derived from aspects of:

- ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual and Impact Assessment Third Edition’ (GLVIA) (2013)<sup>11</sup>
- Landscape Institute (2021) ‘Assessing landscape value outside national designations’ Technical Guidance Note 02/21<sup>12</sup>
- Natural England (2014) ‘An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment’<sup>13</sup>
- Natural England (2019) ‘An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management’<sup>14</sup>
- The Countryside Agency Topic Paper 6 (2002) ‘Techniques and criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity’<sup>15</sup>

3.1.3 The assessment can be summarised as having four key stages:

- 1) Define the purpose, scope and study area for the project
- 2) Desk study
- 3) Field study
- 4) Classification and description of LCAs and LCTs

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<sup>10</sup> Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types> [Date Accessed: 20/09/24]

<sup>11</sup> Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) Abingdon: Routledge

<sup>12</sup> Landscape Institute (2021) ‘Assessing landscape value outside national designations’ TGN 02/21 Available at <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/publication/tgn-02-21-assessing-landscape-value-outside-national-designations/> [Date Accessed: 20/09/24]

<sup>13</sup> Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types> [Date Accessed: 20/09/24]

<sup>14</sup> Natural England (2019) ‘An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management’ Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/817928/landscape-sensitivity-assessment-2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817928/landscape-sensitivity-assessment-2019.pdf) [Date Accessed: 20/09/24]

<sup>15</sup> The Countryside Agency (2002) Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5601625141936128> [Date Accessed: 20/09/24]



3.1.4 Natural England’s 2014 guidance sets out five principles for Landscape Character Assessment:

- 1) Landscape is everywhere and all landscape and seascape has character;
- 2) Landscape occurs at all scales and the process of Landscape Character Assessment can be undertaken at any scale;
- 3) The process of Landscape Character Assessment should involve an understanding of how the landscape is perceived and experienced by people;
- 4) A Landscape Character Assessment can provide a landscape evidence base to inform a range of decisions and applications; and
- 5) A Landscape Character Assessment can provide an integrating spatial framework – a multitude of variables come together to give us our distinctive landscapes.

3.1.5 The process of Landscape Character Assessment, as described in ‘An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment’ is illustrated in **Figure 3.2**.

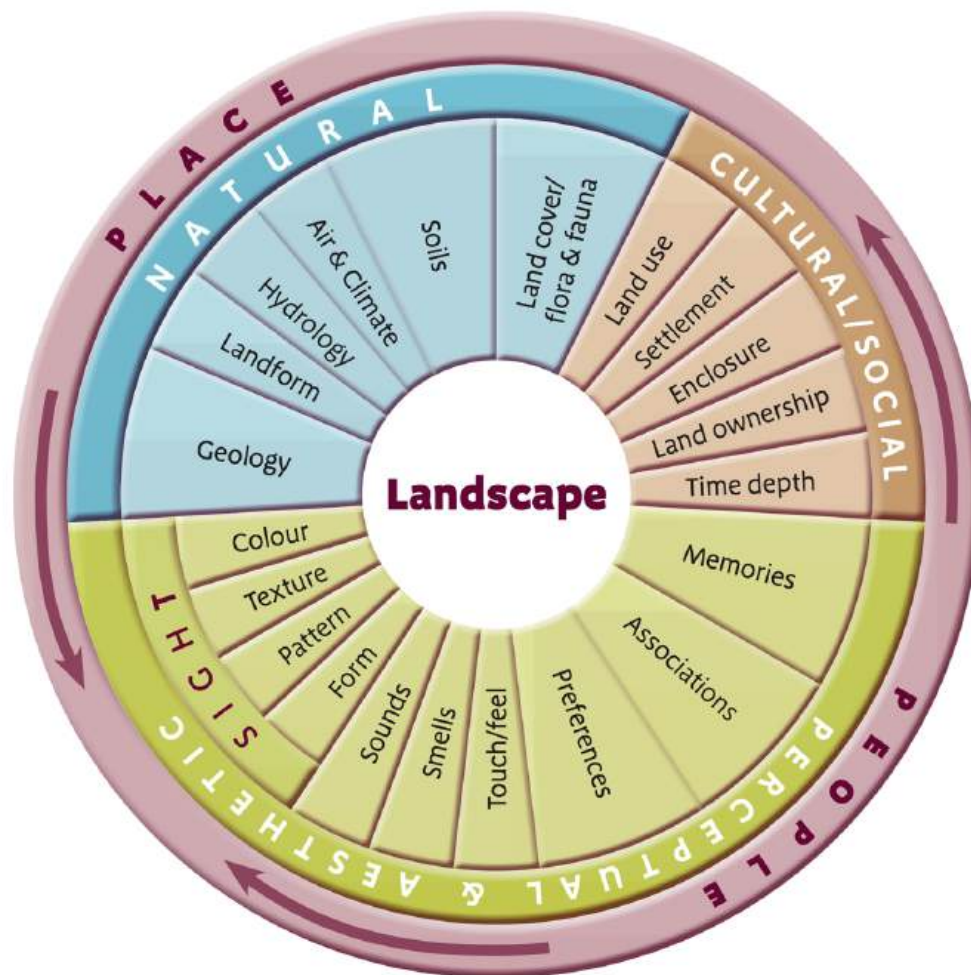


Figure 3.1: What is Landscape?

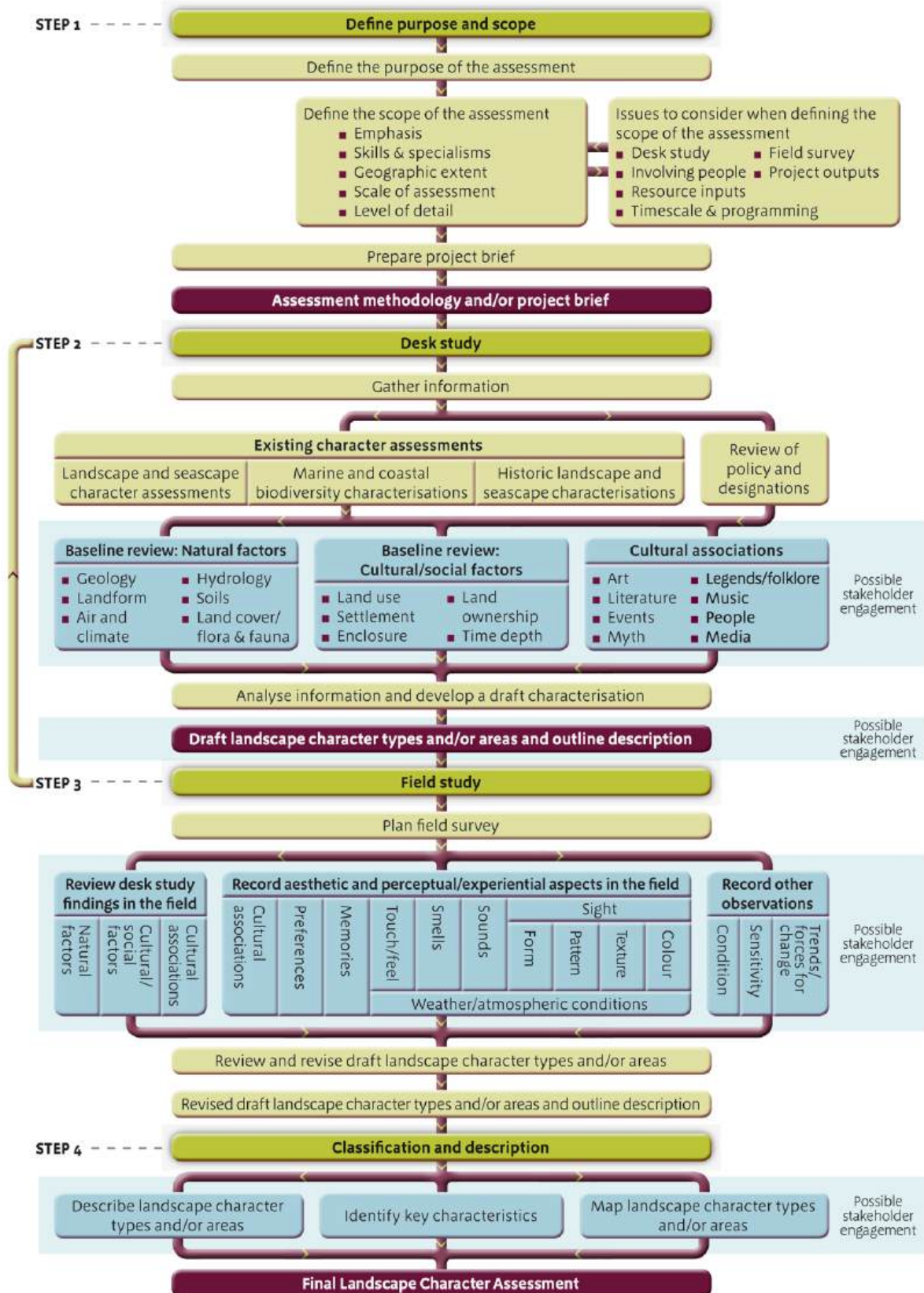


Figure 3.2: Landscape Character Assessment – the process



## 3.2 Define purpose and scope of the project

3.2.1 This study provides an update to the ‘Landscape Assessment of the Borough of Rugby (Sensitivity and Condition Study)’, carried out by the Living Landscapes Project in conjunction with Warwickshire County Council and Rugby Borough Council in 2006.

## 3.3 Desk study

3.3.1 The desktop study stage consists of an information gathering exercise to prepare a baseline review of natural, cultural and social aspects of Rugby Borough. This relies largely on information from the following sources:

- National Character Areas (NCAs) in Rugby Borough: Dunsmore and Feldon, Northamptonshire Uplands and Leicestershire Vales;
- Landscape Assessment (Sensitivity and Condition Study) of the Borough of Rugby, published by Warwickshire County Council (2006);
- Rainsbrook Valley Landscape Sensitivity Study (Warwickshire County Council, 2017) (covering the southern fringe of Rugby town);
- Landscape Sensitivity Study for Binley Woods, Brinklow, Long Lawford, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Stretton-on-Dunsmore, Wolston and Wolvey (Warwickshire County Council, 2016); and
- Rugby Borough Landscape Capacity for Wind Energy Developments (White Consultants, 2011, unpublished).

3.3.2 Spatial GIS data used to inform this Landscape Character Assessment are listed in **Table 3.1**

**Table 3.1:** GIS data used in this Landscape Character Assessment

Dataset	Source
Ancient woodland	Natural England
Built-up areas	Ordnance Survey
Country Parks	Natural England
Flood zones	Environment Agency
Geology	British Geological Survey
Historic environment and heritage assets (listed buildings, scheduled monuments and registered parks and gardens)	Historic England
National Character Areas	Natural England
Nature conservation designations (Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserves)	Natural England
Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Scale Colour Raster	Rugby Borough Council
Priority habitat inventory	Natural England
Public Rights of Way	Rowmaps
Terrain	Ordnance Survey Terrain 50
Watercourses and surface water	Ordnance Survey
Woodland	National Forest Inventory

### 3.4 Field study

3.4.1 As stated in ‘An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment’<sup>16</sup>:

*“the field study is an essential part of the Landscape Character Assessment process. It presents the opportunity to observe and understand how all the factors identified as part of the desk study interact and are perceived and experienced, to give us landscapes of distinct character. It also enables the identification of other factors that are not evident from the desk study and the chance to record aesthetic and perceptual aspects”.*

3.4.2 The guidance goes on to explain why Landscape Character Assessment can be used to inform land use planning and specifically local plans. Landscape is typically appreciated under umbrella headings of (i) Natural, (ii) Cultural and Social, and (iii) Perceptual and Aesthetic factors.

### 3.5 Classification and description of Landscape Character Areas and Types

3.5.1 Landscape classification can be prepared at a variety of scales depending on the purpose and scope of the project. The scale of the area to be assessed determines the likely level at which the differences between homogeneous and distinctive factors are separated to identify character areas.

3.5.2 The Landscape Character Assessment guidance from Natural England<sup>17</sup> states that this part of the process deals with the final classification and description of LCAs and LCTs, and explains:

- The difference between LCAs and LCTs, and their use;
- Classification at different scales;
- Involvement of people;
- Boundary confirmation;
- Naming LCAs and LCTs;
- Describing landscape character; and
- Mapping LCAs and/or LCTs.

3.5.3 Overall, the landscape classification was informed by these stages which were used to define areas of distinct, recognisable and consistent character, and group areas of similar character together. LCAs do not, generally, include main settlements, although they may wash over rural dwellings and farmsteads.

3.5.4 The Landscape Assessment (Sensitivity and Condition Study) of the borough of Rugby (2006) identified LCAs and LCTs which have been reviewed and updated.

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<sup>16</sup> Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types> [Date Accessed: 20/09/24]

<sup>17</sup> Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types> [Date Accessed: 20/09/24]

### 3.6 Definitions

3.6.1 The definitions presented in **Table 3.2** have been reproduced from Natural England's Landscape Character Assessment Guidance (2014)<sup>18</sup> and are used throughout this report.

*Table 3.2: Natural England (2014) definitions*

Landscape Character Areas*	These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type. Each will have its own individual character and identity, even though it shares the same generic characteristics with other areas of the same type.
Landscape Character Assessment	This is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive. This process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment.
Landscape Character Types*	These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historical land use, and settlement pattern.
Landscape Quality (or condition)**	This is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.
Landscape Value**	The relative value or importance attached to a landscape (often as a basis for designation or recognition), which expresses national or local consensus, because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations or other conservation issues.
Sensitivity ***	A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor.
Susceptibility ***	The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences.

Sources:

\* The Countryside Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (CAX 84), the Countryside Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage, April 2002.

\*\* The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2002), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Second Edition, London: Spon Press.

\*\*\* Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition, London: Routledge.

<sup>18</sup> Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types> [Date Accessed: 20/09/24]

## 4 The landscape of Rugby Borough

### 4.1 Natural factors

#### Landform and geology

- 4.1.1 The borough of Rugby is characterised by a lowland, gently undulating landscape which is strongly influenced by the River Avon and River Leam (see **Figure 4.1**). The topography gradually rises and falls between the River Avon and River Leam, to the west of the town of Rugby. The topography rises to the north of the River Avon towards a rolling plateau, comprising an area of high ground between the town of Rugby and Hinckley to the north. This plateau forms the south western section of the Leicestershire Wolds. The highest point in the borough is at Bush Hill (163m AOD) in the far south, just to the west of Flecknoe. The rising topography in the south of the borough forms part of the Ironstone Wolds, a hilly region in Northamptonshire. Other notable hills within the borough include Draycote Hill (100m AOD), Hensborough Hill (113m AOD) and Walsgrave Hill (92m AOD). The bedrock geology (at 1:625,000 scale) of the borough mostly comprises Triassic rocks (undifferentiated), mudstone, siltstone and sandstone and lias group, mudstone, siltstone, limestone and sandstone. There is also a small area of Triassic rocks (undifferentiated), sandstone and conglomerate, interbedded, to the west of the borough<sup>19</sup>.

#### Hydrology

- 4.1.2 Numerous watercourses flow through the borough of Rugby (see **Figure 4.1**). Most notably, the River Avon flows in a westerly direction across the central area of the borough, through the town of Rugby towards Long Lawford, Wolston and Ryton-on-Dunsmore. The River Avon is joined by tributaries including Clifton Brook, the River Swift and Sow Brook. The River Leam flows in a westerly direction across the southern area and is joined by tributaries including Millholme Brook and the River Itchen at Marton. The River Anker originates in the northern area of the borough, near Wolvey and flows in a north-westerly direction towards Nuneaton. There are also canals within the borough. The Oxford Canal connects the town of Rugby with Coventry, the Grand Union Canal crosses through the south of the borough and the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal crosses through the north of the borough. Water bodies in the borough include Draycote Water (244ha) located to the south-west of the town of Rugby, Coombe Pool (31ha) located to the east of the Coventry urban area and wetlands at Brandon Marsh Nature Reserve.

