

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment of SHELAA sites

Blaby District Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

May 2025



Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1	Draft.	H Simeonov J Ashton Davies J Akerman V Kakar	H Simeonov M Grant	M Grant	11.10.2024
2	Final draft.	H Simeonov V Kakar	H Simeonov M Grant	M Grant	27.02.2025
3	Report updated with additional sites.	H Simeonov	M Grant	M Grant	29.04.2025
4	Final report issue.	H Simeonov	M Grant	Katrina Davies	13.05.2025
5	Minor text edits. Alternative text to tables added. Final report issue.	H Simeonov	M Grant	Katrina Davies	21.05.2025



Land Use Consultants Limited

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Chapter 1

Introduction and context

Introduction

1.1 Blaby District is in the process of reviewing its Local Plan which will guide development across the district until 2041 and will need to accommodate a significant amount of new housing and employment growth. As part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, the Council needs to consider whether the landscape of the district has the capacity to accommodate new development without causing significant adverse effects on its character.

1.2 LUC was commissioned by Blaby Council in 2024 to provide a landscape sensitivity assessment (herein referred to as the 'study') to provide part of the evidence base to inform the preparation of its new Local Plan. This document builds upon results obtained in the Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment prepared in January 2020. The purpose of the study is to provide a robust and up-to-date evidence base and assessment to inform the appropriate scale, form and location of future development to minimise harm to the landscape and setting of settlements. By assessing and mapping the relative sensitivity of different landscapes, the study will provide a tool for informing landscape change.

Policy Context

The European Landscape Convention

1.3 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) of the Council of Europe came into force in the UK in March 2007. It establishes the need to recognise landscape in law; to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of landscapes; and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies. The ELC definition of 'landscape' recognises that all landscapes matter, be they ordinary, degraded or outstanding:

'Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.'

National

1.4 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024 and contains several policies which refer to the consideration of landscape and the built environment in planning decisions.

1.5 Under Strategic Policies, Paragraph 20 states that:

'Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for: ...d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.'

1.6 Within Section 15, in relation to conserving and enhancing the natural environment, Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states:

'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;...'

1.7 Paragraph 188 of the NPPF goes on to state:

'Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.'

1.8 Under the section considering ground conditions and pollution, Paragraph 196 recognises the need to:

"...ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should...

...b) Identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and

c) Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.'

Planning Practice Guidance

1.9 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) indicates that: 'to help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can be completed'. Given the potential level of development proposed in the emerging Local Plan, it was considered necessary to assess the sensitivity of the landscape around settlements and in strategic sites to development.

Local Planning

1.10 Blaby District Council adopted The Local Plan (Core Strategy) in February 2013. The plan sets out the core visions, policies and objectives for delivering sustainable development within the district up to 2029, and sits together with the Local Plan (Delivery) Development Plan Document (adopted February 2019).

1.11 Blaby District is included within the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan which sets out the spatial vision for the City and County to 2050. The final version of the Plan was approved in December 2018. The Strategic Growth Plan sets out the agreed Growth Strategy across Leicester and Leicestershire to 2050 and will be delivered through the Local Plan mechanism.

1.12 Blaby District is in the process of reviewing its Local Plan which will guide development across the district until 2041.

Neighbourhood Planning

1.13 As of February 2024, six designated Neighbourhood Areas are within the Blaby District. Blaby District has made (adopted) five of the six Neighbourhood Areas individual Neighbourhood Plans within the wider context of the Blaby District Development Plan.

1.14 A number of these plans have specific policies on landscape, or other policies, such as design or green infrastructure, which make reference to landscape and the potential impact of development on these areas.

Landscape Context

1.15 England is divided into a total of 159 National Character Areas (NCA), which identify areas based on their landscape character, biodiversity and geodiversity. Blaby district falls within two NCAs:

- NCA 73: Charnwood
- NCA 94: Leicestershire Vales

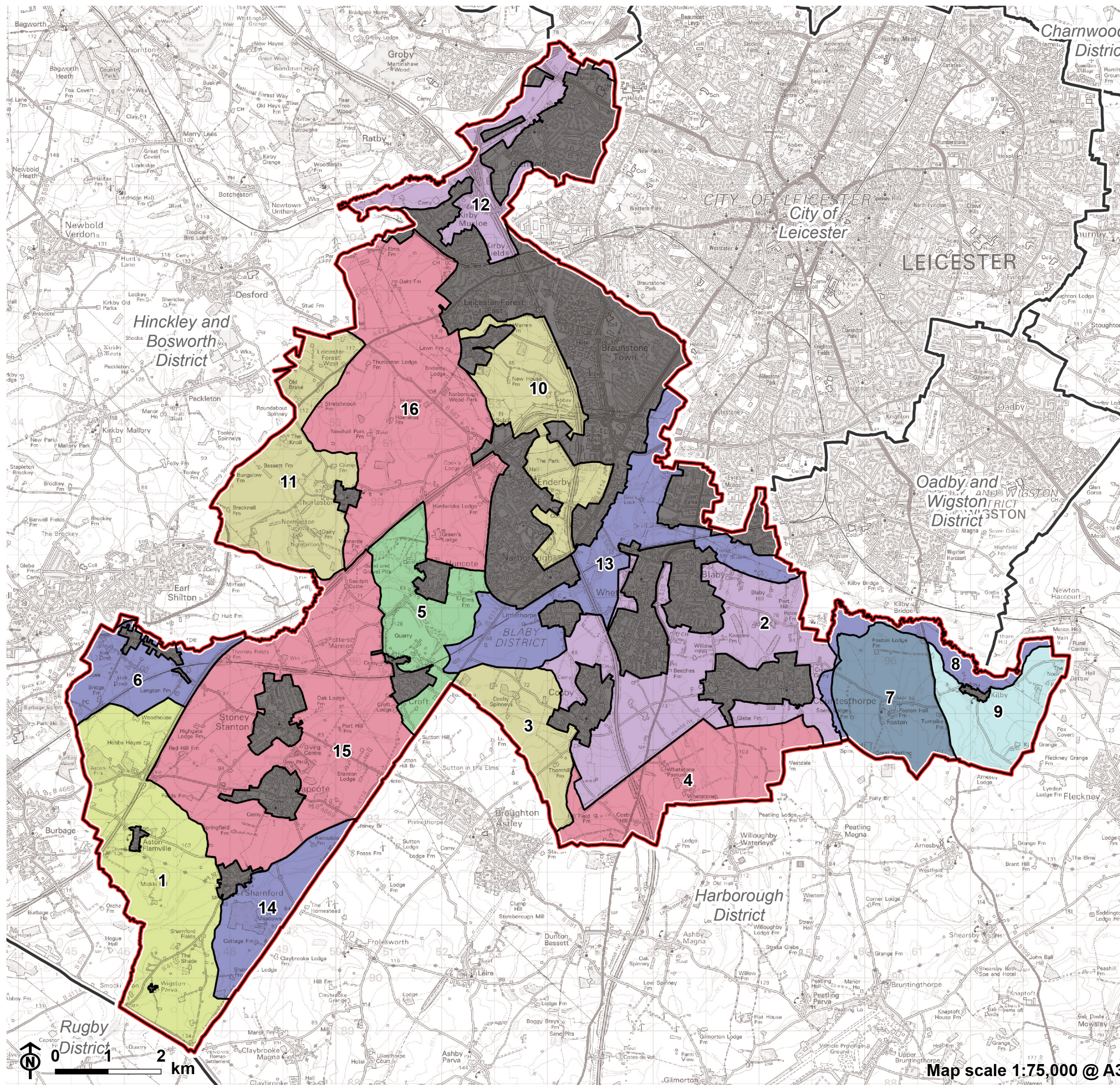
1.16 The majority of the district is within the Leicestershire Vales NCA, with a small part in the north of the district located within the Charnwood NCA. Major roads and

Chapter 1 Introduction and context

development characterise the part of the district within the Charnwood NCA and consequently are not typical of the rest of the NCA (located within adjacent local authority areas).

1.17 The Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment, adopted in January 2020, identifies 8 Landscape Character Types and 16 individual Landscape Character Areas, which form part of the primary evidence base for this Landscape Sensitivity Assessment. Figure 1 illustrates the Blaby landscape character framework.

Figure 1: Landscape Character Areas



- Blaby District Council
 - Neighbouring local authority
 - Settlement
- Landscape Character Types**
- Agricultural Parkland
 - Floodplain
 - Gently Rolling Farmland
 - Open Farmland
 - Quarrying and Farmed Land
 - Rural Rolling Farmland
 - Urban Fringe
 - Wooded Farmland
- Landscape Character Assessment**
- 1 - Aston Flamville Wooded Farmland
 - 2 - Blaby, Countesthorpe and Whetstone Fringe
 - 3 - Cosby Agricultural Parkland
 - 4 - Cosby and Whetstone Rolling Farmland
 - 5 - Croft Hill and Quarries
 - 6 - Elmesthorpe Floodplain
 - 7 - Foston Open Farmland
 - 8 - Kilby Meadows
 - 9 - Kilby Rural Rolling Farmland
 - 10 - Lubbesthorpe Agricultural Parkland
 - 11 - Normanton Agricultural Parkland
 - 12 - Rothley Brook Fringe
 - 13 - Sense and Soar Floodplain
 - 14 - Soar Meadows
 - 15 - Stoney Stanton Rolling Farmland
 - 16 - Thurlaston Rolling Farmland

