

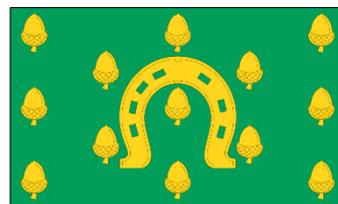
**RUTLAND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER  
ASSESSMENT 2022  
CONSULTATION DRAFT**



**PART 2  
JULY 2022**

## Acknowledgements

This landscape character assessment has been prepared by Anthony Brown of Bayou Bluenvironment Ltd. and Graham Bradford of The Planning & Environment Studio Ltd. The consultants are grateful to Rutland County Council for steering the study and in particular to Kerry Andrews, Planning Policy Officer, for her support and Rachel Armstrong, Principal Planning Policy Officer, for managing the project.



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# **RUTLAND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT 2022**

## **PART 1**

(published separately)

- 1.Introduction
- 2.Methodology
- 3.Landscape Change
- 4.Introduction to the Character of Rutland’s Landscapes
- 5.The New Rutland Landscape Classification

Table 1: Rutland Landscape Classification 2003 and 2022

Figure 1: Rutland Landscape Character Classification

Figure 2: Landscape Classification & National Character Areas

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# PART 2

## 1.INTRODUCTION

The Rutland Landscape Character Assessment 2022 is divided into two sections:

**Part 1** (published separately) outlines the background to landscape characterisation in Rutland, the purpose and scope of the study, explaining why and how it has been prepared. It outlines the new landscape classification across Rutland County, as shown in Figure 1 and Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Rutland Landscape Classification 2022**

Landscape Character Types 2022	Landscape Character Areas 2022
A. High Rutland	<i>Ai. Leighfield Forest</i>
	<i>Aii. Undulating Mixed Farmlands</i>
	<i>Aiii. Eyebrook Basin</i>
	<i>Aiv. Chater Valley</i>
B. Vale of Catmose	
C. Rutland Water Basin	
D. Rutland Plateau	<i>Di. Cottesmore Plateau</i>
	<i>Dii. Clay Woodlands</i>
	<i>Diii. Gwash Valley</i>
	<i>Div. Ketton Plateau</i>
E. Welland Valley	<i>Ei. Middle Valley West (Caldecott to Seaton)</i>
	<i>Eii. Middle Valley East (Seaton to Tinwell)</i>

This shows that the five landscape character types (LCTs) A to E identified within the 2003 Rutland Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) are still valid, although some of the boundaries have been refined and re-mapped. These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character, sharing broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historical land use, settlement pattern, and perceptual and aesthetic attributes.

As in the 2003 LCA, three of the LCTs are sub-divided into single unique landscape character areas (LCAs) as discrete geographical areas of LCTs A, D and E. Landscape character types B. Vale of Catmose and C. Rutland Water Basin are recognised as distinct types of landscape that are not sub-divided into smaller landscape character areas.

Two landscape character areas, *Aii. Undulating Mixed Farmlands* and *Aiii. Eyebrook Basin* are renamed to better reflect their key landscape characteristics.

A glossary of terms is included as Appendix 1 to Part 1 of the Rutland LCA 2022.

**Part 2** (this section) identifies and describes the landscape character types (LCTs) and landscape character areas (LCAs) and provides guidance for the conservation, enhancement and restoration of landscape character. Part 2 provides a straight forward reference document written in clear, plain non-technical language with a range of readers in mind: it provides information to those who live, work or visit the County, and to the general public and others with an interest in the County's rich and diverse landscape; it provides advice to applicants seeking to develop land within the County; and it provides a day-to-day working reference document to guide officers and members of the council when considering the implications of planning applications on the environment.

Throughout Part 1 and Part 2, the names of each of the landscape character areas (LCAs) are given in *italics* to help the reader to differentiate them from the landscape character types (LCTs).

## 2.THE RUTLAND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT, 2022, PART 2

**Part 2** follows the following format:

- A map to illustrate the general location of the landscape character types (LCTs) and landscape character areas (LCAs);
- A general description of the landscape character type, including its landscape character, physical and cultural influences, and aesthetic and perceptual qualities;
- The description of each landscape character area (and landscape character types B. Vale of Catmose and C. Rutland Water Basin that are not sub-divided) includes:
  - A detailed map illustrating its location and a general description of its location and boundaries;
  - Description of key landscape characteristics;
  - Description of the main forces for landscape change, with reference to key issues affecting landscape sensitivity;
  - The overall landscape management strategy for the LCA, with guidelines for the type of measures that should be taken to achieve the overall strategy, expressed as either one or more of:

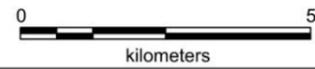
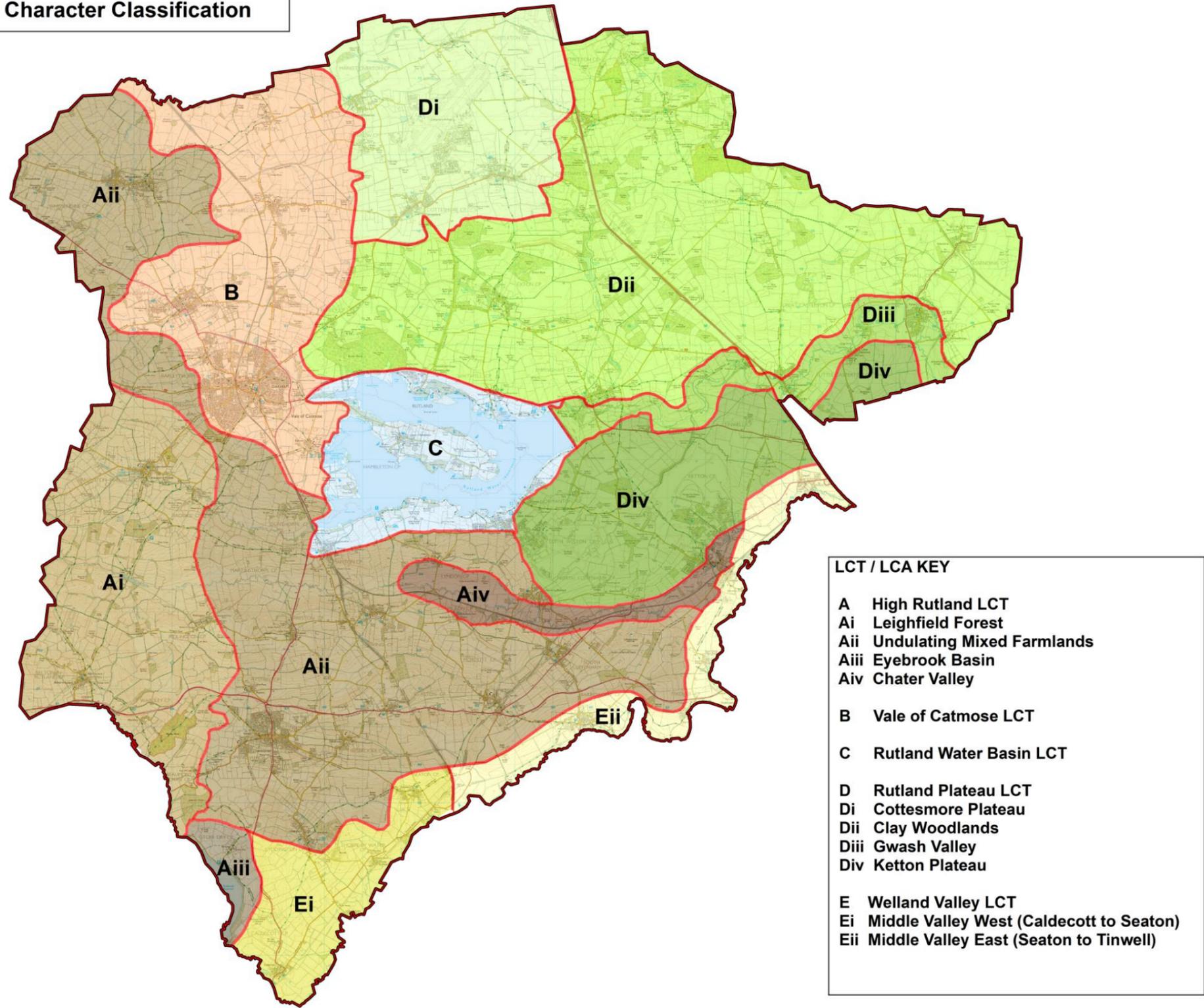
Conserve - where the main objective is to conserve the existing character of the landscape;

Enhance - where opportunities should be taken to enhance existing character through introduction of new landscape elements and features (for example the planting of new hedgerows and hedgerow trees to restore historic field patterns) or by managing existing landscape elements and features differently (for example increasing the biodiversity of intensively managed grassland and arable land by managing and linking buffer strips along linear features such as hedgerows to create a continuous network of wildlife corridors);

Restore / Re-create - where opportunities should be taken to restore/re-create some key aspects of the landscape (for example orchards) or create new landscapes through landscape restoration.

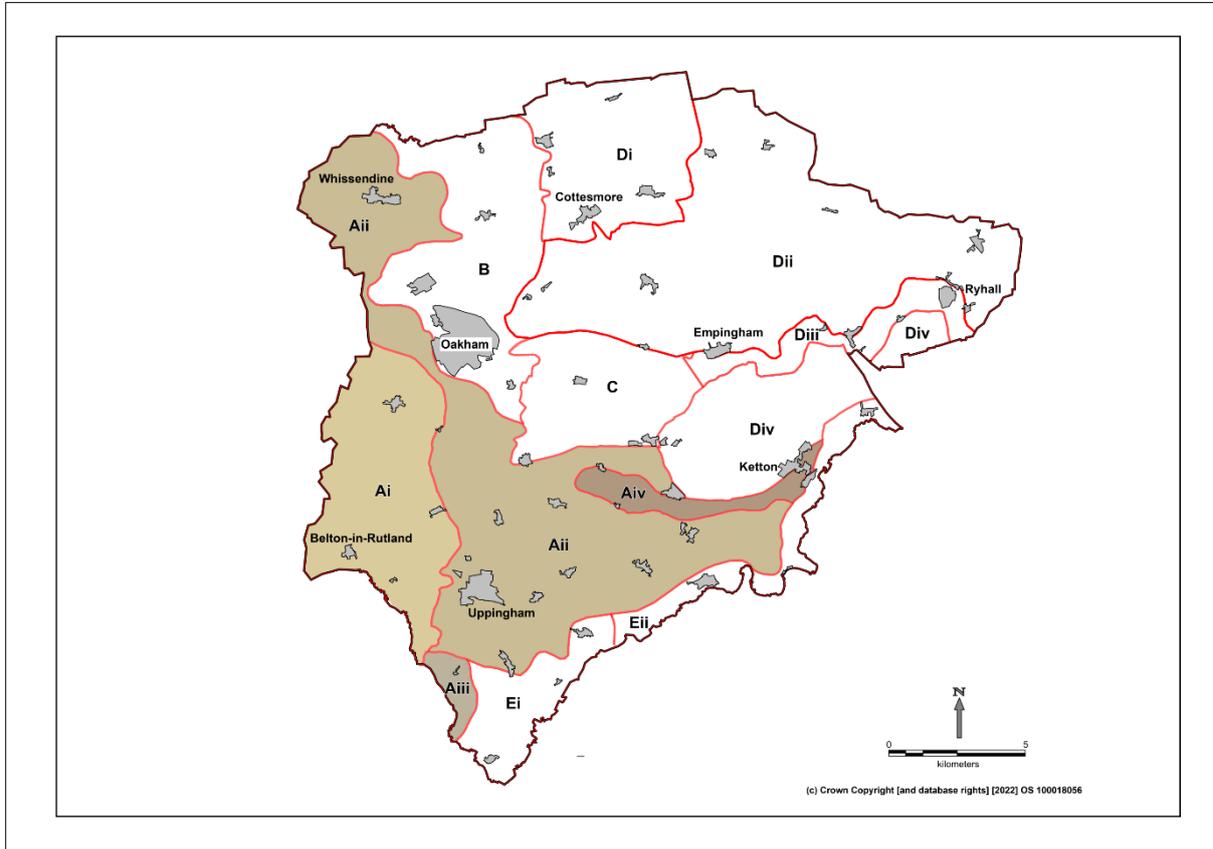
- Photographs are provided at the end of the descriptions to illustrate some of the key landscape characteristics and other features of the landscape. Annotations are provided in Section 3 corresponding to each photograph number.

Rutland LCA Consultation Draft June 2022  
 Figure 1: Rutland Landscape Character Classification



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# Landscape Character Type A HIGH RUTLAND



## ***Landscape Character***

The High Rutland Landscape Character Type (LCT) forms an extensive landscape along the western fringe and most of the southern half of the county. It forms the eastern side of the *High Leicestershire* landscape character area as recognised by Leicestershire County Council that in turn shows a broad correlation to the High Leicestershire National Character Area.

Erosion of the Jurassic Lias Clays has resulted in a high, dissected plateau located mainly in Leicestershire, where the rivers Gwash and Chater, the Eye Brook, and numerous tributary streams radiate to the east towards Oakham and Ketton, and southwards from Uppingham, into the River Welland. A number of small streams including the Whissendine Brook radiate out from the high plateau northwards and flow into the River Witham. This gives the area a distinctive hilly, rolling landform; to the west the steeper sided valleys and higher narrower ridges of the *Leighfield Forest* Landscape Character Area (LCA) give a smaller scale, more intimate and dramatic landscape with the highest part of the county reaching 197m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to the west of Oakham and falling to around 100m AOD in a short distance before sharply rising again; to the north and east the *Undulating Mixed Farmlands* LCA is a larger scale, more open and gently undulating landscape, with broadly rolling ridges and more rounded hills, with in parts relatively flat areas (for example to the east of

Ridlington and west of Uppingham) and shallower valleys. Despite the complex drainage patterns and varied landform, the landscape has a strong visual unity.

Of particular importance to creating this visual unity is the simple underlying geology and the undulating landform, a mixed agricultural regime with areas of permanent pasture preserving ridge and furrow, woodlands and spinneys within a largely enclosed field pattern and a network of mainly regularly shaped fields, thorn hedges with ash and oak trees. The settlement pattern of the market town of Uppingham and dispersed villages, hamlets and farms, the widespread use of local ironstone in churches, vernacular buildings and country houses are also significant in contributing to local identity and sense of place of the High Rutland LCT.

The rural landscape retains a tranquil and sometimes empty, remote character, particularly to the west and where winding country lanes and narrow gated roads connecting isolated hamlets and farms have seen little improvement. Despite the Eyebrook reservoir being popular for fishing, due to its restricted access and limited recreational facilities the *Eyebrook Basin* LCA retains a tranquil, remote character largely due to the gently sloping landform around the flooded lower valley of the Eye Brook, its unsettled nature and secluded location away from any significant intrusion. The *Chater Valley* LCA also retains a largely rural, tranquil, intimate, sheltered character away from road and rail intrusion.

The High Rutland LCT retains a historic character, with limited evidence of change and development, although some areas have seen extensive conversion or reversion to arable farming with attendant loss of pasture, woodland, field boundaries, hedgerow trees and small pockets of semi-natural vegetation.

Landscape condition is generally good, notably where the hedgerow networks are well maintained and contain frequent mature trees that have not succumbed to disease.

### ***Physical Influences***

Localised patterns of landform, land cover and land use within the High Rutland LCT are influenced by the underlying sedimentary mudstones and limestones, with ironstones and clay, of the Lower Jurassic period, where the lowland area abuts the outliers of hard Precambrian crystalline rocks which form the prominent hills in the neighbouring county of Leicestershire. Harder bands of limestone tend to stand out as small ridges, cut by radiating watercourses. Warm red-brown hued ironstone is a common and distinctive building material in the High Rutland LCT. Irregular and unconsolidated spreads of till (Boulder Clay) conceal the solid geology over large parts.

Slowly permeable loamy and clayey soils are predominant across the landscape, and despite consistency in the nature of the soils, a mixed agricultural regime is evident; the distribution of arable and pasture largely dictated by variations in landform. On steeper slopes and wetter areas bordering streams and rivers, improved and semi-improved pastures are prevalent, with particularly steep slopes marked by remnant areas of woodland or

unimproved species rich grassland. On gently undulating and sloping land, arable cultivation is notable. Field ponds are also characteristic of the High Rutland LCT.

The agricultural landscape is punctuated by numerous small deciduous woodlands and spinneys and whilst these are generally not extensive, they are often prominent features when occupying steep slopes or elevated hills and ridges. They provide significant landscape and wildlife interest within the agricultural landscape. The notable concentration of surviving natural and semi-natural ancient woodlands within the *Leighfield Forest LCA* between south of Oakham and Stockerston over the border into Leicestershire, mark the remnants of the medieval Royal hunting lands of the Forest of Rutland.

Hedgerows and hedgerow trees also contribute to the well-treed character of the landscape. In areas of intensive arable production, hedgerows can be low and trees intermittent, particularly where they mark later periods of enclosure. However, elsewhere the hedge cover is generally very strong and contributes significantly to the perception of a well-maintained agricultural landscape. Sinuous hedgerows marking ancient parish boundaries are particularly rich, providing important refuges and connective habitats for wildlife.

### ***Cultural Influences***

In keeping with many areas of rural England, up to the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century it is likely that much of Rutland would have been cleared of woodland ('Wildwood') to establish new nucleated villages surrounded by open fields in ridge and furrow cultivation. However, at the same time the Royal hunting forests including Leighfield Forest were in existence. Periods of prosperity would have seen settlement expansion and church building.

From the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, the landscape would have seen widespread depopulation, largely as a result of the limited quality of the soils for cereal cultivation and the actions of landlords who could see greater profits in the reversion of land to grazing for vast flocks of sheep. Other small villages and hamlets on marginal land had been abandoned by successive epidemics in the Middle Ages such as the Black Death. Today, the landscape displays evidence of this period, with deserted and shrunken villages (for example at Brooke, Martinsthorpe and Snelston) and ridge and furrow of former fields preserved beneath areas of permanent pasture. In some cases, villages were not entirely abandoned, but declined to leave just one or two farms where once there was a thriving community.

From the Tudor period the landscape was also increasingly being enclosed, quick growing thorn hedges being used to demarcate boundaries and divide up the landscape. This continued until widespread Parliamentary enclosure of the remaining open land in the late-18<sup>th</sup> and early-19<sup>th</sup> centuries resulted in a complex patchwork pattern of fields overlying much older field systems. Local variations include field ponds for watering stock and fox coverts created on poorer pasture areas to replace natural cover that had been cleared. Enclosure also led to the loss of villages as private landlords rearranged their land holdings.

Enclosure was accompanied by the realignment of minor roads and their construction to a standard width, giving characteristically straight rural roads with wide verges.

The growing wealth of landowners led to further developments in the landscape during a period of transformation in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Halls and other large country houses were built, and churches embellished. Whilst Uppingham has grown from agricultural settlements to market towns, most villages retain a strong association with agriculture with a legacy of good stone-built farmhouses, cottages and outbuildings, often utilising the locally sourced distinctive iron-rich geology. This transformation established the distinctive vernacular character with a mix of house types and styles but with a number of common features influenced by the use of a limited range of materials which give a uniformity of appearance.

Most villages are compact and nucleated, well integrated into the landscape. Modern extensions are often linear or with some depth whilst still reflecting historic layouts of a main street and back lane with linking tracks or lanes. Together with the market town of Uppingham, many of the villages and hamlets have designated Conservation Areas (and numerous Listed Buildings) recognising their historic character and appearance. However, historic use of many settlements as working farming villages has been lost, although many retain a working farm in the village. Similar to most rural areas of England, agricultural mechanisation, amalgamation of farms into larger units and improvements in transport and personal mobility mean that the majority of residents are no longer reliant on the village for employment.

High Rutland has been associated with fox hunting with hounds for hundreds of years, up until the Government ban in 2005. The Cottesmore Hunt continues to meet to hunt within High Rutland using a combination of laid trails and bird flushing with its equally famous neighbours the Quorn Hunt and the Belvoir Hunt. Miles of tracks, untracked grassland, hedges, coverts and woodland are maintained for the purpose by the Hunt, farmers and other landowners. Similarly, the large farming estates maintain hedges and game cover copses for pheasant and partridge shoots.

Other equestrian uses, including stable buildings, horse fencing, exercise yards, lunge rings, turn-out paddocks, all weather gallops, as well as modern indoor facilities (horse walkers and therapy swimming pools) in purpose made buildings, are distinctive features within the county's landscape.

The industrial age saw the construction of railways, the localised impacts of which can still be seen on the landscape today. Although some railways have been closed or fallen into disuse they remain as local landscape features with associated lines of trees, small woodlands and concentrations of sites of ecological value. Today the East Midlands Railway crosses the River Welland on the impressive Welland Viaduct near Seaton, running north-south through Oakham on a series of bridges and in tunnels as it crosses the ridges and valleys of the undulating High Rutland landscape. A Cross Country Rail Service runs west – east through the Chater valley between Birmingham and Cambridge via Oakham and Stamford.

The A6003 also passes north-south through the undulating landscape of High Rutland from Oakham to Northamptonshire via Uppingham. The only other main road within the landscape is the A47, running east-west through Leicestershire to Northamptonshire following the higher ridges between the river valleys.

There has been only limited expansion of settlements within the High Rutland LCT, principally to the north and west of Uppingham, to the east and west of Whissendine, and at North Luffenham, that has seen the increased use of uncharacteristic building materials including brick and tile. Elsewhere there has been limited modern infill and village edge development, and major infrastructure including an overhead electricity power line, telecommunications and mobile phone masts on more elevated ground. Solar farms are beginning to impact on the landscape, but at present other renewable energy developments such as wind turbines are not present.

Despite changes in built development, infrastructure and energy provision, there has been relatively little change in the rural landscape of High Rutland from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As in other areas, agricultural intensification has led to the decline in hedgerow networks and the consolidation of fields to form large parcels of land for intensive arable farming, with associated loss of pasture and pockets of semi-natural vegetation. However, in parts new woodland planting is quite extensive; for example, the Woodland Trust has new plantations between Oakham and Braunston-in-Rutland. Some parkland landscapes are in good condition, others urgently need restoration and reinstatement of good management practice.

### ***Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities***

There is considerable visual variety across the High Rutland LCT. Exposed and elevated areas provide sweeping panoramas across neighbouring lowlands, with nearby hills and ridges punctuating the skyline. Elsewhere, and notably along the deeper valleys and below the steep slopes, the landform obscures middle and long distance views to create a more intimate and enclosed landscape. Despite these contrasting visual characteristics, the landscape has strong visual unity, largely arising from the mixed agricultural regime, widespread ridge and furrow and generally well-maintained field networks of hedges and hedgerow trees. Whilst areas of woodland are limited, the landscape is perceived as being well-treed and in generally good condition.

Where hedgerow patterns have seen little fragmentation and settlements have seen limited growth and development from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the landscape retains a strong historic rural character, with tangible evidence of land use and settlement stretching back to the medieval period. Of particular significance are the quiet winding lanes between long established villages, hummocky landform associated with ridge and furrow farming and other medieval features such as deserted or shrunken villages and manorial complexes preserved beneath areas of permanent pasture.

Vernacular architecture, particularly where the locally sourced ironstone has been used, also provides visual unity in the landscape. This is further enhanced by older churches, some

of which have spectacular towers and spires and are prominent landmarks in the landscape, and large country houses which display the use of these ironstones with their distinctive warm red-brown hues.

Despite the local influence of Uppingham (and the edge of Oakham in the neighbouring Vale of Catmose LCT) and major infrastructure, the landscape retains a strong agricultural character. Although constructed on a series of embankments and in cuttings, the A6003 is not significantly visually intrusive in the landscape, although it does create, as well as the A47, a busier, noisier ambience in the main road corridor. The tall pylons taking the major electricity power line north-south through Leicestershire and Northamptonshire via the rolling landscape of High Rutland is locally prominent, especially on the higher ground and where they break the skyline.

In some locations the amalgamation of features associated with equestrian uses, including temporary and unsightly clutter and lighting, can detract from the unspoilt rural character and can be particularly intrusive in views to and from villages.

**There are four landscape character areas (LCAs) within LCT A. High Rutland:**

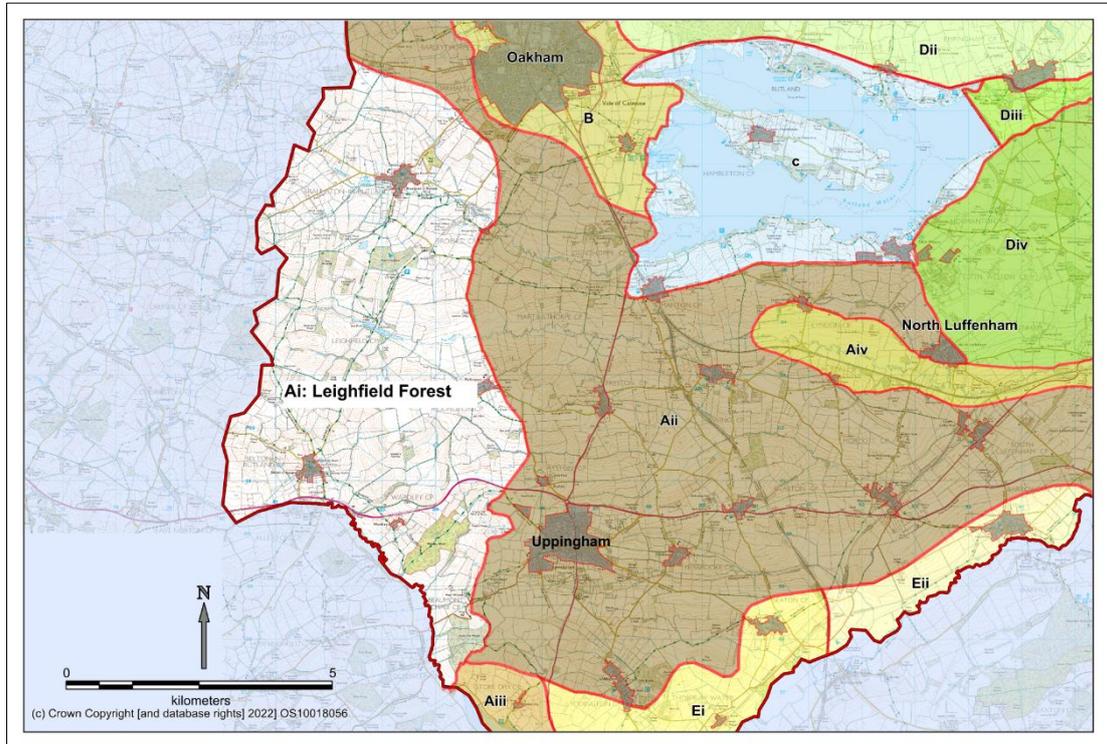
**LCA Ai. *Leighfield Forest***

**LCA Aii. *Undulating Mixed Farmlands***

**LCA Aiii. *Eyebrook Basin***

**LCA Aiv. *Chater Valley***

# Landscape Character Area Ai. **LEIGHFIELD FOREST**



## ***Location and Boundaries***

The *Leighfield Forest* Landscape Character Area (LCA) lies in western Rutland, extending into Leicestershire. It stretches north-south from north of Braunston-in-Rutland to Stockerston (in Leicestershire), and west-east from Tilton-on-the-Hill (in Leicestershire) to Ridlington. In the early medieval period, Leighfield Forest was an extensive Royal forest straddling the borders of Rutland and Leicestershire although it was initially known as the Forest of Rutland. It included many large woodlands which would have been individually enclosed, farmland, villages and a network of lanes and tracks connecting isolated farms. At least four deer parks were enclosed within the woodland, but only one of these at Cold Overton has remaining ancient woodland. Although largely cleared in the mid-1600s, there are isolated surviving natural or semi-natural Ancient Woodlands at Prior's Coppice, Wardley Wood and Stoke Dry Wood within the High Rutland LCT.

