

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 : Review Of Conservation Area Appraisals

Areas where a number of important buildings are concentrated are often designated as Conservation Areas. These areas are defined as areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which is desirable to preserve and enhance. There are nine conservation areas in the district. The Conservation Area Appraisals for these areas have been reviewed and a summary of the heritage characteristics of each of the areas is described below:

Blaby

The town's history dates back over a 1000 years, although there is evidence of an earlier settlement in the area. The original name is of Danish origin but archaeological excavations have revealed evidence of earlier Anglo-Saxon settlements. The church in Blaby is mostly of fourteenth century construction although records indicate that there was a church in Blaby from 1140.

The town has a connection to the hosiery industry and this association still remains with many residents in Blaby still involved in this trade.

The oldest surviving buildings are located in 'The Green' although evidence suggests this is not the original centre which was closer to the junction between Sycamore Street and Welford Road. The properties are largely 19th Century although the pattern of the streets may be medieval in origin. The majority of houses were built as artisan cottages interspersed with a few larger houses and villas. The process of demolition and rebuilding in the town has resulted in a diverse character, brick and slate are the main building materials used.

Within the Conservation Area there are three listed buildings: The Barkers Arms- dating from the 16th Century; the All Saints Church 14th Century; the 19th Century Blaby Hall which is built in a 17th Century style.

Aston Flamville

The village was originally named Eston and was renamed in the 11 C by Lord Flamville. It has four listed buildings which include: the church, manor house, church farm and the Dovecote.

The visual appraisal of the village noted that enclosed land and mature trees provide an important visual entrance to the village. Hedgerows, views over fields and groups of buildings are key characteristics.

Wigston Parva

This village has been preserved largely due to planning policy allowing new development for essential roads only. The village is unique not only in terms of its size but also for the historic pattern of the village which is a strong feature. The ground rises from the settlement and the houses are grouped around an enclosed village green which is the main feature. A large number of mature trees surround the village.

Originally named Wiceston it later became known as Little Wigston or Wigston Parva (parva means little). It has been noted within the history of Hinckley that the village has the appearance of a neat rural square.

The Hill Farmhouse dates back to 1727, and is one of the main features of the Conservation Area. The area is characterised by its focus on the central square upon which the farm buildings and workers cottages are all centred. The church is within the south eastern corner of the village.

Kirby Fields

The area is surrounded by open fields to the north and east, by public open space to the west and Leicester Forest East to the south. The area was developed in 1877 when half of the Kirby Fields farm was sold off into lots for building. A series of large individually designed houses were then built on the site. Fifty houses had been built by 1925.

Development pressure during the 1950s to 1970s resulted in the subdivision of the area and redevelopment of some of the original plots. The majority of this development has been integrated into the Conservation Area and is screened by the landscape.

Grand Union Canal

The canal has been developed in stages by several different rail companies between the late 18th Century and early 19th Century. The canal was opened in 1778 and shortly afterwards was connected to the Grand Junction Canal thus forming the 'Grand Union Canal'.

The majority of the canal is similar in form and construction although it has subtle differences between each canal company. The synthesis of each section of the canal is considered to be of special significance.

The canal covers approximately 65 miles and includes sections of both broad and narrow gauge river navigation. It is a narrow linear waterway flanked by a towpath and is crossed at regular intervals by bridges.

The Conservation Area encompasses the canal and all associated areas which have features considered relevant to the history or construction of the canal.

Countesthorpe

The village covers 150 hectares with much of the development occurring in the last 50 years. The historic core is still evident and is situated to the eastern end of the present day village. Countesthorpe is set in an agricultural landscape on relatively flat land. The village is mainly situated on one main road east west and another north south.

Historical records date back to the 1200s when the areas was called both Le Thorp and Thorp Cuntasse. The use of Thorp can be traced back to the Scandinavian/ Danish influences in the 880s AD. Houses were confined to a nucleus of the village settlement to ensure they didn't encroach on to the surrounding agricultural land. Beyond the village core was a number of large open fields that were divided into strips.

Enclosure in 1767 resulted in massive changes in the local landscape with cooperative farming replaced by intensified agriculture. The former farmhouses within the Conservation Area provides physical evidence of the early agricultural economy of the village. Unemployment brought a shift from agriculture to the manufacture of socks and stockings which over the 18 and 19C grew to become the dominant work of the village. This diversification from farming triggered the expansion of the village around the village core. Frameshops were a common feature of gardens although only one remains, in

Green Lane. The most significant growth of the village has occurred within the last fifty years.