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<sup>19</sup> BGS (2024) GeoIndex (onshore). Available at: <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geoindex-onshore/> [Accessed 25/09/24]

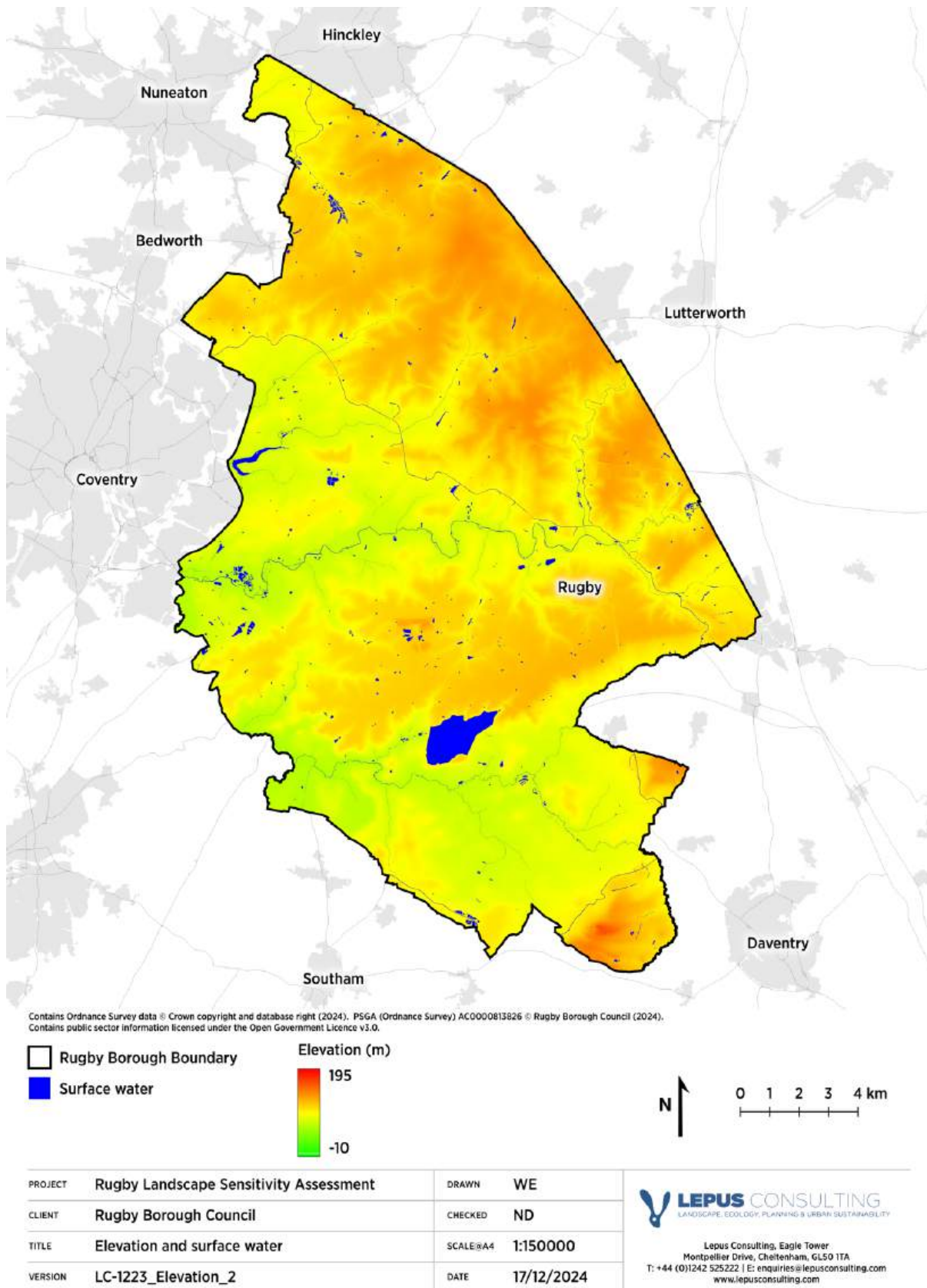


Figure 4.1: Elevation, watercourses, surface water and flood zone 3

## Land cover and biodiversity

- 4.1.3 There are seven SSSIs in the borough of Rugby. These are Brandon Marsh, Coombe Pool, Draycote Meadows, Ryton and Brandon Gravel Pits, Ryton Wood, Stockton Railway Cutting and Quarry and Wolston Gravel Pit (see **Figure 4.2**). There are six LNRs in the borough. These are Ashlawn Cutting, Cock Robin Wood, Linnell Road, Newbold Quarry Park, Stockton Railway Cutting and Swift Valley (see **Figure 4.2**). No European sites are located within the borough (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas or Ramsar sites). Priority habitats in the borough (Natural England's Priority Habitat Inventory<sup>20</sup>) are listed in **Table 4.1** and presented on the map in **Figure 4.2**.

**Table 4.1: Priority habitats in Rugby (Natural England's Priority Habitat Inventory)**

Priority habitat	Area (ha) within Rugby	Percentage of Rugby (35,358ha)
Deciduous woodland	1185.8	3.4%
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	211.1	0.6%
Good quality semi-improved grassland	218.7	0.6%
Lowland meadows	37.5	0.1%
Traditional orchards	15.2	0.04%
Lowland fens	4	0.01%
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	1.3	0.004%
Reedbeds	0.6	0.002%
Lowland calcareous grassland	0.3	0.001%

- 4.1.4 Broadleaved, coniferous and mixed woodlands cover 1,947ha (OS woodland data), which is 5.5% of the borough. This calculation excludes small areas of woodland and small clearings in woodland are included<sup>21</sup>. The National Forest Inventory (NFI)<sup>22</sup> covers any forest or woodland in Great Britain of at least 0.5ha in area, with a minimum width of 20m, and that has at least 20% tree canopy cover. NFI data classifies woodland into types. Woodland types in Rugby are listed in **Table 4.2**. There are 466ha of ancient woodland in the borough and the largest areas are found in the central western area at New Close Wood, Birchley Wood, Brandon Wood and Ryton Wood.

**Table 4.2: National Forest Inventory (2022) woodland types in Rugby**

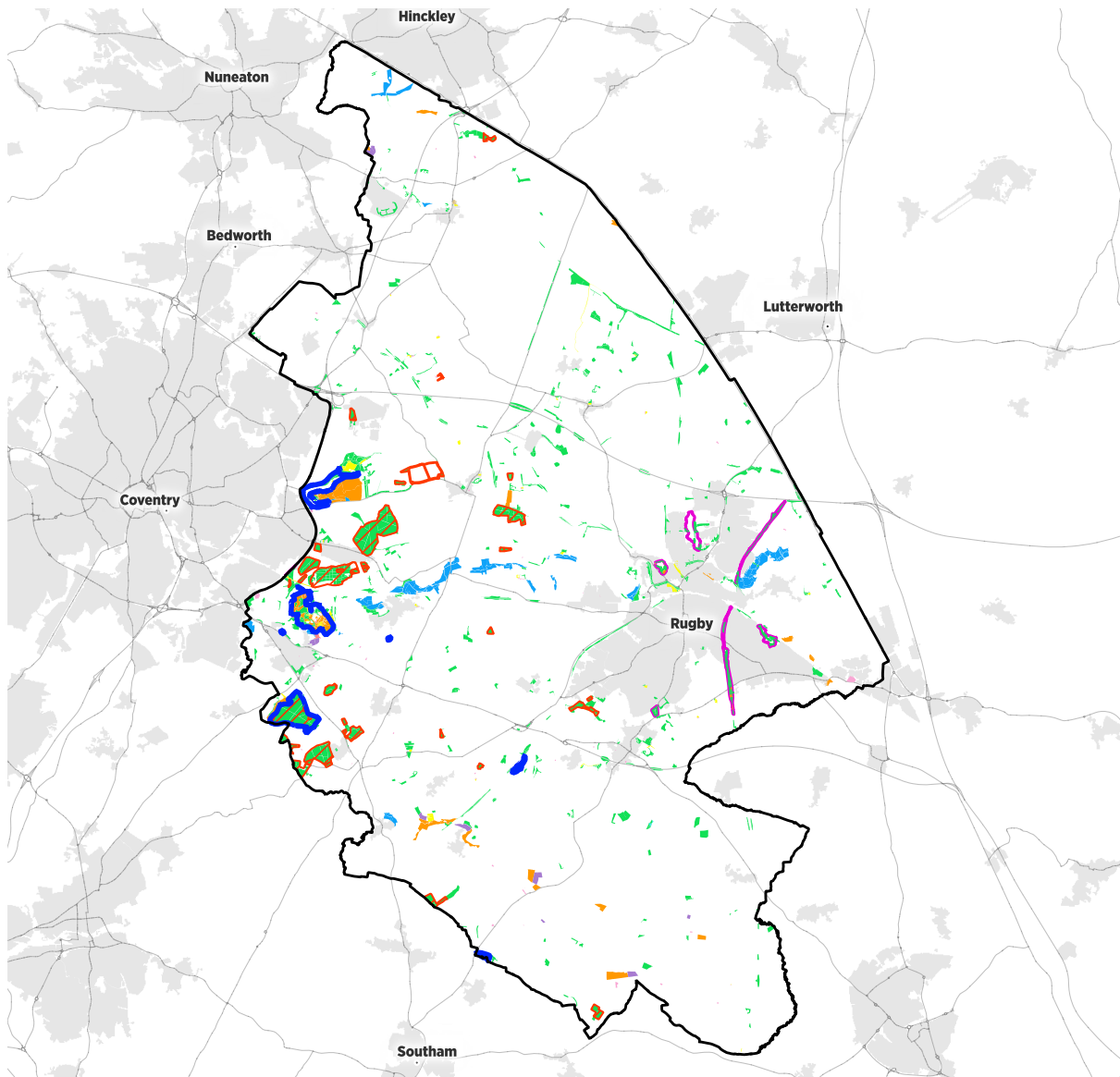
Woodland type	Area (ha) within Rugby	Percentage of Rugby (35,358ha)
Broadleaved	1278.3	3.6%
Assumed woodland	200.1	0.6%
Conifer	78.8	0.2%
Young trees	71.9	0.2%
Felled	31.3	0.1%
Mixed mainly conifer	14.2	0.04%
Ground prep	13.5	0.04%
Mixed mainly broadleaved	3.5	0.01%

<sup>20</sup> Natural England (2024) Priority Habitats Inventory (England). Available at: <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Defra::priority-habitats-inventory-england/about> [Accessed 26/09/24]

<sup>21</sup> OS (2024) OS OpenMap – Local. Available at: <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/products/os-open-map-local> [Accessed 26/09/24]

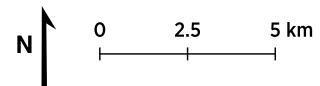
<sup>22</sup> Forest Research (2024) National Forest Inventory. Available at: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/national-forest-inventory/> [Accessed 26/09/24]





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- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Rugby Borough                              | Lowland calcareous grassland                    |
| Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) | Lowland fens                                    |
| Local Nature Reserve (LNR)                 | Lowland meadows                                 |
| Ancient Woodland                           | No main habitat but additional habitats present |
| <b>Priority Habitat</b>                    | Purple moor grass and rush pastures             |
| Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh       | Reedbeds  |
| Deciduous woodland                         | Traditional orchard                             |
| Good quality semi-improved grassland       |   |



PROJECT	Rugby Borough Local Plan Landscape Character Assessment	DRAWN	WE
CLIENT	Rugby Borough Council	CHECKED	ND
TITLE	Rugby Designations and Priority Habitats	SCALE@A4	1:163200
VERSION	LC-1223_Designations & Priority Habitats	DATE	27/09/2024

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Figure 4.2: Nature conservation designations and priority habitats in Rugby (Natural England's Priority Habitat Inventory)

## 4.2 Cultural and social factors

### Land use, settlement and infrastructure

- 4.2.1 Rugby is a market town and also the principal settlement, surrounded by a rural environment comprised of smaller settlements including Binley Woods, Dunchurch, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Stretton-on-Dunsmore, Wolston and Wolvey. Outside the town, the landscape is predominantly agricultural comprising extensive areas of arable land and improved pasture.
- 4.2.2 Rugby is centrally located in England and benefits from strong road and rail infrastructure. The M6, M45 and M69 motorways cross through the borough and the A5 road traverses the eastern boundary. The West Coast Main Line serves Rugby Railway Station which connects London to Birmingham. Large warehouses and distribution centres are found in the area including at Swift Valley Industrial Estate, Rugby Gateway and Central Park which are situated to the north of the Rugby urban area, near M6 motorway junction 1.
- 4.2.3 The Birmingham Green Belt covers approximately half of the borough. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Urban sprawl is a phenomenon whereby cities expand outwards into neighbouring countryside, which eventually results in towns and cities merging and the valuable green space between them being damaged or lost altogether<sup>23</sup>.
- 4.2.4 Several golf courses are found across the borough including Rugby Golf Club, Leam Valley Golf Centre, Ansty Golf Club and Bramcote Waters Golf Club. Five Country Parks are located within the borough: Coombe Park, Draycote Water, Newbold Quarry, Ryton Pools and Swift Valley. Country Parks are typically located near urban areas and provide green spaces for the enjoyment of the nature and the outdoors. No land owned by the National Trust or the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is found in the borough.
- 4.2.5 The borough is crossed by a strong network of Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) with footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways which connect the settlements across the countryside. Recreational routes are also present such as the Coventry Way, Shakespeare's Avon Way, the Oxford Canal Walk, the Grand Union Canal Walk and the Twelve O'Clock Ride at Coombe Abbey.

### Historic environment and heritage assets

- 4.2.6 There are 27 scheduled monuments, seven Grade I, 44 Grade II\* and 458 Grade II listed buildings in the borough. There are also 19 conservation areas<sup>24</sup> and five RPGs. These are Coombe Abbey (Grade II\*), Newnham Paddox (Grade II), Dunchurch Lodge (Grade II), Ryton House (Grade II) and Bilton Grange (Grade II) (see **Figure 4.3**).