...continued

### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Ai. Leighfield Forest**

- Nearby hills and ridges punctuate the skyline
- Along the deeper valleys and below the steep slopes, the landform obscures middle and long distance views to create a more intimate and enclosed landscape
- Only four villages in the LCA; Braunston-in-Rutland, Belton-in-Rutland, Ridlington and Wardley, together with Brooke, a small hamlet, and isolated farms connected by a small number of quiet winding lanes and narrow gated roads
- Many isolated farms are former 'Lodges', e.g., West Lodge, Jubilee Lodge and Leigh Lodge, a reminder of their previous location on the edge of woodland
- Vernacular architecture in manor houses, cottages, farms and outbuildings where the locally sourced ironstone has been used, providing visual unity in the landscape
- Braunston-in-Rutland, Belton-in-Rutland and Ridlington retain historic cores within Conservation Areas, with several listed buildings
- Tranquil and sometimes empty, remote character
- Popular with walkers using the Leighfield Way, Macmillan Way and Rutland Round local recreation routes, and other tracks and gated roads
- Public access through Wardley Wood and Prior's Coppice.

### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Ai. LEIGHFIELD FOREST**

- Underlying geology of Whitby mudstone formation bedrock, with slowly permeable seasonally wet, slightly acid but base-rich, loamy and clayey soils
- Underlain with ironstone-rich Jurassic marlstone rock formation and Lincolnshire limestones; this area is renowned for its limestone, clay, iron and other minerals
- Distinctive, steeply rolling landform with high narrow ridges and relatively steep sloping valleys caused by fluvio-glacial action
- To the west of Oakham, the highest part of the county reaches 197m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), falling to around 100m AOD in a short distance before sharply rising again
- Dissected by the rivers Gwash and Chater, and a number of small streams flowing mainly west to east, some flowing southwards into the Eye Brook
- Despite the complex drainage patterns and varied landform, the landscape has a strong visual unity
- Variation in scale from intimate to medium scale landscape
- Dense tree cover with a large number of small woods, spinneys, copses, coverts and shelter belts
- Semi-natural Ancient Woodlands at Prior's Coppice, Wardley Wood and Stoke Dry Wood, referred to by Forestry Commission England as Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS)
- Predominantly broadleaved woodlands with a small mix of conifers; Ash is the

**LCT A. High  
Rutland**

- dominant tree, with others usually Pedunculate Oak, Small-leaved Lime, Silver Birch and Wych Elm
- A mosaic of other landscape features including marshes, meadows, and tree-lined hedges
- Complex patchwork pattern of enclosure fields

**LCA Ai. LEIGHFIELD FOREST**

**12**

## ***Landscape Change***

### **Forces for Change**

- Agricultural intensification has resulted in conversion or reversion to arable farming with increased field sizes and associated loss or damage to characteristic landscape features including pasture, woodland, field boundaries, hedgerow trees, areas of semi-natural vegetation and ridge and furrow
- New agricultural buildings reflect the general increase in farm size, and can be visually prominent
- Tree loss from Ash Dieback disease is evident, which could have an increasing impact on the character of the landscape
- The *Leighfield Forest* LCA is unlikely to experience considerable development pressure
- A47 Wardley Hill Improvement in the late 1980s had limited landscape and visual impact due to it being largely in cutting and incorporating extensive roadside planting. Other significant infrastructure improvements are unlikely
- Although not currently characteristic of the *Leighfield Forest* LCA, more elevated locations could be attractive to wind farm development, solar farms particularly on south-facing slopes, and other renewable energy developments.

## ***Landscape Management***

## **Landscape Management Strategy for LCA Ai. Leighfield Forest**

**The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to RESTORE / RE-CREATE the landscape, wildlife and traditions of the historic Leighfield Forest area and CONSERVE the remaining landscape mosaic of woodlands, streams, marshes, meadows and tree-lined hedges.**

To achieve the overall management strategy, consideration should be given to the following guidelines:

- Link remaining fragments of ancient woodlands through the planting of new native woodlands and hedgerows, including along watercourses
- Restore the historic field pattern through the planting of new native hedges and hedgerow trees
- Encourage positive management to replace trees in locations affected by Ash Dieback disease
- Conserve the historic heritage including remaining ridge and furrow, deserted and shrunken villages, and manorial complexes that include fishponds and barrows
- Encourage the appropriate management of existing woods and other valuable wildlife habitats
- Protect the structure and unity of the landscape by considering the landscape and visual impact of new structures, siting them away from visually prominent locations and close to existing buildings, and changes in farming practices
- Use new tree planting and woodland to screen new residential and agricultural development
- Protect the character of the countryside and the distinctive character, form and pattern of settlements, and consider visual impact of any new development ensuring it fits well into the landscape in terms of location, style and design
- Protect the small scale, intimate, deeply rural character of the landscape from large scale renewable energy developments, taking into consideration cumulative landscape and visual effects.

Photo 1



Photo 2



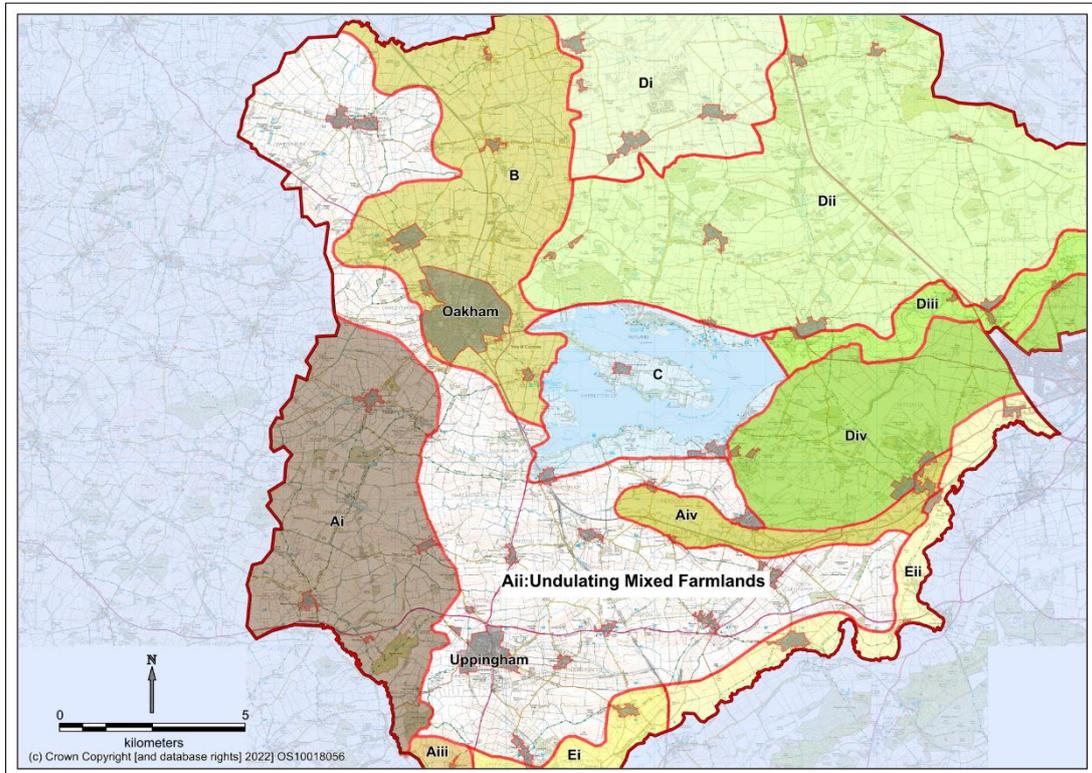
Photo 3



Photo 4



## Landscape Character Area Aii. **UNDULATING MIXED FARMLANDS**



### ***Location and Boundaries***

The *Undulating Mixed Farmlands* Landscape Character Area (LCA) occupies the majority of the southern half of the county between Rutland Water Basin, the *Chater Valley* and the *Welland Valley*. It wraps around the north-western fringe of the county around Whissendine, and in a narrow belt between Oakham and the *Leighfield Forest* LCA to the west. The market town of Uppingham is located in the south the LCA, with Whissendine in the north and a number of smaller villages throughout the LCA.

## **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Aii. *UNDULATING MIXED FARMLANDS***

- Underlying geology of Whitby mudstone formation bedrock, with bands of limestone, ironstone and sandstones of the Inferior Oolite Group, with slowly permeable seasonally wet, slightly acid but base-rich, loamy and clayey soils
- Underlain with ironstone-rich Jurassic marlstone rock formation, with Lincolnshire limestones and river terrace sand and gravel in the valleys to the north and east; this area is renowned for its limestone, clay, iron and other minerals
- Varied landform of broad rolling ridges, steep sided valleys, rounded hills and undulating lowlands (less distinctive than the steeply rolling landform of higher, narrower ridges and steeper sloping valleys of LCA Ai. *Leighfield Forest*)
- In parts relatively flat areas (for example to the east of Ridlington and west of Uppingham) and shallower valleys
- Dissected by the rivers Gwash and Chater, and a number of small streams flowing mainly west to east, some flowing southwards into the River Welland
- A number of small streams including the Whissendine Brook radiate out from the high plateau northwards and flow into the River Witham
- A predominantly medium scale landscape, more open with fewer, low-cut or gappy hedges, fewer hedgerow trees and less enclosure than the *Leighfield Forest* LCA to the west
- Despite the complex drainage patterns and varied landform, the landscape has a strong visual unity
- Grasslands are either improved or semi-improved pasture on steeper slopes and wetter areas bordering streams and rivers, grazed mainly by sheep, but also cattle with horses particularly near the villages
- Arable cultivation, mainly on the flatter, drier higher ground
- Patchwork pattern of predominantly regular, geometric enclosure fields
- Numerous small deciduous woodlands and spinneys, plantations, fox coverts and copses, often prominent features when occupying steep slopes or elevated hills and ridges, provide significant landscape and wildlife interest, together with tree belts alongside railways (some disused) and roads
- Predominantly broadleaved woodlands with a small mix of conifers; Ash is the dominant tree, with others usually Pedunculate Oak, Small-leaved Lime, Silver Birch and Wych Elm
- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees also contribute to the well-treed character of the landscape
- Strong historic rural character, with evidence of medieval land use and settlement, in particular ridge and furrow, deserted and shrunken villages (e.g., Martinsthorpe), and manorial complexes with fishponds and barrows

*continued...*

...continued

### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Aii. *Undulating Mixed Farmlands***

- The settlement pattern of the market town of Uppingham and a number of dispersed villages, hamlets and farms, the widespread use of local ironstone in churches, vernacular buildings and country houses are also significant in contributing to local identity and sense of place
- Most villages are compact and nucleated, well integrated into the landscape, and connected via a network of quiet winding lanes and narrow gated roads
- Only two main roads cross the area, neither of which are significantly visually intrusive, but the immediate transport corridors are busy and noisy; the A6003 passes north-south from Oakham to Northamptonshire via Uppingham; and the A47 running east-west through Leicestershire to Northamptonshire following the higher ridges between the river valleys
- Together with the market town of Uppingham, many of the villages and hamlets have designated Conservation Areas (and numerous Listed Buildings) recognising their historic character and appearance
- St. Andrew's Church at Whissendine sits in an imposing location, with a particularly impressive tower silhouetted against lighter skies
- Northern area around Whissendine is a transitional area between High Leicestershire to the west and the Vale of Catmose to the east; the landform is more rounded, lower and undulating, with shallower valleys (some dry) running north-south
- Equestrian uses with a range of distinctive features in the landscape
- East Midlands Railway continues northwards from the Welland Viaduct in the neighbouring Welland Valley LCT, through Oakham on a series of bridges and in tunnels as it crosses the ridges and valleys of the undulating landscape
- Retains a strong agricultural character with only one overhead electricity power line (passing north-south to the west of Oakham and east of Uppingham where tall pylons are locally prominent, especially on the higher ground and where they break the skyline), telecommunications and mobile phone masts on more elevated ground, large solar farm on the eastern edge of Uppingham
- Agricultural intensification has led to the decline in hedgerow networks and the consolidation of fields to form large parcels of land for intensive arable farming, with associated loss of pasture and pockets of semi-natural vegetation
- Exposed and elevated areas provide sweeping panoramas across neighbouring lowlands creating the perception of an open, large-scale landscape
- Along the deeper valleys and below the steep slopes, the landform obscures middle and long distance views to create a more intimate and enclosed landscape
- Popular with walkers using the Macmillan Way and Rutland Round local recreation routes, and other tracks and gated roads.

## ***Landscape Change***

### **Forces for Change**

- Agricultural intensification has resulted in conversion or reversion to arable farming with increased field sizes and associated loss or damage to characteristic landscape features including pasture, woodland, field boundaries, hedgerow trees, areas of semi-natural vegetation and ridge and furrow
- Tree loss from Ash Dieback disease is evident, which could have an increasing impact on the character of the landscape
- New agricultural buildings reflect the general increase in farm size, and can be visually prominent
- Modern incursion in the *Undulating Mixed Farmlands* LCA has been relatively limited, to expansion of Uppingham, North Luffenham and Whissendine, and some modern infill and village-edge development, with increased use of uncharacteristic building materials including brick and tile
- Whilst equestrian uses help maintain the pastoral character, a number of fields are over-grazed and the accumulation of inappropriate fencing and other materials, buildings and associated clutter detracts from the unspoilt rural character and is particularly intrusive in views to and from the villages
- Significant infrastructure improvements are unlikely
- There is a large solar farm on the eastern edge of Uppingham, and other areas could be attractive to further renewable energy developments including solar farms particularly on south-facing slopes, wind farm development on more elevated locations, with the potential for Biogas, Biofuel and Energy from Waste development elsewhere throughout the LCA.

## ***Landscape Management***

### **Landscape Management Strategy for LCA Aii. *Undulating Mixed Farmlands***

**The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to CONSERVE and where necessary RESTORE the strong agricultural and historic rural character and unity of the landscape**

To achieve the overall management strategy, consideration should be given to the following guidelines:

- Minimise the impact of new structures and changes to farming practices by carefully siting new large scale agricultural buildings away from visually prominent locations and amongst existing buildings where possible
- Use new tree planting and woodland to screen new agricultural development
- Protect the character of the countryside and the distinctive character, form and pattern of settlements. Uppingham is likely to be a location for further growth, where landscape and visual impact of any new development is a particular consideration, as well as on other settlement edges, where the aim should be to ensure it fits well into the landscape in terms of location, style and design. Neighbourhood Plans, landscape sensitivity studies and other documents should be followed to guide the location and the form of development
- Conserve the historic heritage including remaining ridge and furrow, deserted and shrunken villages, and manorial complexes that include fishponds and barrows
- Restore the historic field pattern through the planting of new native hedges and hedgerow trees
- Encourage the appropriate management of existing woods and other valuable wildlife habitats
- Encourage positive management to replace trees in locations affected by Ash Dieback disease
- Protect the rural character of the landscape from renewable energy developments, taking into consideration cumulative landscape and visual effects.

Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9

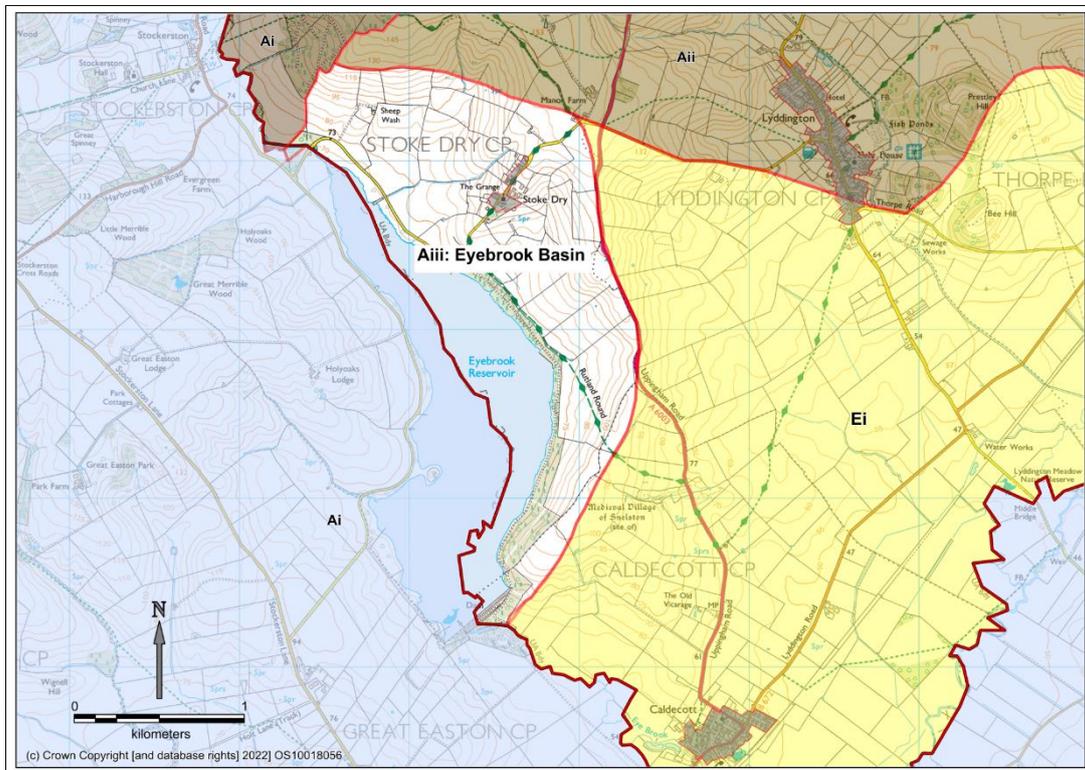


Photo 10



*See page 101 for photo descriptions*

# Landscape Character Area Aiii. **EYEBROOK BASIN**



## ***Location and Boundaries***

The *Eyebrook Basin* Landscape Character Area (LCA) is the flooded lower valley of the Eye Brook that forms the south-western boundary of the county, extending into Leicestershire to the west. It comprises the flat expanse of the Eyebrook Reservoir (created between 1937 – 1940 to supply water to the Corby steelworks) and the gently rising landform around it on all sides to nearby skylines formed by the *Undulating Mixed Farmlands* LCA to the north, High Leicestershire to the west and the top of the Welland Valley to the south and east (with the A6003 forming part of the eastern boundary).

### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Aiii. EYEBROOK BASIN**

- The Eye Brook is one of a number of rivers and streams running off and dissecting the High Rutland LCT that gives it a distinctive hilly, rolling landform; the *Eye Brook Basin* LCA is different due to the flat expanse of water created by the flooding of the lower valley of the Eye Brook and the gently sloping valley on all sides, creating a simple unified landscape
- The water level in the reservoir lies at between 70-75m AOD, with the valley sides gently rising to around 120m AOD, with a maximum height of 145m AOD
- Tranquil, remote character largely due to the landform, unsettled nature, secluded location and limited access, away from any significant intrusion
- Mixed agricultural land use: predominantly arable fields with improved and semi-improved pasture, and regular, geometric low cut hedgerows with few trees
- Mixed broadleaf and coniferous plantations along the eastern shore, including spruce, pine willow and ash, and low maintained hedgerows, including laid hedges, with hedgerow trees provide definition to the water's edge
- The mosaic of habitats includes marshland and mudflats
- Stoke Dry Wood, a semi-natural Ancient Woodland, lies on the northern edge of the *Eye Brook Basin* LCA, with other remnant woodlands from Leighfield Forest, the former medieval Royal hunting forest on the Leicestershire side of the valley
- Open water area of approximately 200 hectares (ha)
- Reservoir and surrounding area totalling approximately 210ha is designated SSSI
- Important site for wintering wildfowl
- Limited recreational activity: part of the private Eyebrook Estate and managed by Anglian Water as a fly fishery, with a reputation for trout (and pike) fishing, with no general public access or other water sports
- Minor road runs alongside the northern and western shores, with a small parking area on the north shore; no access along the eastern and southern sides although the Rutland Round local recreation route passes close by to the east
- The only main road in the area is the A6003 that forms part of the eastern boundary of the LCA with the Welland Valley LCT
- Unsettled character: Stoke Dry is the only village; a small, quiet village of around 15 homes located half way up the eastern side with views over the reservoir, and built in the local vernacular from locally sourced ironstone with its characteristic warm red-brown hue
- The landform obscures middle and long distance views from the water and lower slopes to create a more intimate and enclosed landscape and sense of visual containment
- Panoramic long distance views from the basin rim on the A6006 and layby, westwards across the reservoir into Leicestershire, and across the Welland Valley into Rockingham Forest to the south
- Association with the 'Dambusters' raid during the Second World War as one of the practice sites used by RAF 617 Squadron for the 'bouncing bomb' developed by Sir Barnes Wallis.

## ***Landscape Change***

### **Forces for Change**

- The modern, open utilitarian landscape created by the man-made reservoir following the damming of the Eye Brook has over time softened as the plantations and hedgerows have matured, helping to assimilate the expanse of water into the landscape, creating a predominantly rural character with an individual, albeit managed, sense of place
- Management of the surrounding vegetation appears mixed; hedgerows on the Leicestershire side have been laid whilst some on the Rutland side are gappy with post and wire fencing in poor condition
- Tree loss from Ash Dieback disease is evident, which could have an increasing impact on the character of the landscape
- Relatively recent woodland planting at the northern end
- The *Eye Brook Basin* LCA is unlikely to experience development pressure
- Although not currently characteristic of the *Eye Brook Basin* LCA, more elevated locations could be attractive to renewable energy developments such as wind turbines, and solar farms on south-facing slopes.

## ***Landscape Management***

### **Landscape Management Strategy for LCA Aiii. *Eye Brook Basin***

**The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to CONSERVE and where necessary RESTORE the simple, rural character and unity of the landscape and the wildlife interest of the SSSI**

To achieve the overall management strategy, consideration should be given to the following guidelines:

- Avoid any new development that would affect the tranquil, remote rural character of the landscape
- Encourage continued limited public access throughout the LCA, including management by Anglian Water to allow limited recreational activity on the reservoir
- Retain the unsettled character by limiting new housing within Stoke Dry
- Consider visual impact of any new housing, particularly on the village edge, ensuring it fits well into the landscape in terms of location, style and design
- Encourage the appropriate management of existing woods, hedgerows and other valuable wildlife habitats
- Encourage positive management to replace trees in locations affected by Ash Dieback disease
- Protect the rural character of the landscape from renewable energy developments.

Photo 11



Photo 12



Photo 13



Photo 14

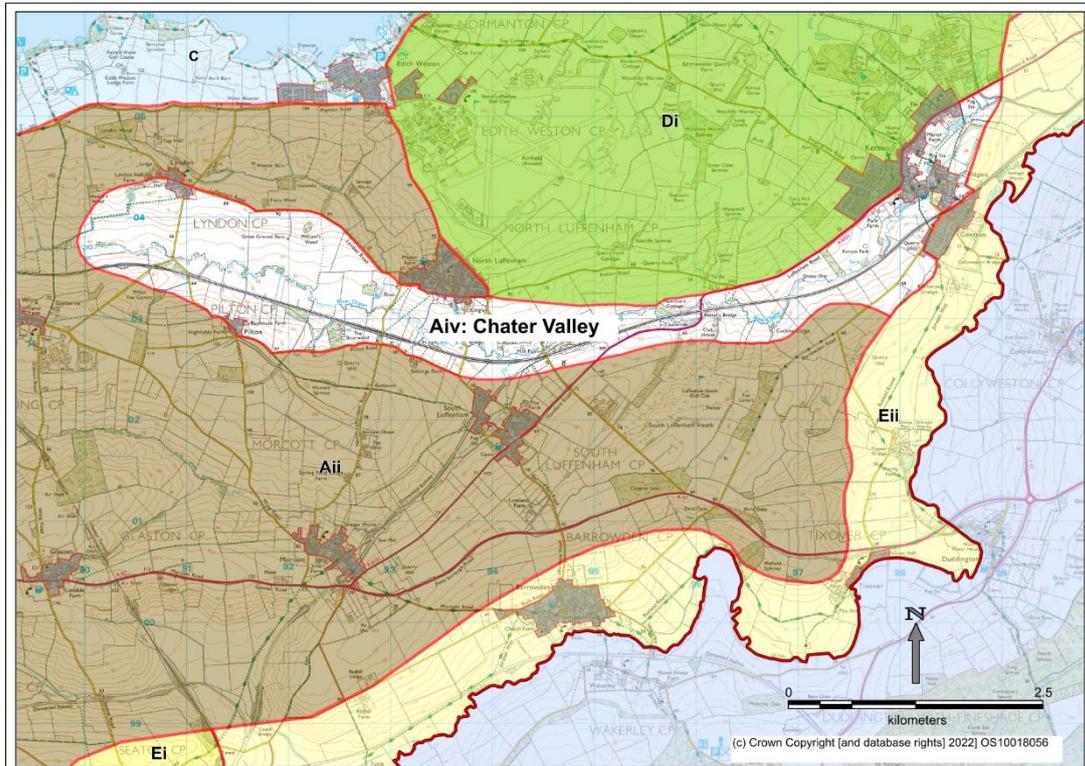


Photo 15



*See page 101 for photo descriptions*

# Landscape Character Area Aiv. **CHATER VALLEY**



## ***Location and Boundaries***

The *Chater Valley* Landscape Character Area (LCA) is the middle and lower valley of the River Chater as it flows off the hills of High Leicestershire eastwards through the High Rutland LCT, from Lyndon, through Ketton and Aldgate, to join the River Welland to the east of Ketton. The *Chater Valley* LCA cuts through the *Undulating Mixed Farmlands* LCA and forms the southern boundary of the *Ketton Plateau* LCA.