Limitations of the Study

1.18 This study provides an assessment of the relative landscape sensitivities of the different assessment parcels to residential and employment development, without knowing the exact location, layout, design or mitigation proposed. It therefore should not be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of a certain location for a particular development. It is not a replacement for detailed studies for specific siting and design, and all developments will need to be assessed on their individual merits.

1.19 The study is based on an assessment of landscape character using carefully defined criteria. Landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interplay of often unequally weighted variables (or 'criteria'). We have sought to address this issue in our summary of overall landscape sensitivity given for each assessment parcel, which considers how the criteria-based assessments combine to provide an overall sensitivity result for the different development types under consideration. The assessments are based on professional judgement, taking account of the interplay between criteria, as well as those which might be more important to the landscape character of the assessment parcel.

1.20 It is also worth noting that the LSA considers the following:

- The natural character of the landscape but not specific ecological issues in relation to species or habitats;
- The historic and cultural character of the landscape but not specific cultural heritage/archaeological issues associated with individual designated heritage assets and their settings; and
- The visual character of the landscape, but not visual amenity issues associated with specific receptors, such as the overall quality, experience and nature of public views from specific locations, such as promoted viewpoints, or of private views and outlook available to occupants of residential properties.

1.21 These are all issues that will need to be taken into account in site selection and impacts will need to be reported at the time when individual proposals are put forward - as such they will be addressed through planning applications and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process including more detailed landscape and visual impact assessments and appraisals (LVIA).

1.22 This report concentrates on understanding the sensitivities to development and does not address capacity. Capacity is a further stage of assessment that requires consideration of cumulative development, landscape objectives, and thresholds of acceptable change to identify the likely quantum of change that can be accommodated.

1.23 Finally, the report remains a strategic study and is based on the assessment of broad settlement edge assessment parcels and strategic sites. There may be spatial variations in character within any one assessment parcel, and these are described in the text. Individual site-level investigations will likely indicate further differences and variations at the site scale. This study was undertaken at 1:25,000 scale and involved desk study and field work from roads, public rights of way and other public vantage points.

1.24 The following sites were not accessible during fieldwork: SAP035, LIT009 and LIT008. Each of the following sites was surveyed, but views were limited due to boundary vegetation: EBLA002, EBLA003, EBLA004, BLA038, SHA009 and EWHE001.

Structure of the Report

1.25 The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 sets out the methodology of the LSA.
- Chapter 3 sets out the overall landscape sensitivity results for the parcels.
- Chapter 4 sets out general development management guidance.
- Appendix A contains the detailed proformas for the parcels.
- Appendix B contains information sources.

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1 This chapter summarises the method that was used to undertake the landscape sensitivity assessment, including the key sources of evidence used, the scales of development considered, and the assessment criteria and process followed.

2.2 The LSA was undertaken in accordance with the principles in Natural England's 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment - to inform spatial planning and land management' (June 2019). The methodology draws on LUC's previous extensive experience in landscape sensitivity studies and reflects the requirements of the project brief and discussion at the Inception Meeting held on 10th April 2024.

Development scenarios

2.3 The study addresses the following types of development. Scenarios were agreed with the Blaby District Council as representative of typical development types coming forward in the district.

Residential development

2.4 Housing developments with a net density range of approximately 30 to 40 dwellings per hectare, plus supporting community infrastructure. Dwellings are typically 2–3 storeys with gardens.

Employment development

2.5 Light commercial/industrial development (B1/B2 uses). These are defined as small-scale office, light industry or small sheds. Structures are typically 2-4 storeys high, with associated car parking and landscaping including trees, grass and areas of planting.

2.6 Warehouse development (B8 uses). Large block-shaped warehouse-type buildings, generally two to four storeys (approximately 5 to 15 metres) high. These comprise the typical regular grid-like layouts of a business park, with associated road

infrastructure and car parking. Limited landscaping usually comprises grass verges and occasional tree planting.