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<sup>23</sup> CPRE (2023) All you need to know about the Green Belt. Available at: <https://www.cpre.org.uk/explainer/all-you-need-to-know-about-the-green-belt/> [Accessed 26/09/24]

<sup>24</sup> Rugby Borough Council (2023) Conservation areas and character appraisals. Available at: <https://www.rugby.gov.uk/w/conservation-areas-and-character-appraisals#character-appraisals> [Accessed 24/09/24]



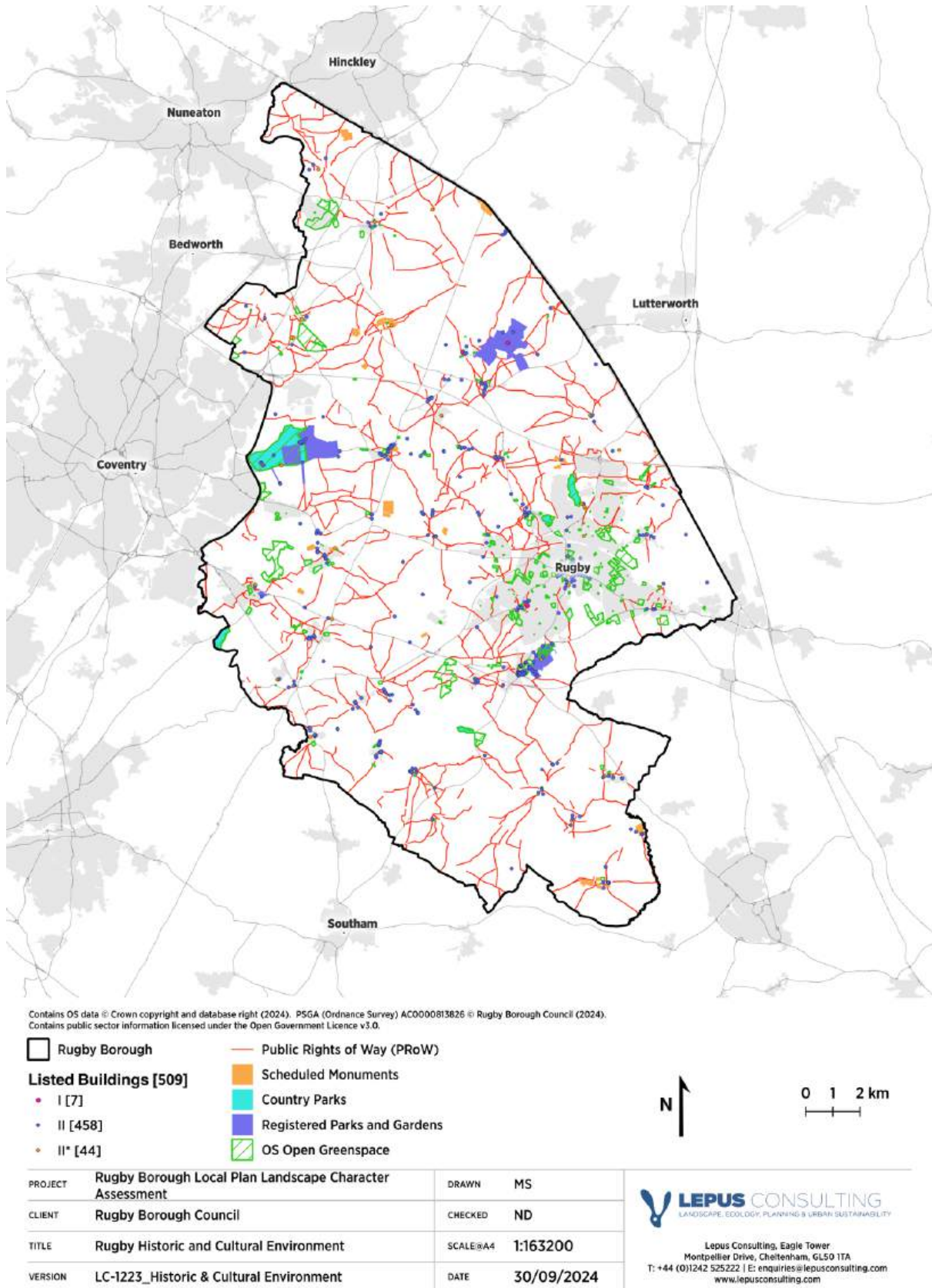


Figure 4.3: Historic environment and recreation assets in Rugby

## 5 Classification of Landscape Character Areas and Types

### 5.1 National Character Areas

5.1.1 At a national level, landscape character has been defined by the assessment work of Natural England, which has divided England into areas of similar landscape character called National Character Areas (NCAs). There are four NCAs located within the borough of Rugby:

- Dunsmore and Feldon NCA<sup>25</sup>;
- Leicestershire Vales NCA<sup>26</sup>;
- Mease/Sence Lowlands NCA<sup>27</sup>; and
- Northamptonshire Uplands NCA<sup>28</sup>.

5.1.2 The Arden NCA intersects the boundary of Rugby by a very small margin (see **Figure 5.1**). Brief descriptions of the four NCAs within Rugby are provided below.

#### **Dunsmore and Feldon NCA**

*“Dunsmore and Feldon is predominantly a rural, agricultural landscape, crossed by numerous small rivers and tributaries and varying between a more open character in the Feldon area and a wooded character in Dunsmore. The name Feldon refers to the old English term feld meaning ‘open cleared land’ and expresses the contrast, in medieval times, with the more wooded Arden area to the north-west. The area is mainly within Warwickshire, with the southern boundary delineated by the steep limestone escarpment of the Cotswolds, and the northern boundary by the Leicestershire Vales. To the west lie the well-wooded pastures of Arden, together with the Severn and Avon Vales, while the undulating pastures and low hills of the Northamptonshire Uplands form the eastern border.”*

#### **Leicestershire Vales NCA**

*“This National Character Area (NCA) extends from Hinckley in the west to Leicester in the north-east. It stretches southwards to Market Harborough and Lutterworth. It shares characteristics with the neighbouring Northamptonshire Vales NCA.”*

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<sup>25</sup> Natural England (2024) Dunsmore and Feldon NCA. Available at: <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/dunsmore-and-feldon/> [Accessed 24/09/24]

<sup>26</sup> Natural England (2024) Leicestershire Vales NCA. Available at: <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/leicestershire-vales/> [Accessed 24/09/24]

<sup>27</sup> Natural England (2024) Mease/Sence Lowlands NCA. Available at: <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/mease-sence-lowlands/> [Accessed 24/09/24]

<sup>28</sup> Natural England (2024) Northamptonshire Uplands NCA. Available at: <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/northamptonshire-uplands/> [Accessed 24/09/24]

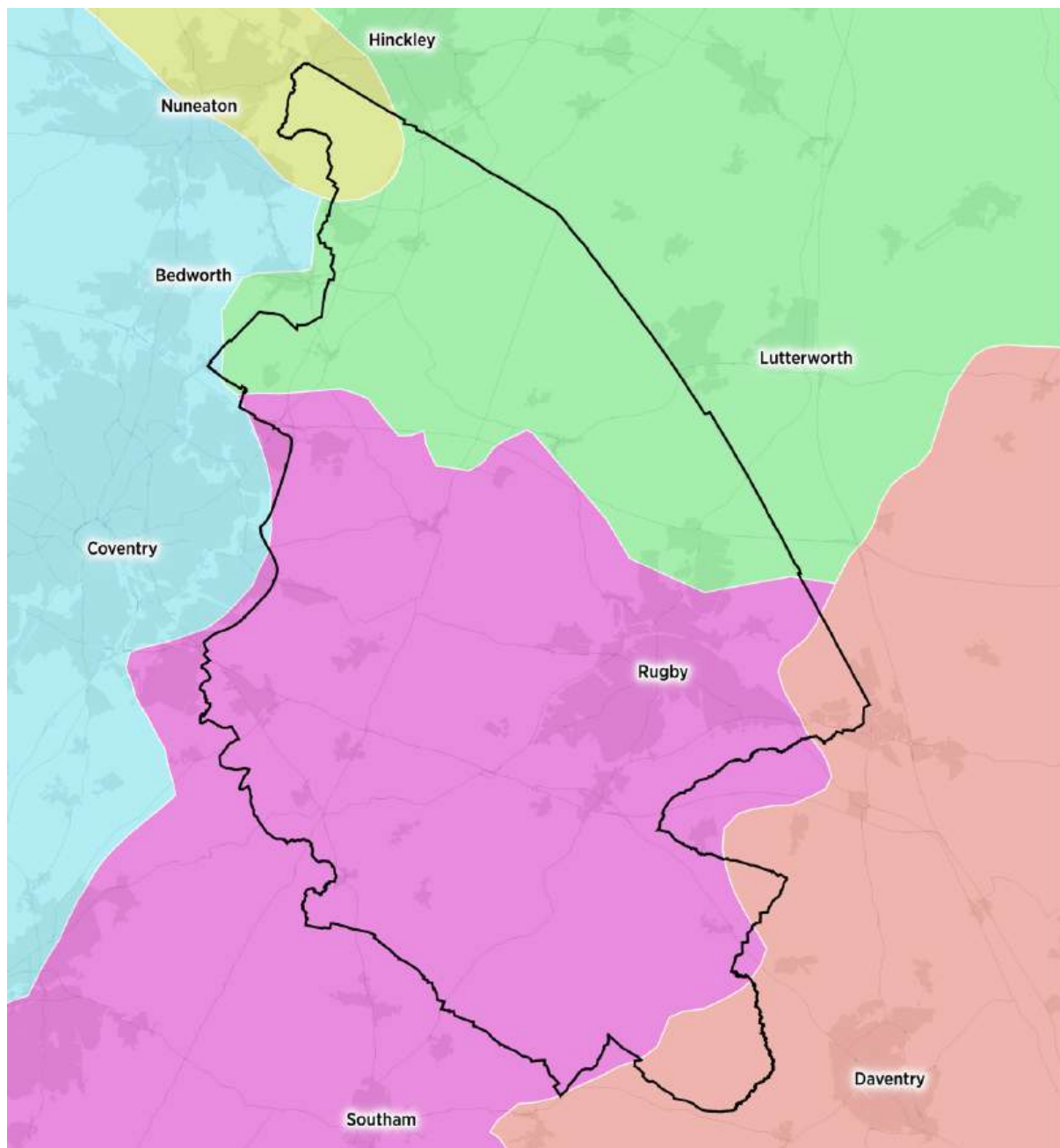
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### **Mease/Sence Lowlands NCA**

*“The Mease/Sence Lowlands are a gently rolling agricultural landscape centred around the rivers Mease, Sence and Anker. The area extends across: Derbyshire in the north, Warwickshire in the south, Leicestershire in the east and Staffordshire in the west. With its towns lying on the fringes of the National Character Area (NCA), only a very small percentage of it is urban. These lowlands retain a rural, remote character, with small villages, red brick farmsteads and occasional historic parkland and country houses. The National Forest extends into the area north of the River Mease.”*

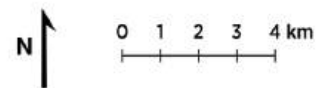
### **Northamptonshire Uplands NCA**

*“The Northamptonshire Uplands National Character Area (NCA) is an area of gently rolling, limestone hills and valleys capped by ironstone-bearing sandstone and clay Lias, with many long, low ridgelines. Rivers flow out from the NCA in all directions, including several major rivers – the Cherwell, Avon, Welland, Tove, Ouse, Nene and Ise. While there are areas of differing character, there are strong unifying landscape features across the Northamptonshire Uplands, most importantly the extensive areas of open field systems with ridge and furrow and the earthworks of deserted and shrunken settlements which occur throughout. Other features include the strong, mostly Parliamentary enclosure pattern with high, wide, A-shaped hedgerows bounding the largely rectilinear fields with their frequent mature ash and oak trees; the many country houses and their associated extensive areas of historic and nationally important designed parkland landscapes; the distinctive ironstone, cob and brick nucleated settlements with their large stone churches, often with prominent steeples; the narrow lanes with very wide grassy verges; and the small, scattered but prominent broadleaved woods and coverts. There are also wide, long-distance views from the edges and across the ridgetops throughout the area.”*



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- Rugby Borough Boundary
- Arden
- Dunsmore and Feldon
- Leicestershire Vales
- Mease/Sence Lowlands
- Northamptonshire Uplands



PROJECT	Rugby Landscape Sensitivity Assessment	DRAWN	WE
CLIENT	Rugby Borough Council	CHECKED	ND
TITLE	National Character Areas	SCALE@A4	1:150000
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Figure 5.1: NCAs in Rugby Borough

## 5.2 Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines (1993)

5.2.1 The Warwickshire Landscapes Project was a partnership between Warwickshire County Council and the Countryside Commission. The project was set up in 1987 to consider the unique and distinctive landscapes of Warwickshire, and to develop a new methodology for landscape assessment tailored to the needs of lowland England. This project resulted in the production of the Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines (1993)<sup>29</sup> which identified seven broad regional character areas in Warwickshire; Arden, Avon Valley, Cotswolds, Dunsmore, Feldon, High Cross Plateau and Mease Lowlands.

## 5.3 Landscape Assessment of the Borough of Rugby (Sensitivity and Condition Study) (2006)

5.3.1 The Landscape Assessment of the Borough of Rugby (Sensitivity and Condition Study) was carried out by the Living Landscapes Project in conjunction with Warwickshire County Council and Rugby Borough Council in 2006. The aim of the 2006 study was to examine the character of the landscape around Rugby, its sensitivity to change, the condition of the countryside abutting Rugby's urban fringe and beyond, and to demonstrate how the outcomes could be used as a decision tool in the development planning process. The landscape character analysis identified a number of Landscape Description Units (LDUs) within the Rugby Borough. These LDUs were then grouped together to form LCTs. LCTs combine to form LCAs, four of which occur in Rugby Borough (2006): Dunsmore, Feldon, High Cross Plateau, and Mease Lowlands.

## 5.4 Landscape Character Areas and Types

5.4.1 The boundaries and descriptions of the LCAs and LCTs identified in the old classification (2006 study) form the basis for the new classification. The new LCAs and LCTs are listed in **Table 5.1** and presented on the map in **Figure 5.2**.

*Table 5.1: LCAs and LCTs in Rugby Borough*

LCA	Change from 2006 classification	LCT	Change from 2006 classification
Dunsmore	Updated urban area extents	Plateau Farmlands	Updated urban area extents
		Plateau Fringe	Updated urban area extents
		Dunsmore Parklands	Updated urban area extents
Feldon	Updated urban area extents	Ironstone Fringe	Removed part near Hillmorton which is now strongly defined by new development. Updated urban area extents
		Vale Farmlands	Updated urban area extents
		Lias Village Farmlands	Updated urban area extents
High Cross Plateau	Updated urban area extents	Open Plateau	Now extends into the previous Mease Lowlands LCA.
		Village Farmlands	Updated urban area extents
Mease Lowlands	Removed and combined into High Cross Plateau LCA	Estate Farmlands	Removed and combined into High Cross Plateau LCA
n/a	n/a	Urban areas	Updated urban area extents

<sup>29</sup> Warwickshire County Council (1993) Landscape architecture service - landscape character and guidelines. Available at: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/landscapeguidelines> [Accessed 27/09/24]