## **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Aiv. *CHATER VALLEY***

- The River Chater is one of a number of rivers and streams running off and dissecting the High Rutland LCT that gives it a distinctive hilly, rolling landform; the *Chater Valley* LCA is a distinctly different narrow, sheltered valley with gentle valley slopes, creating a simple unified landscape
- An intimate valley in many areas, largely due to the high level of woodland cover, with roadside and railway-side tree belts, copses, mature individual trees, hedgerows and hedgerow trees
- Ketton Park adds to the perception of a well-treed landscape
- Woodland and tree belts on high ground beyond the shoulders of the valley sides help to define the valley and add to the perception of a well-treed landscape
- Predominantly semi-improved and improved grassland within a patchwork of field sizes and patterns; small scale, irregular and intimate close to Ketton and Aldgate, and more open elsewhere, where occasional mature trees are set within a larger scale grassland landscape, providing a more parkland-like appearance
- River meadows on the valley floor provide riparian interest and wildlife value
- More geometric arable fields on the gently valley slopes beyond the valley floor
- Predominantly unsettled landscape with few buildings, although close to village edges at Lyndon, Pilton, North Luffenham and South Luffenham
- Provides a narrow, intimate finger of open space and green infrastructure important to the setting of Ketton (including Aldgate) and Geeston, with a strong sense of place through the centre of the village
- The river follows a sinuous, meandering course through the valley, gently falling west-to-east from around 65m AOD at Lyndon to around 30m AOD to the east of Ketton, where it joins the River Welland
- A railway providing a Cross Country Rail Service runs through the valley in a number of cuttings and on embankments and bridges, locally affecting the intimacy of the valley although well-vegetated cutting and embankment slopes reduce its visual impact
- The railway bridges over the A6121, adding to the intrusion of noise and movement within the middle part of the *Chater Valley* LCA
- The valley is of high recreational amenity value in the vicinity of Ketton where the Hereward Way, Rutland Round and Jurassic Way cross over the river, and a number of public rights of way provide local access through the valley between Ketton and Aldgate
- Valley shoulders generally limit views out of the valley, although in more open parts there are middle-distance views to prominent ridges beyond the valley
- The valley is overlooked by villages and there are views across it from the A6121 and a number of narrow lanes that run along the valley or cross it, although the water itself is seldom conspicuous
- Features of historic interest include earthworks and a moat near North Luffenham
- Disused windmill is a feature in the landscape
- Christmas trees at Digby Farm are conspicuous in the landscape.

## ***Landscape Change***

### **Forces for Change**

- Hedgerow loss and arable field enlargement has created a more open, larger scale character to the western end of the valley
- Small scale housing development has occurred within the valley at Ketton off the A6121, generally well designed and assimilated into the valley landscape and retaining a soft edge to the village
- Although not currently characteristic of the *Chater Valley* LCA, more elevated locations could be attractive to wind farm development, solar farms particularly on south-facing slopes, and other renewable energy developments.

## ***Landscape Management***

### **Landscape Management Strategy for LCA Aiv. *Chater Valley***

**The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to CONSERVE and where necessary RESTORE the simple, sheltered, intimate, unsettled, pastoral, unified character of the landscape**

To achieve the overall management strategy, consideration should be given to the following guidelines:

- Avoid any new development that would affect the simple, intimate, unsettled, pastoral character of the landscape
- New housing development on village edges and within Ketton should be well located, designed and detailed to protect the character of the *Chater Valley* LCA and the setting of the villages in the landscape. Neighbourhood Plans, landscape sensitivity studies and other documents should be followed to guide the location and the form of development
- Encourage restoration of typical landscape character by replacing hedgerow loss
- Ensure any road and rail improvements are sensitive to the intimate valley character and are well assimilated into the landscape
- Conserve the historic heritage
- Encourage the appropriate management of existing woods, flood meadows and other valuable wildlife habitats
- Protect the simple, intimate, unified character of the landscape from renewable energy developments, taking into consideration cumulative landscape and visual effects.

Photo 16



Photo 17



Photo 18



Photo 19



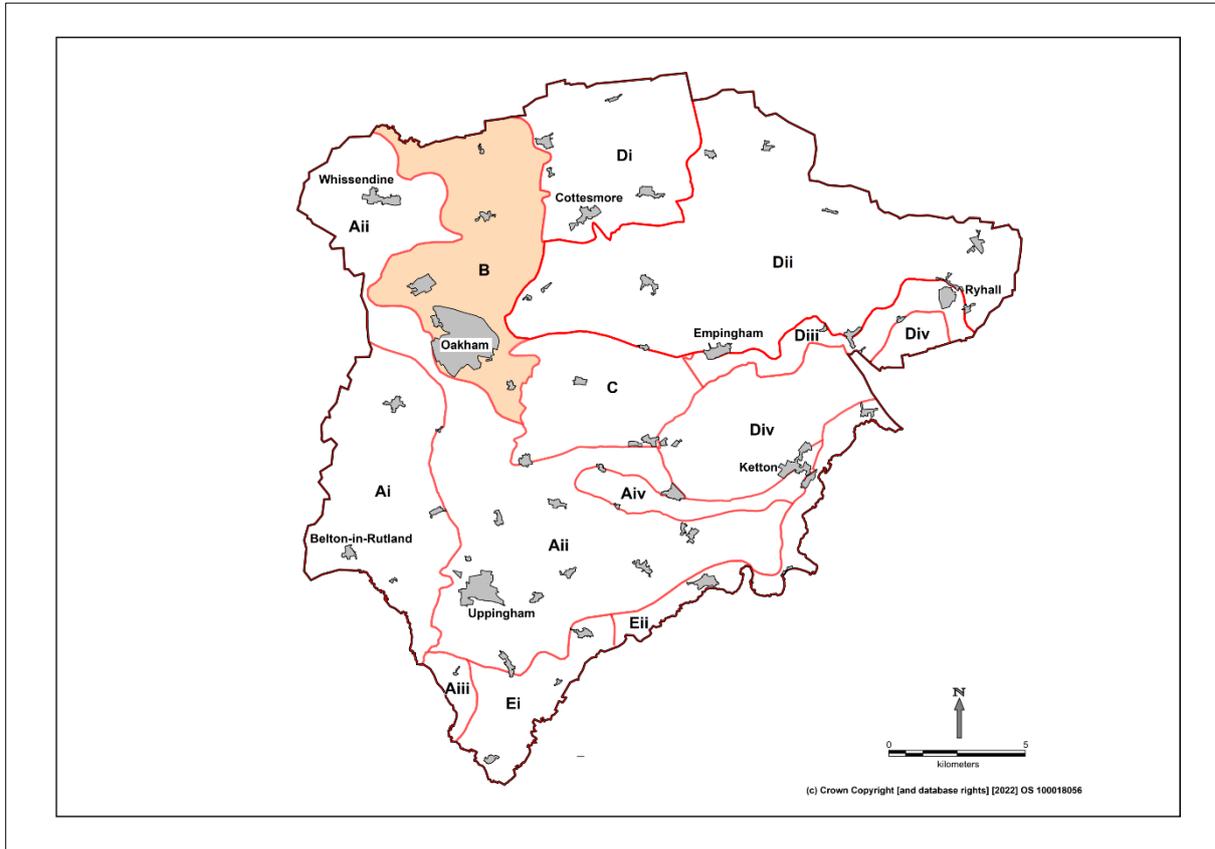
Photo 20



*See page 101 for photo descriptions*

# Landscape Character Type B

## VALE OF CATMOSE



### *Landscape Character*

The Vale of Catmose Landscape Character Type (LCT) is a broad, shallow, flat bottomed, elongated basin defined to the west and south by a distinct rise to the rolling hills of the High Rutland LCT (and further west the High Leicestershire landscape character area as recognised by Leicestershire County Council), to the north of the county by the rising ground of The Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds national character area, and to the east by the scarp slope rising to the Rutland Plateau LCT. The Vale of Catmose LCT extends to the western shores of Rutland Water (previously identified by Leicestershire County Council as the eastern curved arm of the Vale of Catmose, but since identified as a distinct LCT in its own right).

The Vale of Catmose LCT has a strong sense of place due to the surrounding landform features flanking the lower lying vale, creating broad scale visual containment.

The extensive, low lying rural landscape is underlain by Jurassic limestone, mudstones, ironstone and clays, and widespread superficial deposits that create a gently undulating landscape with a consistent and recognisable character. Along the Vale's eastern side, the

thick mantle of glacial till thins out to expose hard beds of limestone that form a steep scarp slope rising to the Rutland Plateau LCT. The boundary between the two LCTs follows the 125m AOD contour which for the most part of its length follows the bottom of the steep scarp slope marking the edge of the Vale of Catmose. The lowest part of the vale lies at around 80m AOD along the western shore of the Rutland Water reservoir.

Shallow streams flow eastwards from the High Leicestershire plateau into the vale, continuing northwards to drain the vale into the River Witham. The southern end of the Vale of Catmose drains eastwards from Oakham via the northern arm of the River Gwash and the River Eg into Rutland Water, and beyond to join the River Welland to the east of Stamford. Whilst the streams occupy shallow folds in the landscape and are not immediately apparent in views, their courses are often traced by following sinuous belts of trees and riparian habitat.

The vale landscape is generally characterised by productive mixed agriculture, set within an enclosed landscape of well-maintained hedgerows. Despite low levels of woodland cover, local landform, hedgerows, shelter belts, small fox coverts and wooded skylines create visual containment and give the vale landscape an intimate character. By contrast, panoramic views across the vale are possible from elevated land at the edges. Wide areas are under permanent pasture, often grazed by dairy cattle. However, areas of pasture are increasingly being ploughed up and cultivated, with associated hedgerow removal.

The principal county market town of Oakham is located within the Vale of Catmose LCT, beyond which the vale predominantly retains a strong rural and tranquil character, with farms and small historic nucleated villages located throughout areas of productive farmland, linked by narrow winding lanes and minor roads. Field ponds are prevalent around Langham.

### ***Physical Influences***

The Vale of Catmose LCT is closely associated with a broad belt of Jurassic limestone, mudstones, ironstone and clays of the Lias Group. These rock formations give rise to a low, gently undulating landform. Extensive deposits of glacial till (boulder clay) mask the underlying bedrock, together with bands of sub-alluvial sand and gravel, and river terrace sand and gravel. These deposits further soften landform features and exert a strong influence on soils and therefore patterns of agricultural land use.

The Vale of Catmose landscape is generally characterised by a productive mixed farming regime: the wetter, low lying areas are well suited to pasture farming, with large areas of improved grassland for dairy cattle; permanent pasture and meadows are typical along stream channels, where ranker and rushy pastures are found; with cereal and vegetable cropping widespread throughout the vale.

The clayey soils generally have impeded drainage, with naturally wet soils along narrow belts bordering streams. Sinuous belts of alder and willow trees, riparian habitat and rushy pastures define the otherwise undiscernible watercourses in the landscape.

In this long settled and productive agricultural landscape there are typically low levels of woodland cover. Despite this, the landscape appears well-treed, largely on account of ground level views across wide areas encompassing hedgerows, game coverts, mixed plantations and shelter belts. Whilst not common, hedgerow trees, notably oak and ash, are also important in adding to the impression of a well-treed character of the Vale of Catmose landscape.

The landscape has retained little semi-natural habitat, with few areas noted for their nature conservation value. In such a managed agricultural environment, networks of hedgerows and hedgerow trees gain significance in offering refuge for wildlife.

### ***Cultural Influences***

It is probably back to the late Saxon period that the existing dispersed pattern of nucleated settlements can largely be traced, when the vale villages became established and consolidated. Oakham, now the main county market town of Rutland, lies within the Vale of Catmose, together with the villages of Ashwell, Barleythorpe, Egleton, Langham and Teigh.

Oakham nestles where the vale narrows to the south, located close to the slopes of the Leighfield Forest LCA on High Rutland LCT to the west, with the promontory of high land at Burley-on-the-Hill to the east projecting from the Rutland Plateau LCT. Nestling in the gap between the surrounding hills provides a particularly strong relationship between the town and its landscape setting in the vale. Housing on the western side of Oakham encroaches on to the higher ground within the *Undulating Mixed Farmlands* LCA, and close to the higher ridges and valleys of the *Leighfield Forest* LCA, blurring the distinction between the landscape character areas.

Except for Oakham, Barleythorpe and Langham, which are located close together along the A606, the remaining villages are widely spaced across the vale. They are of generally complex but, nevertheless, compact form around a nucleus of historic lanes and are usually located at the junction of two or more roads that wind through the landscape, or on the banks of the small streams crossing the vale. Langham has experienced significant 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion beyond its medieval layout, but this is still clearly distinguishable in the series of narrow, parallel lanes and church. Ashwell, Egleton and Teigh in particular have retained much of their agricultural character with working farms within or close to their small historic cores designated as Conservation Areas, with several listed buildings. Historic open glebe land and the remains of the medieval settlement and Manor House at Ashwell (a Scheduled Monument), and ridge and furrow preserved beneath areas of permanent pasture, provide tangible evidence of land use and settlement stretching back to the medieval period. Holy Trinity Church and the Old Rectory at Teigh were used in the BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*.

The building materials are varied, including ironstone, limestone, red brick and white render with roofs of Collyweston and blue slate, tiles and occasionally thatch.

Enclosure of much of the Vale of Catmose LCT occurred in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, as evidenced by regular fields bounded by hedgerows laid out in geometric patterns. More sinuous older hedges are evident, defining parish boundaries or older field systems into which the straight enclosure boundaries were established. Farms were also established in the new field systems.

Throughout the vale there is evidence of field boundary loss, particularly where arable farming is prevalent. Elsewhere, hedgerow maintenance has declined or has been subjected to cutting by mechanical flails, so hedgerows have become generally very low and gappy, often supplemented with post and rail fencing. The hedgerow trees are, in places, less frequent or over-mature, and some are succumbing to Ash Dieback disease. These characteristics are particularly noticeable along the Oakham Road, just north of the town and around Ashwell where there is also evidence of non-agricultural use of the land for horse grazing and stabling. However, this is not a uniform characteristic as there are pockets of land in the northern extremities of the vale where there is evidence of a better maintained agricultural landscape with more substantial, stock-proof hedges, although even here field sizes are still relatively large, showing some evidence of intensification of agriculture over recent decades.

There are a number of linear features in the Vale of Catmose including, the Leicester - Melton - Oakham railway line, the A606 Melton – Oakham Road, the disused Oakham - Melton Mowbray canal and dismantled railway. The canal was the main supplier of goods into and out of Oakham before the arrival of rail. It retains water in places and, along with its riparian vegetation, is a locally significant feature in both landscape and ecological terms. The railway line and the dismantled railway also have some ecologically interesting, linear features within shallow cuttings and along low embankments which appear to have been relatively unaffected by the intensive arable farming alongside. The railway, in places, foreshortens or restricts views across the vale and locally creates a more enclosed landscape where it intersects with field boundaries. The road and railway introduce some noise and movement into an otherwise quiet, calm, rural landscape. An electricity transmission line passes through the vale to the west of Oakham and Langham, where the pylons are conspicuous features within the flat vale landscape.

The Vale of Catmose has been associated with fox hunting with hounds for hundreds of years, up until the Government ban in 2005. The Cottessmore Hunt continues to meet from its kennels outside Ashwell (former kennels between Ashwell and Oakham have been converted into housing) to hunt using a combination of laid trails and bird flushing with its equally famous neighbours the Quorn Hunt and the Belvoir Hunt. Miles of tracks, untracked grassland, hedges, coverts and woodland are maintained for the purpose by the Hunt, farmers and other landowners. Similarly, the large farming estates maintain hedges and game cover copses for pheasant and partridge shoots.

Other equestrian uses, including stable buildings, horse fencing, exercise yards, lunge rings, turn-out paddocks, all weather gallops, as well as modern indoor facilities (horse walkers and therapy swimming pools) in purpose made buildings, are distinctive features in the landscape, particularly around Langham (home to the Rutland Polo Club and racing stables).

Significant growth of the principal county market town of Oakham has occurred to the north and east, including completion of the A606 northern bypass linking the A6003 south of the town to join Oakham Road to the north between Barleythorpe and Langham. Growth of roadside planting creates a significant landscape corridor separating the town from Langham and from the Showground and rugby pitches within the Vale of Catmose north of the bypass. Barleythorpe just about retains its separate identity.

Roads radiating out from Oakham across the vale to Langham, Ashwell and Cottesmore are straighter and wider, and more 'urbanised' with kerbs, footways and lighting in parts, than the other roads throughout the vale. Ashwell Road passes the former H M Prison, Ashwell, now Oakham Enterprise Park, further 'urbanising' this part of the vale, although landscape and visual impact is limited.

### ***Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities***

The Vale of Catmose is a simple and unified LCT, consisting of a limited palette of features and elements, principally comprising permanent pastures, mixed farmland within a planned pattern of hedged enclosures, and beyond Oakham a small number of nucleated villages and dispersed farmsteads linked by narrow winding lanes and more direct roads.

Whilst the landform of the Vale of Catmose is typically low and subdued, rising landform and woodland along the fringes creates a sense of visual containment. The woodland around Burley-on-the-Hill, on the edge of the Rutland Plateau, is visually important throughout the area, linking with woodlands around Barnsdale when viewed from the southern part of the vale.

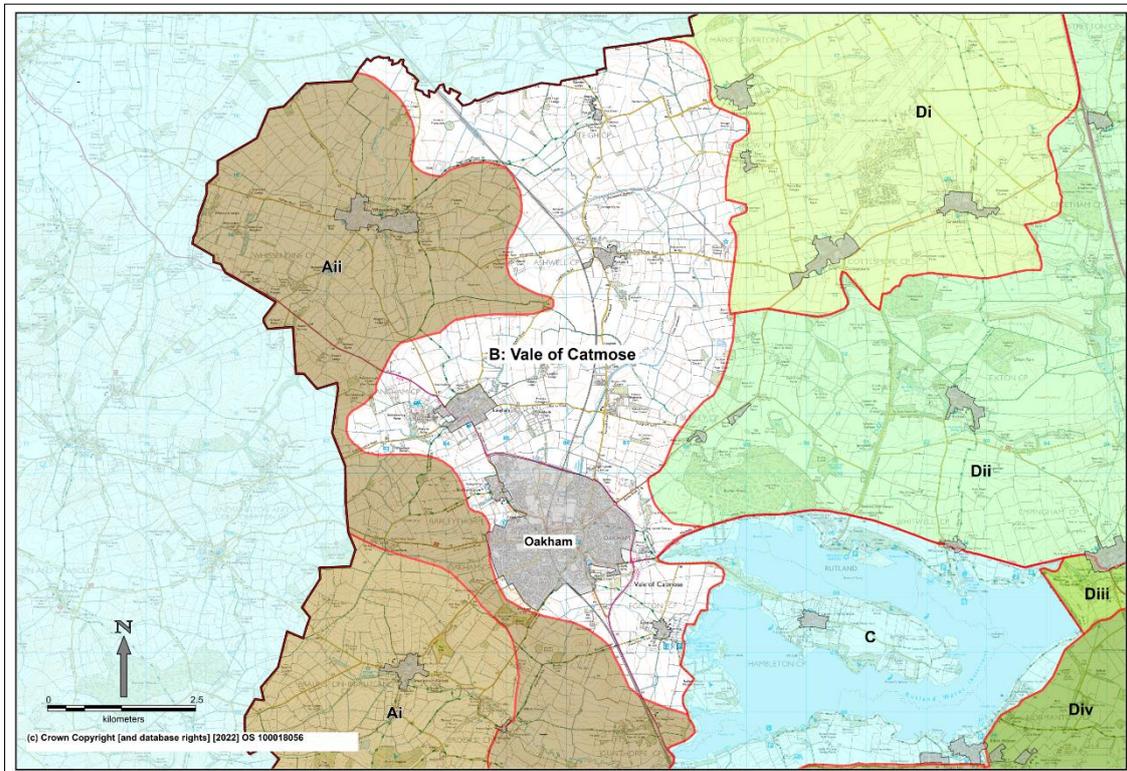
The soft and gently undulating landscape and low levels of woodland cover creates a relatively open and expansive landscape. Wide panoramic views are possible across the vale, especially from elevated areas along its fringes. A more intimate character prevails in low lying areas, particularly where intact hedgerow networks and belts of trees truncate views.

The Vale of Catmose LCT is also perceived as being relatively sparsely settled, with a small number of farms, and villages widely distributed throughout the rural landscape. These are small and nucleated, with surrounding belts of trees integrating them into their landscape setting, the skyline often only being punctuated by the church spire or tower which can often be seen from some distance away. The church of St. Peter and Paul at Langham has a particularly impressive spire and setting in the village.

The Vale of Catmose has a strong rural character, with wide areas retaining a sense of rural tranquillity.

# Landscape Character Type B

## VALE OF CATMOSE (continued...)



The Vale of Catmose LCT is not divided into smaller landscape character areas. The following tables summarise the landscape characteristics of the Vale of Catmose LCT, forces for change in the landscape, and landscape management strategies.

## **Landscape Characteristics of LCT B. VALE OF CATMOSE**

- Underlying geology of Jurassic limestone, mudstones, ironstone and clays, and widespread superficial deposits that create a gently undulating, broad, shallow, flat bottomed, elongated landscape with a consistent and recognisable character
- Along the Vale's eastern side, the thick mantle of glacial till thins out to expose hard beds of limestone that form a steep scarp slope rising to the Rutland Plateau LCT
- Strong sense of place due to surrounding landform features flanking the lower lying vale, creating broad scale visual containment
- Strong rural character, with wide areas retaining a sense of rural tranquillity
- Low levels of woodland cover, but local landform, hedges, hedgerow trees, shelter belts, small fox coverts and wooded skylines create visual containment and give the vale landscape a well-treed appearance and intimate character
- Drained by shallow north or east flowing streams not immediately apparent in views, their courses are often traced by following sinuous belts of trees and riparian habitat
- Mixed agriculture, with wide areas under permanent pasture, often grazed by dairy cattle, and arable cultivation widespread
- Geometric pattern of regular fields and enclosure hedges, but evidence of field boundary loss and enlargement of arable fields, and poor maintenance in parts
- Dispersed settlement pattern of the principal county market town of Oakham, nucleated villages at Ashwell, Egleton, Langham and Teigh, and isolated farmsteads, linked by roads radiating out of Oakham and a network of minor roads, narrow winding lanes and tracks
- Villages retain much of their agricultural character and historic layouts within Conservation Areas, with several listed buildings and a variety of building materials including local ironstone, limestone, Collyweston slate, tiles and occasionally thatch
- Linear features in the landscape include an electricity transmission line, roads and railway that introduce some intrusion into the otherwise calm, quiet, rural landscape
- Dismantled railway and disused canal often have associated linear vegetation significant in landscape and nature conservation terms, whilst in places foreshortening views across the vale
- Panoramic views across the vale from elevated fringes
- Increasing equestrian use with distinctive and in some locations intrusive features in the landscape, in particular village edges
- Significant growth of the principal county market town of Oakham has occurred to the north and east, including completion of the A606 northern bypass.

## ***Landscape Change***

### **Forces for Change**

- Agricultural intensification has resulted in the change from pastoral to arable farming, with associated increased field size and loss of hedges
- Evidence of decline in maintenance of the hedgerow network, with gaps, increasing use of post and wire fences, and few hedgerow trees with Ash Dieback in some areas
- However, there is evidence of positive management where field margins are left un-sown for wildlife
- Development pressure for housing, commerce and industry is likely to continue, particularly around Oakham, potentially creating visual intrusion and further extending the urban fringe
- Although not currently characteristic of the Vale of Catmose, south-facing slopes could be attractive to solar farms, and other renewable energy developments elsewhere within the landscape.

## ***Landscape Management***

### **Landscape Management Strategy for LCT B. Vale of Catmose**

**The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to CONSERVE existing landscape features and rural character, and RESTORE those features lost or under threat.**

To achieve the overall management strategy, consideration should be given to the following guidelines:

- Encourage positive management to restore hedgerows, create new hedges and hedgerow trees (especially in locations affected by Ash Dieback disease) and areas of permanent pasture
- Encourage positive management along stream margins with appropriate planting to enhance the visibility of watercourses whilst increasing the occurrence of semi-natural habitats
- Protect the structure and unity of the landscape by considering the landscape and visual impact of all new structures and buildings, siting them away from visually prominent locations and close to existing buildings
- Protect the character of the countryside and the distinctiveness, form and pattern of settlements, and consider visual impact of any new development ensuring it fits well into the landscape in terms of location, materials and design. Neighbourhood Plans, landscape sensitivity studies and other documents should be followed to guide the location and the form of development
- Manage further growth to the north of Oakham to retain the gap between the town and Langham and to protect the village's separate identity
- Manage further growth to the west of Oakham to protect its sensitive setting in the landscape by avoiding building on surrounding higher ground
- Extensive woodland planting would generally be inappropriate within the open expansive vale, but limited individual tree planting or small copses around settlements could help integrate new development whilst maintaining the perception of a well-treed landscape, and to increase semi-natural habitats
- Protect the strong rural character of the landscape from renewable energy developments, taking into consideration cumulative landscape and visual effects.