Countesthorpe is on the site of late a Anglo-Saxon to early medieval village which existed between 850AD and 1349 AD and included the Church of St Andrews. This was originally a medieval church which was extended in 1841 and 1907.

The village centre is focused on the Church of St Andrew and The Square together with all or part of the 5 roads radiating out of The Square including part of Wigston St. The spatial quality varies owing to the irregular and contrasting nature of the spaces within the historic core and the nature of the built form. The buildings contrast from tight knit buildings and continuous frontages characteristic of Central St, Church St, Main St and east side of Peatling St, western end of Orchard Lane and the western side of Wigston St and the open character around the larger houses and outbuildings of the historic former farmsteads on Station Road, parts of 'the Square', Green Lane and the southern end of Main Street.

The Square is characteristically enclosed although this has been diluted by the setting of King William IV public house. Linden House Farm on Station Road is a landmark building. This road provides an important gateway into the historic core. Some smaller lanes in the village have a rural character with older buildings screening more modern development.

Red brick is the common building material often using a Flemish bond although occasionally English or Suffolk bond is evident. The colour and texture contributes to the areas distinctiveness. Some of the older buildings are characterised by render which is generally white and some timber framed and mud stone buildings are evident. The Church is the only stone building and is predominantly limestone and granite. Welsh slate is the predominant roof material although some older buildings use Leicestershire Swithland slate. The replacement of these materials with more modern materials is detracting from the character of the village. Roads and modern street furniture do not enhance the historic character of the village.

Important open spaces include the Paddock, St Andrews Churchyard and the Square. Trees are important for defining the space and providing interest in the skyline, they contribute to the rural character of Green Lane and help to screen modern development along Station Road and Green Lane.

Cosby

The village has been subject to development pressures for expansion to meet the demand of commuters due to its proximity to Leicester City Centre. However, the older shopping core of the village has not been visually affected by this expansion.

The 'by' in the name of the village suggests it was first settled by the Danes in the 9th and 10th Century, although the first recorded information was in 1086 in the Domesday Book.

During the 17th Century the knitting industry became more prominent within the village. Today the village is a mix of styles and periods, the oldest building is the Church of St Michael and All Angels built within the 13th and 14th Century and the 15th Century clerestory. Cosby House is the most significant domestic building, the barn is half-timbered with brick infilling with the date 1766 engraved in the wood. Most of the other

buildings are 18th and 19th Century although some may conceal earlier timber-framed structures.

Cosby has developed around a brook and this gives the village its distinctive character. The stream forms the central spine, in the village centre it flows through a small open space and is surrounded by roads which provides an open character to the centre.

Enderby

The village is situated on a ridge of high ground above the northwest reaches of the Soar Valley. In recent years the M1 and M69 have been constructed to the east and north of the village. The Conservation Area is within the north-eastern side of the village where the land rises in a north westerly direction towards a series of former quarries. These granite outcrops have had a strong influence on the character of the village.

The street pattern of the area remained relatively unchanged from the 18th to 19th Century with built development was contained within the traditional boundaries of the village. Expansion did not occur until later in the 19th Century and into the 20th Century.

There are a network of footpaths which serve the village and contribute to its local distinctiveness, including the walled footpaths leading east towards The Nook.

The earliest definite record of the village was in 1204. The Church of St John is within the present day village centre was established in the 13th Century although the earliest remaining building, the tower, is from the 14th Century. The rest was rebuilt in the 19th Century. The other earliest known building is the Manor House which dates from the 15th Century. Enderby Hall is an important building within the village although is mostly screened from view by mature vegetation and a walled boundaries. It's owners have played an important role in the village. Richard bequeathed a Free School to the village and later sold it to allow the building of the national school in 1860. This was further enlarged and Italian style modifications made to the hall in 1867 by Charles Brook one of the greatest known benefactors of the village. He also rebuilt the church, the reading rooms and working men's institute.