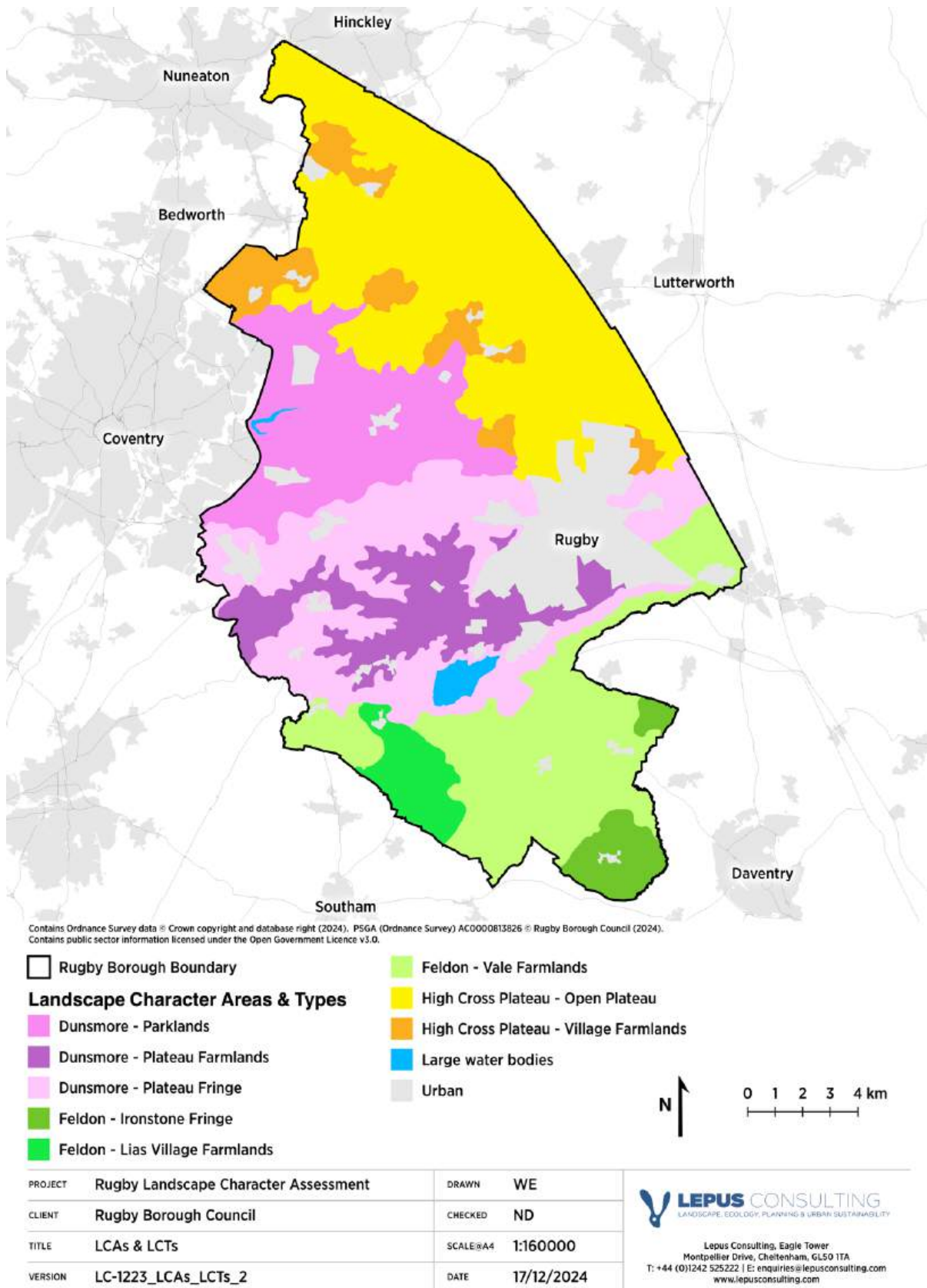


Figure 5.2: LCTs in Rugby Borough

# 6 Dunsmore Landscape Character Area

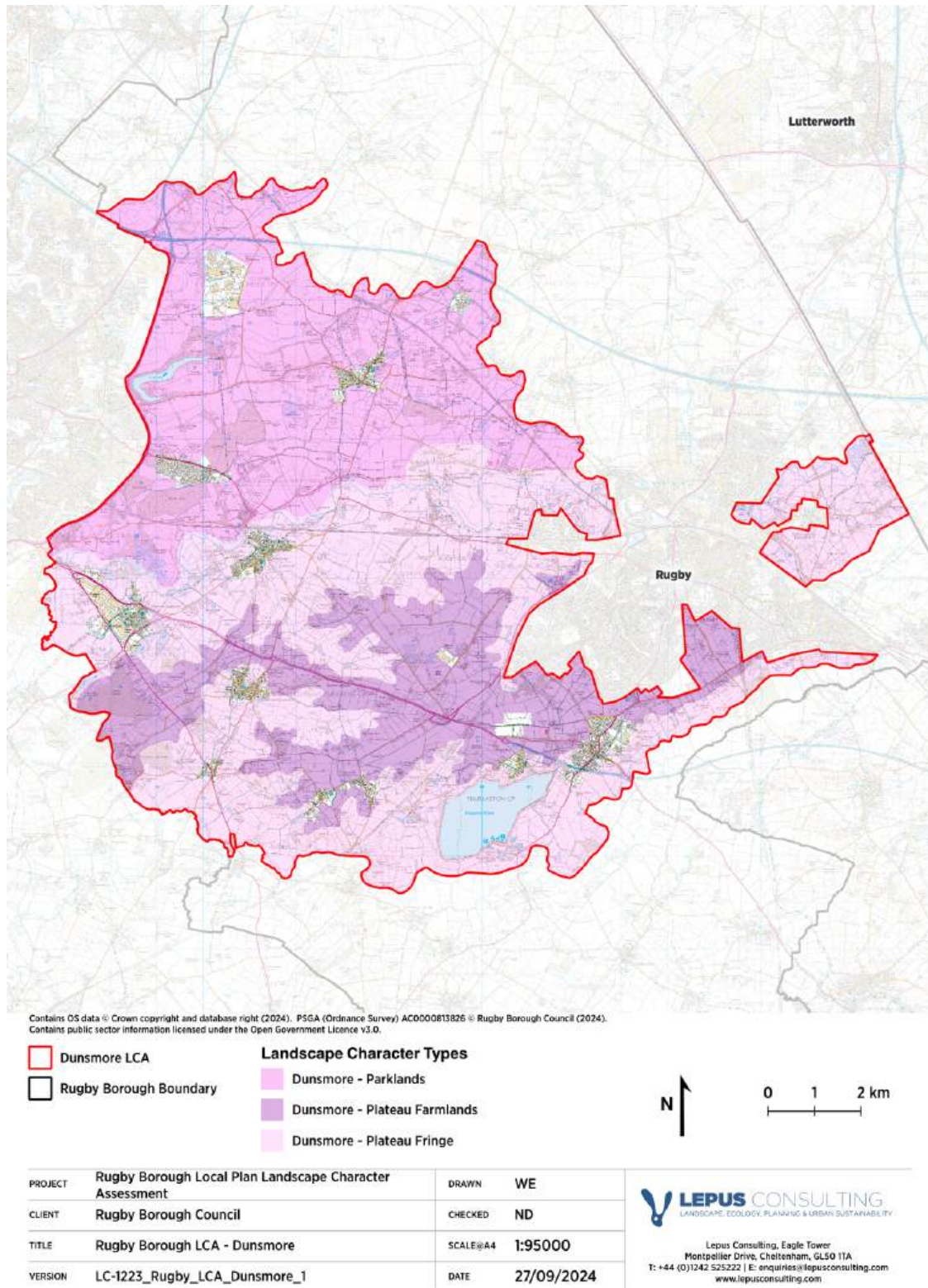


Figure 6.1: Dunsmore LCA



# Dunsmore Landscape Character Area



Coombe Abbey, designated as a Country Park and Registered Park and Garden (Parklands)



Eastern area of Coombe Pool (Parklands)



View towards the east from Coome Abbey Country Park (Parklands)



View towards the east from Coome Abbey Country Park (Parklands)



Draycote Reservoir (Plateau Farmlands)



View of Long Lawford (Plateau Fringe)



# Dunsmore Landscape Character Area



View of Dunsmore from Birdingbury Road (Plateau Fringe)



View of arable fields and warehousing development from the A4071 (Plateau Fringe)



View from Brinklow Castle (Parklands)



View from Peter Hall Lane (Parklands)



View of arable fields adjacent to the A4071 (Plateau Farmlands)



View of woodland towards Middlemarch Business Park (Plateau Farmlands)

## 6.1 Description

- 6.1.1 The Dunsmore LCA is centrally located within Rugby Borough. It is bordered by Leamington Spa, Coventry and Rugby, with its northern boundary meeting the Leicestershire Vales. The character of Dunsmore is shaped by its rich historical and ecological features and strongly influenced by the area's geology.
- 6.1.2 This area, with its intensively farmed and partially urbanised landscape, is marked by varied rolling topography and characterised by low glacial plateau and meandering river valleys. The widespread presence of glacial sands and gravels has contributed to its historical association with heathland and common land, despite little of the health remaining today. However, remnant heathy vegetation and frequent 'Heath' place names reflect the area's strong regional identity. Semi-natural habitats are limited to small pockets of unimproved grassland, wetland areas and flood meadows along river corridors, as well as ancient woodland complexes to the west. These ancient woodlands, mature hedgerow oaks and historic parklands, give the region a well-wooded appearance.
- 6.1.3 The River Swift rises in south Leicestershire, flowing through Lutterworth before joining the River Avon in Rugby. The Avon, a key tributary of the River Severn, runs through the heart of the Dunsmore LCA in a south-westerly direction, with several smaller tributaries feeding into it. The area is defined by its gently meandering river valleys, pollard willows, streamside alders and patches of scrubland. Heavy clay loams around the poorly defined flood plains support arable farming right up to the water's edge.

## 6.2 Key characteristics

### Natural

- **Soils:** Light sandy soils and poorly drained clay loams support mixed farming and intensive large arable fields.
- **Geology:** Pleistocene gravel overlying the Jurassic and Triassic mudstone and limestone bedrock.
- **Hydrology:** Canals (Oxford Canal and Grand Union Canal) and the Draycote Reservoir provide important riparian habitats and recreational activities including fishing, walking, cycling, windsurfing and sailing. The River Avon, River Stour and River Leam feed the Draycote Reservoir which provides drinking water for communities within the Dunsmore and Feldon and Arden NCAs.
- **Land cover/flora & fauna:** Woodland cover is low, and primarily concentrated to the west, with areas of ancient woodland which support Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Molluscs (*Mollusca*) and Fritillary butterflies (*Argynni*). The Princethorpe Woodlands are the most important cluster of ancient woodlands in Warwickshire and an outstanding example of a large area of semi-natural habitat. Priority habitats found within this LCA are listed in **Table 6.1**.
- **Landform:** The Dunsmore Plateau stretches ten miles to the west of Rugby and reaches 120m AOD near Dunchurch.

### Cultural/social

- **Settlement:** Settlements including Leamington Spa, Coventry and Rugby have a strong influence on the area, met with key transport infrastructure and large warehousing units. Traditional villages within the borough are constructed from local materials such as red brick and Lias limestone.
- **Land use:** Predominantly nucleated settlement pattern with a low density of isolated farmsteads and barns. The landscape is intensively farmed.
- **Enclosure:** The landscape features large fields with regular or rectilinear shapes, although some smaller fields also feature.

### Perceptual & aesthetic

- **Sounds:** Key transport infrastructure, urban development and large warehousing units have a strong influence on the aural quality of Dunsmore.
- **Sights:** The landscape features arable fields alongside urban development.

*Table 6.1: Summary of priority habitats located within the Dunsmore LCA*

Priority Habitat	Area (ha)	% of LCA
Deciduous woodland	818.2	5.9
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	182.1	1.3
Good quality semi-improved grassland	153.9	1.1
Lowland meadows	13.1	0.1
Traditional orchard	5.7	0.04
Lowland fens	4.0	0.03
Lowland calcareous grassland	0	0
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	0	0
Reedbeds	0	0

## 6.3 Landscape Character Types

6.3.1 The Dunsmore LCA comprises three distinct LCTs: Dunsmore Parklands, Plateau Farmlands, and Plateau Fringe, as described below.

### Dunsmore Parklands

6.3.2 Dunsmore Parklands is an enclosed, gently rolling estate landscape defined by its well-wooded character, with woodland edges, parkland and belts of trees. The large and poorly defined field pattern creates middle distance views to wooded skylines. Belts of mature trees associated with estate lands, mature hedgerows and roadside trees, typically Oak, create a sequence of linked wooded spaces. This helps to create a sense of scale and enclosure in an otherwise intensively farmed landscape.

### Plateau Farmlands

6.3.3 Plateau Farmlands is characterised by its 'empty' landscape with few roads and settlements. The gently rolling topography of the low glacial plateau is characterised by sandy soils, large areas of ancient woodland, and remnant heathland in woodlands and roadside verges. The regular geometric field pattern is defined by closely cropped hawthorn hedges.

## Plateau Fringe

- 6.3.4 Plateau Fringe is a variable, farmed landscape with a gently undulating topography of low rounded hills and narrow meandering river valleys of the Avon and Leam. The Plateau Fringe is characterised by its large arable fields and poorly defined field patterns, interspersed with pockets of permanent pasture, river meadowland and small hedged fields. Small, nucleated villages are a characteristic feature, comprising of loose clusters of dwellings and isolated, brick built farmsteads.

## 6.4 Designations and policy

### Natural

- Brandon Marsh SSSI: a diverse complex of flooded gravel pits, fen and scrub, important for breeding and wintering birds such as Grebe (*Podicipedidae*) and Kingfisher (*Alcedinidae*)<sup>30</sup>.
- Combe Pool SSSI: a critical ornithological site for breeding Herons (*Ardea cinerea*) and wintering Wildfowl (*Anatidae*), with woodlands supporting a variety of breeding birds including Whitethroat Warbler (*Sylvia curruca*)<sup>31</sup>.
- Draycote Meadows SSSI: a grassland community characterised by Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*) and Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), with a rich butterfly population<sup>32</sup>.
- Ryton and Brandon Gravel Pits SSSI: of significant stratigraphic importance, linking the Quaternary fluvial sequences<sup>33</sup>.
- Ryton Wood SSSI: an example of Oak woodland (*Quercus robur*) supporting a diverse range of birds including Warblers<sup>34</sup>.
- Wolston Gravel Pit SSSI: a reference site for Pleistocene studies<sup>35</sup>.
- Two Local Nature Reserves (LNR): Cock Robin Wood and Ashlawn Cutting (southern half).

### Cultural/social

- Three Grade I listed buildings; the Church of St Margaret, Combe Abbey and the Church of St Botolph at the urban edge of Rugby town.
- Eleven SMs, such as Brandon Castle which is situated adjacent to St Margaret's Church and includes 13<sup>th</sup> Century standing and buried remains of Brandon Castle. The Castle survives well and is unencumbered by modern development.

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<sup>30</sup> Natural England (1973) Brandon Marsh SSSI Citation. Available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1001151.pdf> [Accessed 24/09/24]

<sup>31</sup> Natural England (1973) Combe Pool SSSI Citation. Available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1001242.pdf> [Accessed 24/09/24]

<sup>32</sup> Natural England (1973) Draycote Meadows SSSI Citation. Available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1001298.pdf> [Accessed 24/09/24]

<sup>33</sup> Natural England (1991) Ryton and Brandon Gravel Pits SSSI Citation. Available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1002826.pdf> [Accessed 25/09/24]

<sup>34</sup> Natural England (1973) Ryton Wood SSSI Citation. Available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1002217.pdf> [Accessed 25/09/24]

<sup>35</sup> Natural England (1973) Wolston Gravel Pit SSSI Citation. Available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1003027.pdf> [Accessed 25/09/24]



- Four registered parks and gardens, including Ryton House (19<sup>th</sup> Century gardens and villa), Combe Abbey (18<sup>th</sup> Century park and country house), Dunchurch Lodge (early 20<sup>th</sup> Century gardens and country house) and Bilton Grange (mid Victorian gardens and country house).
- Three Country Parks; Ryton, Draycote Water and Coombe Abbey.
- Recreational routes cross through this LCA including Shakespeare’s Avon Way, Coventry Way, the Oxford Canal Walk and the Twelve O’Clock Ride at Coombe Abbey.