Photo 21



Photo 22



Photo 23



Photo 24

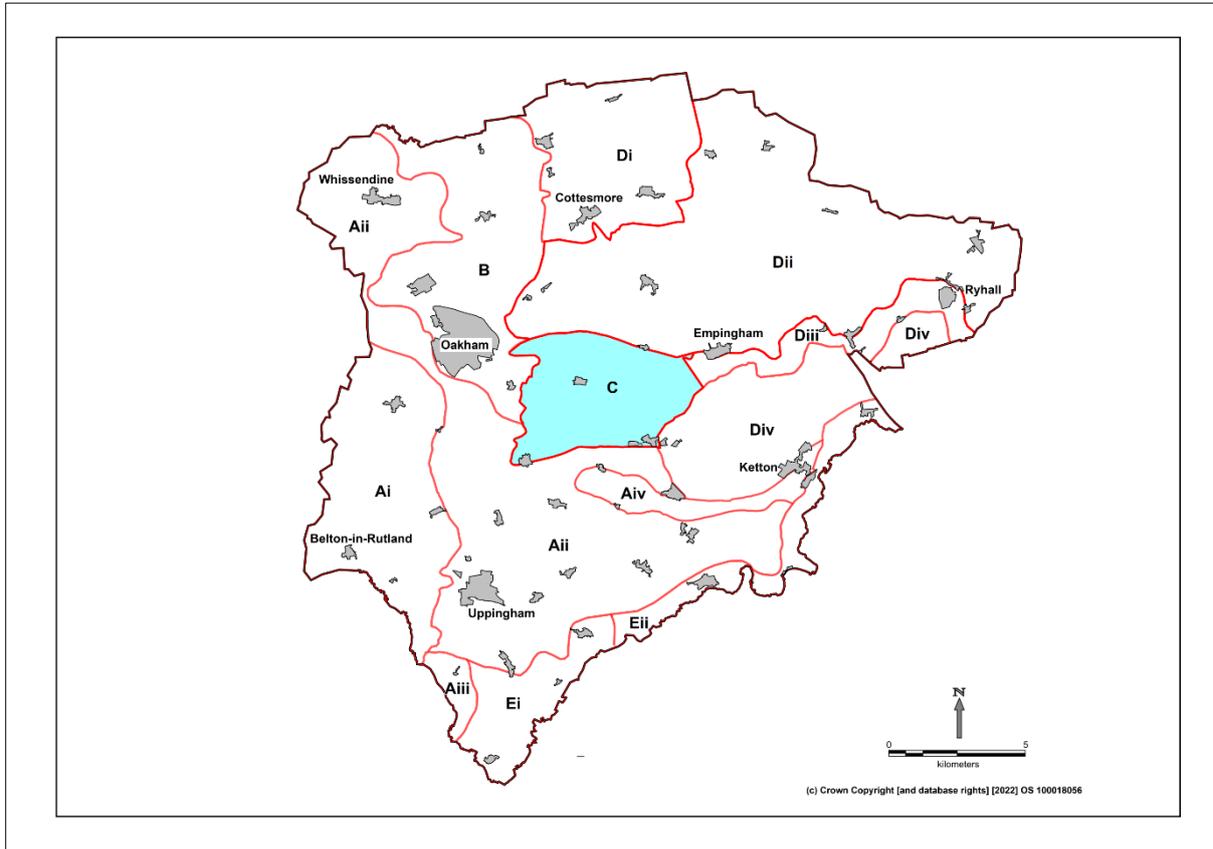


Photo 25



*See page 101 for photo descriptions*

# Landscape Character Type C RUTLAND WATER BASIN



## *Landscape Character*

The Rutland Water Basin Landscape Character Type (LCT) is dominated by the flat expanse of the Rutland Water reservoir within a shallow basin, being surrounded by generally low, gently sloping hills to elongated skylines formed by the Rutland Plateau LCT to the north and east, and High Rutland LCT to the south and west.

The Rutland Water Basin LCT has a strong sense of place due to the surrounding landform features and tree cover flanking the lower lying expanse of water, creating broad scale visual containment. The Hambleton peninsular is important in significantly reducing the scale of the reservoir that, despite its size, retains a relatively intimate character.

The reservoir is largely unobtrusive in the landscape, essentially due to the undulating topography and surrounding woodlands limiting views of the water, although glimpses and occasionally panoramic views are available from Hambleton peninsular and from elevated perimeter roads: the A606 that defines the northern boundary of the LCT and from the Manton – Edith Weston – Empingham road that forms the southern boundary. Only at the eastern end does the true scale of the reservoir become more apparent.

Around the shoreline there is a complex mosaic of wetland and lakeside habitats including lagoons, islands, mudflats, reedswamp, marsh, old meadows, irregular pastures grazed by sheep, and scrub. Mature woodland and spinneys successfully assimilate the reservoir and recreational areas into the landscape. Elsewhere arable land sweeps down to the shores in large, geometric fields with low cut hedges.

The villages of Edith Weston, Manton, Upper Hambleton and Whitwell are fairly well distributed within the LCT. Edith Weston, Manton and Whitwell lie along the main roads that follow the outer rim of the basin, on relatively low ridges above the water, at around 105m AOD (Whitwell), 110m AOD (Edith Weston) and 120m AOD (Manton). Upper Hambleton rises steeply to approximately 125m AOD; its scenic location on the peninsular overlooking the water makes it a popular destination, although its steep, narrow, twisting approach can cause access and congestion problems for visitors and residents. All the villages except Manton have designated Conservation Areas and several listed buildings, retaining a historic core around a church, where towers or spires protrude above the village roof and treetops and are important features in the landscape. The villages include development that is not always sympathetic to the traditional village character.

Features of historic interest include a Moated Scheduled Monument and the Old Hall on the Hambleton peninsular. Large individual buildings at Burley-on-the-Hill (built for the view across the Vale of Catmose from its elevated position on the Rutland Plateau), Barnsdale Lodge (hotel), Rutland Hall (hotel and spa) Hambleton Hall (hotel), Normanton Park (hotel) and other large mansion houses on the Hambleton peninsula are often imposing features sitting within high quality designed landscapes. The former Church of St. Matthew (Normanton Church Museum and wedding venue) now appears to stand in the reservoir surrounded by water, and provides a unique historical time-depth appreciation as a remnant of the, now flooded, former Gwash valley.

The Rutland Water Basin LCT retains a largely unspoilt, tranquil character away from five recreation areas around the water, accommodating significant recreation and tourism needs including sailing, fishing and cycling, and more casual recreational pursuits such as picnicking, walking and bird watching. Anglian Water manage four of the recreation areas / visitor centres at Barnsdale Wood, Normanton, Sykes Lane and Whitwell. Gibbet Lane is a small recreation area occupied by Rutland Sailing Club.

The entire reservoir is recognised as being of international importance for nature conservation: a SSSI and wetland of international importance designated an SPA and Ramsar<sup>1</sup> site supporting internationally important populations of golden plover. Over winter the habitat regularly supports over 23,000 birds including: lapwing, coot, goldeneye, tufted duck, pochard, teal, wigeon, cormorant, great crested grebe, little grebe, shoveler and gadwall.

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<sup>1</sup> Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) - called the "Ramsar Convention" - is an intergovernmental treaty that embodies the commitments of its member countries to maintain the ecological character of their Wetlands of International Importance and to plan for the "wise use", or sustainable use, of all of the wetlands in their territories.

Occupying the centre of the county, the Rutland Water Basin was previously recognised as part of the Vale of Catmose landscape character area in the *Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy* (2001), which continues northwards; however, the *Rutland Landscape Character Assessment* (2003) recognised the basin of Rutland Water as a significant, highly distinctive landscape character type in itself, rather than a sub-division of the Vale of Catmose.

A '*Landscape Review of the Rutland Water Area*' was undertaken in August 2019 that defines the Rutland Water Area (including the reservoir and its immediate environs as identified in the Rutland Local Plan) as a valued landscape. It identifies the key landscape characteristics, features and qualities of the Rutland Water Area that are afforded special protection within the Rutland Local Plan. The policy approach is to allow for carefully managed, limited development of certain specified uses that are well designed and located. This approach has been largely successful in protecting the nature conservation interests of this internationally important site from development that could have an adverse impact on the landscape and wildlife, as well as on the general tranquil and undisturbed environment of Rutland Water, while accommodating recreation and tourism needs.

### ***Physical Influences***

The Rutland Water Basin LCT is closely associated with a broad belt of Jurassic limestone, mudstones, ironstone and clays of the Inferior Oolite Group and Lias Group. These rock formations give rise to a low, gently undulating landform. Extensive deposits of glacial till (boulder clay) mask the underlying bedrock. These deposits further soften landform features and exert a strong influence on soils and therefore patterns of agricultural land use on the slopes surrounding the reservoir.

Despite lying within the Vale of Catmose as recognised at the wider county scale by Leicestershire County Council and at the regional scale, the Rutland Water Basin LCT does not exhibit similar key landscape characteristics as the vale landscape, hence being recognised as a significant, highly distinctive landscape character type in itself, rather than a sub-division of the Vale of Catmose. The flooding of the middle Gwash valley created a dramatic landscape of an expansive, open, flooded valley basin set within the flat fertile Vale of Catmose and rising gently to the edges, shoulders, ridges and slopes of the surrounding hills of High Rutland and the Rutland Plateau, the skylines of which are frequently wooded.

Most of the wider Vale of Catmose has typically low levels of woodland cover and little semi-natural habitat, reflected in the low occurrence of areas within the vale designated for their nature conservation value. It is interesting to note that the Rutland Water Basin LCT provides significant biodiversity assets, many of which are artificial.

## ***Cultural Influences***

It is probably back to the late Saxon period that the existing dispersed pattern of nucleated settlements throughout the wider Vale of Catmose can largely be traced, when the vale villages became established and consolidated. The vale villages of Edith Weston, Manton, Upper Hambleton and Whitwell are fairly well distributed within the Rutland Water Basin LCT. Located on raised landform running between streams, and generally nucleated and retaining a historic core around a church.

The geometric field pattern of regular fields bounded by hedgerows around the reservoir dates back to the enclosures that occurred in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Farms were also established in the new field system; a small number of isolated farms remain amongst the arable fields to the south of the reservoir.

The character and appearance of the middle Gwash valley, passing west-east through the middle of the county to the south and east of Oakham, changed significantly during the 1970s. The construction of the dam wall (that now defines the eastern boundary of the LCT) to the west of Empingham in 1974 where the valley narrowed and the northern and southern arms of the River Gwash met, was followed (contentiously at the time) by the flooding of the valley to create Rutland Water, the largest man-made water reservoir in England (by surface area) and one of the largest artificial waterbodies in Europe. The north and south bays are separated by the Hambleton peninsular, steeply rising to around 125m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

There are remnant features in the landscape that provide a unique historical time-depth appreciation of the former Gwash valley before it was flooded. The Church of St. Matthew at Normanton now appears to stand in the water, and the road running along the spine of the Hambleton peninsular stops abruptly when previously it would have continued to Normanton. Remnant Ancient Woodland survived the flooding of the Gwash valley at Barnsdale.

At the nature reserve at the western end, Rutland Water reservoir provides numerous bird hides and offers nature trails from two visitor centres, at Egleton and Lyndon, with experts providing both formal and informal educational services. The nature reserve is the location of the successful osprey re-introduction project and provides volunteering opportunities including osprey surveillance, management and species recording. Rutland Water is home to the British Birdfair; the first and largest wildlife event of its kind in the world, now in its 30<sup>th</sup> year with over 30,000 visitors annually contributing to the local economy and raising £m's for conservation projects.

After the reservoir was constructed during the early to mid-1970s, it fast became a major focus in the region for sailing and fishing and is now a popular visitor attraction and destination for these and other water-based activities, and more casual recreational pursuits such as picnicking, walking and cycling. Its popularity brings increased pressure for tourism and recreational facilities around the reservoir, and a need to balance this against protecting the nature conservation interests, tranquillity and undisturbed character of parts of the LCT, all which have a big influence on the character of the area.

Unlike large areas within the wider vale landscape, there has not been significant agricultural change within the Rutland Water Basin LCT. Hedgerow loss and arable field enlargement is not a key characteristic. In general, the LCT is a well maintained, well managed landscape in good condition.

### ***Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities***

The Rutland Water Basin LCT is a landscape of contrasts: the simple, flat reservoir dominates the landscape, and gently sloping fields rise to low elongated ridges on the skyline. Tree cover flanks much of the shoreline, including on the Hambleton peninsular that is important in significantly reducing the scale of the reservoir that, despite its size, is unobtrusive and retains a relatively intimate, tranquil character. This is particularly evident at the western end of the reservoir managed as a nature reserve.

However, from some elevated locations around and beyond the reservoir there are particularly fine views of the water and its dramatic landscape setting. The imposing Burley House (Grade I Listed Building) within the Burley-on-the-Hill Registered Historic Park and Garden on elevated landform on the Rutland plateau overlooks the Vale of Catmose and is important to the setting of Rutland Water. At the eastern end the true scale of the reservoir, together with its dam and other infrastructure, become more apparent, accentuated by the contrast with the lower, enclosed valley below the dam and the exposed windswept conditions of the open water and dam top.

The landscape of the Rutland Water Basin LCT is distinctively horizontal-shaped, with the extensive waterbody and surrounding open fields and wooded scarps gently rising to perimeter roads and avenues of trees on elongated shallow ridge tops. The expansive waterbody and 'big skies' are seen with a relatively narrow belt of landscape in-between. Roadside avenues of trees contrast with more informal woods and spinneys.

Medium-sized regular and irregular pastureland contrasts with larger geometric arable fields and low-cut hedges that gently sweep down to the shores of the reservoir. There is a distinctive layered visual experience combining Rutland Water and its immediate environs in the foreground and middle distance, with more distant views of long shallow ridges important to the setting of the reservoir. Around the shoreline the complex mosaic of wetland and lakeside habitats contrasts with the simplicity of the woodland, spinneys and hedgerows.

The water surface varies considerably in accordance with prevailing weather conditions. It is a flat, bright, reflective, light blue, almost glass-like surface with waterfowl dotted about and boats slowly moving on bright sunny days. In windy and cloudy conditions, storms can create substantial wave energy and the surface breaks up with a rough, dark, grey appearance.

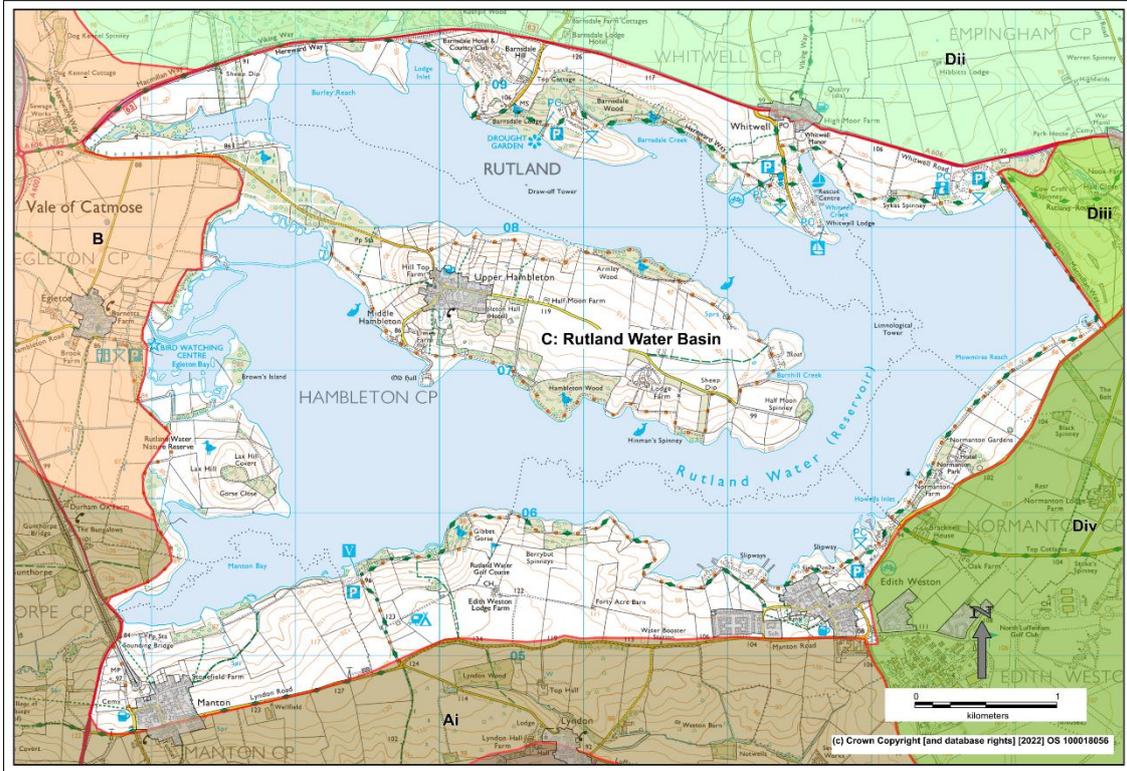
Traffic on the A606 together with cyclists and walkers enjoying the circular route around the reservoir, including the Macmillan Way and Hereward Way recreational routes, create a

busy, noisy ambience which is also particularly evident at the five recreation areas around the water at Barnsdale, Whitwell, Sykes Lane (between Whitwell and Empingham), Normanton and Gibbet Lane (Edith Weston). Here there are parking facilities, toilets, cafés and restaurants, together with fishing, sailing and other water-based activities.

Lyndon Top caravan park and campsite occupies sloping fields rising up from the southern shoreline in a relatively exposed area creating landscape and visual intrusion in views from the Hambleton peninsular in particular.

# Landscape Character Type C

## RUTLAND WATER BASIN (continued...)



The Rutland Water Basin LCT is not divided into smaller landscape character areas. The following tables summarise the landscape characteristics of the Rutland Water Basin LCT, forces for change in the landscape, and landscape management strategies.

## **Landscape Characteristics of LCT C. RUTLAND WATER BASIN**

- A distinctively horizontal-shaped landscape with the extensive, flat, waterbody, surrounding open fields and wooded scarps gently rising to perimeter roads, and avenues of trees on elongated shallow ridge tops
- Expansive waterbody and 'big skies' with a relatively narrow belt of landscape in-between
- A strongly rural character where settlement pattern is sparse, comprising small regularly spaced villages which are generally clustered around a church and occasional farmsteads dotted across the landscape
- Medium-sized regular and irregular pastureland contrasts with larger geometric arable fields and low-cut hedges that gently sweep down to the shores of the reservoir
- Dramatic, unique setting of the distinctive shallow 'bowl-shaped' reservoir, with the northern and southern arms separated by the ridge of high land of the Hambleton peninsula, well assimilated into the surrounding landscape
- The small woodland-topped Lax Hill is a distinctive feature rising to 110m AOD above the reservoir and nature reserve
- Rutland Water is a significant and highly distinctive feature in the remote, rural, open, rolling, mixed farmland vale landscape
- Rutland Water is a major wetland that combines open water with a complex mosaic of wetland and lakeside habitats including lagoons, islands, mudflats, reed-swamp, marsh, old meadows, pastures, scrub and mature woodland
- Contrast of the waterbody and the flat fertile Vale of Catmose with the surrounding higher ridges of High Rutland to the south and west and the Rutland Plateau to the north and east
- Topography and vegetation cover significantly soften views of surrounding villages from where the water is not always visible, despite being elevated above the water level
- Church spires protruding above the village roof and treetops are important features in the landscape
- Imposing Halls and other large Houses within designed landscapes on rising landform overlooking the flat Vale of Catmose and Rutland Water, including Rutland Hall, Burley House and Hambleton Hall
- Contrasts of designed landscapes and roadside avenues of trees, with more informal woods and spinneys
- Particularly fine views of the water and its unique setting from elevated perimeter roads to the north and south, and from higher surrounding ridges
- Distinctive layered visual experience combining Rutland Water and its immediate environs in the foreground and middle distance, with more distant views of long shallow ridges important to the setting of the reservoir
- Significant nationally, regionally and locally important open area as a major focus for active (sporting) pursuits in particular sailing, fishing and cycling

*continued...*

*continued...*

### **Landscape Characteristics of LCT C. RUTLAND WATER BASIN**

- Significant nationally, regionally and locally important open area as a major focus for more passive (recreational and tourist) pursuits in particular picnicking, walking, sight-seeing, bird / wildlife watching
- Extensive opportunities for visitor access within, through and around the area, including sections of several national footpaths including the Hereward Way, Viking Way and Macmillan Way, National Cycle Network Route No. 63, local public rights of way including the Rutland Round, with extensive permissive footpaths, bridleways and off-road cycle tracks
- Other sport and recreation facilities include Rutland Golf Club and camping and caravan sites not always well-assimilated into the landscape
- Cultural heritage interests include Barnhill Moated Site and Moated Enclosure with Fishponds (Scheduled Monuments), Conservation Areas and listed buildings, influence of Burley House and its Registered Historic Park and Garden important to the setting of Rutland Water, sense of history associated with the local rural settlement pattern and building vernacular, and landscape features that provide a unique historical time-depth appreciation of the former Gwash valley before it was flooded, including the Church of St. Matthew at Normanton
- International, national, and local importance for nature conservation, including SSSI, SPA, Ramsar, Local Wildlife Sites, Ancient and semi-natural woodland
- Internationally famous Rutland Water Nature Reserve, managed by the Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust in partnership with Anglian Water
- Perceived qualities of naturalness and tranquillity, for example tranquil wooded walks.

### ***Landscape Change***

#### **Forces for Change**

- Maturing of the planting and habitats associated with the creation of the reservoir in the mid to late 1970s has helped to soften the artificial appearance of the vast waterbody, its assimilation into the landscape, and recognition of its importance for nature conservation, which is likely to continue
- The main force for change has come from increased pressure for tourism and recreational facilities around the reservoir, and the need to balance this against protecting the nature conservation interests, tranquillity and undisturbed character of parts of the LCT, which is likely to continue
- Development within the villages has been limited but has not always been sympathetic to traditional village character
- Anglian Water has considered solar farm development to the east of Rutland Water reservoir dam wall (see LCA Diii. *Gwash Valley*) that could affect the character of the Rutland Water Basin.

## ***Landscape Management***

### **Landscape Management Strategy for LCT C. Rutland Water Basin**

**The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to CONSERVE the nature conservation interests of the internationally important reservoir, and CONSERVE and ENHANCE existing landscape features, the general tranquillity and undisturbed character of the landscape.**

To achieve the overall management strategy, consideration should be given to the following guidelines:

- Encourage the continued protection of the Rutland Water Area, as recognised in local planning policies, from development that could have an adverse impact on the nature conservation value, landscape and other interests, while accommodating appropriate recreation and tourism needs
- Appropriate recreation and tourism development should be located within the recognised recreation areas around the reservoir
- Protect the character of the countryside and the distinctiveness, form and pattern of settlements, and consider visual impact of any new development, particularly on the edges of settlements, ensuring it fits well into the landscape in terms of location, materials and design
- Encourage the continued management of the mosaic of landscape features and habitats
- Introduce new landscape elements and features, such as new hedgerows, hedgerow trees and small copses, around existing facilities such as the Lyndon Top caravan park and camp site to better integrate it into the landscape and to increase semi-natural habitats
- Conserve the historic heritage
- Protect the key characteristics of the landscape from renewable energy developments, taking into consideration cumulative landscape and visual effects.

Photo 26



Photo 27



Photo 28



Photo 29

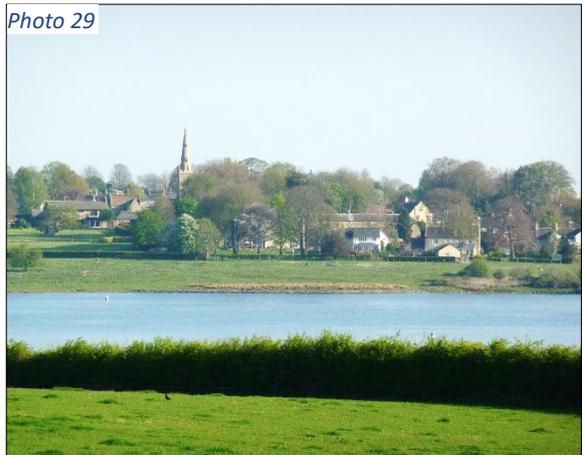
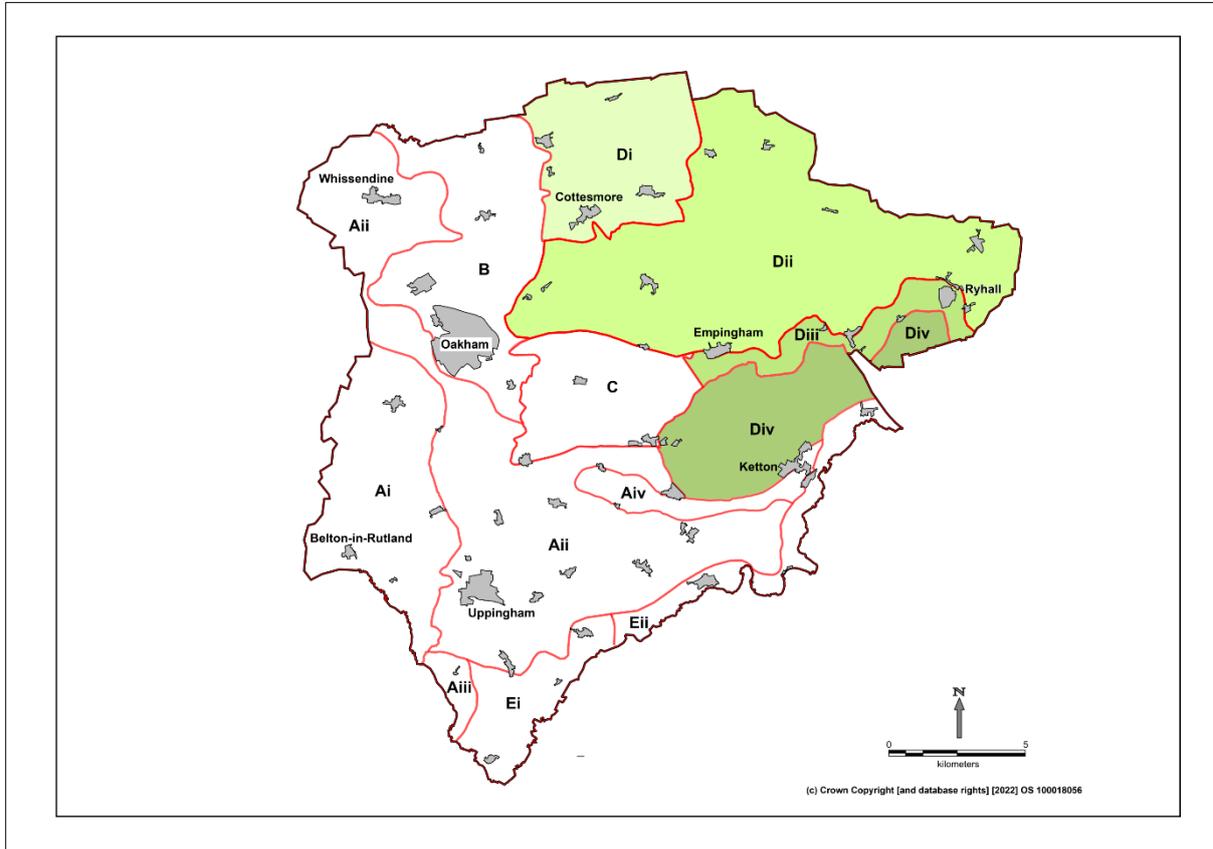


Photo 30



*See page 101 for photo descriptions*

# Landscape Character Type D RUTLAND PLATEAU



## *Landscape Character*

The Rutland Plateau Landscape Character Type (LCT) forms an extensive landscape across the north-eastern and northern central quarter of the county. It comprises the south-western parts of the Kesteven Uplands National Character Area No. 75, and the eastern fringe of the Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds NCA No. 74. The LCT extends northwards from the north-east fringe of the Welland Valley before bordering the High Rutland, Rutland Water Basin and Vale of Catmose landscapes to its west through the heart of the county. The plateau physically extends into Lincolnshire and Leicestershire beyond the northern county boundary.