The village was originally based an agricultural economy and the remaining ridge and furrow is evident within the parkland formerly associated with Enderby Hall. The enclosure act resulted in diversification into hosiery, footwear and quarrying. Later augmented by the knitting industry although little evidence of this remains. Some of the larger workshops built to accommodate the larger industrial equipment, which was powered by steam, are evident in the village, outside the Conservation Area. Quarrying also became a common occurrence from approximately 1825 although no definite date could be found. The last quarry closed in 1967 although the remains of former quarries are evident around the village.

There is a considerable contrast between the rural character of the eastern parts to the more urban qualities of High St, Chapel St and Cross St. Leicester Road marks the transition between the countryside and the village and is distinguished by a high brick wall and grand semi circular entrance to Enderby Hall. A tunnelling effect created along this road by overhanging trees and adds to the rural character. There is a diverse mix of building styles in the Conservation Area ranging from timber construction including cruck truss details with thatched roofs. The cross has a distinctive scrolled porch and dentillated string course dating from the late 18th Century. Four large houses built in the 19th Century are of brick construction although their external walls have been rendered

in a classical style. The court has a distinctive stone pedimented roof and polychromatic brickwork. Purpose built terraced houses within the area date from the late 19th and early 20th Century.

Red brick is the common building material using a Flemish bond. The colour and texture of the brick contribute to built form distinctiveness. On some buildings more than one colour of brick has been used which adds visual interest to the building, the use of light header bricks within the bond gives a distinctive character. Other buildings have been dentillated and have moulded brickwork. A few buildings use local quarried granite stone with some random granite walling evident although in places this has been painted. Roofing material is predominantly Welsh slate and some use of Leicestershire Swithland slate with its distinctive diminishing courses and purple shades is present. Thatch is used on some of the timber framed buildings. Chimney stacks and pots are prominent features of traditional building and the use of decorative ridge tiles, finials and bargeboards add to the skyline and roof interest respectively. Page nineteen of the character area appraisal provides greater detail on the particular features of interest within the village.

No public open spaces exist within the Conservation Area. The largest space being the churchyard. This in combination with the countryside contributes to the rural and spacious feel of the Conservation Area. The pattern of gravestones is a prominent feature. Mature trees along roads provide a tunnelling effect which further contributes to the rural character and provide skyline interest.

Appendix 2

Appendix 2: Review Of Parish Plans

Croft Parish Plan Report (2004)

The village of Croft lies either side of the River Soar at the foot of Croft Hill which is an important historic and landscape feature rising to 300ft. The Croft Parish Plan states that the residents believe Croft is set in attractive countryside although, due to the rapid expansion since the 60's and close proximity to motorway links, it is now considered a semi-rural village.

The villagers of Croft are concerned about the River Soar and its surroundings. They believe more needs to be done to conserve it and many are willing to volunteer to do this. They also consider more could be done to improve the overall environment including increasing the amount of hedgerows, verges, trees and flower tubs, as well as reducing litter. The plan states the protection of Croft Hill and the preservation of the countryside are important.

A granite 'super quarry' is located on the outskirts of the village and is central to the growth and prosperity of the settlement. The residents recognise this and accept it is a part of the village's character.

Leisure and recreation are important to the residents of Croft. This includes walking and cycling in the local landscape. They expressed a desire for more facilities to be provided such as benches for the enjoyment of the environment.

Glenfield Village Appraisal (2001)

The plan states that although Glenfield can not be described as a picture postcard village, the old streets have retained their character and the facilities are good. It considers the village to be a dynamic place to live.

Most of the residents believe the quality of the local environment to be reasonably clean. Litter and dog fouling and lack of parking leading to parking on the verges are the biggest issues. Over 50% believe there is adequate provision of open space, about a quarter of the surveyed population consider more is needed and half would like an expansion of the graveyard to be provided.

Close proximity to the countryside was important to the residents of Glenfield in addition to its convenient and quiet location. Areas for improvement include reducing the speed of traffic, improving unattractive features and reinforcing the weakly defined village centre.

Leicester Forest East Parish Plan (2005)

This is a large village community on the edge of Leicester. It is not an archetypal English village and is a recent conurbation which has expanded considerably in the last hundred years.

there is little mention of the landscape or environment within the plan, although residents are keen to approve public areas with more floral displays, perhaps entering the 'in bloom' competition. Residents are keen to get involved in improving the street scene through joining a committee to maintain flower displays and mow verges outside their property.