6.4.1 Key designations located within this LCA are listed in **Table 6.2**.

*Table 6.2: Summary of key designations located within the Dunsmore LCA*

Designation	Count	Approximate area (ha)	% of LCA
National nature conservation sites (SSSI)	6	240.1ha	1.7
Scheduled monuments	11	44.6	0.3
Registered Parks & Gardens	4	386.6	2.8
Listed Buildings	214	n/a	n/a
Grade I Listed Buildings	3	n/a	n/a
Ancient woodland	n/a	441.7	3.2
Country Parks	3	184.7	1.3

## 6.5 Forces for change

6.5.1 Dunsmore’s landscape faces several pressures:

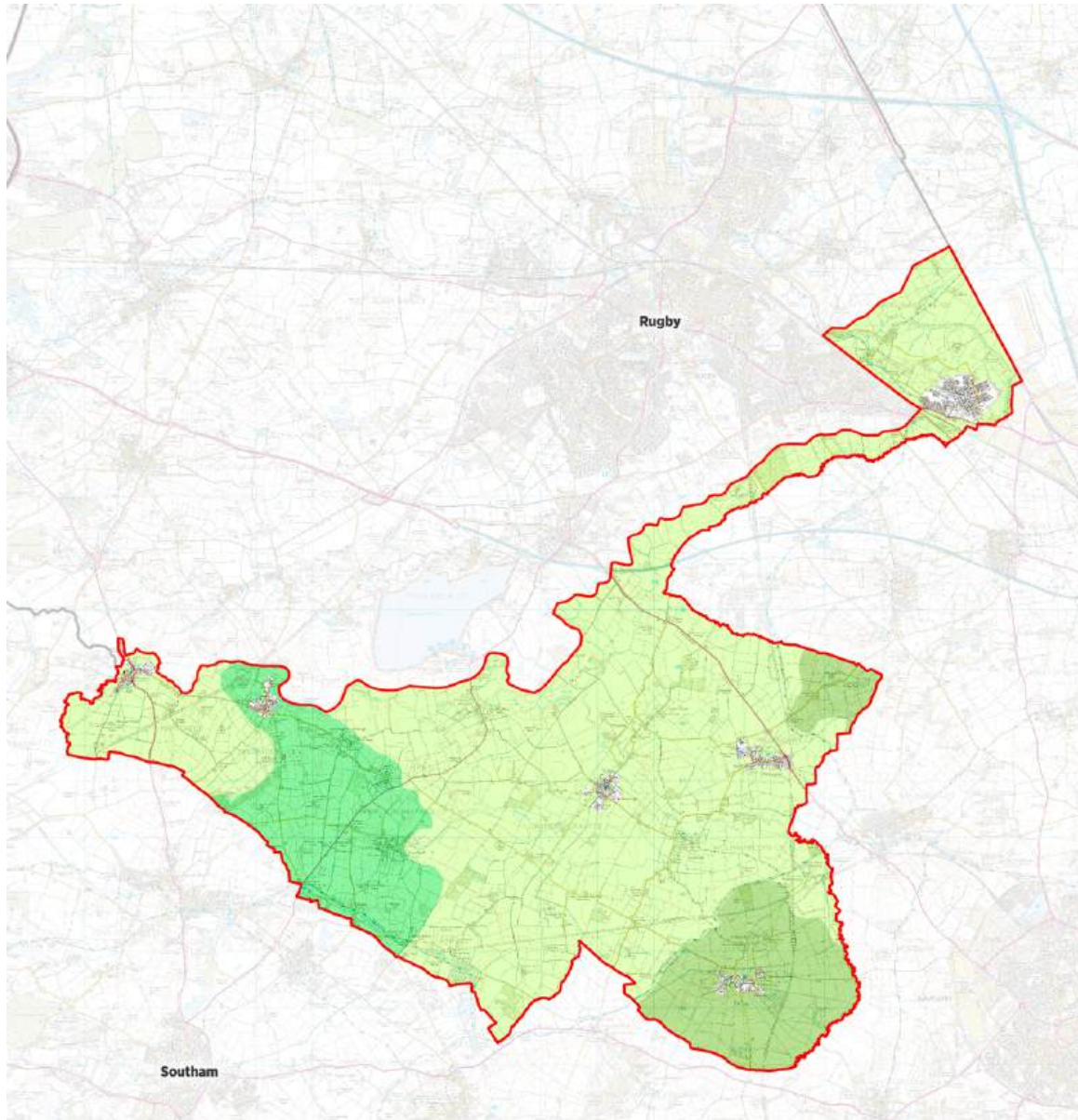
- Inappropriate development bordering woodlands, causing habitat fragmentation and species isolation.
- Loss of mature trees remnant from the 1970s epidemic has exacerbated habitat fragmentation.
- Loss of hedgerows due to urban development and agricultural intensification. The creation of larger fields has exacerbated habitat fragmentation. In addition, there has been a general decline in the practice of hedge laying and an increase in annual trimming, resulting in gaps and loss of structure.
- Sensitive design is lacking in some new residential developments, particularly around historic villages and Rugby’s peri-urban areas. A high number of converted redundant farm buildings for residential and holiday use are not in line with the landscape character.
- Significant decrease in the number of dairy farms and mixed farming in the area.
- Ridge and furrow and other historical earthworks continue to be lost as a result of ploughing, reseeding and the conversion to arable land.

## 6.6 Landscape guidelines

6.6.1 Landscape guidelines to plan, manage and protect the distinctiveness of the Dunsmore LCA include:

- Protect hedgerows and hedgerow trees, many of which are Oak trees (*Quercus robur*).
- Maintaining and enhancing the enclosed wooded character of the landscape. This is especially important in Dunsmore Parklands which is generally in decline.
- Maintaining and enhancing the distinctive character of the landscape. This is especially important in Plateau Farmlands where a large area between Cawston Spinney and the Coventry Road is in decline.
- Enhance the structure and key features of the farmed landscape. This is especially important in the Plateau Fringe which is generally in decline.
- Planting of woodlands should be encouraged where appropriate. The mosaic of habitats including woodlands, hedgerows and heathlands, alongside the sustainable management of agricultural land will enhance the character of the landscape.
- Protect and manage Draycote Reservoir and the network of canals and rivers to enhance biodiversity, water quality and for their contribution to recreation, sense of place and geodiversity.
- Protect and manage the historic character and settlement pattern, including the deserted settlements, ancient settlements, veteran trees, farmsteads, country houses and landscaped parklands. This will enhance the educational and recreational experience for urban and rural communities.
- Enhance the character of settlements in accordance with the landscape through improved design standards. Increased development and property improvements from population change and increased affluence is having an urbanising impact on settlements and dwellings.

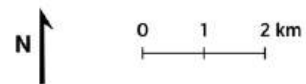
# 7 Feldon Landscape Character Area



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- Feldon LCA
- Rugby Borough Boundary

- Landscape Character Types**
- Feldon - Ironstone Fringe
  - Feldon - Lias Village Farmlands
  - Feldon - Vale Farmlands



PROJECT	Rugby Borough Local Plan Landscape Character Assessment	DRAWN	WE
CLIENT	Rugby Borough Council	CHECKED	ND
TITLE	Rugby Borough LCA - Feldon	SCALE@A4	1:90000
VERSION	LC-1223_Rugby_LCA_Feldon_1	DATE	27/09/2024

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Figure 7.1: Feldon LCA



# Feldon Landscape Character Area



View to the east from Stockton Road, Birdingbury (Vale Farmlands)



View from Moor Lane (Vale Farmlands)



View from Longdown Lane (Ironstone Fringe)



View from Nethercote (Ironstone Fringe)



View of Flecknoe (Ironstone Fringe)



View from Flecknoe (Ironstone Fringe)



# Feldon Landscape Character Area



Leamington Hastings (Lias Village Farmlands)



Flecknoe (Ironstone Fringe)



Flecknoe (Ironstone Fringe)



Flecknoe (Ironstone Fringe)



View from Broadwell Road, Grandborough (Vale Farmlands)



View of footpath, pastoral fields and woodland (Vale Farmlands)

## 7.1 Description

- 7.1.1 Feldon is a lowland agricultural region strongly influenced by Tudor and Parliamentary enclosures. It is characterised by heavy clay soils and a nucleated settlement pattern of small rural villages. Feldon comprises the southern area of Rugby Borough.
- 7.1.2 The name 'Feldon' derives from the Old English word 'feld', meaning 'open cleared land'. To this day, the area remains largely unwooded, although calcareous soils give rise to Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Oak as the main tree species in parcels around Feldon. Historically, the region has been favourable for stock-rearing due to the fertile Lower Lias Clays.
- 7.1.3 A notable feature of Feldon is the outcrop of hard, porcelaneous limestone of the White Lias, which forms an escarpment stretching from the Stour Valley in the south to the River Leam, rising up to 40m above the adjacent lowlands.
- 7.1.4 The landscape reflects the Tudor and Parliamentary enclosure movements through its pattern of large geometric fields, small red brick villages with limited road connections, and a strong sense of 'emptiness'. The farmed landscape retains a robust rural character, showcasing many historic features, particularly ridge and furrow formations and deserted village sites.
- 7.1.5 The River Leam flows through Feldon in a south-westerly direction. The river valley floodplain is wide and poorly defined due to the flat topography. Intensively managed arable land extends up to the river edge as a result of the heavier neutral clay loams around the channel. As a tributary of the River Avon, the River Leam eventually drains into the River Severn and Bristol Channel.

## 7.2 Key characteristics

### Natural

- **Geology:** Underlying Lower Lias clays and Mercia mudstone
- **Landform:** Former limestone quarrying has created significant geological features including rock exposures and soil heaps which are of geological importance.
- **Soils:** Fertile alkaline soils supporting grazed pasture
- **Hydrology:** Narrow, meandering river valleys with diverse flora including pollarded Willows (*Salix*), streamside Alders (*Alnus glutinosa*) and patches of scrub. Canals such as the Grand Union Canal and Oxford Canal provide important riparian habitats and recreational resources.
- **Land cover/flora & fauna:** Limestone exposures and soil heaps of former quarrying areas have developed high diversity limestone grassland communities which support rare species of fly, bee, wasp, beetle and butterfly. Priority habitats found within this LCA are listed in **Table 7.1**.

### Cultural/social

- **Land use:** Large fields with regular or rectilinear shapes.
- **Settlement:** Predominantly nucleated settlement pattern with low-density isolated farmsteads and field barns.
- **Time depth:** Historic character, including enclosed fields, veteran trees and areas of archaeological interest.

### Perceptual

- **Sounds:** High levels of tranquillity
- **Sight:** Strong rural quality, characterised by large areas of countryside

*Table 7.1: Summary of priority habitats located within the Feldon LCA*

Priority Habitat	Area (ha)	% of LCA
Deciduous woodland	79.7	1.1
Good quality semi-improved grassland	53.2	0.7
Lowland meadows	18.1	0.2
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	5.1	0.1
Traditional orchard	6.4	0.1
Reedbeds	0.6	0.01
Lowland calcareous grassland	0.3	0.004
Lowland fens	0	0
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	0	0

## 7.3 Landscape Character Types

7.3.1 The Feldon LCA includes three distinct LCTs which are described below.

### Ironstone Fringe

7.3.2 Ironstone Fringe is a remote, rural landscape of large hedged fields and small, nucleated ironstone villages. This LCT is found in the southern and south-eastern areas of Feldon. The landscape features prominent ironstone hills, pockets of permanent pasture with ridge and furrow, and steep hillsides of semi-natural grassland and scrub.

7.3.3 Small medieval village sites are surrounded by extensive areas of 'empty' countryside and large isolated manor farmsteads. Feldon is characterised by its large and strongly hedged field pattern which creates a relatively strong sense of enclosure in the open, intensively farmed landscape with sparse tree cover.

### Lias Village Farmlands

7.3.4 Lias Village Farmlands is a varied, small-scale hedged landscape of scattered farms and nucleated villages closely associated with Blue and White Lias Limestone. This LCT features well-defined geometric patterns of geometric patterns of small to medium sized fields enclosed by thorn hedgerows, with distant views framed by low, rounded hills or ridgelines. The area has a varied undulating topography, often associated with steep, wooded scarp slopes.

- 7.3.5 The Lias Village Farmlands arises only within the area around Leamington Hastings and Birdingbury where the topography, geometric farmland and vernacular style Blue and White Lias stone buildings create a strong sense of scale and visual unity.

#### **Vale Farmlands**

- 7.3.6 Vale Farmlands is the most typical landscape within Feldon, characterised by a flat, open hedged landscape with few roads or settlements. It comprises a largely intact pattern of medium to large-sized geometric fields bounded by hawthorn hedges and little tree cover, offering wide views of the rising ground and a strong impression of sky and space.
- 7.3.7 Villages are typically few and far between and often consist of small 'open' clusters of farmsteads and dwellings. Deserted medieval villages remain in some areas. The roads in these areas are typically single track bound by thick hedge. Therefore, the pastoral and hedged character of the landscape should be conserved and restored.

## **7.4 Designations and policy**

### **Natural**

- Within the Feldon LCA, there is one SSSI: Stockton Railway Cutting and Quarry. The site encompasses the limestone and calcareous clays of the Lower Lias in the southwest of Rugby Borough<sup>36</sup>. It forms one of the three most significant sites in Warwickshire for butterflies, with 29 species recorded including uncommon species such as Wood White (*Leptisia sinapis*) and White-letter Hairstreak (*Strymonidia w-album*). Also present is a rare moth, the Chalk Carpet (*Scotopteryx bipuntaria*) which is only found at one other site in the country. Scrub is present, creating small glades and rides of herb-rich grassland. The Railway Cutting is managed as a nature reserve by Warwickshire Nature Conservation Trust and a portion of the SSSI is also designated as an LNR.

### **Cultural/social**

- Listed buildings; 78 in total.
  - Three SMs: Medieval settlement remains at Flecknoe, the buried and earthwork remains of the Medieval settlement complex at Wolfhampcote and Moated site south of Manor Farm House near Willoughby.
  - Recreational routes cross through this LCA include the Grand Union Canal Walk and the Oxford Canal Walk.
- 7.4.1 Key designations located within this LCA are listed in **Table 7.2**.

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<sup>36</sup> Natural England (1975) Stockton Railway Cutting and Quarry SSSI Citation. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1002324.pdf> [Accessed 24/09/24]



**Table 7.2:** Summary of key designations located within the Feldon LCA

Designation	Count	Approximate area (ha)	% of LCA
Scheduled monuments	3	28.5	0.4
Ancient woodland	n/a	18.4	0.2
National nature conservation sites (SSSI)	1	3.8	0.1
Registered Parks & Gardens	0	0	0
Country Parks	0	0	0
Listed Buildings	78	n/a	n/a
Grade I Listed Buildings	0	n/a	n/a

## 7.5 Forces for change

7.5.1 The Feldon LCA faces several pressures:

- Dutch elm disease has led to significant loss of the once-abundant Elm (*Ulmus*) trees in hedgerows.
- The population of nationally scarce butterfly species is in an unfavourable declining condition<sup>37</sup>. Retaining and improving foodplant cover is key to maintain the population of White-letter Hairstreak. Wood White is unlikely to be reestablished unless reintroduced.
- Agricultural intensification has resulted in the removal of hedgerows, leading to larger fields.