The Rutland Plateau dips gently, gradually and unevenly away to the east from its highest point at 153m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at Burley House on the prominent scarp ridgeline to the east of the Vale of Catmose, which more generally maintains heights around 145m AOD along its north to south line. It falls and undulates gradually to the lower lying areas around the villages of Ryhall and Essendine and to the outskirts of Stamford with elevations as low as 17m AOD, but more typically ranging from 80m to 25m along the eastern county boundary.

The higher parts of the LCT are generally characteristic of a comparatively elevated, open plateau, particularly around Cottesmore and Greetham, whilst then becoming increasingly incised by small river valleys, notably the North Brook flowing southwards of Greetham and the west-to-east flowing River Gwash, but also other streams draining the plateau to the east such the West Glen River east of Ryhall. The Gwash Valley dissects and separates the higher land above Ketton from the main Rutland Plateau to its north, but this area can be seen to be integral to the plateau landscape as a whole. Heavy clay soils overlying the limestone in the north-east of the county have led to the retention of large and medium woodlands extending in a band from the county boundary close to Clipsham, south-west to the eastern fringe of Oakham, making this central band of the landscape type the most wooded in Rutland.

Of particular importance to creating the continuity of the Rutland Plateau landscape type is the simple underlying Inferior Oolite and Middle Jurassic limestone bedrock geology with thick glacial till surface and the undulating landform, a mixed agricultural regime with areas of permanent pasture preserving ridge and furrow, woodlands and spinneys within a largely enclosed field pattern and a network of mainly regularly shaped fields, thorn hedges with ash and oak trees. There is generally a geometric network of large, regular fields, enclosed by thorn hedges. Calcareous grasslands within quarry sites and verges are characteristic of the Rutland Plateau LCT.

Historic parkland and field sports management of the Burley, Exton, Tickencote, and Clipsham estates influences the local variation in the plateau landscape. Designed landscapes are particularly concentrated on the plateau north of Rutland Water in a belt extending north-east from the grand and prominent Burley House Estate, through Exton Hall Parkland and on to Clipsham Park. Another distinctive feature is the single-sided, broad road verges of the network of lanes resulting from Enclosures Act provisions for specified highway widths. These give the traveller a feeling of openness even on lanes bounded by hedgerows and offer significant ecological interest where unaffected by the adjacent arable farming.

These differences and delineations form the basis of the four sub-areas of the Rutland Plateau LCT.

Larger areas of woodland are a significant feature of the landscape, with areas of broadleaved as well as commercial coniferous plantations across a large sweep of the Rutland Plateau. Whilst not forming continuous forest across it, woodland units frequently coalesce visually with hedgerow trees, smaller copses and coverts, and shelterbelts around farmsteads reinforcing a perception of an extensively wooded, tranquil landscape. Along with this characteristic wooded landscape are large areas of agricultural land, forming a simple mosaic of land cover, with woodlands often foreshortening vistas within.

The more elevated landscape areas are sparsely populated, with larger settlements being limited to Cottesmore and Greetham. As the plateau gradually falls to the east and south larger settlements of Ketton, Empingham, Great Casterton, Little Casterton and Ryhall fall within or across the lower elevations of the Gwash Valley reflecting where more easily cultivated land was historically available. Here, there is generally a more intimate character,

with valley settlements tending to be surrounded by small pasture fields, together with a dispersed pattern of farms beyond the village settlements. A more robust network of hedgerows and stone walls is also evident that contrasts with the more expansive and open areas of the wooded plateau to the north.

Underlying limestone formations and scattered surface deposits of clay have given rise to significant minerals workings and processing infrastructure, both active and historic across the LCT, most dramatically at Ketton but also significant at Greetham and Clipsham. Extensive defence estate infrastructure strongly characterises parts of the plateau, particularly at Cottesmore and St George's Barracks east of Edith Weston, whilst the former airfield at Woolfox east of the A1 has few remaining structures and is consequently less prominent in the landscape, despite its extent and proximity to the road. The major transport corridor of the A1 Great North Road diagonally dissects the plateau with extended straight stretches of dual carriageway and associated junctions, signage and lighting. Elsewhere the highway network across the plateau is primarily of minor roads in an irregular pattern of often straight roads, reflecting the distribution of settlement and limited influence of the plateau terrain. The electrified East Coast Mainline passes across the far eastern fringe of the Rutland Plateau south and west of Essendine, with a disused railway branch line now forming a linear woodland feature in the landscape.

Away from Ketton works, defence estate sites and the national transport corridors, the plateau offers a quiet and perceptually remote rural environment where its medium-scaled rural landscape of woodland and agricultural mosaic predominates over the low density of dispersed settlement. The villages of the plateau often display strong and highly attractive historic character and sense of pace. Whether of historic linear or nucleated form, settlements are characterised by low density housing, simple yet attractive rows of low cottages and larger houses built from warm Collyweston limestone with brown pantile or stone slate roofs, pitched dormer windows and occasionally with more ornate detailing to chimneys. Villages are often characterised by small village greens of open spaces with mature treescapes, with stone walls defining boundaries, serving to further knit continuity of materials across the settlements.

### ***Physical Influences***

The Rutland Plateau LCT is primarily underlain by rocks of the Jurassic Period with the Inferior Oolite group being extensive beneath the elevated parts of the plateau. Differentiation in resistance of the underlying bedrock geology has influenced the relative elevation and main landform features of the plateau, but the solid geology generally has low prominence at the surface, lying below deep deposits of glacial till as well as isolated patches of glacio-fluvial sand and gravel. The underlying geology is therefore only evident at the scarp of the plateaux beyond the landscape character type's western boundary and where these deposits thin out as rivers and streams have incised glacial till on their flow eastwards. Consequently, land use and settlement is less influenced by bedrock geology on the Rutland Plateau than elsewhere across the county.

The landform undulates as it falls from the western scarp crest towards the east but is generally smooth, comprising wide level terrain with soft ridges. Over large areas of the plateau, surface water hydrology is limited to minor streams and brooks. The more significant water courses of the North Brook and River Gwash are however important influences on localised landform and character. The valley of the sinuous north-south flowing North Brook dissects the northern plateau with a local landscape of gently rounded valley sides and distinct, characterful valley floor where the brook has been damned in several places to form small lakes, notably at Fort Henry, and fish farm infrastructure elsewhere. The watercourse is variously enclosed by dense riparian vegetation and tree cover, or in open channel through arable fields and pasture. The highly sinuous Gwash Valley flowing from Rutland Water to the county boundary south of Ryhall similarly dissects the plateau west to east. Its wide valley floor is principally in arable use although pasture is more frequent to its eastern reaches. The watercourse is often only distinguishable as a landscape feature from its bankside trees than from its diminutive channel.

Outcrops of Lincolnshire Limestone and occasionally Ironstone have been worked for both aggregate and building stone across the Rutland Plateau, including an extensive ironstone quarry within the grounds of Exton Park up until 1974, now fully restored. The exposures revealed by the Ketton quarry displays a complete sequence through the Middle Jurassic rocks of the region and is of national significance (SSSI).

Where watercourses have cut through the till surface deposits, narrow bands of alluvium can be found along the valley bottoms. Soils across the plateau are typically slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils and slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged, clays and fine loams. Where limestone is exposed from the till mantle, and in the valleys, areas of shallow, well drained, brashy calcareous clayey soils are present.

### ***Cultural Influences***

The pattern of large tracts of woodland interspersed with farmland that extends across many parts of the Rutland Plateau is a consequence of the widespread deposits of till and heavy wet soils that historically have been less favourable for cultivation. Clearance of natural woodland for cultivation would have focused on the valleys and lighter soils during Neolithic and Bronze Age periods. This is the basis for remnant woodland cover today over the heavier clays. Roman influence is evident by the presence of principal roads that cross the plateau and ridges, most notably the A1 Great North Road (following the route of the Roman 'Ermine Street') utilising lower lying gaps in the terrain, as well as some evidence of settlements.

Saxon settlements tended to be sited around the periphery of the woodlands that were controlled by the royal manors. This ancient pattern of settlement is visible today across the more elevated areas of the Rutland Plateau LCT where wooded areas coincide with the lowest density of settlement, particularly east of the North Brook valley. The many blocks of woodland that are present are indicative of a more extensive cover that once extended across the higher plateau as periodic clearances, such as medieval assarts, created a patchwork landscape of woodland and open field cultivation surrounding nucleated villages,

as well as extensive areas of waste and common, and isolated farmsteads cut out of the woodlands.

From the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the greatest clearances followed the removal of the legal status of the Royal Forests and the effects of the Parliamentary Enclosure Acts. Despite these significant losses, extensive areas of ancient and replanted woodland remain and are a strong and unifying characteristic of the Rutland Plateau LCT.

The growing wealth of landowners led to further developments in the landscape during a period of transformation in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Halls and other large country houses with parkland were built, and churches embellished. Burley-on-the-Hill House stands prominent on the crest of the western scarp of the Plateau, sited imposingly over Rutland Water. Exton's Park and Old Hall stands within extensive parkland including the designed landscape around Fort Henry neo-gothic folly where the North Brook has been dammed to provide a series of artificial lakes. Clipsham Hall and its designed parkland continues the theme of historic houses in close proximity to historic minerals extraction to the north-east of the *Rutland Plateau*. Here the distinctive yew topiary avenue on approach to the hall is maintained by a specific Trust under agreement with the Forestry Commission.

The Rutland Plateau is associated with the romantic poet John Clare. Whilst trying to get his verse noticed and published in the early to mid-1800s, Clare worked as a lime burner at several lime kilns in the area, staying locally at New Inn, a coaching inn at Great Casterton now known as Bridge House, close to the River Gwash running, in Clare's words *"its crooked course...till it crossed the turnpike under a modern looking bridge and wound along a sloping meadow towards the little village of Tickencote"*. Clare captured the brooding sense of antiquity in the ruins of the church at Pickworth in his 'Elegy on the Ruins of Pickworth' when he worked at a lime kiln there, which has been recently restored by the Council as a unique witness to an ancient industrial process and a way of life, and a poignant reminder of a phase in John Clare's early life as he struggled towards publication.

Most villages retain a strong association with agriculture or minerals extraction, with a legacy of good stone-built farmhouses, cottages and outbuildings, often utilising the locally sourced distinctive limestone geology. Predominant vernacular building materials across the Plateau's nucleated settlements and outlying farmsteads reflect the historic extraction of Jurassic limestone and a limited range of alternative materials resulting in a distinctive uniformity of appearance. The limestone presents attractive, warm, buff-hued buildings with brown tiled roofs across the settlements of the Rutland Plateau. Many of the villages and hamlets have designated Conservation Areas (and numerous Listed Buildings) recognising their historic character and appearance. However, historic use of many settlements as working farming villages has been lost, although some retain a working farm in the village. Similar to most rural areas of England, agricultural mechanisation, amalgamation of farms into larger units and improvements in transport and personal mobility mean that the Plateau's residents are generally not employed in primary industries. Most settlements across the Rutland Plateau have retained historic nucleated form despite some limited growth; however, at Cottesmore, Empingham and Ketton, 20<sup>th</sup> century housing estates have more markedly diluted historic settlement form.

Today, areas of woodland across the Rutland Plateau are generally separated by large fields, mainly in arable use, which tend to have low hedges and intermittent hedgerow trees. Evidence of focused new woodland planting can be found between the A1 at Woolfox and Greatham. The increase of arable cultivation in recent decades has resulted in hedgerow removal and field amalgamation, increasing the grain and scale of the landscape. In the valleys, some more intimate areas exist where better maintained hedgerows and dry-stone walls and hedges enclose improved pastures, particularly around Ketton beyond the extent of minerals working. Evidence of historic minerals operations, predominantly small and medium sized shallow former quarries and spoil are widespread across the Rutland Plateau. In areas to the north of the LCT these often-present linear surface water features with associated vegetation and tree belts, or restored arable land where filled shape is elongated in contrast to the more geometric pattern between woodland blocks.

The Rutland Plateau has been associated with fox hunting with hounds for hundreds of years, up until the Government ban in 2005. The Cottessmore Hunt continues to meet to hunt using a combination of laid trails and bird flushing with its equally famous neighbours the Quorn Hunt and the Belvoir Hunt. Miles of tracks, untracked grassland, hedges, coverts and woodland are maintained for field sports purposes. Equestrian uses, including stable buildings, horse fencing, exercise yards, lunge rings, turn-out paddocks, all weather gallops, as well as modern indoor facilities (horse walkers and therapy swimming pools) in purpose made buildings, are distinctive features within the Rutland Plateau landscape.

Past and present Crown Estate land, particularly the major current and former defence sites and the prison at Stocken are significant land uses across the Rutland Plateau. Here, extensive wide-open sites are securely enclosed, with large and numerous hanger and other utility buildings, runways and massive apron areas, and staff housing, whilst being largely devoid of tree cover contrasting with the managed arable and woodland landscapes that surround.

### ***Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities***

The Rutland Plateau LCT presents a harmonious and peaceful rural landscape with large areas of ancient as well as more recently planted woodlands, enclosing a pattern of farmland, parkland and estates, and small or medium sized stone-built villages. Although there are extensive areas of productive and mainly arable farmland interspersed with numerous farms and small villages, the landscape retains a remote character away from the settlements and large defence sites and transport corridors. Where longer distance views are possible from unwooded and more elevated areas within the gently undulating landform, a modest sense of exposure and openness prevails, with big skies whilst elsewhere prominent wooded horizons increase a sense of enclosure and together these create a large scale yet simple rural landscape. Where woodland and other tree cover is more extensive, the perceived scale of the landscape is lessened with the treescape combining to impart a more intimate character and human scale.

Hedgerows and trees are also important textural elements and link with the woodlands to create green networks between areas of woodland and a perception that the landscape is even more wooded than it actually is. Between the woodland blocks the texture of the

arable landscape and wide-open defence sites can be moderately smooth, especially where hedgerows have been lost and where minerals sites restored.

The hues and textures of the Rutland Plateau are generally simple, particularly where arable farming occupies much of the gently undulating landscape contained within large areas of dark woodland. At a more local scale, the changing cropping regimes and the trees and woodlands add textural elements and colours that change with the seasons. The autumn colours of many woodlands are a particularly striking feature of the landscape.

Nature conservation value of the stands of ancient woodland within the landscape contrasts with the relative sparsity of important habitat areas of the arable farmland, although field margin management, new planted woodlands and the frequent small surface water features of designed woodlands and former minerals works further support islands of biodiversity value.

There is considerable visual variety across the Rutland Plateau LCT. Exposed and elevated areas provide sweeping panoramas across neighbouring lowlands, particularly westwards from the Burley scarp over the Vale of Catmose, and south over Rutland Water. Elsewhere, and notably along the pronounced valleys of the North Brook and Gwash the landform obscures longer distance views to create a more enclosed and occasionally intimate landscape, although these are not typical of the wider LCT.

Vernacular architecture, particularly where the locally sourced limestone has been used, also provides visual unity in the landscape. This is further enhanced by older churches, some of which have prominent towers and spires which act as landmarks and reference points in the landscape, and large country houses and parklands which add visual and recreational interest and contrast to the arable and wooded landscape.

Despite the local influence of Ketton (and the edge of Oakham in the neighbouring Vale of Catmose LCT) and major transport and military infrastructure, the landscape retains a strong agricultural character. Although a major link from the A1 to Oakham, the east-west running A606 is not significantly visually intrusive in the landscape compared to the A1, and elsewhere the road network is limited to minor rural lanes.

In some locations the amalgamation of features associated with equestrian uses, including temporary and unsightly clutter and lighting, can detract from the unspoilt rural character and can be particularly intrusive in views to and from villages.

**There are four landscape character areas (LCAs) within LCT D. Rutland Plateau:**

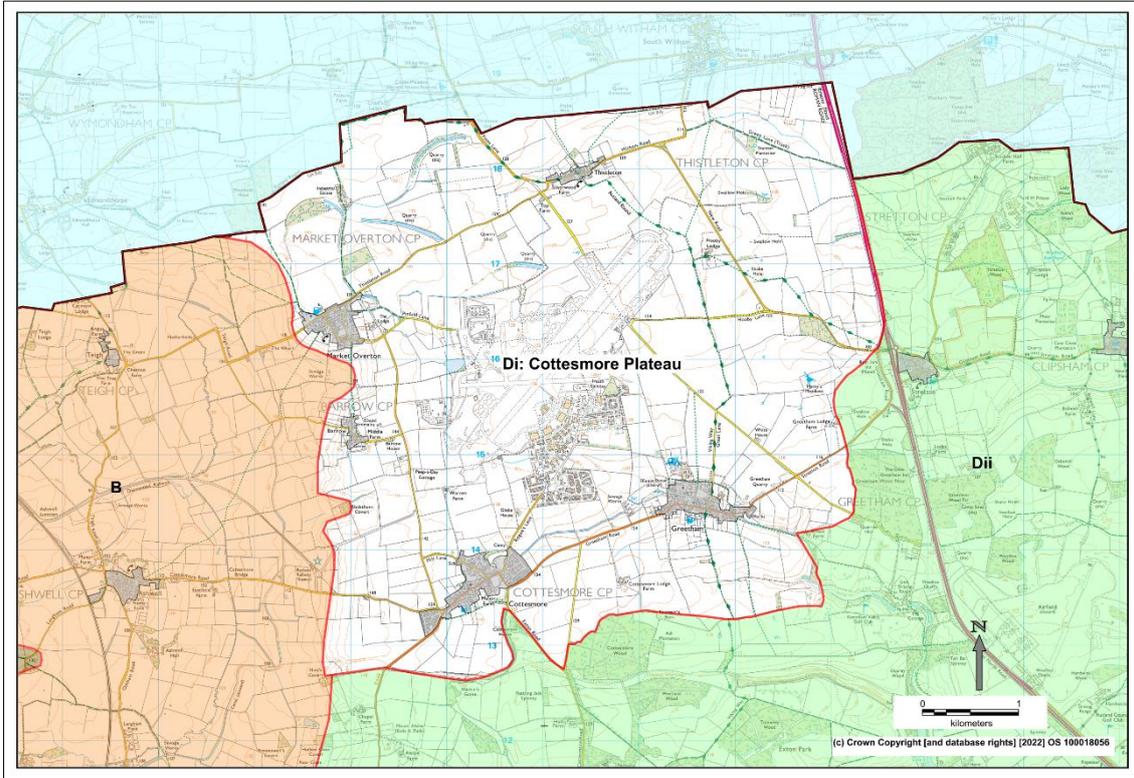
**LCA Di. *Cottesmore Plateau***

**LCA Dii. *Clay Woodlands***

**LCA Diii. *Gwash Valley***

**LCA Div. *Ketton Plateau***

# Landscape Character Area Di. **COTTESMORE PLATEAU**



## **Location and Boundaries**

The *Cottesmore Plateau* Landscape Character Area (LCA) lies centrally on the northern fringe of the county of Rutland, extending into Lincolnshire to its north. It has the most typical plateau-like characteristics of the four sub-areas of the Rutland Plateau LCT. It stretches southwards from the county boundary from just north of Thistleton and Market Overton villages in a generally rectilinear form to encompass the larger settlements of Cottesmore and Greetham, with the dominating and extensive former RAF Cottesmore airbase (since 2012 the Kendrew Army Barracks) occupying a large part of the central area. The small village of Barrow stands centrally to its western boundary, which like Market Overton, stands on the scarp slope rising from the Vale of Catmose LCT to its west. To the north-east boundary the LCA is defined by a stretch of the A1 trunk road.

## **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Di. *Cottesmore Plateau***

- Underlying geology of Jurassic Limestone formation bedrock, with slowly permeable seasonally wet clayey soils and thinner soils with exposed limestone
- Underlain with ironstone-rich Jurassic marlstone rock formation and Lincolnshire limestones; this area is renowned for its limestone, clay, iron and other minerals with historic evidence of small-scale worked strip mines
- Extensive open and mostly flat landform caused by glacial till deposition over bedrock formations
- The highest part of the LCA to the west of Cottesmore reaches 148m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), falling gently to around 100m AOD along much of its eastern border
- A general absence of watercourses with surface water features limited to linear ponds at the sites of historic minerals working
- Predominantly medium to large scale landscape
- Limited tree cover with a few small broadleaved plantation woods, spinneys, copses, coverts and linear stands along former minerals sites
- Ash is the dominant tree, with occasionally beech, lime and sycamore
- A limited mosaic of other landscape features including large arable fields, historic minerals sites, tree-lined hedges and the extensive, mainly open Kendrew Barracks with concentrations of large army defence infrastructure
- Complex patchwork pattern with low clipped hawthorn hedgerows
- Predominantly arable cultivation on the flat, drier higher ground around the barracks
- Smaller pockets of semi-improved pasture found on the periphery of settlements, with horse keeping and associated paraphernalia particularly near the villages
- Limited nature conservation value, with the exception of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Greetham Meadow designated for its Mesotrophic grassland to the eastern fringe
- Active quarries at Greetham and Thistleton with associated dust accumulations on roads and in hedgerows, and intrusive haul roads
- Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) designated at Greetham Quarry (active) and Thistleton Gullet (historic) minerals sites
- Exposed and elevated sites to the western scarp ridge provide sweeping panoramas across neighbouring lowlands of the Vale of Catmose creating the perception of an open, large-scale landscape
- Large skies perceived across the open landscape of the central and northern plateau

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### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Di. *Cottesmore Plateau***

- Widespread open views often possible across the landscape but also partly foreshortened by hedgerows and liner tree belts across the north of the LCA
- Only five villages in the LCA; Market Overton, Greetham, Barrow, Thistleton and Cottesmore. The large Kendrew Barracks effectively constitute a freestanding community, which in combination with the operational buildings and infrastructure is the most significant settlement of the LCA
- Conservation Areas within Market Overton, Greetham and Cottesmore
- Modern Kendrew Barracks army dwellings contrast in form, layout and design to the historic villages within the LCA
- Elsewhere the historic built environment is limited, although church spires are often prominent features in the flat landscape
- Low density of farmsteads on the arable farmland
- A limited road network of often straight lanes
- Vernacular architecture in manor houses, cottages, farms and outbuildings where the locally sourced limestone has been used, providing visual unity in the settlements
- Tranquil and sometimes empty, remote character in places, but always close to modern influences and noise and visual intrusions
- Strong audible influence of the A1 close to the major transport corridor along the eastern side of the LCA
- Rutland Round and Viking Way local recreation routes are part of an otherwise low density of Public Rights of Way.

## ***Landscape Change***

### **Forces for Change**

- Defence site uses and future development at the Kendrew Barracks
- Agricultural intensification has resulted in conversion or reversion to arable farming with increased field sizes and associated loss or damage to historic landscape features including pasture, woodland, field boundaries, hedgerow trees, areas of semi-natural vegetation
- New agricultural buildings reflecting the general increase in farm size, and evidence of diversification with increased chicken sheds, can be visually prominent
- Small industrial estate north of Market Overton suggests development pressure for housing and employment sites within or around the larger settlements is reasonably likely
- Quarrying has recommenced at Thistleton and continues at Greetham
- Potential future development at quarry sites when they become inactive, for example for housing or distribution shed developments
- Existing caravan, camping and glamping sites around Greetham suggests there may be pressure for similar land uses
- Evidence of decline in maintenance of the hedgerow network, with gaps, increasing use of post and wire fences, and few hedgerow trees with Ash Dieback in some areas
- Although not currently characteristic of the *Cottesmore Plateau* LCA, some locations could be attractive to wind farm development, solar farms particularly on south-facing slopes, and other renewable energy developments
- Pressure for storage and distribution development within the A1 corridor in proximity to Ram Jam corner and Stretton junctions immediately outside the eastern edge of the LCA.

## ***Landscape Management***

### **Landscape Management Strategy for**

#### **LCA Di. *Cottesmore Plateau***

**The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to RESTORE the landscape, wildlife and treescapes and CONSERVE the remaining landscape mosaic of woodlands, ponds, meadows and tree-lined hedges.**

To achieve the overall management strategy, consideration should be given to the following guidelines:

- Increase woodland cover and link dispersed woodlands through the planting of new native trees and hedgerows
- Seek to manage and mitigate visual intrusion of existing and further major infrastructure at the Kendrew Army Barracks
- Restore the historic field pattern through the planting of new native hedges and hedgerow trees, particularly around settlements
- Encourage positive management to replace trees in locations affected by Ash Dieback disease
- Encourage the appropriate management of existing woods and other valuable wildlife habitats, including calcareous grassland sites and RIGS
- Protect the structure and unity of the landscape by considering the landscape and visual impact of new structures and buildings, siting them away from visually prominent locations and close to existing buildings, and impacts due to changes in farming practices
- Use new tree planting and woodland to screen new residential and agricultural development, and quarrying activities
- Protect the character of the countryside and the distinctiveness, form and pattern of settlements, and consider visual impact of any new development ensuring it fits well into the landscape in terms of location, materials and design. Neighbourhood Plans, landscape sensitivity studies and other documents should be followed to guide the location and the form of development
- Protect the remaining smaller scale field pattern, pasture and treescape on the periphery of settlements when siting new development.

Photo 31



Photo 32



Photo 33



Photo 34

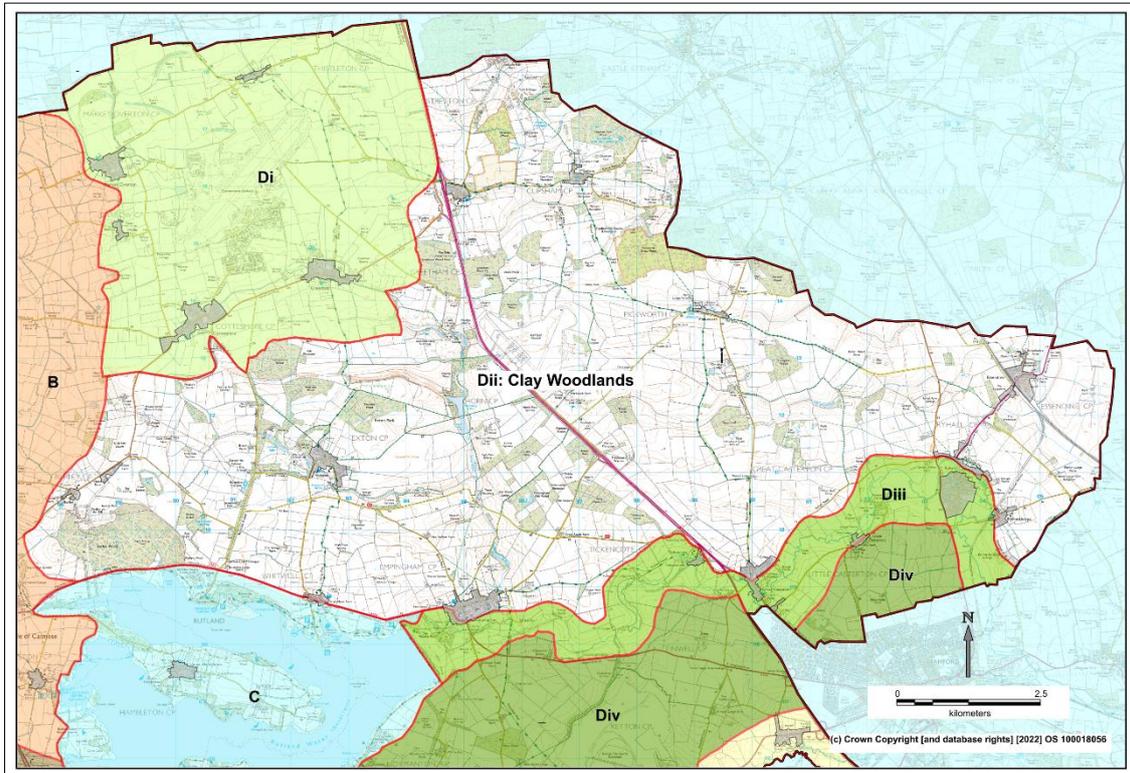


Photo 35



*See page 101 for photo descriptions*

# Landscape Character Area Dii. CLAY WOODLANDS



## ***Location and Boundaries***

The *Clay Woodlands* Landscape Character Area (LCA) occupies a large area of the north-east parts of the county of Rutland, extending from its boundary between Stocken Park in the north and Stamford in the east before sweeping westwards to its boundaries with the Vale of Catmose LCT to the west and *Gwash Valley* LCA and Rutland Water Basin LCT to its south. It washes over the dispersed settlements of Stretton, Clipsham, Pickworth, Essendine and parts of Great Casterton to the east of the bisecting A1 corridor, and Empingham, Whitwell, Exton and Burley to its west.