It is a sociable village with good activities on offer for adults and children including: eleven clubs for adults and seven clubs for children.

Braunstone Town Parish Plan

Braunstone Town is the most densely populated area in Blaby District and one of the largest parishes in England. It is on the southern edge of Leicester and has some large-scale commercial developments and good shopping and employment provision.

The open spaces within the town are considered to be a high priority for protection and are greatly valued by local residents. The majority of residents would like the open countryside to the west of the M1 to be preserved and designated as green wedge in the local plan. Most residents however, were not aware of the walks and paths in the area and suggested raising awareness through leaflets. Cycle routes are generally considered good, but are still not well used.

Sharnford Village Appraisal (2002)

The village is large and includes a church, a number of public houses, a post office and play area. Lorries from Croft Quarry travel through the centre of the village and residents raised issues of safety particularly for cyclists.

The village is not considered to be attractive by over 50% of the surveyed population. It is hoped this can be improved through local initiatives such as hanging baskets and a clean up of the brook.

The footpaths are well signposted and consequently well used. Walking was identified as the most common village recreational activity.

Kilby Village (1997)

This is a small and rural village; the residents agree it is peaceful and friendly with the atmosphere of a farming community. Improving the attractiveness of the village is still considered important and could be achieved through planting schemes. Footpaths are well used and residents would like an expansion of this network. Speeding traffic is the greatest issue in the village.

Whetstone Village Appraisal (2000)

This is a large village approximately five miles south of Leicester. It has undergone rapid expansion in the last fifteen years and has many amenities including shops, schools, churches, business premises, public houses and a superstore. New housing estates have changed the village character and are likely to have affected the community spirit. This is being addressed as part of the village appraisal.

The countryside around Whetstone is very important to the residents. The farmland, brook, railway embankment and local footpaths are all valued. Opportunities to improve the village through verge maintenance, repairing stiles and protecting the countryside were highlighted in the plan.

Countesthorpe Parish Plan (2004)

Countesthorpe is a large village six miles south of Leicester close to the M1. It is surrounded by countryside and has amenities for all age ranges including recreation and sporting activities.

There is strong opposition to more large-scale development as residents consider that the surrounding countryside has already been eroded. Some new housing for the elderly and first time buyers would be acceptable. The Conservation Area should be protected and extended where possible.

Initiatives to improve the local environment include planting of trees and flowers, more seating to sit and enjoy the village and a booklet of exploratory village walks.

Sapcote Village Appraisal Report (2003)

Sapcote is a small village ten miles south west of Leicester. The village expanded rapidly in the 1960's when new estates were built around the central core of older buildings. Brick is the predominant building material, with a tile roof.

The playing fields are a scheduled ancient monument, underneath the surface are 3 moats and a ridge and furrow system. This large open space in the centre of the village is considered to be unique and valued and its preservation of high importance. The appraisal included a detailed resume of the buildings in the village and highlighted those of heritage importance and those of community importance such as the public house and the church.

The environment and local history of the village are important to residents. The footpaths are regularly used and the church and other historic buildings are highly valued but there is a lack of information about walks and heritage.