## 7.6 Landscape guidelines

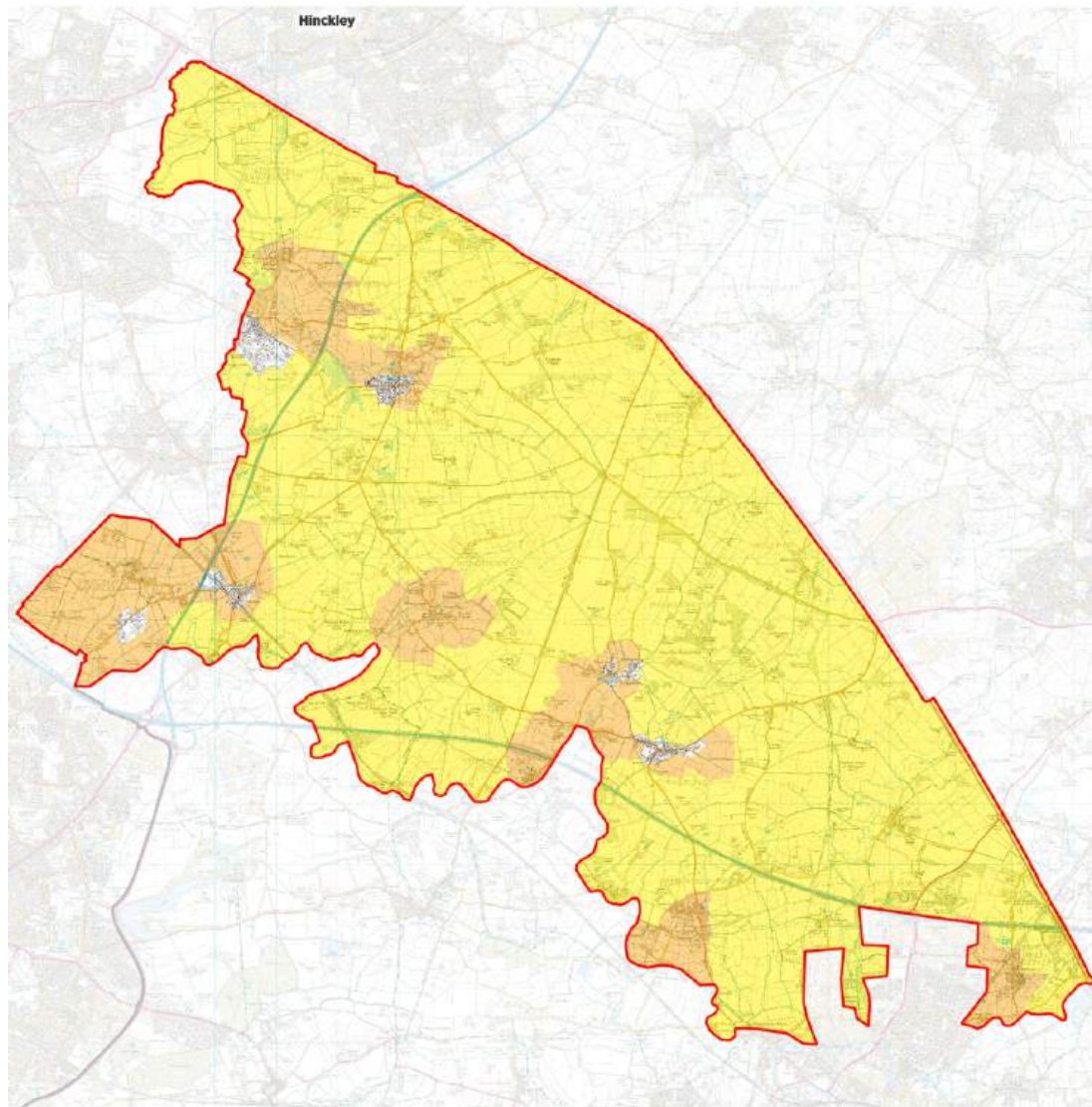
7.6.1 Landscape guidelines to plan, manage and protect the distinctiveness of the Feldon LCA include:

- Conserve the structure and remote rural character, particularly of the Ironstone Fringe.
- Conserve the diversity and local distinctiveness, particularly of the Lias Village Farmlands.
- Protect and manage the historic character, settlement pattern and features of Feldon, especially archaeological sites and heritage interest such as deserted settlements and ridge-and-furrow sites, ancient woodland, farmsteads and country houses.
- Enhance educational and recreational experience for urban and rural communities.
- Maintain and protect high levels of tranquillity.
- Address high phosphates, pesticides and sedimentation in water bodies, particularly within the Leam catchment, to ensure good ecological status. Promote the River Leam Catchment Plan and agri-environmental schemes to farmers and landowners.

<sup>37</sup> Natural England. Stockton Railway Cutting and Quarry SSSI – Condition of Features and Units. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteFeatureCondition.aspx?SiteCode=S1002324&SiteName=Stockton%20Railway%20Cutting%20and%20Quarry%20SSSI> [Accessed 26/09/24]

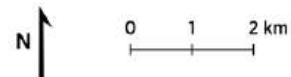


# 8 High Cross Plateau Landscape Character Area



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- High Cross Plateau LCA
  - Rugby Borough Boundary
- Landscape Character Types**
- High Cross Plateau - Open Plateau
  - High Cross Plateau - Village Farmlands



PROJECT	Rugby Borough Local Plan Landscape Character Assessment	DRAWN	WE
CLIENT	Rugby Borough Council	CHECKED	ND
TITLE	Rugby Borough LCA - High Cross Plateau	SCALE@A4	1:85000
VERSION	LC-1223_Rugby_LCA_High_Cross_Plateau_1	DATE	27/09/2024

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Figure 8.1: High Cross Plateau LCA



# High Cross Plateau Landscape Character Area



View of pastoral land at Ryehill Spinney north of Churchover (Open Plateau)



View from Barnacle (Village Farmlands)



Views of pastoral farmland and Magna Park (Open Plateau)



View of arable field to the south of Wolvey (Open Plateau)



Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal (Open Plateau)



View from Barnacle (Village Farmlands)



# High Cross Plateau Landscape Character Area



View of arable field and settlement from Hinckley Road (Open Plateau)



View to the south west of arable fields north of Copston Magna (Open Plateau)



View to the north-east of arable fields and Copston Spinney (Open Plateau)



View of arable fields from Bow Lane (Open Plateau)



View of pastoral fields and warehousing development to the north of Churchover (Open Plateau)



View to the south from PRoW 162/R96x/1, Cosford (Open Plateau)

## 8.1 Description

8.1.1 High Cross Plateau is a sparsely populated agricultural region situated between Rugby and Hinkley in the north east of Rugby Borough. It consists of wide rolling ridges and deep but poorly defined valleys and a distinctly rural character.

8.1.2 The physical nature of the area and the historical development both have a strong influence on the character of the landscape. This is reflected in the pattern of large fields, the nucleated settlement pattern and the strong impression of 'emptiness' in many areas resulting from the early enclosure of this rather marginal agricultural area. The dominant settlement type consists of small rural red brick villages and the landscape has retained historic features including remnants of medieval ridge and furrow and deserted medieval village sites. There is a distinctly rural and tranquil feel to the landscape.

8.1.3 The River Swift flows through the area in a southerly direction into Dunsmore LCA and meets the River Avon at Rugby. The River Swift has a distinct river valley, with flat flood plains and gravel terraces. Riverside meadows and waterside trees and shrubs are common.

## 8.2 Key characteristics

### Natural

- **Geology:** Gentle clay ridges and valleys underlain by Lias bedrock
- **Landform:** Undulating topography
- **Hydrology:** Distinctive river valleys including the River Swift with flat flood plains and gravel terraces. The Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal provides an important biodiversity and recreation feature. The Canal has no locks and is used recreationally for boaters and walkers<sup>38</sup>
- **Soils:** Predominantly heavy and poorly drained, although light, freely draining soils appear on ridge summits
- **Land cover / flora & fauna:** Scattered woodland and waterside trees are present. Priority habitats found within this LCA are listed in **Table 8.1**.

### Cultural/social:

- **Land use:** Overall visual uniformity to the landscape and settlement pattern. Mixture of pasture and arable agriculture developed on the neutral clay soils.
- **Settlement:** Villages characterised by red brick buildings and attractive stone buildings.
- **Time depth:** Strong historic landscape with a rich time depth, including medieval settlements

### Perceptual and aesthetic

- **Sounds:** High levels of tranquillity, at points influenced by surrounding key transport infrastructure and warehousing development
- **Sight:** Visual uniformity to the landscape and settlement pattern

<sup>38</sup> Canal & River Trust. Ashby Canal. Available at: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/canals-and-rivers/ashby-canal> [Accessed 26/09/24]

**Table 8.1:** Summary of priority habitats located within the High Cross Plateau LCA

Priority Habitat	Area (ha)	% of LCA
Deciduous woodland	222.7	2.0
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	22.3	0.2
Good quality semi-improved grassland	9.5	0.1
Lowland meadows	6.3	0.1
Traditional orchard	2.3	0.02
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	1.3	0.01
Lowland calcareous grassland	0	0
Lowland fens	0	0
Reedbeds	0	0

### 8.3 Landscape Character Types

8.3.1 The High Cross Plateau LCA includes two distinct LCTs which are described below.

#### Open Plateau

8.3.2 Open Plateau is a large, open rolling landscape with wide views dissected by broad valleys and a strong impression of emptiness and space. The field pattern is generally medium to large in scale but poorly defined, drawing the eye to distant skylines rather than foreground views. Smaller fields are associated with pockets of permanent pasture and ridge and furrow. Belts of woodland additionally form prominent features in the otherwise open landscape. Settlement is minimal, characterised by small settlements and isolated farmsteads and hamlets.

#### Village Farmlands

8.3.3 Village Farmlands is a small scale, mainly pastoral, hedged landscape closely associated with nucleated village settlements around the plateau fringe. This landscape strongly contrasts with the Open Plateau. Clusters of settlements, narrow winding lanes, geometric small-hedged fields and the undulating topography associated with small valleys create a varied, intimate landscape.

8.3.4 The farmed landscape is characterised by small fields enclosed by thorn hedges which create a strong sense of scale and visual unity when well-managed. Scattered hedgerow and roadside ash trees, permanent pasture often with ridge and furrow, and field ponds fringed by trees and scrub are a feature of this LCT.

### 8.4 Designations and policy

#### Natural

- Swift Valley LNR



## Cultural/social

- Two Grade I listed buildings; Church of St Edith and a screen, gates and gatepiers at Newnham Paddox Park.
- Ten SMs including a Roman town at High Cross, bowl barrows and deserted villages.
- Newnham Paddox, a mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century landscaped park of approximately 115ha and registered historic garden. The Park comprises 20ha of gardens, pleasure grounds, ponds and woodland and is a Grade II registered park and garden<sup>39</sup>. The area is enclosed by mature conifers to the north and east.
- Swift Valley Country Park is located within this LCA, at the northern edge of the town of Rugby.
- Recreational routes cross through this LCA including the Coventry Way and the Oxford Canal Walk.

8.4.1 Key designations located within this LCA are listed in **Table 8.2**.

**Table 8.2:** Summary of key designations located within the High Cross Plateau LCA

Designation	Count	Approximate area (ha)	% of LCA
Registered Parks & Gardens	1	176.3	1.6
Scheduled monuments	10	71.5	0.6
Country Parks	1	26.7	0.2
Ancient woodland	n/a	5.8	0.1
National nature conservation sites (SSSI)	0	0	0
Listed Buildings	77	n/a	n/a
Grade I Listed Buildings	2	n/a	n/a

## 8.5 Forces for change

8.5.1 High Cross Plateau's landscape faces several pressures:

- Increasing development pressure from surrounding urban areas. This is evident in the concentration of wind turbines located around Lutterworth and the A5, to the east of the borough. The presence of major transport routes surrounding and within the borough is resulting in increasing development pressure, challenging the rural and unspoilt character of the area.
- Current habitat fragmentation as a result of the unwooded character results in more individual trees, groups of trees and hedgerows being more susceptible to loss and damage due to pests, disease, wind and fire.
- Increased pressures for food production are resulting in the expansion of arable farming. This national drive for greater self-sufficiency is likely to continue, resulting in continued pressure to convert grassland to arable use and the intensification of arable land.
- Climate change could impact the landscape, with risks such as soil erosion and flooding.

<sup>39</sup> Parks & Gardens (2000) Newnham Paddox. Available at: <https://www.parksandgardens.org/places/newnham-paddox> [Accessed 26/09/24]

## **8.6 Landscape guidelines**

8.6.1 Landscape guidelines to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of the High Cross Plateau LCA include:

- Manage, conserve and enhance the River Swift and River Anker in rural and urban areas to enhance biodiversity and recreation opportunities, improve water quality, flow and availability, benefit soil quality and limit soil erosion.
- Protect the rural setting and secluded nature of settlements and farmsteads.
- Reduce habitat fragmentation through new tree planting.

## 9 Valued landscapes

### 9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF<sup>40</sup> states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. A ‘valued landscape’ is defined in Landscape Institute guidance<sup>41</sup> as:

*“An area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday<sup>42</sup> landscapes”.*

9.1.2 Part of the project brief included a requirement to consider the existence of any areas of locally strong landscape character which might be considered to be valued landscapes.

9.1.3 Overall, the results from the Landscape Character Assessment showed that outside the town of Rugby, the landscape across the borough is broadly characterised by gently rolling farmland with scattered villages and sparse woodland cover. This is typical of the key characteristics of the NCAs which cover the borough: Dunsmore and Feldon NCA, Leicestershire Vales NCA, Mease/Sence Lowlands NCA and Northamptonshire Uplands NCA. The rural landscape is intersected by strategic transport infrastructure corridors and the sometimes frequent presence of large commercial buildings and industrial sites detract from landscape quality in places where they are present. Across the borough, the gently rolling farmed landscapes which include large arable fields as well as hedgerows and infrequent woodlands do not generally give rise to conspicuous distinctive landscapes. In the far south of the borough, located within the Ironstone Fringe LCT (part of the Feldon LCA) can be found the village of Flecknoe and Bush Hill. These places are an exception to the otherwise unremarkable mosaic of agricultural landscapes found elsewhere in the borough. This chapter explores whether or not the landscapes of Flecknoe and Bush Hill might constitute a ‘valued landscape’.

### 9.2 The Ironstone Fringe LCT

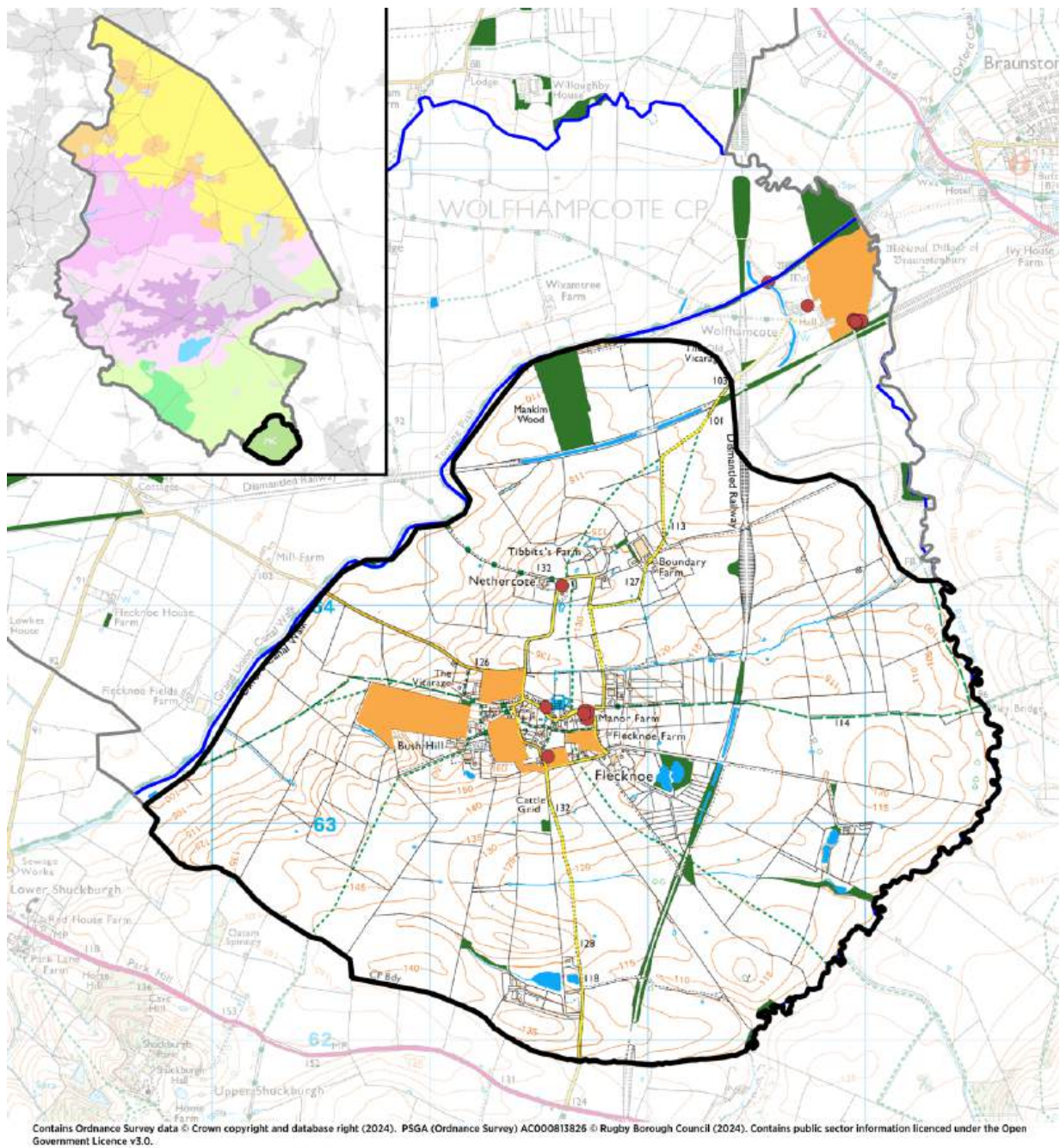
9.2.1 The Ironstone Fringe LCT, which surrounds the village of Flecknoe, is bounded by the Grand Union Canal to the northwest and the River Leam to the east. Flecknoe sits atop Bush Hill, reaching elevations of up to 160m and the settlement stands out against the gently rolling landscape to the north. Flecknoe is home to a scheduled monument featuring the remains of a medieval settlement, adding built historic significance to the area, along with several Grade II listed buildings that further enhance its heritage value. The small hamlet of Nethercote is situated to the north of Flecknoe. The combination of historical features, elevated topography and sense of remoteness contributes to the area’s distinct landscape character. The location of this landscape is shown in **Figure 9.1**.