## **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Dii. CLAY WOODLANDS**

- Underlying geology of Jurassic Limestone formation of Great Oolite group bedrock over a central section of the LCA east of the A1, and inferior Oolite Group of Limestone, Sandstone Siltstone and Mudstone with slowly permeable seasonally wet clayey soils above to the west
- Gently undulating landform due to river erosion of glacial till deposition over bedrock formations, but with isolated areas of rolling ridges and deep valleys in the north around Stretton and Clipsham
- Highest part of the LCA reaches 153m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at Burley House, falling gently to around 30m AOD along much of its eastern border, but with locally isolated low points of 17m AOD
- Predominantly medium scale landscape with complex patchwork pattern of geometric but irregular arable fields with some pasture interspersed with frequent woodlands from small to medium sizes
- Variety of landscape features within the Exton estate, partly due to past mining operations for iron ore in the 1900s, with deep valleys, rolling ground, ancient woods, high hedges and game cover copses
- Extensive tree cover with mixed scales of broadleaved and conifer plantation woods, spinneys, copses, coverts, designed avenues and woodland and linear tree belts along watercourses
- Ash is the dominant tree species, with others usually oak and sycamore
- Views often foreshortened by extensive mosaic of woodland blocks and interlinking tree belts and hedgerow trees across LCA
- Distinctive and striking treed avenues at Barnsdale (Broadleaf) and Clipsham (Yew)
- Historic minerals sites, tree-lined hedges and the extensive, historic designed parkland landscapes at Burley, Exton and Clipsham
- Hedge loss and field size increase apparent in arable landscapes particularly east of the A1
- Smaller pockets of semi-improved pasture found to the periphery of settlements with horse keeping particularly near the villages
- Small watercourses run west to east across the dipping relief in shallow valleys adding some complexity to the topography of the LCA with the significant exception of the North Brook's north-to-south course in a more defined valley
- Small artificial lakes located within designed parklands, particularly in the North Brook valley and long small, east flowing brooks
- Active and historic evidence of small and medium scale surface quarrying
- Maturing planting at Greetham Valley and Rutland County Golf Clubs
- Strong linear influence of the major transport corridors which bisect the LCA with the A1 tracing the route of the Ermine Street Roman Road and the East Coast Mainline with extensive gantry and overhead wire infrastructure

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### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Dii. *Clay Woodlands***

- Important nature conservation sites widespread across the LCA generally within woodlands and unimproved grasslands including SSSIs of Clipsham Old Quarry and Pickworth Great Wood, Burley and Rushpit Woods, Empingham Marshy Meadows and Newell Wood
- Significant concentration of Local Wildlife Sites, principally across woodlands
- Regionally Important Geological Sites designated at Clipsham Quarry and Woolfox Quarry (both active) minerals sites.
- Limited nucleated, and occasionally linear settlements in the LCA; Burley, Belmsthorpe, Exton, Empingham, Essendine, Stretton, Clipsham and parts of Great Casterton and Whitwell which overlap into the *Gwash Valley* LCA (Diii)
- Conservation Areas within Exton, Empingham, the Medieval village of Horn, Clipsham, Stretton and Whitwell
- Scheduled Monuments at Woodhead Castle baily and fishpond, Horn deserted medieval village and moat and Essendine moated castle site
- Low density of farmsteads on the arable farmland
- A limited road network of often straight, narrow lanes with verges of varying widths and generally well-maintained hedgerows
- Remnant dry stone walls made of local limestone are characteristic features in some parts of the clay woodlands, but with evidence of poor maintenance
- Vernacular architecture in manor houses, cottages, farms and outbuildings where the locally sourced limestone has been used, providing visual unity in the settlements
- Former Defence Estate airfield at Woolfox presents an open landscape with remnant airfield runways and modern business development
- Professional equestrian and racing stables with associated paraphernalia well screened in large private estates
- Prison at Stocken, although not prominent in the landscape
- Tranquil and sometimes empty, semi-remote character away from villages and A1 corridor
- Sense of intermittent enclosure within spaces between woodlands, with large skies apparent away from treed areas
- Rutland Round and Viking Way local recreation routes are part of an otherwise low density of Public Rights of way.

## ***Landscape Change***

### **Forces for Change**

- Former defence site uses and potential future development at Woolfox
- Agricultural intensification resulting in conversion or reversion to arable farming with increasing field sizes and associated loss or damage to historic landscape components including pasture, woodland, field boundaries, hedgerow trees, areas of semi-natural vegetation
- Evidence of decline in maintenance of the hedgerow network, with gaps, increasing use of post and wire fences, and loss of trees from Ash Dieback disease in some areas, which could have an increasing impact on the character of the landscape
- Evidence of decline in field boundary stone walls, with gaps and increasing use of post and wire fences
- New agricultural buildings reflect the general increase in farm size and can be visually prominent
- Continuing and extended surface minerals operations
- Development pressure for housing and employment sites within or around the larger settlements and A1 corridor is reasonably likely
- Application for major solar farm development around Essendine suggests some areas of the LCA could be attractive for solar farm development, with potential for wind energy and other renewable energy schemes also
- Pressure for storage and distribution development within the A1 corridor in proximity junctions within the LCA
- Recent woodland planting particularly across Greetham Valley and Rutland County Golf Clubs
- Existing camping and glamping site and application for lodges at Rutland Golf Club suggests there may be pressure for similar recreational land uses throughout the LCA.

## ***Landscape Management***

### **Landscape Management Strategy for LCA Dii. *Clay Woodlands***

The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to **CONSERVE** the distinctive landscape mosaic of woodlands, ponds, meadows, parklands and tree-lined hedges, and **ENHANCE** the landscape through the management of farmland, minerals sites, transport corridors and renewable energy sites and proposals.

To achieve the overall management strategy, consideration should be given to the following guidelines:

- Reinforce and protect woodland cover and link dispersed woodlands through the planting of new native trees and hedgerows
- Seek to manage and mitigate landscape and visual effects of potential development at Woolfox
- Ensure future caravan, camping, glamping and other similar recreational land uses are sensitively located, avoiding prominent sites
- Enhance existing and historic field patterns through the planting of new native hedges and hedgerow trees, particularly across the east of the LCA
- Encourage positive management to replace trees in locations affected by Ash Dieback disease
- Encourage positive management to replace field boundary stone walls
- Encourage the appropriate management of existing woods, calcareous grassland sites and other valuable wildlife habitats
- Manage and safeguard RIGS within active minerals sites
- Protect the structure and unity of the landscape by considering the landscape and visual impact of all new structures and buildings, siting them away from visually prominent locations and close to existing buildings
- Use new tree planting and woodland to screen new residential and agricultural development, and recreational land uses
- Protect the character of the countryside and the distinctiveness, form and pattern of settlements, and consider visual impact of any new development ensuring it fits well into the landscape in terms of location, materials and design. Neighbourhood Plans, landscape sensitivity studies and other documents should be followed to guide the location and the form of development
- Protect the remaining smaller scale field pattern, pasture and treescape on the periphery of settlements when siting new development.

Photo 36



Photo 37



Photo 38



Photo 39



Photo 40



Photo 41



Photo 42

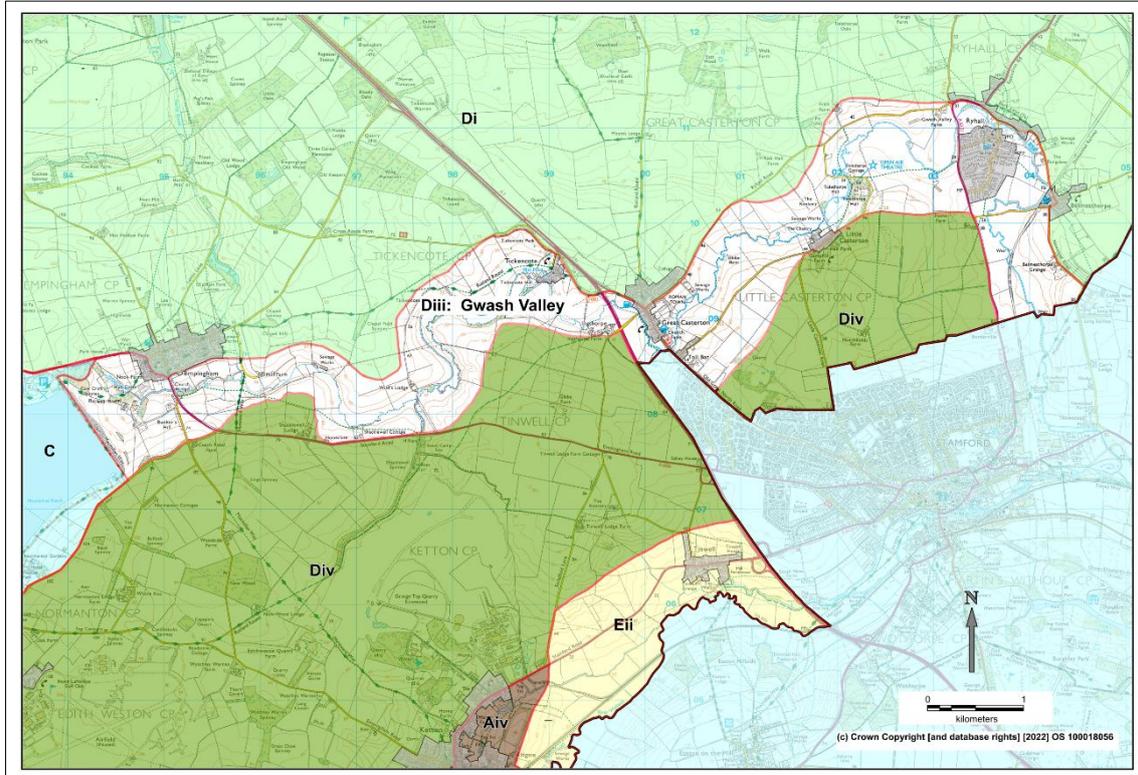


Photo 43



*see page 101 for photo descriptions*

# Landscape Character Area Diii. **GWASH VALLEY**



## ***Location and Boundaries***

The *Gwash Valley* Landscape Character Area (LCA) occupies a sinuous ribbon through the county of Rutland, extending from its boundary at the eastern end of Rutland Water to follow the course of the River Gwash eastwards to the county boundary north-east of Stamford in Lincolnshire. The *Clay Woodlands* LCA bounds its full northern extent, whilst the *Ketton Plateau* LCA lies to its south, and as such is mostly bounded within the wider Rutland Plateau LCT. The LCA is a shallow river valley with settlement limited to Tickencote, Ingthorpe, parts of Great and Little Casterton and Ryhall.

### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Diii. GWASH VALLEY**

- Underlying geology of Jurassic Limestone formation of Great Oolite group bedrock over a central section of the LCA east of the A1, and inferior Oolite Group of Limestone, Sandstone Siltstone and Mudstone with slowly permeable seasonally wet clayey soils above to the west
- Wide, shallow valley landform caused by river erosion of glacial till deposition over bedrock formations
- Highest part of the LCA reaches only 92m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at Rutland water dam head, falling gently to around 25m AOD as the River Gwash flows into Lincolnshire close to the eastern-most county boundary
- Between Rutland Water outflow and Ryhall the shallow valley sides fall gradually in gently convex profile to a sinuous narrow river channel which itself is often inconspicuous
- Predominantly large to medium scale landscape with simple land use pattern of snaking river channel, valley floor and pasture flanked by larger arable fields and generally free of larger woodlands
- Widespread but intermittent sinuous tree belts along the riverbanks
- Line of the river sometimes has low landscape prominence where bankside trees are absent
- Higher views across the valley allow full width of the LCA to be observed from generally consistent height horizontal valley crests (away from the North Brook confluence) where bankside trees are absent
- Absence of minerals sites, contrasting with much of the rest of the Rutland Plateau LCT
- North Brook's confluence with the River Gwash east of Empingham provides a gentle break in otherwise even north valley topography
- Low clipped, managed hedgerows with hedgerow trees less frequent than elsewhere on the plateau
- Designed parkland landscapes at Tickencote Hall and Park and Tolethorpe Hall
- Conservation Areas extend across the LCA at Tickencote, Great Casterton, Little Casterton, Tolethorpe Hall Parkland and Ryhall
- Moated fishponds at Empingham, site of Roman Town at Great Casterton are Scheduled Monuments
- Valley floor complexity of linear riparian trees around Gwash and North Brook's confluence
- Strong visual and perceptual interruption of the valley floor landscape by the A1 cutting and bridge at Tickencote. Structural planting along the A1 associates well with linear riparian tree lines along the Gwash course
- General absence of nature conservation sites along the valley LCA with exception of Tickencote Marsh SSSI and Local Wildlife designations at Hall Close ponds, Empingham, and Home Farm, Great Casterton

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### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Diii. *Gwash Valley***

- Limited settlement within the LCA; Tickencote, Great Casterton, Little Casterton and Ryhall whose historic form as been particularly diluted by 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion
- Low density of farmsteads on the shallow valley sides or floor
- Very limited main road network within the valley with exceptions of main A606 Empingham Road, the A6121 south and west of Ryhall, and the crossing of the A1 at Tickencote, but often flanking the LCA on or close to the valley crests
- Less tranquil than much of the Rutland Plateau LCT although locally intimate and peaceful areas located along the river course away from villages, parallel roads and A1 crossing
- Sense of openness generally away from the course of the river and its riparian vegetation, with large skies apparent from valley brows
- Limited range in relief often allows for views to be foreshortened by riparian tree belts within the valley floor
- Hereward Way and Rutland Round local recreation routes are part of an otherwise low density of Public Rights of Way
- Much of the course of the river is through inaccessible private land
- Multiple small water treatment works located in the LCA but generally well screened by trees
- Tolethorpe Hall within wooded parkland includes an open-air theatre and is home to Stamford Shakespeare Company
- Steeper, geometric, expansive and engineered earth embankment of Rutland Water dam is locally dramatic but a-typical of the LCA valley's sinuous and cultivated character
- Footpath access across the dam offers more elevated views down the valley LCA where tree cover is perceived to be more significant than in transection views across the valley.

## ***Landscape Change***

### **Forces for Change**

- Agricultural intensification resulting in conversion to arable farming with increased field sizes and associated loss or damage to pastoral landscape components including field boundaries, hedgerow trees, and limited areas of semi-natural vegetation
- New agricultural buildings reflect the general increase in farm size, and can be visually prominent on the valley floor
- Water treatment infrastructure improvements
- Development pressure for housing and employment sites within or around the settlements, in particular Great Casterton and Ryhall, and within the A1 corridor is reasonably likely
- Pressure for solar farm development (previous proposal by Anglian Water to the east of Rutland Water reservoir dam wall); more open landscape to the east of the LCA on south facing side could be attractive
- Pressure for storage and distribution development within the A1 corridor in proximity junction at Great Casterton.

## ***Landscape Management***

### **Landscape Management Strategy for LCA Diii. *Gwash Valley***

**The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to CONSERVE the distinctive river valley channel and associated riparian vegetation and remnant pasture which is of inherent landscape and nature conservation value, and to ENHANCE the shallow valley landscape and its biodiversity potential through positive agricultural and woodland practice across arable land.**

To achieve the overall management strategy, consideration should be given to the following guidelines:

- Reinforce and protect riparian treescapes and extend native tree planting along the river course where trees have been lost, and the establishment and reinforcements of new and weak hedgerows and reducing field size
- Seek to manage and mitigate visual intrusion of major transport infrastructure along the A1 corridor
- Encourage the appropriate management of existing woodland and wet pasture as well other valuable riverside wildlife habitats
- Protect the structure and unity of the landscape by considering the landscape and visual impact of all new structures and buildings, siting them away from visually prominent locations and close to existing buildings
- Use new tree planting and woodland to screen new residential and agricultural development
- Protect the character of the countryside and the distinctiveness, form and pattern of settlements, and consider visual impact of any new development ensuring it fits well into the landscape in terms of location, materials and design. Neighbourhood Plans, landscape sensitivity studies and other documents should be followed to guide the location and the form of development
- Protect the remaining smaller scale field pattern, pasture and treescape on the periphery of settlements when siting new development.

Photo 44



Photo 45



Photo 46



Photo 47



Photo 48



Photo 50

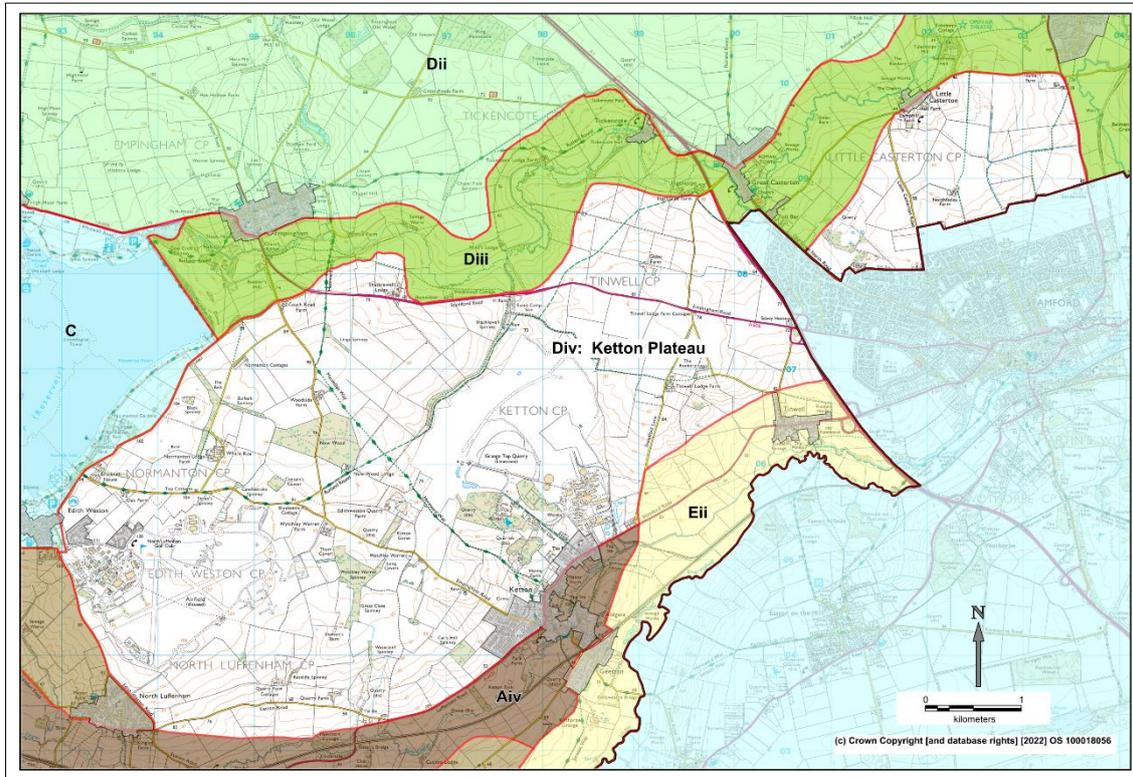


Photo 51



*See page 101 for photo descriptions*

# Landscape Character Area Div. **KETTON PLATEAU**



## ***Location and Boundaries***

The *Ketton Plateau* Landscape Character Area (LCA) forms the southern fringe of the wider Rutland Plateau LCT. It occupies the relatively higher terrain to the south of the *Gwash Valley* LCA, bounded to its south by the *Chater Valley* LCA of High Rutland and the eastern fringe of the Welland Valley LCT. To its western extent the *Ketton Plateau* LCA has a short boundary with the *Undulating Mixed Farmlands* LCA. The LCA is bisected administratively by a narrow strip of land within Lincolnshire comprising the north-west urban limits of Stamford. The LCA is characterised to a significant degree by its unsettled character and dominant land uses of the large limestone quarry and cement works at Ketton, and the defence estate's St George's Barracks (on the site of the former North Luffenham airfield). The northern extent of Ketton and the southern extent of Little Casterton lie within the *Ketton Plateau* LCA.

## **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Div. *Ketton Plateau***

- Underlying geology of Jurassic Limestone formation of Great Oolite group bedrock over the elevated western plateau section of the LCA, and inferior Oolite Group of Limestone, Sandstone Siltstone and Mudstone with slowly permeable seasonally wet clayey soils to the remaining greater area of the LCA
- Modestly elevated, gently rounded plateau landform with gradual convex slopes dipping to the *Gwash Valley* to the north and east, and *Chater Valley* to the south, with a broad level summit area north-west of *Ketton* village
- Highest part of the LCA reaches 107m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at *St George's Barracks* in west, falling gently to around 26m AOD at its eastern boundary at the lower *Gwash* valley. More typically elevations along the northern fringe are around 60m AOD (although lower as it extends eastwards) and between 50m and 40m AOD along its southern fringe
- Significant absence of surface water features on the permeable limestone bedrock, limited to field ditches to the east
- The plateau is significantly interrupted by the large limestone quarry and cement works at *Ketton*, visible from well beyond the LCA. This characterises an extensive proportion of the LCA with open quarrying, settling lagoons, major plant and conveyor infrastructure, processing buildings, offices, internal roads and landscaping and a sizeable solar farm
- Less visually intrusive due to its wide-open flat spaces but significant in extent is *St George's Barracks* (on the site of the former *North Luffenham* airfield)
- Otherwise, a predominantly medium-scale landscape with simple land use pattern of medium sized rectilinear arable fields and limited woodland cover
- Low clipped hedgerows with well-spaced hedgerow trees emphasise an open, generally unenclosed landscape
- Woodlands are more limited than elsewhere across the *Rutland Plateau*, with a local concentration of shelterbelts and small blocks falling between *St George's Barracks* and the *Ketton* works complex which limit intervisibility between the major sites on non-agricultural land use
- Strong screening belt of trees to the extensive perimeter of the limestone quarry and cement works at *Ketton*, often limiting views into the works and void
- Outside the *Ketton* works and *St George's Barracks* sites, settlement is notably limited to northern parts of *Ketton* and southern extents of *Little Casterton*, largely inconspicuous in their river valley settings
- Limited cultural heritage designation across the plateau, with sections of *Ketton* and *Little Casterton* Conservation Areas fringing small parts of the LCA

*continued...*

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### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Div. *Ketton Plateau***

- A low proportion of the LCA is designated as of nature conservation value with main exceptions of the three SSSIs of Ketton Quarry calcareous grassland habitat which lies across areas of disused and active minerals working, smaller area of similar habitat at North Luffenham Quarry (disused); and the linear Shackwell Hollow stream, marsh and wet woodland
- Local Wildlife Sites are designated at Edith Weston Mine (quarry) abutting the SSSI; at North Luffenham Airfield (St George's Barracks) for its extensive area of moderately species rich grasslands; and at Stamford Quarry for mesotrophic and wet grassland, ponds and woodland scrub
- Low density of farmsteads on the gentle plateau sides
- Less well managed agricultural landscape to the south, with gappy and absent hedges
- Signs of farm diversification with significant Christmas tree plantations
- Very limited road network across the Plateau with exceptions the main A606 Empingham Road, running west-east north of Ketton and limited network of often straight minor roads elsewhere, skirting the major airfield and works sites. The A1 and Stamford Road A6121 partly bound the LCA
- A variation in tranquillity, with areas less tranquil than much of the Rutland Plateau LCT due to the presence of the works and proximity to the A1 corridor which partly bounds the eastern edge of the main block of the LCA and which is visible from its upper eastern areas, providing movement and noise in the landscape, which to a lesser extent is also apparent with the A606 and A6121
- Sense of openness generally away from screening treescapes between the works and disused airfield
- Extensive views are available from higher parts of the LCA to distant landscapes beyond the County boundary
- Features in the landscape include a disused windmill off Empingham Road, contrasting with the nearby limestone quarry and cement works at Ketton
- MacMillan Way and Rutland Round local recreation routes are part of an otherwise modest density of Public Rights of Way. The MacMillan Way has a protected route through the heart of the works complex.

## ***Landscape Change***

### **Forces for Change**

- Continued major activity and change within the limestone quarry and cement works at Ketton
- MOD plans to close and vacate St George's Barracks by 2024 may lead to possible future development / redevelopment on parts of the site
- Intensification of arable farming practice with loss of field boundaries, consequent increased field sizes and associated agricultural buildings in the open landscape
- Restoration of minerals sites on cessation of extraction
- Loss of distinctive hedgerow trees, and limited areas of semi-natural vegetation to arable farming
- Signs of poor agricultural management to the south, with gappy and absent hedges
- Signs of farm diversification with significant Christmas tree plantations
- Development pressure for housing at Ketton, and storage and distribution development and employment sites within or around the A1 corridor
- Expansion of Stamford abutting the LCA, for example at Quarry Farm (site of the former Stamford Quarry)
- More open landscapes to the south and east of the LCA on south facing side could be attractive for solar farm development as evidenced at the limestone quarry and cement works at Ketton
- Although not currently characteristic of the *Ketton Plateau* LCA, there is also the potential for wind energy and other renewable energy developments elsewhere within the landscape.