Appendix 3

Appendix 3: Landscape Character Assessment Field Survey Sheet

Site Location:		Grid Reference:				
Photo viewpoint reference(s):						
Views into site (Mark on map):						
Views from site (Mark on map):						
Desire lines / Footpaths (Mark on map):						
Use of site (Mark on map):						
LANDFORM / TOPOGRAPHY:						
Flat Undulating Rolling Steep Vertical	Plain Rolling Lowland Plateau Scarp / Cliffs / Ridge Hills Mountains	Deep Gorge Broad Valley Narrow Valley Floodplain Estuary Coastal				
LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS:						
Built Form	Land Cover	Farming	Field pattern and enclosure	Woodland /Trees	Hydrology	Communications
Scattered Farms	Parkland	Arable	Regular fields	Deciduous woodland	River – natural	Motorway
Village	Amenity / recreation	Pasture	Irregular fields	Coniferous plantation	River– engineered	A Roads
Urban	Scrub	Mixed	Timber Fences	Mixed Woodland Shelterbelt	Canal	B Roads / Lanes
Urban Fringe	Marsh	Rough Grazing	Metal fences		Stream	Access track
Industry	Bog	Set aside	Fence within Hedgerow	Hedgerow trees	Drainage ditch/ dyke	Public Footpaths
Military	Moor / heath	Dominant hedgerow species	Walls	Orchard	Reservoir	Railway
Archaeological / Historical features	Meadow Agriculture	Oak	Large scale	Copse	Lake	Disused railway
Ecclesiastic	Rough Grassland	Ash	Medium scale	Coppice	Pond- natural	Canal
Country Houses	Forestry	Hawthorn	Small scale	Isolated trees	Pond- man made	Military
Farm buildings	Golf	Hazel	Hedgerows < 1m	Avenue		Pylons
Estates	Horticulture	Field maple	Hedgerows > 1m	Parkland		Telegraph poles
	Horsiculture	Dogwood	Well managed hedgerows	Clumps		Cycleway
	Quarry	Blackthorn	Poorly managed hedgerows	Scattered trees		Bridleways
	Bare ground	Elm	Hedgerow Condition	Linear strips		Other infrastructure
	Wetland meadow	Elder	Good	Regenerating scrub		
	Derelict Land		Moderate	Pollarded trees		
			Fragmented			
AESTHETIC / PERCEPTUAL ASPECTS:						
Scale Intimate Small Large Vast Enclosure Tight Enclosed Open Exposed Diversity Uniform Simple Diverse Complex Texture Smooth Textured Rough Very Rough Form Vertical Sloping Rolling Horizontal Line Straight Angular Curved Sinuous Colour Monochrome Muted Colourful Garish Balance Harmonious Balanced Discordant Chaotic				Movement Dead Still Calm Busy Pattern Random Organised Regular Formal Unity Unified Interrupted Fragmented Chaotic Security Comfortable Safe Unsettling Threatening Stimulus Monotonous Bland Interesting Inspiring Tranquillity Inaccessible Remote Vacant Peaceful Not tranquil Pleasure Offensive Unpleasant Pleasant Attractive Beautiful Visual Dynamic Sweeping Spreading Dispersed Channelled		

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER:
Brief Description:
Key Characteristics and Distinctive Features and why important:
Rarity (within the district):
Condition / Quality:
Settlement form and setting within the landscape:
Architecture (incl. vernacular style/local materials):
Additional Comments:

Appendix 4

Appendix 4: Settlement Character Assessment Field Survey Sheet

SETTLEMENT:				
VIEWS INTO SETTLEMENT:				
VIEWS OUT OF SETTLEMENT:				
Confined	Open	Channelled	Glimpsed	Changeable
GATEWAYS:				
LANDMARK FEATURES (visible outside the settlement):				
TOPOGRAPHY:				
Flat	Undulating	High ground	Narrow valley	Broad valley
STREET AND BLOCK PATTERN:				
Regular	Irregular	Sinuuous	Geometric	
PUBLIC REALM/ OPEN SPACE:				
Surfaced	Park/ garden	Grass verge	Avenue of trees	Cemetery
Playing fields	Private gardens	Allotments	Play areas	Squares
Courtyards	Informal open space	Waterside: River	Lake Stream	Pond Canal
FORM:				
Cluster	Dispersed	Grid	Irregular block	Linear
Ribbon	Spreading	Varied	Circular	Continuous frontage
AGE OF DEVELOPMENT:				
Historic core	19 th century	20 th century	Mixture	
BUILDING TYPE:				
Terrace	Semi-detached	Detached	Cottage	Flat/apartment
Office	Industrial	Farm	Country house	Church
Landmark buildings	School	Shop	Bungalow	
MATERIALS:				
Granite	Slate	Sandstone	Brick	Wood
Metal	Render	Painted	Clay tile	Limestone
COLOUR:				
Blue	Black	Dark grey	Light grey	Red
Yellow	Beige	Light brown	Dark brown	White
Green	Buff			
BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:				
Stone walls	Brick walls	Evergreen hedgerow	Ornamental hedgerow	Native hedgerow
Metal fence	Timber fence	No boundary	Woodland	
ROOF LINE (PICTURE):				
Uniform	Varied	Rising	Undulating	Flat
Church spires	Pylons	Commercial	Flat roof	Pitched roof
Chimneys	Landmark buildings	Vegetation	Industry	
MOVEMENT:				
Motorways	A roads	B roads	Rural lanes	Tracks
Footpaths	Alleys	Railway	Disused railway	River
Stream	Canal			
URBAN EDGE:				
Defined	Fragmented	Dispersed		
Vegetated	Urban	Mixed		
Recreation	Pasture	Grazing	Woodland	Private
Allotments	Golf course	Estate		
CONDITION:				
Tidy	Untidy	Formal	Informal	Fragmented