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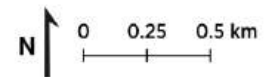
<sup>40</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (2024) Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Accessed 17/01/25]

<sup>41</sup> Landscape Institute (2021) ‘Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designation’ Available at <https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2021/05/tgn-02-21-assessing-landscape-value-outside-national-designations.pdf> [Date accessed 15/11/24]

<sup>42</sup> ‘Everyday’ landscapes may nevertheless have value to people.



- Rugby Borough Boundary
- Flecknoe, Ironstone Fringe
- Watercourse
- Surface Water
- Woodland
- Scheduled Monuments
- Listed Buildings**
- Grade II



PROJECT	Rugby Landscape Character Assessment	DRAWN	MS
CLIENT	Rugby Borough Council	CHECKED	ND
TITLE	Flecknoe, Ironstone Fringe	SCALE@A4	1:23000
VERSION	LC-1223_Flecknoe_Ironstone Fringe_Feldon_1	DATE	17/01/2025

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Figure 9.1: Ironstone Fringe LCT surrounding Flecknoe



# Ironstone Fringe LCT at Flecknoe



View south towards Bush Hill from Flecknoe Station Road



View south-east towards Flecknoe from Flecknoe Station Road



View east from Flecknoe Station Road



View south from Flecknoe



Arable farmland and dwellings at Flecknoe



Arable farmland between Flecknoe and Nethercote



## 9.3 Local landscape value

9.3.1 The definition of landscape value, particularly in relation to landscapes which lie outside a national landscape designation, has been subject to much discussion amongst landscape assessment practitioners since the term was used in the 2019 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

9.3.2 In 2021, the Landscape Institute published a Technical Guidance Note (TGN), 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations'<sup>43</sup>. This TGN provides information and guidance to landscape professionals and others to make judgments about the value of a landscape (outside national landscape designations) in the context of the UK Town and Country Planning system. The TGN can also assist reviews of such judgements to enable a common understanding of the approach. The TGN sets out some useful definitions relating to the assessment of landscape value.

### **Landscape qualities: The characteristics or features that are valued**

*"This term is being used to distinguish landscape qualities from landscape characteristics which are elements, or combinations of elements, which make a particular contribution to landscape character. Landscape qualities (in the sense meant in this TGN) are usually referred to as 'special qualities' or 'special landscape qualities' in relation to nationally designated landscapes. For example, 'special qualities' is a statutory expression used in relation to National Parks, in policy for Scotland's local landscape designations, and is a term used informally to describe components of natural beauty set out in AONB Management Plans".*

### **Assessing landscape value as part of plan making**

*"Landscape value can be assessed as an evaluation stage of a landscape character assessment or as a follow-on study. In this case landscape qualities will be identified in relation to individual character areas or types. Currently these are commonly described as 'valued landscape characteristics' or 'landscape qualities'".*

9.3.3 The TGN does not seek to provide an evaluative methodology to replace that provided in other advisory documents, such as Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Sensitivity Assessment and the GLVIA (page 84 in the GLVIA includes a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes). The TGN does, however, set out a series of factors to consider when identifying landscape value (Table 1 of the TGN 02/21, see **Appendix A**):

- Natural heritage
- Cultural heritage
- Landscape condition
- Associations
- Distinctiveness
- Recreational
- Perceptual (scenic)
- Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)
- Functional

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<sup>43</sup> Landscape Institute (2021) 'Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designation' Available at <https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2021/05/tgn-02-21-assessing-landscape-value-outside-national-designations.pdf> [Date accessed 15/11/24]

## 9.4 Evaluation of the landscape value of the Ironstone Fringe LCT

9.4.1 The following information in **Table 9.1** provides a summary of the assessment of landscape value within the Flecknoe area of the Ironstone Fringe LCT based on relevant factors provided in Table 1 of the TGN 02/21 (see **Appendix A**).

**Table 9.1:** Valued landscape factors – Ironstone Fringe LCT

Valued landscape indicators	Commentary on the expression of this indicator in the study area
<b>Natural heritage:</b> Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape.	
Presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place	A block of deciduous woodland is present at Mankim Wood and along the dismantled railway line. Field boundaries are lined with hedgerows and trees. Areas of permanent pasture and rough grazing are present within the area. Ponds are also present. The River Leam follows the eastern boundary of the area. These features enhance ecological interest and contribute to the sense of place.
Presence of distinctive geological, geomorphological or pedological features	Geologically, at over 160m high, Bush Hill stands out as a prominent feature. This elevation contrasts with the relatively flat and uniform landscape of Rugby Borough, creating visual interest and a focal point within the landscape.
<b>Cultural heritage:</b> Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape.	
Presence of historic landmark structures or designed landscape elements	There are seven Grade II listed buildings located in Flecknoe and Nethercote. A trig pillar is present at the summit of Bush Hill. Five areas in and around Flecknoe are designated as a scheduled monument for its medieval settlement remains <sup>44</sup> . The medieval settlement was first recorded in the Domesday Survey (11 <sup>th</sup> Century), later deserted then re-populated in the 17 <sup>th</sup> or 18 <sup>th</sup> Century. The remains survive well as house sites, ditches and enclosures alongside well-preserved earthworks. The scheduled monument forms a group with other scheduled medieval settlements in the area including Wolfhampcote, Upper Shuckburgh and Lower Shuckburgh as well as a part of the wider regional historic landscape pattern.
Landscape which offers a dimension of time depth.	Listed buildings, the scheduled monument and the Grand Union Canal provide evidence of time depth. The dismantled railway running through Flecknoe is evident of the station and railway line. Flecknoe station was opened in 1895 and closed in 1963 <sup>45</sup> . Ridge and furrow is present in fields surrounding Flecknoe, showing evidence of historical agricultural practices.
<b>Landscape condition:</b> Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure	
Good physical condition/intactness of individual landscape elements (e.g. walls, parkland, trees)	There are examples of landscape elements in good condition, including hedgerows and trees along field boundaries. Pastoral fields, grazed with sheep are the principal land use and are distributed as a series of relatively small field parcels, that surround the summit and cloth the slopes of Bush Hill, each often with well-maintained enclosure-era hedges which define the stock-proof boundaries.
Absence of detracting/incongruous features (or features are present but have little influence)	The landscape is predominantly agricultural and detracting features are minimal. There is a visually prominent derelict brick building to the north of Flecknoe. Residential dwellings in Flecknoe integrate with the nucleated settlement pattern.

<sup>44</sup> Historic England. Medieval settlement remains at Flecknoe. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1020934> [Accessed 08/11/24]

<sup>45</sup> Warwickshire Railways. Flecknoe Station. Available at: <https://www.warwickshirerailways.com/lms/flecknoe.htm> [Accessed 08/11/24]

<b>Distinctiveness:</b> Landscape that has a strong sense of identity	
Landscape character that has a strong sense of place	The area's topographical features, including the elevation of Bush Hill, rise above the surrounding landscape and creates a striking contrast that enhances the visual identity and experiential quality of the landscape. This topographical distinction, combined with the area's historical depth, such as the medieval settlement remains, adds to its sense of permanence and continuity over time. Remoteness and tranquillity each provide a strong sense of nature and associated high aesthetic quality.
<b>Recreational:</b> Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important	
Presence of open access land, common land and public rights of way where appreciation of landscape is a feature	Five PROWs radiate from the village of Flecknoe, offering access to the surrounding landscape. These paths enable walkers and visitors to appreciate the distinctive topography, including the views from Bush Hill. The Grand Union Canal Walk and the Oxford Canal Walk follow the boundary of the Ironstone Fringe LCT.
Landscape that forms part of a view that is important to the enjoyment of a recreational activity	The PROW network surrounding Flecknoe provide access to a tranquil, rural landscape with high recreational and experiential value. The elevated topography allows for long distance views to the surrounding landscape which enhances the visual experience.
<b>Perceptual (scenic):</b> Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense	
Distinctive features, or distinctive combinations of features, such as dramatic or striking landform or harmonious combinations of land cover	Bush Hill is a distinct landform within the surrounding landscape, providing both visual interest and a sense of contrast to the surrounding terrain, making Bush Hill a key element that defines the character of the landscape.
Strong aesthetic qualities such as scale, form, colour and texture	Surrounding the village of Flecknoe, the arable and pastoral fields bounded by hedgerows provide strong aesthetic quality in terms of colour, texture and form. Settlements within the village of Flecknoe are distinct due to their red brick design and stone wall features.
Presence of natural lines in the landscape (e.g. natural ridgelines, woodland edges, river corridors, coastal edges)	To the east of the village, the dismantled railway, now infilled and transformed into deciduous woodland, provides a prominent semi-natural corridor in the landscape. The Grand Union Canal flows along the north-western boundary of the Flecknoe area of the Ironstone Fringe, and the River Leam along the eastern boundary.
Visual diversity or contrasts which contributes to the appreciation of the landscape	The network of PROWs enables recreational appreciation of the landscape. The topography and remoteness of the area contrasts with other areas of Rugby which contributes to the appreciation of the landscape.
<b>Perceptual (wilderness and tranquillity):</b> Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wilderness, tranquillity and/or dark skies	
High levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity	Perceived tranquillity levels are high across the landscape and disturbances from man-made activities are minimal. Man-made noise levels and movement are generally low due to the distant proximity to main roads, large urban areas and commercial sites. Farming activities and occasional passing vehicles along small country lanes present the main auditory detractors.
Sense of remoteness, seclusion or openness	The landscape offers a strong sense of remoteness, seclusion, and openness, creating an environment that feels both peaceful and unspoiled. The area's relatively isolated location, away from urban development, enhances its sense of tranquillity. The expansive views from Bush Hill contribute to the feeling of openness.
A general absence of intrusive or inharmonious development, land uses, transport and lighting	Within the Ironstone Fringe area, and views from the area to the surrounding landscape, the development is minimal and non-intrusive, such as small country lanes, isolated and dispersed farm and manor houses. The landscape is characterised by a general absence of intrusive or inharmonious development, maintaining its natural and tranquil aesthetic. Development within the area is minimal and non-intrusive, with only small local roads running through the landscape, allowing for unobstructed views of the surrounding countryside. The isolated and dispersed farmhouses and manor houses blend into the rural setting, ensuring that the built environment does

	not overpower the natural features. This low level of development contributes to the overall sense of tranquillity and harmony with the landscape.
<b>Functional:</b> Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape	
Landscapes and landscape elements that contribute to the healthy functioning of the landscape	Hedgerows, trees, ponds and watercourses play crucial roles in the healthy functioning of the landscape within the Ironstone Fringe.

## 9.5 Summary

9.5.1 Numerous distinctive physical and aesthetic qualities have been identified across a range of factors that are considered to contribute to its landscape value, as assessed using the Landscape Institute TGN 2021 guidelines. In summary, these valued qualities comprise:

- Bush Hill forms a prominent and distinct **topographical feature**.
- A **range of habitats** to support biodiversity, including deciduous woodlands, ponds, hedgerows and watercourses.
- **Long distance, panoramic views** across the surrounding landscape.
- **Good accessibility** with numerous PRowS for outdoor recreation.
- **High tranquillity levels** with little auditory detractors from transport infrastructure or commercial developments.
- **Heritage assets** including Grade II listed buildings and a scheduled monument.

9.5.2 It is concluded that the Flecknoe area of the Ironstone Fringe LCT within the Feldon LCA can be considered as a 'valued landscape'. In terms of planning policy, the identified special qualities of the landscape should be protected and enhanced.

## 9.6 Next steps

9.6.1 To support recognition of this landscape as a valued landscape in the Local Plan, further work is recommended to strengthen the evidence base and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the landscape. This could include the following:

- Local landscape character assessment;
- Village design statement;
- The identification of locally valued views;
- Stakeholder engagement with local residents;
- Engagement with different recreational interest groups;
- Dark skies mapping;
- Historical analysis to understand the evolution of the landscape; and
- Ecological surveys and habitat mapping.



## 10 Conclusion

### 10.1 About this report

10.1.1 This report comprises a Landscape Character Assessment to support the preparation of the new Rugby Local Plan. It provides an update to the 'Landscape Assessment of the Borough of Rugby (Sensitivity and Condition Study)', carried out by the Living Landscapes Project in conjunction with Warwickshire County Council and Rugby Borough Council in 2006.

10.1.2 Three LCAs and eight LCTs have been identified. Each LCA includes a description, key characteristics, designations and policy, forces for change and landscape guidelines to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness.

### 10.2 Landscape character of Rugby Borough

10.2.1 Overall, this Landscape Character Assessment found that the borough is characterised by a lowland, gently rolling landscape which is strongly influenced by the River Avon and River Leam. Land use is predominantly agricultural, comprising extensive areas of arable land and improved pasture. The landscape character of the borough is increasingly visually influenced by the concentration of commercial buildings, particularly large distribution centres and warehouses surrounding key infrastructure routes. This is particularly notable in the Dunsmore and High Cross Plateau LCAs. In contrast, the Feldon LCA, particularly the Ironstone Fringe LCT, is characterised by a relatively stronger sense of remoteness and tranquillity. Notable features which contribute positively to landscape character across the borough include:

- **Ancient woodlands** particularly in the central western area at New Close Wood, Birchley Wood, Brandon Wood and Ryton Wood.
- **Gently rolling topography** which allows for long distance views in places, particularly from the south of Rugby and Dunchurch towards the Northamptonshire hills.
- **Historic environment** and **heritage assets** which contribute to a sense of time depth locally, including scheduled monuments, listed buildings and registered parks and gardens.
- **Native hedgerows** and **mature trees** along field boundaries.
- **The canal network** including the Oxford Canal, the Grand Union Canal and the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal.
- **Waterbodies** including Draycote Water, Coombe Pool and wetlands at Brandon Marsh Nature Reserve.
- **Watercourses** including the River Avon and the River Leam.