## ***Landscape Management***

### **Landscape Management Strategy for LCA Div. *Ketton Plateau***

**The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to RESTORE areas scarred by historic and current minerals operation and the site of the former North Luffenham airfield and their significant biodiversity potential through positive restoration, woodland and grassland establishment, and to ENHANCE the intensively managed arable landscape and its low levels of natural habitat value.**

To achieve the overall management strategy, consideration should be given to the following guidelines:

- Reinforce and protect remaining treescapes and to extend native tree planting across the plateau where trees have been lost to minerals extraction, the airfield and arable farming, and the establishment and reinforcements of new and weak hedgerows, increasing hedgerow trees and reducing field size
- Seek to manage and mitigate visual intrusion of major transport infrastructure along the A1 corridor, continued major activity and change within the limestone quarry and cement works at Ketton, and possible future development / redevelopment at St George's Barracks
- Encourage the appropriate management, extension and reconnection of existing woodland, calcareous and other unimproved grasslands and pockets of marsh
- Encourage better agricultural management, for example with new hedgerow planting
- Protect the structure and unity of the landscape by considering the landscape and visual impact of all new structures and buildings, siting them away from visually prominent locations and close to existing buildings
- Protect the character of the countryside and the distinctiveness, form and pattern of Ketton and Little Casterton, and consider visual impact of any new development, particularly on the edge of Ketton, ensuring it fits well into the landscape in terms of location, materials and design. Neighbourhood Plans, landscape sensitivity studies and other documents should be followed to guide the location and the form of development
- Use new tree planting and woodland to screen new residential and agricultural development where proposed
- Protect the valued qualities of the attractive landscape to the south of Rutland Water where views across the reservoir are possible, and where marginally more intimate field pattern and enclosure by woodland, remain.

Photo 52



Photo 53



Photo 54



Photo 55



Photo 56

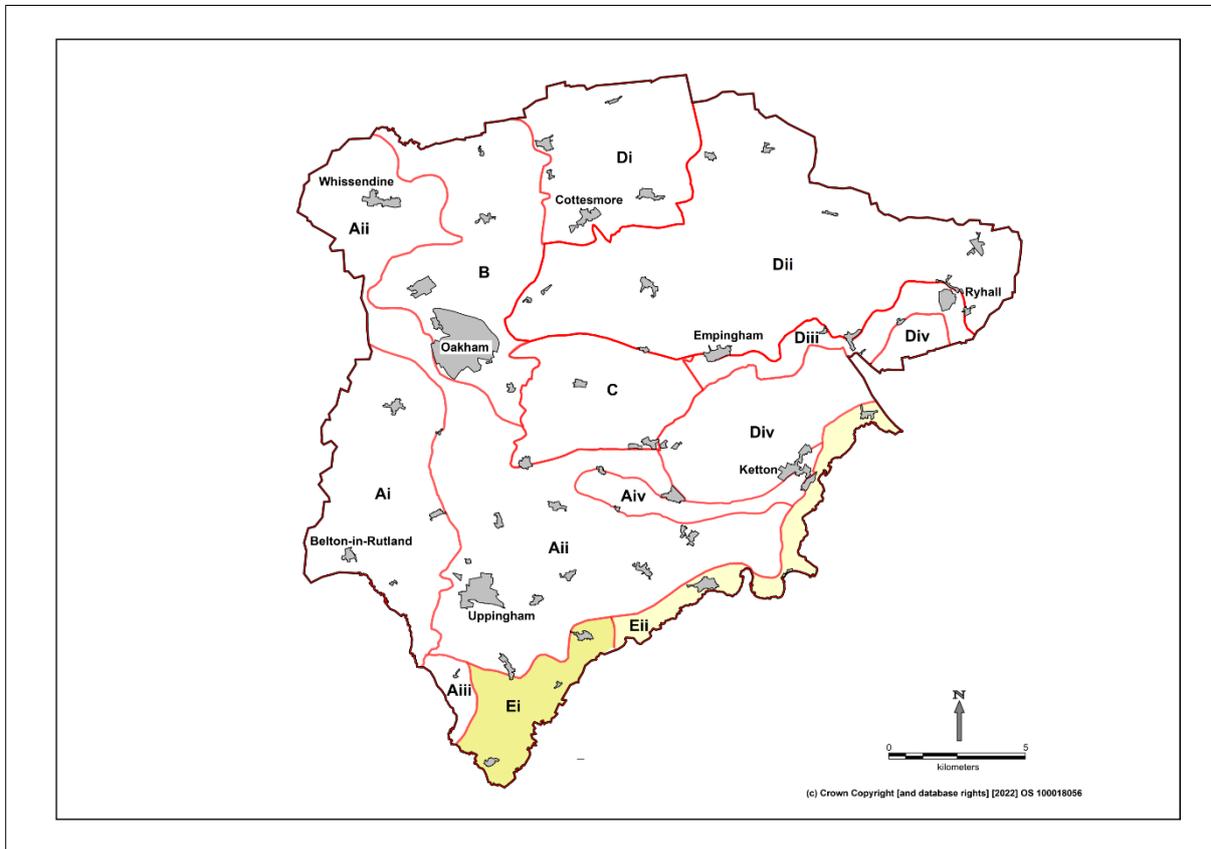


*See page 101 for photo descriptions*

**LCT D.  
Rutland Plateau**

**LCA Div. KETTON PLATEAU**

# Landscape Character Type E WELLAND VALLEY



## *Landscape Character*

The Welland Valley Landscape Character Type (LCT) forms a continuous valley landscape of varying width across the entire southern fringe of the county. It mainly overlays parts of the south-eastern edge of the High Leicestershire National Character Area No. 93, but also parts of the Northamptonshire Vales National Character Area No. 89. It also includes small fragments of the northern fringe of Rockingham Forest National Character Area No. 92. The LCT extends from the south-west of the county at Caldecott village, in a generally north-easterly direction to a short length of county boundary south of Stamford. Its southern edge is defined by the county boundary with Northamptonshire, whilst its northern side bounds the High Rutland LCT and a short length of the Rutland Plateau LCT east of Ketton. At this point the shallow valley extends into Lincolnshire at Stamford.

The Welland Valley LCT runs in a varied but gradually tapering band along the flow and direction of its principal topographic feature, the River Welland. This would ordinarily be expected to be the converse, with a broadening of the valley along its course downstream, but bedrock geology subtly reverses this on its middle course through Rutland. The river

channel sometimes defines the county's southern boundary, but not consistently so, with small parts of the county lying south of the river and conversely falling north of the river for short stretches. The northern valley slopes and crest lies wholly within Rutland but the southern valley sides lie exclusively in Northamptonshire. The river's elevation naturally lessens through the county, entering Rutland at about 52m AOD and outflowing into Lincolnshire at Stamford at around 25m AOD. The northern fringe of the LCT which broadly reflects the course of the river has a high point at 140m AOD east of Stoke Dry and falls to around 40m AOD at Tinwell, but within its length undulates considerably.

The landscape form of the LCT is therefore a medium-scaled shallow river valley with relatively extensive flat valley floor and gently rounded, gradually climbing slopes rising to the north where the transition from the river valley into High Rutland or the Rutland Plateau is often subtle and gradually transitional, such that its river valley character is defined more by its lower features than any strongly enclosing sense by the valley sides. The River Welland within the valley is frequently inconspicuous, being modest in width and flow, a perception further strengthened as it is often distanced from public vantage points. It follows a highly sinuous course with frequent pronounced bends and meanders on its north-east flow. Land outside the county in Northamptonshire which forms the southern valley side is frequently wooded across the upper valley slope, which is distinctly horizontal, and frames the wider valley when viewed from higher land to the north within Rutland.

Surface geology is of deep alluvium and gravel deposits across the flood plain which obscure any underlying bedrock geology to create the occasionally wide, but generally flat alluvial floodplain surrounded by rising landform to the adjacent landscape character types. Within the alluvium floodplain the sinuous river channel is frequently enclosed by riparian vegetation and habitat, and it is this, rather than the watercourse which presents the more obvious landscape feature. Where riparian trees and vegetation have been cleared, it is often difficult to perceive the river channel as it passes through level arable and pasture farmland. Generally, hedgerow and waterside trees are important components of the valley floor landscape with alder, willow and poplar typical species along the river's course.

There is a greater occurrence of pastoral land use across the valley floor than across its sides where arable becomes increasingly widespread. A regular pattern of medium to large fields is defined by usually low hedgerows, but sometimes overgrown or at other times incomplete and hence resulting in more expansive pasture tracts, especially to the west. The rich soils of the valley floor do however support significant sections of arable land, including on land immediately adjacent to the riverbanks. Ridge and furrow provides evidence of long term pastoral use.

There is limited block woodland cover along the linear LCT, but riparian trees and vegetation, and small shelterbelts and screening around the few farms of the valley can combine in views to appear to be continuous and significantly foreshorten some longer views when looking across the valley floor.

The floodplain itself is mostly free of significant development apart from low prominence agricultural structures and small bridges. However, the Welland Valley LCT includes several settlements on the lower valley side: within Rutland on the north side of the river,

Caldecott, Thorpe by Water, Seaton, Barrowden, Tixover, Geeston, and Tinwell are relatively significant settlements that flank the floodplains on the lower slopes and hilly valley spurs of the LCT, a pattern closely reflected on the south valley side within Northamptonshire. Seaton, in particular, occupies a locally prominent hillside site in the valley. Outside these settlements, farmsteads are infrequent with build development limited to small scale water treatments work and other small scale water infrastructure such as sluices. The major exception to this is the imposing Welland Viaduct which bisects the LCT as it sweeps the railway across the valley between Harringworth (in Northamptonshire) and Seaton. Its spectacular series of high brick-built arches provide a dramatic landscape interruption and visual focal point in the LCT as well as defining the boundary of its two component landscape character areas. Another, now disused railway runs along the whole length of this part of the valley although often with no more prominence than field side hedgerows.

Roads often define or reflect the outer edges of the floodplain at the lower break in the valley side gradient, and link the valley settlements. River crossings are infrequent and usually on routes between settlements flanking opposite sides of the valley. Bridges over the river provide views of the watercourse otherwise often difficult to access in the LCT. The sparsity of settlement river crossings and road network across the valley floor, and widespread arable land use across its valley slopes contribute to the generally peaceful character of the LCT.

The nucleated villages of the valley often display strong and highly attractive historic character and sense of place. Settlements are characterised by low density housing, simple yet attractive rows of low cottages and larger houses built from warm Collyweston limestone with brown pantile or stone slate roofs, pitched dormer windows and occasionally with more ornate detailing to bargeboards and chimneys. Villages are often characterised by small village greens and open spaces with mature treescapes, with stone walls defining boundaries, that serving to further knit continuity of materials across the settlements. Former agricultural stone barns and grander houses often punctuate the predominant cottage type housing.

### ***Physical Influences***

The medium scale, shallow valley landscape of the Welland Valley LCT is primarily underlain by rocks of the Lias Group to its west, comprising Mudstone, Sandstone, Siltstone and Limestones. To the east, and partly reflecting the division of the LCT into its two LCAs, the valley is predominantly underlain by the Inferior Oolite Group with corresponding Mudstone, Sandstone, Siltstone and Limestones. Alluvial deposits above form the wide flat floodplain bounding the meandering river channel itself. Absence of minerals working in the Welland Valley suggest deposits of sand and gravel are not significant, and the general sparsity of hydrological control infrastructure has allowed distinctive topographic features formed by dynamic natural processes to form, such as its complex meanders, that remain visible in the landscape. In places the functional flood plain of the valley is in excess of 500m width, whilst narrowing considerably in the areas around Barrowden and Tixover Grange.

As a valley LCT the landform comprises the sometimes broad, sometimes narrow flat valley floor with the gradually rising sides extending up to the Rutland Plateau and High Rutland LCTs to the north. Across the northern valley side, the landform undulates over a series of softly rounded valley spurs which separate very small stream and drainage channels in gentle localised valleys draining the higher landscape to the north into the River Welland. These gentle but frequent and irregular valleys and spurs complicate the northern valley side landform such that it is sometimes visually indistinct as a clear linear valley to the main watercourse.

The highly sinuous River Welland is the predominant surface water feature of the LCT, and there are few artificial ponds or lakes along its course, although not entirely absent. Feeder streams are often visually indistinct. The single exception is the confluence of the Welland and the River Chater south-west of Tinwell, although this is still not a prominent landscape feature. Its wide valley floor is principally in arable use although pasture is more frequent to its eastern reaches. The watercourse is often only distinguishable as a landscape feature from its bankside trees than from its often diminutive channel.

### ***Cultural Influences***

The free draining lower valley slopes and gravel terraces, close to reliable sources of water, have been a deep-historical focus for settlement and farming, as found in the series of historic villages north of the river floodplain. Consequently, the wet alluvial soils of the valley floor can contain widespread archaeological interest and offer a valuable window into ancient culture and land use that do not typically survive in drier conditions. The regular inundation of the floodplain has precluded settlement across the valley floor as well as protecting fertile soils, and land uses apart from agriculture are not historically diverse in the landscape, reflecting limited security in the flood plain. Built development in the valley floor is restricted to infrequent dwellings and farmsteads. Nucleated village form reflects their siting well above the flood plain on gentle terrain, contrasting with linear settlement form elsewhere in regional river valley landscapes, which typically extend along river flanks when valley sides are more pronounced.

Beyond these villages the character of the floodplain landscape contains fewer direct cultural influences. Field boundaries, largely in geometric patterns dating to parliamentary enclosure, divide the floodplain into medium to large fields, with the historic pattern breaking down through weak hedgerows and conversion to modern arable farming practice, and in some places, such as east of Caldecott to create wider areas of open farmland. In areas of permanent pasture, ridge and furrow and former flood meadow systems are preserved and are an important remnant of former farming practices.

Designated historic sites are sparse within the Welland Valley LCT. North of Caldecott on the widest section of the valley floor is the site of the lost Medieval Village of Snelston which is registered as a Scheduled Monument lying either side of the main A6003 Uppingham Road. It provides little visual significance in the landscape, however. Historic buildings are infrequent outside the nucleated villages and their corresponding Conservation Areas.

Manor houses are found at Tixover, Thorpe by Water and Tinwell, with 'Grange' farmsteads infrequently scattered along the valley.

The major A1 trunk road which traces the line of Ermine Street Roman Road defines and delineates the eastern boundary of the LCT on the county boundary at Stamford. Here major junction slip roads and highway lighting and signage present some of the limited transport infrastructure found across the LCT. Elsewhere and partly reflecting the significant minerals extraction heritage of the neighbouring LCTs, the Welland Viaduct is a striking example of Victorian railway engineering and provides a dramatic visual and heritage asset to the valley, contrasting with the modern engineering of the A1's landscape impact. Its 1.6km span of 82 arches and containing 30 million bricks is the longest masonry viaduct in the UK and is Grade II Listed. It is still predominately used by minerals freight trains. Other railway infrastructure including the disused railway which runs west-east through much of the Welland Valley has had moderately constraining influence on the extent of flood plain. This has been further influenced by artificial levees which has also facilitated the increased cultivation of the valley floor from historically pastoral land.

The Welland Valley landscape is not well provided with Public Rights of Way, reflecting historic flooding and the establishment of the linear highways which flank the valley floor. River crossings are generally limited to those of the highway network and therefore further direct or limit opportunity for recreational use across the valley countryside. The bridges however form important components of the cultural and built heritage of the LCT particularly at the six-arched stone Collyweston Bridge and the Turtle Bridge on the bridleway south of Morcott.

Most villages of the LCT retain a strong association with agriculture or minerals extraction, with a built legacy of good stone-built farmhouses, cottages and outbuildings, often utilising the locally sourced distinctive limestone geology. Predominant vernacular building materials across the valleys side nucleated settlements and outlying farmsteads reflect the historic extraction of Jurassic limestone and a limited range of alternative materials resulting in a distinctive uniformity of appearance. The predominant Collyweston limestone presents an attractive, warm, buff-hued buildings with brown tiled roofs across the settlements of the Welland Valley. Designated Conservation Areas (and numerous Listed Buildings) lay across Seaton Barrowden, Geeston and Tinwell reflecting their historic character and appearance. However, historic use of many settlements as working farming villages has been lost, although some retain a working farm in the village. Similar to most rural areas of England, agricultural mechanisation, amalgamation of farms into larger units and improvements in transport and personal mobility mean that the Valley's communities are generally not employed in agriculture, whilst neighbouring LCT minerals extraction are historically important for local employment.

Settlements within the Welland Valley LCT have partly retained historic nucleated form despite some limited growth, particularly in Barrowden, Geeston and Tinwell where 20<sup>th</sup> century housing estates have more markedly diluted historic settlement form. Tixover occupies a narrow point on an elevated rise immediately above the river channel and unlike other settlements of the Welland Valley displays an undiluted linear form and strong agricultural character.

## ***Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities***

The Welland Valley LCT presents a peaceful, gentle rural landscape away from its few main roads, with low-lying remnants of pastoral valley floor, sheep and cattle grazing and linear riverside vegetation being gently framed by more distant valley slopes. Land use pattern is simple and with limited variety in components, principally the rough grain of gazed pasture with mixed condition hedgerows, and the more dynamic, seasonally varied geometric arable farmland where enclosure is less consistent.

Although there are areas of productive arable farmland interspersed with farms and small villages, the landscape retains a remote character away from the settlements. Where longer distance views are possible from upper slopes of the north valley side, the absence of built development across the valley floor is notable, as is the wooded horizon to the Northamptonshire valley crest. The gently undulating landform of the north valley side where settlements such as Seaton stand above the valley floor draw the eye along the LCT, whilst the mostly sinuous riparian treescape within the floodplain provides a perceived density disproportionate to its actual extent and cover. These factors, alongside the subtle perception of the valley's enclosure combine to impart a more intimate character and human scale of the LCT. Moreover, across many vistas this intimate character can be viewed in direct contrast to the larger scale arable landscapes which extend increasingly in transition to High Rutland and the Rutland Plateau landscapes to the north.

Hedgerows and riparian trees are important textural elements and link with the limited extent of woodlands to create green networks along the river's course. Between the winding linear tree belts and the rough texture of the pastoral landscape, arable farmland can be moderately smooth, especially where hedgerows have been lost to intensification of farming practice.

The hues and textures of the Welland Valley LCT are generally simple but can be blocky, particularly where mixed arable farming occupies much of the gently undulating valley side and floodplain, contrasting with greater extent of woodlands above and beyond. At a more local scale, the changing cropping regimes and the arable landscape add textural elements and colours that change with the seasons. The autumn colours of the riparian vegetation are a particularly striking feature of the landscape.

Any expected, inherent nature conservation value of the lowland valley and river corridor is reflected by few ecological designations, limited to one SSSI (Seaton Meadows), a Nature Reserve (Lyddington Meadow) and three Local Wildlife Sites. Intensive farming, drainage and removal of hedgerows and riverside woodland, as well as related water quality issues have reduced historic ecological importance of the LCT. The River Welland and its valley landscape however remains of high potential ecological importance as a green and blue corridor and migration route. Significant potential to enhance those habitats remains but will increasingly be influenced by changing rainfall patterns and climate change impacts.

Towards the east of the LCT the visual and perceptual impact of the limestone quarry and cement works at Ketton and the A1 corridor become more prominent and erode the relative tranquillity experienced in much of the western valley area.

There is some visual variety across the Welland Valley LCT. Panoramic vistas are possible from the upper parts of the northern valley side such as from the A6003 south of Uppingham and above Seaton, particularly south and eastwards. Elsewhere, and notably along the valley floor and its parallel roads, riparian trees and hedgerows can significantly limit vistas, but longer distance views to the upper slopes of the LCT and their transition into High Rutland and the Rutland Plateau remain. It is possible therefore to experience a mixed sense of enclosure and openness traversing both across and along the Welland Valley.

Vernacular architecture, particularly where the locally sourced limestone has been used across settlements, provides some modest visual unity in the landscape. This is further enhanced by older churches, some of which have prominent towers and spires, and grange farmsteads which act as locally important landmarks and reference points in the landscape. St Luke's Church at Tixover stands completely isolated from the settlement and the road network as a free-standing historic building with squat castellated tower immediately north of the riverbank within its church yard which is also a Local Wildlife Site.

Urban fringe countryside and recreational uses, such as stabling and riding areas are wholly inconspicuous within the LCT, further emphasising the undiluted dominance of agricultural land use across the LCT and serving to afford generally attractive approaches to villages.

There are **two landscape character areas (LCAs) within LCT E. Welland Valley:**

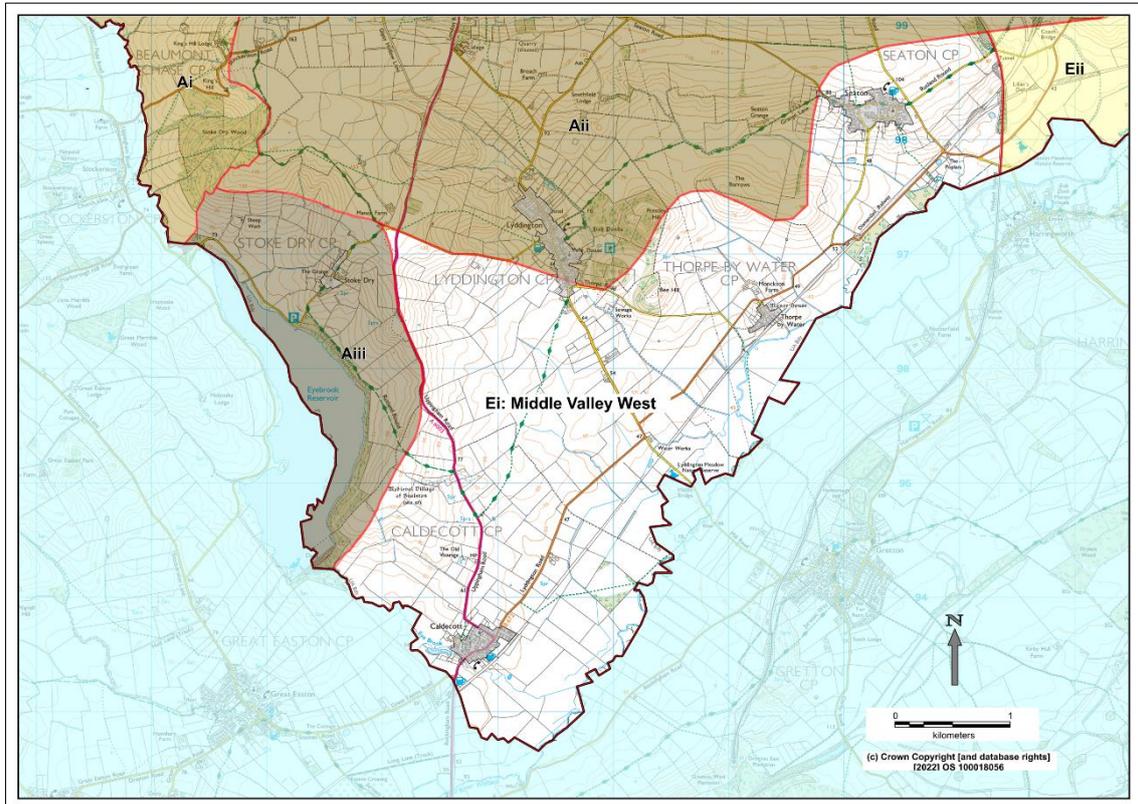
**LCA Ei. *Middle Valley West (Caldecott to Seaton)***

**LCA Eii. *Middle Valley East (Seaton to Tinwell)***

# Landscape Character Area Ei

## *MIDDLE VALLEY WEST*

### *(Caldecott to Seaton)*



### ***Location and Boundaries***

The *Middle Valley West* Landscape Character Area (LCA) occupies the south-western third of the Welland Valley LCT. Its northern boundary extends westwards from the imposing Welland Viaduct to follow the weakly-defined, undulating crest of the valley as it transitions to High Rutland landscape. Its western and south-western boundary are defined by the A6003 and the watershed to the *Eyebrook Basin* LCA. The southern boundary is then defined by the county boundary with Northamptonshire as far as the viaduct's southern end, and which for significant stretches is defined by the river's course.

### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Ei. *Middle Valley West***

- Underlying geology of Lias Group Limestone formation bedrock, with thick, rich alluvium deposits above
- Shallow valley landform with distinctive flat valley floor of the flood plain of the River Welland
- The northern fringe of the LCA broadly reflects the course of the river with a high point at 140m AOD east of Stoke Dry falling to around 76m AOD at the Welland railway, but within its length undulates considerably
- Gently rising northern valley side over rounded, indistinct spurs which separate minor tributary streams draining into the Welland
- To the west of Caldecott the river channel stands at around 45m AOD, falling gently to around 40m AOD as it passes beneath the Welland Viaduct to the east
- Around Caldecott in the west of the LCA the valley floor is almost 2km in width, with a wide gently concave, sweep of rising valley side to the water shed along the A6003 Uppingham Road
- The valley floor irregularly tapers to the eastern LCA boundary at the Welland Viaduct
- As well as the River Welland, a series of small, meandering feeder streams, inconspicuous drainage ditches and river meadows occupy the valley floor
- A predominantly medium scale landscape
- Very limited woodland cover with a few small broadleaved plantation woods, located east of Lyddington (extending into High Rutland LCT) and along or immediately south of the disused railway line south of Seaton
- Extensive riparian vegetation and trees close to the river are not continuous, but make a significant landscape contribution, exacerbated by its sinuous course such that it can appear to be much greater in depth than it is
- A simple mosaic of other land uses comprising medium scale arable fields, tree-lined hedges, though noticeably absent around Caldecott, and low-lying pasture within the valley floodplain with remnant ridge and furrow grazed by sheep and cattle, in particular between Caldecott and Thorpe by Water
- Some historic field patterns remain visible particularly immediately around the settlements, but field boundary loss or degradation has resulted in larger open space being perceived, including over pasture land at Caldecott
- A gradual but irregular transition from pasture to arable cultivation as the valley runs northeast, although pasture remains apparent on land closer to the river channel and settlement, but not exclusively so
- Arable farming is dominant across the lower slopes of the northern valley side
- Nature conservation designations include Local Wildlife Site at Lyddington Grassland for Mesotrophic grassland interest and the wet pasture Lyddington Meadow Nature Reserve

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### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Ei. *Middle Valley West***

- Modestly elevated sites to the northern fringe of the LCA provide sweeping panoramas across the valley landscape, contained to the south by the level topped and wooded valley side within Northamptonshire
- Large skies perceived from the upper slopes of the LCA but more contained, moderately enclosed perception is experienced whilst travelling along the valley floor, exacerbated in places by small woodlands belts
- Views within the valley floor are often foreshortened by the sinuous line of hedges, some with trees, and the few linear tree belts across the north-east of the LCA
- Three nucleated villages stand within the LCA above the valley floor: Caldecott, Thorpe by Water and Seaton
- Conservation Area completely overlies Seaton's attractive historic settlement
- Elsewhere the historic built environment is limited to within the settlements where numerous listed buildings are concentrated including the prominent Manor House at Thorpe by Water and the fine church of All Hallows in Seaton
- Vernacular architecture in manor houses, cottages, farms and outbuildings constructed with locally sourced limestone provides visual unity in the attractive small rural settlements
- Scheduled Monument designated at the site of the Medieval Village of Snelston, north of Caldecott, although this has very limited landscape presence
- Low density of farmsteads within the farmland of the valley floor, connected by a limited road network of minor lanes running above the flood plain on the lower valley side, parallel to the river 's general course
- The only river vehicular crossing within the LCA is Mill Bridge which takes Mill Road across a small tributary of the Welland at the County boundary
- Tranquil character across the LCA
- Limited network of Public Rights of Way, with the Rutland Road passing across the western section and a footpath within the valley floor
- The lack of footpaths and roads on the valley floor often results in the river course being distant and of low landscape prominence
- The northern parts of the Welland Viaduct and its approaches presents a massive, striking and dominant landmark which also defines the majority of the eastern boundary of the LCA and the western boundary of the *Middle Valley East* LCA
- Limited water treatment infrastructure in the valley floor is of low visual prominence
- The disused former railway line running parallel and north of the river channel is locally conspicuous only where it follows a well-treed and vegetated course
- Conspicuous pylons cross the valley floor between Lyddington and Thorpe by Water.