RELATIONSHIP OF EDGE TO SETTLEMENT CORE:				
Strong	Partial	None		
STREET SCALE:				
Intimate	Small	Medium	Large	Vast
HERITAGE CONTRIBUTION TO CHARACTER:				
High	Moderate	Low	Fragmenting	
LANDMARK BUILDINGS				
BRIEF DESCRIPTION / KEY CHARACTERISTICS				
RARITY/SENSITIVITY				
SETTING WITHIN LANDSCAPE / DESCRIPTION OF THE URBAN EDGE				

CHARACTER OF THE SETTLEMENT

- Enclosure** Tight Enclosed Open Exposed
- Diversity** Uniform Simple Diverse Complex
- Balance** Harmonious Balanced Discordant Chaotic
- Movement** Dead Still Calm Busy
- Security** Comfortable Safe Unsettling Threatening
- Stimulus** Monotonous Bland Interesting Inspiring
- Tranquillity** Inaccessible Remote Vacant Peaceful Not tranquil
- Pleasure** Offensive Unpleasant Pleasant Attractive Beautiful

Appendix 5

Appendix 5: Summary of Local Landscape Character Areas

Stepping Stones Landscape Character Assessment

TEP was commissioned to undertake a landscape character assessment of the Stepping Stones study area. This included a review of the existing landscape character areas that covered the study area and production of a landscape character assessment of the remaining areas. This was a relatively broad scale assessment which identified the suitability of each of the character areas to accommodate new woodlands. The study covered the northern half of the District and identified five character areas. The key characteristics of each area are summarised below:

Leicester Forest East and Narborough Fringe

- Flat to gently rolling landscape with a mix of land uses including agriculture and recreation
- Transitional landscape between the urban edge of rural countryside
- Long distance views over farmland towards the urban fringes of Leicester possible from much of the area
- Limited blocks of woodland planting although a partially wooded horizon created by maturing hedgerows
- Pylons are a prominent feature due to their numbers and scale; numerous other smaller telegraph poles are also present
- Evidence of the loss of field boundary structure through an increase in field size and lack of hedgerow management

Broughton Astley Open Farmland

- Regular organised field pattern enclosed by low neatly clipped single species hedgerows
- Uniform character due to predominantly similar land uses and field patterns
- General lack of mature hedgerow trees within field boundary vegetation, with few blocks of woodland and isolated trees prominent in the landscape
- Uniform horizon broken up by a few isolated trees and limited blocks of woodland
- Manicured and organised landscape created through intensive management of field boundaries.

Blaby and Countesthorpe Fringe

- Linear treebelts along communication routes and around settlements
- Mature field boundaries around fields of varying scale
- Mix of land uses from recreational and rough grazing adjacent to the urban edge with more agricultural pasture and arable farmland away from settlements
- Golf courses and parklands include substantial groups of isolated trees
- Number of recreational routes through the area with a mix of informal recreational facilities including woodland and parkland
- New woodland planting buffer strips and linear blocks

Foston Open Farmland

- Open expansive landscape with limited (often non existent) boundaries
- Numerous telegraph poles cross the area
- Woodland is limited to a few blocks present around Foston. These form a prominent feature within the landscape
- Hedgerow boundaries contain few mature trees

- Large scale field pattern with long distance views on high ground across the character area.

Wistow Agricultural Parkland

- Parkland character due to a number of country manors with large fields and mature isolated trees
- Views of large country houses and historic churches
- Avenues of mature trees along roads
- Meandering rivers and streams with brick hump back bridges
- Pockets of woodland of single species around farmsteads

Rothley Brook Meadows Management Strategy

Rothley Brook is an Area of Green Wedge to the north west of Leicester and links to Anstey Green Wedge. Urban development borders all boundaries with Groby and Ratby forming the western boundary and Glenfield and Kirby Muxloe the eastern and southern boundaries. The assessment identified seven different local landscape character areas within the Green Wedge. These are as follows:

Groby Fields

Open rolling agricultural fields with unhindered views in all directions. There is little woodland cover, mature and stag headed trees in the hedgerows are a distinctive feature. Land use is mostly arable farming with fields demarcated by species poor hedgerows.