# Appendix A Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 - Table 1

## 2 Tools to enable practitioners to assess landscape value

This TGN uses the following definitions:

**Landscape qualities = characteristics/ features of a landscape that are valued**

*This term is being used to distinguish landscape qualities from landscape characteristics which are elements, or combinations of elements, which make a particular contribution to landscape character. Landscape qualities (in the sense meant in this TGN) are usually referred to as 'special qualities' or 'special landscape qualities' in relation to nationally designated landscapes. For example, 'special qualities' is a statutory expression used in relation to National Parks, in policy for Scotland's local landscape designations, and is a term used informally to describe components of natural beauty set out in AONB Management Plans<sup>3</sup>.*

**Landscape value = the relative value or importance attached to different landscapes by society on account of their landscape qualities (see Table 1).**

*The definition of landscape value used in this TGN draws on, and is compatible with, the [GLVIA3](#) definition of landscape value as well as Natural England's [definition](#) (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013; Tudor, 2014). The definition makes it clear that it is 'society' that assigns value to landscapes. However, landscape value means more than popularity and the Landscape Institute suggests that value assessments should be undertaken by a landscape professional, drawing on evidence from stakeholders where available.*

### 2.1 Introduction

**2.1.1** Assessments of landscape value (for landscapes which are outside, and not candidates for, national designation) may be required at different stages of the planning process, for example:

- *Local planning authorities (LPAs), neighbourhood planning groups and other parties at the evidence-gathering and plan-making stages;*
- *LPAs, applicants/appellants and others considering a site on which future development or other form of change is proposed, usually at the planning application or appeal stage.*

**2.1.2** These scenarios are shown by **Figure 1**, along with the type of guidance that might feed in.

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<sup>3</sup> National Parks are UK-wide. AONBs are found in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and NSAs are unique to Scotland.



- *NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland (2020) have jointly produced guidance on designating Local Landscape Areas (LLAs) in Scotland which is intended primarily for local authorities to use in taking forward their own designation process. The guidance acknowledges that local landscape designations are a valuable tool in the development plan toolbox and outlines the process for designating new LLAs and refreshing existing designations, noting that ‘designations do not mean other places are unimportant or not valued’ (paragraph 1.16).*
- *NRW has published LANDMAP Guidance Note 1: LANDMAP and Special Landscape Areas (2017)<sup>4</sup> which sets out an approach for defining Special Landscape Areas in Wales using LANDMAP<sup>5</sup> information. These areas may be designated for ‘their intrinsic physical, environmental, visual, cultural and historical importance, which may be considered unique, exceptional or distinctive to the local area’ and they should be ‘important for their distinctive character, qualities and sense of place’.*

**2.2.7** The guidance produced by NatureScot and NRW may be helpful for other nations that do not have their own guidance.

**2.2.8** Where local designations are used, the identification of their spatial boundaries and their landscape qualities should be supported by evidence.

**2.2.9** **Table 1** of this TGN sets out a range of factors that could be considered to define the value of a landscape<sup>6</sup> and to inform the designation process. These factors are intended to be consistent with the factors set out in existing guidance in relation to local landscape designations in Scotland and Wales, as well as guidance in relation to national landscape designations (e.g. guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England). However, they are not intended to be an exhaustive list.

**2.2.10** Stakeholder engagement and early collaboration with local communities will add depth to the assessment by helping the landscape professional to understand what people value about the local landscape. Community engagement should be encouraged whenever practicable in line with existing planning guidance.

### Evaluative studies linked to landscape character assessment

**2.2.11** The guidance on Landscape Character Assessment (The Countryside Agency and Scottish National Heritage, 2002), which is still in use in Scotland, acknowledges that ‘most assessments will usually move beyond the characterisation stage to the stage of making judgements to inform particular decisions’<sup>7</sup>. Natural England’s 2014 document, which replaced the 2002 guidance in England, also notes that landscape character assessment can be used to identify special qualities and inform judgements (Tudor, 2014). These evaluative studies can be undertaken as an extension to a landscape character assessment, or as a separate follow-on study. Such studies can include the identification of landscape qualities that contribute to the value of landscape areas or types<sup>8</sup>. **Table 1** of this TGN sets out a range of factors that could be considered as part of the process.

**2.2.12** In these types of assessments, information from stakeholders (where available) about what is valued should inform the landscape professional’s consideration of landscape value.

### Landscape sensitivity studies

**2.2.13** Landscape value is assessed as one of the two components of landscape sensitivity in strategic landscape sensitivity assessments. As explained in [Natural England’s An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – to Inform Spatial Planning and Land Management](#) (Tudor, 2019), landscape

<sup>4</sup> <https://naturalresources.wales/media/680613/landmap-guidance-note-1-landmap-slas-2017.pdf>  
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/planning-policy-wales-edition-10.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> LANDMAP is an all-Wales landscape resource where landscape characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated.

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that designation is a process that may include factors other than landscape value.

<sup>7</sup> This is a two-stage process with the landscape character assessment being separate from subsequent assessments of value or sensitivity.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that, in Wales, LANDMAP already includes a range of criteria-based evaluations relating to the landscape.





Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England);

- The term 'landscape condition' is used in place of 'landscape quality (condition)';
- 'Rarity' and 'representativeness' are combined into a newly-named factor 'distinctiveness'; and
- A new factor, 'function' is included which addresses the value attached to landscapes which perform a clearly identifiable and valuable function.

**2.4.3** It should be noted that the factors are not presented in order of importance.

**2.4.4** As with Box 5.1 in GLVIA3, **Table 1** is not intended to be an exhaustive list of factors to be considered when determining the value of landscapes, but to provide a range of factors and indicators that could be considered. This TGN is intended to be complementary to GLVIA3.

**Table 1:** Range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value

Factor	Definition	Examples <sup>11</sup> of indicators of landscape value	Examples of evidence <sup>12</sup>
<b>Natural heritage</b>	Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape	<p>Presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place</p> <p>Extent and survival of semi-natural habitat that is characteristic of the landscape type</p> <p>Presence of distinctive geological, geomorphological or pedological features</p> <p>Landscape which contains valued natural capital assets that contribute to ecosystem services, for example distinctive ecological communities and habitats that form the basis of ecological networks</p> <p>Landscape which makes an identified contribution to a nature recovery/ green infrastructure network</p>	<p>Landscape character assessment</p> <p>LANDMAP Geological Landscape and Landscape Habitats Aspects (in Wales)</p> <p>Ecological and geological designations</p> <p>SSSI citations and condition assessments</p> <p>Geological Conservation Review</p> <p>Habitat surveys</p> <p>Priority habitats</p> <p>Nature recovery networks/ nature pathways</p> <p>Habitat network opportunity mapping/ green infrastructure mapping</p> <p>Catchment management plans</p> <p>Ecosystem services assessment/ schemes</p> <p>Specialist ecological studies</p>
<b>Cultural heritage</b>	Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or	Presence of historic landmark structures or designed landscape elements (e.g. follies,	Landscape character assessment

<sup>11</sup> These examples are not exhaustive.

<sup>12</sup> Evidence may be set out in development plans (or evidence that sits alongside development plans). Online mapping may also provide useful information (see 'useful data links' at the end of this TGN).



Factor	Definition	Examples <sup>11</sup> of indicators of landscape value	Examples of evidence <sup>12</sup>
	cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape	<p>monuments, avenues, tree roundels)</p> <p>Presence of historic parks and gardens, and designed landscapes</p> <p>Landscape which contributes to the significance of heritage assets, for example forming the setting of heritage assets (especially if identified in specialist studies)</p> <p>Landscape which offers a dimension of time depth. This includes natural time depth, e.g. presence of features such as glaciers and peat bogs and cultural time depth e.g. presence of relic farmsteads, ruins, historic field patterns, historic rights of way (e.g. drove roads, salt ways, tracks associated with past industrial activity)</p>	<p>LANDMAP Historic Landscape and Cultural Landscape Services Aspect (in Wales)</p> <p>Historic environment and archaeological designations</p> <p>Conservation Area appraisals, Village Design Statements</p> <p>Historic maps</p> <p>Historic landscape character assessments<sup>13</sup> Historic Land Use Assessment<sup>14</sup> and Historic Area Assessments<sup>15</sup></p> <p>Place names</p> <p>Specialist heritage studies</p>
<b>Landscape condition</b>	Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure	<p>Good physical condition/ intactness of individual landscape elements (e.g. walls, parkland, trees)</p> <p>Good health of elements such as good water quality, good soil health</p> <p>Strong landscape structure (e.g. intact historic field patterns)</p> <p>Absence of detracting/ incongruous features (or features are present but have little influence)</p>	<p>Landscape character assessment</p> <p>LANDMAP condition and trend questions (in Wales)</p> <p>Hedgerow/ tree surveys</p> <p>Observations about intactness/ condition made in the field by the assessor</p> <p>SSSI condition assessments</p> <p>Historic landscape character assessments/ map regression analysis</p>
<b>Associations</b>	Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts	Associations with well-known literature, poetry, art, TV/film and music that contribute to perceptions of the landscape	<p>Information about arts and science relating to a place</p> <p>Historical accounts, cultural traditions and folklore</p>

<sup>13</sup> Historic Landscape Characterisation has developed as a GIS mapping tool to capture how land use has changed and the 'time-depth' of the present-day landscape.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/characterisation/historic-landscape-characterisation/>

<sup>14</sup> Mapping of Scotland's Historic Landscape: <https://hllmap.org.uk/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/understanding-place-historic-area-assessments/>



Factor	Definition	Examples <sup>11</sup> of indicators of landscape value	Examples of evidence <sup>12</sup>
		<p>Associations with science or other technical achievements</p> <p>Links to a notable historical event</p> <p>Associations with a famous person or people</p>	<p>Guidebooks/ published cultural trails</p> <p>LANDMAP Cultural Landscape Services aspect (in Wales)</p>
<b>Distinctiveness</b>	Landscape that has a strong sense of identity	<p>Landscape character that has a strong sense of place (showing strength of expression of landscape characteristics)</p> <p>Presence of distinctive features which are identified as being characteristic of a particular place</p> <p>Presence of rare or unusual features, especially those that help to confer a strong sense of place or identity</p> <p>Landscape which makes an important contribution to the character or identity of a settlement</p> <p>Settlement gateways/approaches which provides a clear sense of arrival and contribute to the character of the settlement (may be ancient/historic)</p>	<p>Landscape character assessment</p> <p>LANDMAP Visual &amp; Sensory question 3 and 25, – Historic Landscape question 4 (in Wales)</p> <p>Guidebooks</p> <p>Observations about identity/ distinctiveness made in the field by the assessor</p>
<b>Recreational</b>	Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important	<p>Presence of open access land, common land and public rights of way (particularly National Trails, long distance trails, Coastal Paths and Core Paths) where appreciation of landscape is a feature</p> <p>Areas with good accessibility that provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and spiritual experience/ inspiration</p> <p>Presence of town and village greens</p> <p>Other physical evidence of recreational use where experience of landscape is important</p> <p>Landscape that forms part of a view that is important to the</p>	<p>Definitive public rights of way mapping/ OS map data</p> <p>National Trails, long distance trails, Coastal Paths, Core Paths</p> <p>Open access land (including registered common land)</p> <p>Database of registered town or village greens</p> <p>Visitor surveys/ studies</p> <p>Observations about recreational use/ enjoyment made in the field by the assessor</p>



Factor	Definition	Examples <sup>11</sup> of indicators of landscape value	Examples of evidence <sup>12</sup>
		enjoyment of a recreational activity	
<b>Perceptual (Scenic)</b>	Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense	<p>Distinctive features, or distinctive combinations of features, such as dramatic or striking landform or harmonious combinations of land cover</p> <p>Strong aesthetic qualities such as scale, form, colour and texture</p> <p>Presence of natural lines in the landscape (e.g. natural ridgelines, woodland edges, river corridors, coastal edges)</p> <p>Visual diversity or contrasts which contributes to the appreciation of the landscape</p> <p>Memorable/ distinctive views and landmarks, or landscape which contributes to distinctive views and landmarks</p>	<p>Landscape character assessment</p> <p>LANDMAP Visual and Sensory scenic quality question 46 (in Wales)</p> <p>Protected views, views studies</p> <p>Areas frequently photographed or used in images used for tourism/ visitor/ promotional purposes, or views described or praised in literature</p> <p>Observations about scenic qualities made in the field by the assessor</p> <p>Conservation Area Appraisals</p> <p>Village Design Statements, or similar</p>
<b>Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity)</b>	Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies	<p>High levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet<sup>16</sup></p> <p>Presence of wild land and perceptions of relative wildness (resulting from a high degree of perceived naturalness<sup>17</sup>, rugged or otherwise challenging terrain, remoteness from public mechanised access and lack of modern artefacts)</p> <p>Sense of particular remoteness, seclusion or openness</p> <p>Dark night skies</p>	<p>Tranquillity mapping and factors which contribute to and detract from tranquillity</p> <p>Dark Skies mapping</p> <p>Wildness mapping, and Wild Land Areas in Scotland</p> <p>Land cover mapping</p> <p>Field survey</p> <p>LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect</p>

<sup>16</sup> More about tranquillity can be found in Landscape Institute Technical Information Note [01/2017](#) (Revised; Landscape Institute, 2017).

<sup>17</sup> Relating to extensive semi-natural vegetation, presence of wildlife and presence of natural processes/ lack of human intervention.





Factor	Definition	Examples <sup>11</sup> of indicators of landscape value	Examples of evidence <sup>12</sup>
		A general absence of intrusive or inharmonious development, land uses, transport and lighting	
<b>Functional</b>	Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape	<p>Landscapes and landscape elements that contribute to the healthy functioning of the landscape, e.g. natural hydrological systems/ floodplains, areas of undisturbed and healthy soils, areas that form carbon sinks such as peat bogs, woodlands and oceans, areas of diverse landcover (benefits pest regulation), pollinator-rich habitats such as wildflower meadows</p> <p>Areas that form an important part of a multifunctional Green Infrastructure network</p> <p>Landscapes and landscape elements that have strong physical or functional links with an adjacent national landscape designation, or are important to the appreciation of the designated landscape and its special qualities</p>	<p>Land cover and habitat maps</p> <p>Ecosystem services assessments and mapping (particularly supporting and regulating services)</p> <p>Green infrastructure studies/strategies</p> <p>Development and management plans for nationally-designated landscapes, Local Plans and SPDs</p> <p>Landscape character assessments</p>

### The practical application of factors in coming to a judgement on landscape value

**2.4.5** The following bullet points provide some advice on the practical application of the factors in **Table 1**:

- *The factors to be considered are not fixed as they need to be appropriate to the particular project and location. It is recommended that the factors used to assess landscape value in a particular assessment are, where appropriate, discussed with the relevant planning authority or statutory consultees.*
- *The indicators of value should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account what they contribute (positively or negatively) to a specific landscape. The relative importance to be attached to each indicator is likely to vary across different landscapes. Once evidence for each factor has been collated and assessed, it is important to step back and judge the overall ‘weight of evidence’ in coming to an overall judgement on landscape value.*
- *There are likely to be overlaps between the factors, as well as overlaps with other specialist studies for example in relation to natural and cultural factors. These overlaps should be acknowledged and considered when presenting conclusions on the overall value of the landscape.*
- *While condition/intactness of a landscape is one factor that can influence value, poor landscape management should not be a reason to deny a landscape a valued status if other factors indicate*



Habitats Regulations Assessments

Sustainability Appraisals

Strategic Environmental Assessments

Landscape Character Assessments

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments

Green Belt Reviews

Expert Witness

Ecological Impact Assessments

Habitat and Ecology Surveys



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