## ***Landscape Change***

### **Forces for Change**

- Agricultural intensification has resulting in conversion or reversion to arable farming with increased field sizes and associated loss or damage to historic landscape features including pasture, woodland, field boundaries, hedgerow trees, areas of semi-natural vegetation
- New agricultural buildings reflect the general increase in farm size, and can be visually prominent
- Development pressure for small scale housing and employment sites within or around the historic settlements
- Climate change effects on the flood plain, soil erosion, its limited historic built environment and nature conservation potential
- Although not currently characteristic of the *Middle Valley West* LCA, more elevated locations could be attractive to wind farm development, solar farms particularly on south-facing slopes, and other renewable energy developments.

## ***Landscape Management***

### **Landscape Management Strategy for LCA Ei. *Middle Valley West***

**The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to CONSERVE the remaining landscape mosaic of natural river course, small woodlands, pasture, tree-lined hedges and historic settlement, and RESTORE these where necessary to increase the LCAs landscape and wildlife value.**

To achieve the overall management strategy, consideration should be given to the following guidelines:

- Increase woodland (including wet woodland) cover and link dispersed woodlands through the planting of native trees and hedgerow restoration
- Restore the historic field pattern through the planting of new native hedges and hedgerow trees, particularly around settlements but also across the valley floor
- Encourage the appropriate management of existing woods and other valuable wildlife habitats in relation to the valley's significant wildlife corridor value
- Maintain a low-intervention approach to hydrological management so as to allow dynamic fluvial processes to shape the valley floor landscape
- Protect the structure and unity of the landscape by considering the landscape and visual impact of new structures, siting them away from visually prominent locations and close to existing buildings
- Use new tree planting and woodland to screen new residential and agricultural development
- Protect the character of the countryside and the distinctive character, form and pattern of settlements, and consider visual impact of any new development ensuring it fits well into the landscape in terms of location, materials and design
- Protect the remaining smaller scale field pattern, pasture and treescape on the periphery of settlements when siting new development.

Photo 57



Photo 58



Photo 59



Photo 60

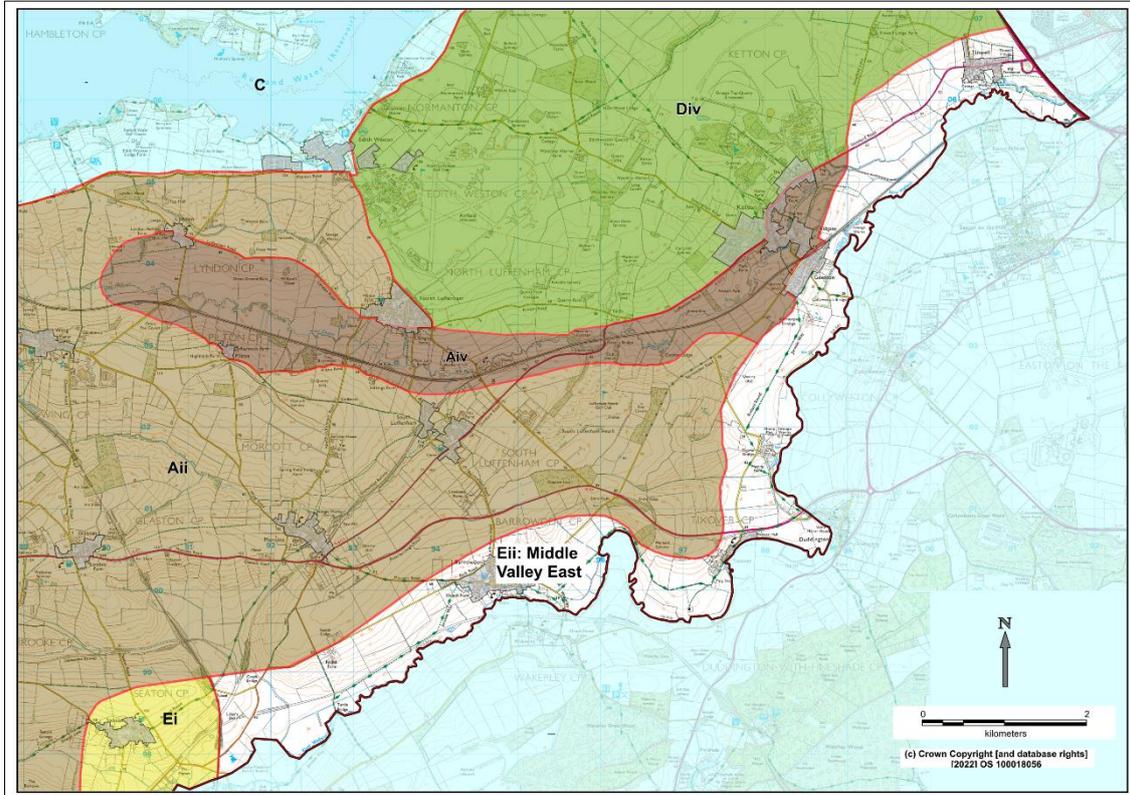


Photo 61



*See page 101 for photo descriptions*

# Landscape Character Area Eii. *MIDDLE VALLEY EAST*



## *Location and Boundaries*

The *Middle Valley East* Landscape Character Area (LCA) occupies the north-eastern two thirds of the Welland Valley LCT within Rutland. It extends north-eastwards as a highly sinuous and sometimes narrowing valley landscape. Its northern boundary snakes north and eastwards from the approaches to the imposing Welland Viaduct to follow the weakly-defined, undulating crest of the valley as it transitions to High Rutland and Rutland Plateau landscapes to its north. Its eastern boundary is defined by the A1 corridor east of Tinwell, and then returns south westerly almost entirely along the course of the river which defines the county boundary, almost to the point where it meets the mid-point of the Welland Viaduct. The southern valley side of the Welland lies entirely outside the county and the LCA. The LCA includes the settlements of Barrowden, Tixover, Geeston and Tinwell.

### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Eii. *Middle Valley East***

- Underlying geology of Inferior Oolite Group with corresponding Mudstone, Sandstone, Siltstone and Limestones bedrock, with thick, rich alluvium deposits above
- Narrowing, medium scale valley landform with distinctive flat valley floor of the flood plain of the River Welland
- The northern fringe of the LCA broadly reflects the course of the river with a high point at 85m AOD at the Viaduct northern approaches, falling to around 40m at the river channel then gently to around 20m AOD as the A1 crosses the Welland in the north-east, but within its length undulates considerably around the 50m contour
- Gently but perceptibly rising northern valley side over rounded, indistinct spurs which separate minor tributary streams draining into the River Welland
- The LCA comprises a middle section of the full Welland Valley and it irregularly narrows as it heads downstream, reflecting bedrock geology, and counter to the general character of broadening river valley topography
- The flat valley floor is markedly narrowed between steeper sides at Geeston and again at Barrowden where separation from the south valley side settlement of Wakerley is less than 170m
- Apart from the river there is a general absence of surface water features with the exception of small feeder streams and inconspicuous drainage ditches, increasingly noticeable to the north-east
- Very limited woodland cover generally, but more frequent than in the *Middle Valley West* LCA, with dispersed, irregular small broadleaved plantation woods, more frequent to the west of the LCA
- Some structural planting is found in proximity to the A1 corridor and around the dispersed, small scale water treatment works in the valley floor
- Extensive riparian vegetation and trees along the course of the river are extensive but not continuous, but make a significant landscape contribution, exacerbated by its sinuous course such that it can appear to be much greater in depth than it actually is
- A simple mosaic of other land uses comprising medium scale geometric arable fields, tree-lined hedges and less extensive, dispersed pasture within the valley floodplain and on the periphery of settlements
- Some historic field patterns remain visible, particularly around Barrowden and Tinwell, but field boundary loss or degradation has generally resulted in larger open spaces being perceived
- Simple patchwork pattern with hawthorn hedgerows, often incomplete or degraded, particularly in the east of the LCA where some fields are delineated by straight drainage ditches with little evidence of hedges

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### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Eii. *Middle Valley East***

- Arable farming is dominant across the lower slopes of the northern valley side outside the immediate environs of settlements
- Modestly elevated sites to the northern fringe of the LCA provide sweeping panoramas across the valley landscape, contained to the south by the level topped and wooded valley side within Northamptonshire. Vistas tend to be more limited to the south than across the *Middle Valley West* LCA
- In many vistas across the valley the river course is a minor visual feature
- The shallow valley topography and limited tree cover allows for large skies to be perceived from the upper slopes of the LCA and increasingly towards the northeast of the LCA
- Away from the settlements there is limited sense of enclosure whilst travelling along the valley floor, although enclosure is markedly increased on well-treed approaches to the main villages, particularly Geeston and Barrowden
- Views within the valley floor can be foreshortened by the sinuous line of thick riparian hedges and trees and the few linear tree belts, but this gradually diminishes across the northeast of the LCA where arable land use is most concentrated
- As a river corridor there is a significant scarcity of nature conservation designations, with a single SSSI at Seaton Meadows (Mesotrophic grassland) and the diminutive Local Wildlife Sites at Tixover Churchyard and Barrowden Grassland
- Three nucleated villages stand within the LCA: Barrowden, Geeston and Tinwell
- Tixover contrasts with a retained linear form
- Conservation Areas completely overlay Barrowden and Tinwell's well conserved built environments, and Geeston is included within the Ketton Conservation Area
- The historic fringe of Geeston has been significantly diluted by relatively large expansion of mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> Century suburban housing
- The historic built environment is generally limited to within the settlements where numerous listed buildings are concentrated including the attractive Crown Public House and Manor House in Tinwell, and St. Peter's Church at Barrowden with its striking and elegant stone spire; Turtle Bridge, Wakerley Road bridge and Collyweston Bridge provide features of interest in the landscape
- Vernacular architecture within the settlements include manor houses, cottages, farms and outbuildings, mainly constructed with locally sourced limestone which provides visual unity in the attractive rural settlements
- Low density of farmsteads and Granges on the arable farmland of the valley floor
- A limited road network, primarily a short section of the A6121 as it passes west to east through Tinwell, and a short section of the A47 passing to the north of Tixover, whilst minor lanes connecting the valley's settlements are limited in extent as they cross the narrow LCA to bridge the river and of limited landscape impact

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### **Landscape Characteristics of LCA Eii. *Middle Valley East***

- Relatively limited network of Public Rights of Way, with the Rutland Round/Jurassic Way running most of its sinuous length, but with infrequent connecting routes
- The northern parts of the Welland Viaduct and its approaches presents a massive, striking and dominant landmark which also defines the majority of the western boundary of the LCA
- Less perceived tranquil character to the east of the LCA due to the movement and noise from the active railway connecting Oakham to Stamford, the Ketton Works minerals freight spur that connects to the passenger line west of Tinwell, and the A1 corridor along the eastern LCA boundary separating Rutland from Stamford.

### ***Landscape Change***

#### **Forces for Change**

- Agricultural intensification and drainage resulting in conversion or reversion to arable farming with increased field sizes and associated loss or damage to historic landscape features including pasture, woodland, field boundaries, hedgerow trees, areas of semi-natural vegetation
- New agricultural buildings reflect the general increase in farm size, and can be visually prominent
- Development pressure for small scale housing and employment sites within or around the historic settlements
- Climate change effects in relation to the flood plain and inundation, soil erosion, its limited historic built environment and nature conservation potential
- Intensification of use at the limestone quarry and cement works at Ketton where activity can be seen and experienced from within the adjoining LCA
- Improvements to the A1 trunk road
- Potential solar farm suitability in more open areas to the east.

## ***Landscape Management***

### **Landscape Management Strategy for LCA Eii. *Middle Valley East***

**The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to CONSERVE the remaining landscape mosaic of natural river course, small woodlands, pasture, tree-lined hedges and historic settlement, and RESTORE these where necessary to increase the LCAs landscape and wildlife value.**

To achieve the overall management strategy, consideration should be given to the following guidelines:

- Increase wet woodland cover and link dispersed woodlands through the planting of native trees and hedgerow restoration, reflecting more extensive treescapes to the south of the river
- Restore the historic field pattern through the planting of new native hedges and hedgerow trees, particularly around settlements but also across the valley floor
- Encourage the appropriate management of existing woods and other valuable wildlife habitats in relation to the valley's significant wildlife corridor's under representation of ecological sites
- Maintain a low-intervention approach to hydrological management so as to allow dynamic fluvial processes to shape the valley floor landscape
- Protect the structure and unity of the landscape by considering the visual impact of new structures, siting them away from visually prominent locations and close to existing buildings
- Use new tree planting and woodland to screen new residential and agricultural development
- Protect the character of the countryside and the distinctive character, form and pattern of settlements, and consider visual impact of any new development ensuring it fits well into the landscape in terms of location, materials and design. Neighbourhood Plans, landscape sensitivity studies and other documents should be followed to guide the location and the form of development
- Protect the structure and unity of the landscape and its character from future development at the limestone quarry and cement works at Ketton in the neighbouring LCA
- Protect the remnant smaller scale field pattern, pasture and treescape on the periphery of settlements when siting new development.

Photo 62



Photo 63



Photo 64



Photo 65



Photo 66



Photo 67



Photo 68



Photo 69



See page 101 for photo descriptions

### 3. PHOTOGRAPH DESCRIPTIONS

<b>LCA Ai. Leighfield Forest</b> (page 15)	
Photo 1	<i>New woodland planting off Brooke Road, between Brooke and Ridlington.</i>
Photo 2	<i>Agricultural buildings can be visually prominent on exposed ridges, as here south of Brooke.</i>
Photo 3	<i>Characteristic road sign at a minor road junction south of Brooke.</i>
Photo 4	<i>Near the southern end of the LCA between Wardley Wood and Stoke Dry Wood, where ancient woodland in the former Royal forest straddles the borders of Rutland and Leicestershire.</i>
Photo 5	<i>Distinctive, steeply rolling landform with high narrow ridges and relatively steep sloping valleys, with hedges and hedgerow trees obscuring long distance views and creating enclosure, as here north of Ayston.</i>
<b>LCA Aii. Undulating Mixed Farmlands</b> (page 21)	
Photo 6	<i>Broad rolling ridges, steep sided river valleys within a medium scale, well-treed, mixed agricultural landscape, as here near the A6003 south of Manton.</i>
Photo 7	<i>Large solar farm to the east of Uppingham.</i>
Photo 8	<i>In the northern area of the LCA around Whissendine, the landform is more rounded, lower and undulating, with shallower valleys.</i>
Photo 9	<i>Pastural land use on lower, rounded undulating hills to the west of Barleythorpe.</i>
Photo 10	<i>A strong agricultural and historic character is retained despite mobile phone masts on elevated ground and increased equestrian uses with a range of distinctive buildings and other features, as here between Brooke and Oakham, with ridge and furrow within the foreground meadow.</i>
<b>LCA Aiii. Eyebrook Basin</b> (page 25)	
Photo 11	<i>A simple unified landscape of flat reservoir and gently sloping valley sides, seen here from the A6003.</i>
Photo 12	<i>The mosaic of habitats includes Stoke Dry Wood, a semi-natural Ancient Woodland on the northern edge of the LCA, geometric low cut hedgerows with few trees, marshland and mudflats.</i>
Photo 13	<i>Stoke Dry is the only village in the LCA; a small, quiet village located half way up the eastern side with views over the reservoir, and built in the local vernacular from locally sourced ironstone.</i>
Photo 14	<i>Mixed broadleaf and coniferous plantations along the eastern shore, gentle landform and limited views create an intimate and enclosed landscape with a sense of visual containment.</i>
Photo 15	<i>Tranquil, remote character largely due to the landform, unsettled nature, secluded location and limited access, away from any significant intrusion.</i>
<b>LCA Aiv. Chater Valley</b> (page 29)	
Photo 16	<i>The River Chater runs in a narrow, sheltered, intimate valley, although the water itself is seldom conspicuous, here off the minor road between North Luffenham and South Luffenham.</i>

Photo 17	<i>An intimate valley in many areas, largely due to the high level of woodland cover, with roadside and railway-side tree belts, copses, mature individual trees, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, as here between Lyndon and Pilton.</i>
Photo 18	<i>Predominantly unsettled landscape with few buildings, although close to village edges such as Pilton seen here from the minor road south of Lyndon.</i>
Photo 19	<i>Disused windmill is a feature in the landscape to the east of South Luffenham, where the well vegetated railway cutting slopes (alongside the track-side works seen here) reduces visual impact of the transport corridor.</i>
Photo 20	<i>Predominantly semi-improved and improved grassland within a patchwork of field sizes and patterns, with river meadows and riparian habitats providing interest and wildlife value, and more geometric arable fields on the gently valley slopes beyond the valley floor.</i>
<b>LCT B: Vale of Catmose</b> (page 39)	
Photo 21	<i>A broad, shallow, flat bottomed, elongated basin with a strong rural character and mixed agricultural land use, retaining a sense of rural tranquillity and visual unity, and distinct rise to the rolling hills of the High Rutland LCT, seen here from the minor road between Cottesmore and Ashwell.</i>
Photo 22	<i>Trees suffering from Ash Dieback disease, here south of Ashwell.</i>
Photo 23	<i>Some sections of the disused canal retain water and are accessible along the towpath, here west of the Oakham Enterprise Park (former Ashwell Prison).</i>
Photo 24	<i>Significant growth of the principal county market town of Oakham has occurred to the north and east, extending the urban fringe but generally well-integrated into the landscape, seen here from the minor road to the west of Barleythorpe.</i>
Photo 25	<i>The principal county market town of Oakham lies within the Vale of Catmose which is defined to the west by distinct rise to the rolling hills of High Rutland, seen here from the steep scarp slope of the Clay Woodlands LCA at Burley on the Rutland Plateau to the west, creating a strong sense of place.</i>
<b>LCT C: Rutland Water Basin</b> (page 50)	
Photo 26	<i>Internationally, nationally and locally important for nature conservation, the Nature Reserve covers the entire western side of the reservoir with an extensive mosaic of semi-natural habitats away from the more active pursuits. The Hambleton peninsula helps provide a sense of tranquillity.</i>
Photo 27	<i>Rutland Water is a major focus for recreation, tourist and sporting pursuits providing extensive opportunities for visitor access and enjoyment of the countryside.</i>
Photo 28	<i>Rutland Sailing Club occupies the small recreation area at Gibbet Lane to the west of Edith Weston, seen here from across the reservoir on Hambleton peninsula.</i>
Photo 29	<i>Settlement pattern is sparse, with a small number of regularly spaced villages softened by vegetation cover, and where church spires protruding above the roof and tree tops, seen here at Edith Weston, are important features in the landscape around the reservoir.</i>
Photo 30	<i>Unique appreciation of historical time-depth with juxtaposition of Rutland Water and remnants of the flooded Gwash valley; here the former Church of St. Matthew (Normanton Church) now appears to stand in the water.</i>
<b>LCA Di. Cottesmore Plateau</b> (page 63)	

Photo 31	<i>Large army defence buildings and infrastructure at Kendrew Barracks are prominent within the extensively open, flat, medium to large scale plateau landscape, seen here from Thistleton Road east of Market Overton.</i>
Photo 32	<i>Increased agricultural diversification such as chicken sheds, with new planting helping to assimilate them into the landscape. The spire of St Mary's Church, Greetham, is a prominent feature in the flat landscape.</i>
Photo 33	<i>Quarrying at Thistleton is intrusive amongst the flat, open arable fields around the barracks, seen here from Thistleton Road to the east of Market Overton.</i>
Photo 34	<i>Modern Kendrew Barracks army dwellings seen here from Greetham Road between Cottesmore and Greetham, contrasting in form, layout and design to the historic villages within the LCA.</i>
Photo 35	<i>The spire of St Nicolas' Church, Cottesmore, is a prominent feature in the flat landscape, seen here from the west looking across semi-improved pasture found on the periphery of the village.</i>
<b>LCA Dii. Clay Woodlands</b> (page 69)	
Photo 36	<i>A limited road network of often straight, narrow lanes with verges of varying widths and generally well-maintained hedgerows, within a landscape with an extensive mosaic of woodland blocks and interlinking tree belts, seen here along Exton Road.</i>
Photo 37	<i>Evidence of decline in field boundary stone walls, here between Pickworth and Great Casterton.</i>
Photo 38	<i>New agricultural buildings reflect the general increase in farm size and can be visually prominent, as here between Pickworth and Great Casterton.</i>
Photo 39	<i>Village Green within the historic Conservation Area at Exton.</i>
Photo 40	<i>Cattle grazing on semi-improved pasture between Pickworth and Great Casterton.</i>
Photo 41	<i>Burley-on-the-Hill historic designed parkland landscape, with Burley House standing prominently on the crest of the western scarp of the Rutland Plateau with imposing views over Rutland Water.</i>
Photo 42	<i>Views are often foreshortened by extensive mosaic of woodland blocks and interlinking tree belts and hedgerow trees across LCA, as here around Rutland County Golf Club.</i>
Photo 43	<i>Area of rolling ridges and deep valleys in the north around Stretton and Clipsham.</i>
<b>LCA Diii. Gwash Valley</b> (page 75)	
Photo 44	<i>Shallow river valley sides fall gradually in gently convex profile to a sinuous narrow river channel where the water itself is often inconspicuous, as seen here from Ryhall Road to the west of Ryhall.</i>
Photo 45	<i>The River Gwash at Empingham from Church Bridge on the A606.</i>
Photo 46	<i>Wide shallow river valley landform of flat arable fields within the floodplain south of Ryhall.</i>
Photo 47	<i>The River Gwash through the centre of Ryhall.</i>
Photo 48	<i>Shallow river valley sides and narrow river channel which itself is often inconspicuous, as seen here between Great Casterton and the A1.</i>

Photo 49	<i>Predominantly medium to large scale landscape with simple land use pattern with large arable fields and sinuous tree belts along the riverbank, west of Little Casterton.</i>
Photo 50	<i>The River Gwash south of Ryhall from the Belmesthorpe Road bridge.</i>
Photo 51	<i>Predominantly medium to large scale landscape with simple land use pattern with large arable fields flanking the river channel, and generally free of larger woodlands, here from Newstead Road on the County boundary between Ryhall and Stamford.</i>
<b>LCA Div. Ketton Plateau (page 81)</b>	
Photo 52	<i>The large limestone quarry and cement works at Ketton is visible from well beyond the LCA, here seen from north of Empingham on the Cottesmore Plateau LCA.</i>
Photo 53	<i>Less well managed agricultural landscape to the south, with gappy and absent hedges, whilst belt of trees to the extensive perimeter of the limestone quarry and cement works at Ketton limit views into the works and void.</i>
Photo 54	<i>Features in the landscape include a disused windmill off Empingham Road, contrasting with the modern limestone quarry and cement works at Ketton.</i>
Photo 55	<i>Extensive views are available from higher parts of the plateau to distant landscapes beyond the County boundary, here from Empingham Road looking into Northamptonshire.</i>
Photo 56	<i>The large limestone quarry and cement works at Ketton characterises an extensive proportion of the LCA with open quarrying, settling lagoons, major plant and conveyor infrastructure, processing buildings, offices, internal roads and landscaping and a sizeable solar farm, here seen from Steadfold Lane.</i>
<b>LCA Ei. Middle Welland Valley West (Caldecott to Seaton) (page 94)</b>	
Photo 57	<i>The Welland Viaduct forms a massive, striking and dominant landmark over the river meadows, and defines the majority of the eastern boundary of the LCA.</i>
Photo 58	<i>Mill Road bridges over a tributary of the River Welland at Middle Bridge on the County boundary, and passes through river meadows alongside the dismantled railway.</i>
Photo 59	<i>Ridge and furrow grazed by cattle between Caldecott and Thorpe by Water.</i>
Photo 60	<i>Simple mosaic of land uses including tree-lined hedges and low-lying pasture within the valley floodplain, seen here looking back from Rockingham Road (in Northamptonshire) east of Caldecott, showing the elevated sweeping northern valley fringe to the LCA.</i>
Photo 61	<i>The Welland Viaduct defines the majority of the eastern boundary of the LCA and the western boundary of the Middle Valley East LCA. The southern slopes of the Welland Valley lie within Northamptonshire and are an important component of the character of the river valley.</i>
<b>LCA Eii. Middle Welland Valley East (Seaton to Tinwell) (page 100)</b>	
Photo 62	<i>The gently rising northern valley side transitions to the High Rutland landscape to the west of Barrowden.</i>
Photo 63	<i>Limited network of Public Rights of Way, here following the dismantled railway through the distinctive flat valley floor to the west of Barrowden.</i>
Photo 64	<i>In many vistas across the valley, the river course is a minor visual feature.</i>

Photo 65	<i>The nucleated historic village of Barrowden lies on the northern valley side, where the striking elegant spire of St. Peter's Church is a feature in the landscape.</i>
Photo 66	<i>The linear farming village of Tixover lies on the river side.</i>
Photo 67	<i>Ketton Road links Ketton and Collyweston via an arched stone bridge over the river (with a similar bridge between Barrowden and Wakerley).</i>
Photo 68	<i>Simple mosaic and patchwork pattern of medium scale arable and pasture fields and occasionally tree-lined hedges, with a limited sense of enclosure, seen here from Ketton Road on the edge of Collyweston (Northamptonshire) looking west over the valley.</i>
Photo 69	<i>Limited woodland cover allows views to a weakly defined crest as the valley transitions to the High Rutland landscape, seen here from Wakerley Road between Wakerley and Harringworth (Northamptonshire) looking north over the valley.</i>