The Ponds

This is a low-lying area compared with surrounding fields. Fishing ponds are surrounded by groups of trees and dispersed vegetation characterise this area.

Martinshaw Fringe

This is an open landscape, however, enclosure is provided by surrounding built development. Tree planting is sparse, although Martinshaw Wood is a characteristic and important feature.

Brook Pastures

Flat low-lying small pasture fields and enclosed tree lined paths contrast with the more open fields. Across the area land use is dominated by rough pasture with a strong urban influence created by main roads, industrial units and the settlement of The Brantings. There are many recreational areas although little woodland is present. Mature trees along Rothley Brook create a wooded character.

Castle Meadows

Enclosed, flat landscape comprising mown grass fields and arable farming. Contained due to its low-lying topography and periphery vegetation. Recreational uses dominate.

Upper Fields

Open rolling arable fields with a strong sense of exposure. Limited small and fragmented hedgerows contribute to the sense of exposure.

Western Golf Course

Open parkland character although pockets of enclosure are created by groups of trees. The area has a diverse mix of vegetation which has an attractive aesthetic and

ecological contrast between the natural historic landscape and the manicured golf course.

Sence And Soar Green Wedges Management Strategy

This green wedge lies between Narborough and Whetstone in the centre of the district and extends north between Glen Parva and Enderby towards the centre of Leicester. It is strongly associated with the floodplains of both the Rivers Sence and Soar and the Grand Union Canal. The Green Wedge Assessment classified the area into nine different landscape character areas. These are summarised below:

Ten Pound Rise

Fragmented character which is predominantly recreational. Predominantly open with long distance views. Strong urban influence present throughout with housing and office development highly visible.

Enderby Fields

Open and exposed rolling landscape, with distance views possible due to sparse hedgerow and tree cover. Intensive arable farming with large scale field pattern although this becomes smaller towards Enderby St John. M1 is visually intrusive.

Enderby Parkland

Traditional estate landscape characterised by rolling open pasture interspersed with large mature oaks. Woodland and boundary walls are a characteristic feature.

Cosby Fields

Medium sized open rolling landscape where arable farming predominates. Largely uniform and regular shaped fields. Dense well managed hedgerows limit views across most of the area. Views become more open in the north where boundaries have been left unmanaged and have become fragmented. The golf course is one of the largest parts of this character area and is well maintained. The Great Central Railway provides an elevated well vegetated edge to the area.

Narborough Fields

This is characterised by tall hedged paddocks and hay fields and large intensively farmed arable fields. Whetstone Brook is not visually prominent within the area and has little bank side vegetation. The M1 corridor and River Soar provide vegetated features which accentuate the openness within the character area.

Narborough Bog

Designated as a SSSI it has a distinctive character, comprising woodland, reed bed and damp meadows interspersed with willow scrub. It is small and intimate in scale further enhanced by the presence of mature woodland. Water is a characteristic feature and the relationship with the River Soar is important.

The Paddocks

Medium to small-scale fields bounded by thick hawthorn hedgerows which restrict views and provide a sense of enclosure. Areas of recreation are untypical of this character area.

Soar Valley

Large open floodplain bordered by the built environment with water the defining characteristic of the area. Small to medium-sized fields which are generally grazed by horses and cattle. Hedgerows are the main form of field enclosure although in places are over mature or fragmented. Tree cover is sparse. Pylons are a dominant feature of the landscape. Housing and industrial areas provide a sense of containment.

Sence Meadows

Edges of the area are strongly contained by built development. Railways and Leicester Road dissect the area. Generally fields are poorly managed and rapidly becoming overgrown. Mature hedgerows divide the fields although vegetation is generally associated with the River Sence in the centre of the character area. Pylons are a dominant feature although do not conflict with the area's scale and contained character.

Appendix 6

Appendix 6: Summary of adjacent Boroughs' Landscape Character Areas

Although not part of the district these landscape character areas provide a context to the fringes of the district and have been evaluated to ensure that this assessment fits comfortably within the wider network of landscape character assessments which cover Leicestershire.

Hinckley and Bosworth

This assessment was completed in 2006 and formally adopted as supplementary planning guidance in July 2006. The borough lies immediately to the west of Blaby District and therefore a number of the character areas identified within this assessment are located adjacent to the western boundary of the district. There are five character areas adjacent to the district, these are summarised below:

Charnwood Fringe Character Area

- A prominent landform with localised steep slopes around rocky outcrops.
- The land use is dominated by pasture and woodland with quarries, pools and outcrops. A medium to small field pattern interspersed with large areas of woodland cover.
- The area has a strong suburban influence with distant views of the urban edges of Leicester and has a good network of public footpaths.

Forest Hills Character Area

- A gently undulating landform with small plateaus on high ground.
- It is a predominantly rural landscape with arable and rough set-aside, although it is influenced by industrial/ urban features such as masts, poles and pylons.
- Generally a large scale field pattern with groups of smaller fields surrounding settlements.
- Visually open due to immature plantations.

Desford Vales Character Area

- Gently rolling landform of even slopes with gentle undulations.
- It is predominantly arable with clustered areas of industry and recreational facilities. Tree cover is limited with scattered trees and small linear woodland copses.
- The area has a large to medium sized field pattern enclosed by hawthorn hedges.
- Where these have been removed open views are possible.

Stoke Golding Vales

- Predominantly flat with gentle undulations.
- Mix of arable and pasture medium-sized rectilinear field pattern bounded by mixed hedgerows with scattered hedgerow trees and small copses.
- Settlements are usually located on high ground.
- The area is criss-crossed by a network of small lanes and public footpaths
- The Ashby Canal has a number of attractive canal bridges.
- Open and expansive landscape which is tranquil and rural in character.

Hinckley and Burbage Fringe

- Gently rolling landform with areas of flat ground.
- Mix of arable and pasture with isolated blocks of woodland.
- Industrial use increases around urban areas.

- Medium-sized rectilinear field pattern bounded by mixed hedgerows and few hedgerow trees.
- Area heavily influenced by settlements which are frequently visible on ridgelines.
- Significant transport infrastructure subdivides the area.
- Number of distinctive landscape features such as Burbage common and wood have local and national importance as ecological and recreational resources.

Oadby And Wigston Landscape Character Assessment

This district is located along the south eastern boundary of Leicester City and partially extends into the study area. The character areas identified are at a detailed scale, which reflects the extent to which urban development covers the borough. The study identifies seven character areas which are close to Blaby District and these are summarised below:

Stoughton

- A rural parkland character created by the area's close association with Stoughton Farm Park.
- Roads are lined with mature avenue trees with areas of parkland and formal gardens.
- A few spinneys are present within estate grounds.
- Long distance views of estate houses on high ground are a key characteristic.

Thurnby and Oadby Green Wedge

- A mix of land uses comprising recreation adjacent to the urban edge and agriculture elsewhere.
- Boundaries are generally well defined and belts of planting and a spinney are present along roads.
- The character is becoming fragmented through urban development and recreational land uses.

Oadby Grange

- This character area is an agricultural landscape with arable farming being the most common land use although there are small areas of pasture.
- The area has a strong rural character created by a combination of mature hedgerows, trees and a number of spinneys and small copses at field boundaries and small areas of set aside scrub.
- Open views from high ground are possible giving the landscape an exposed character.

Wigston East

- The landform is a series of undulating ridges and valleys which dictates the visibility across the area.
- Predominantly rural in nature the land uses become more urban and recreational towards the urban edge.
- Field boundary vegetation is often fragmented, although where present it is often tall and dense.
- Field ponds are a characteristic feature.

Wigston South

- This is an agricultural area with a mix of arable and improved grassland generally used for grazing.
- Field boundaries are variable with dense vegetation and mature trees in places.

- Ponds and meadows are frequent throughout the character area.

Sence Valley

- Associated with the floodplain of the River Sence land uses are predominantly pasture although it becomes more arable to the south of the river.
- Field boundaries are generally well vegetated and species rich with large areas of meadows and wetland vegetation.

Upper Soar (South)

- A rural arable landscape with low field boundaries enabling long distance views.
- Woodland is restricted to around the sewage works and is a dominant feature within this character area.