Spatial framework

2.7 The LSA assesses sites identified through the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). This includes a defined list of individual SHELAA sites and strategic sites, within Blaby district:

- 2 x strategic sites
- 21 x large sites (extended Principal Urban Area (PUA))
- 14 x large village sites
- 10 x small village sites
- 7 x employment sites

2.8 These sites have been grouped geographically where possible to form larger assessment parcels for the purpose of the study. The full list of sites is set out below and ordered alphabetically by site type. These are mapped in Figure 2 and Figure 3 below.

Table 2.1: Strategic sites considered within LSA

Site reference	Development type
STO026 and SAP013	Residential and employment development
WHE027 and COS010	Residential and employment development

Table 2.2: Large sites (extended PUA) considered within LSA

Site reference	Development type
BLA030/ BLA032/ BLA033 / BLA038/ EBLA002/ EBLA003/ EBLA004	Residential and employment development
BLA031, BLA034, BLA039 and BLA040	Residential and employment development
COU037	Residential development

Site reference	Development type
COU038 / COU022 / COU050	Residential development
COU045	Residential development
COU042/COU047/COU051/COU052	Residential and employment development
COU49	Residential development
ELM008	Residential and employment development
END022	Residential and employment development
END024/ NAR018 and NAR020	Residential and employment development
GLE030	Residential development
GLE031	Residential and employment development
GLE032	Residential and employment development
GPA025 /GPA026	Residential development
KMU009	Residential development
KMU025	Residential development
KMU026	Residential development
LFE019 and LFE020	Residential development
NAR022, NAR016, NAR002 and ENDO028	Residential and employment development
WHE026 and EWHE031	Residential and employment development
WHE032	Residential development

Table 2.3: Large village sites considered within LSA

Site reference	Development type
COS009	Residential development
COS012 / COS014 and COS015	Residential development
COS013	Residential development
CRO006/ CRO009	Residential development
HUN013	Residential development
HUN019, HUN017, HUN016 and HUN021	Residential development
LIT022	Residential development
LIT023	Residential development
LUB002	Residential development
SAP035 (including SAP025 and SAP019)	Residential development
SAP024, SAP029 and SAP034	Residential development
STO009	Residential development
STO023	Residential development
STO024 and STO025	Residential development

Table 2.4: Small village sites considered within LSA

Site reference	Development type
ELM010	Residential and employment development
ELM011	Residential development
KIL002 and KIL008	Residential development
KIL006	Residential development
LIT008, LIT009 and LIT024	Residential development
SHA008 and SHA009	Residential development

Site reference	Development type
SHA010	Residential development
THU004 and THU005	Residential development
THU008	Residential development
THU009	Residential development

Table 2.5: Employment sites considered within LSA

Site reference	Development type
EAST001	Employment development
EBLA002 / EBLA003, EBLA004 and BLA038	Employment development
EELM001	Employment development
ELUB002	Employment development
ESHA001	Employment development
ETHU001	Residential and employment development
EWHE001	Employment development

2.9 No buffers were applied to individual sites or parcels.

2.10 There are a number of sites that overlap adjoining local authority areas. Where this is the case, the sites have been assessed as a whole and a note has been recorded where elements within the parcel are either within or outside Blaby District.

2.11 The assessment is made on the existing landscape baseline, however, where relevant, it is noted where any planned strategic developments (e.g. NSIPs and significant local plan allocations and planning applications), are located and likely impacts on the surrounding landscape and visual character. These do not affect the overall assessment scores.

Development of Sensitivity Criteria

Assessing landscape sensitivity

2.12 The LSA uses carefully defined criteria to assess landscape sensitivity. Criteria selection is based on the attributes of the landscape most likely to be affected by residential and employment development and considers both landscape and visual aspects of sensitivity. The criteria used in this study are defined below, providing examples of the types of landscape character or features that could indicate low or high sensitivity against each. These definitions are shown in Tables 2.7 to 2.13 below.

2.13 A five-point rating from ‘low’ to high’ landscape sensitivity is used to illustrate overall levels of landscape sensitivity – i.e. how susceptible the character and quality of the landscape would be to change. These definitions are shown in Table 2.6 below.

2.14 As with all assessments based upon data and information which is to a greater or lesser extent subjective, some caution is required in its interpretation. An assessment of landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interplay of often unequally weighted variables (i.e. ‘criteria’). Each parcel is assessed against each criterion in turn, with explanatory text indicating features or attributes of lower or higher sensitivity. This culminates in an overall landscape sensitivity judgement (using the five-point scale above), taking account of the interrelationships between the different criteria and the specific characteristics of the landscape being assessed.

Table 2.6: The five-point scale of landscape sensitivity

Sensitivity judgement	Definition
High	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly sensitive to change.
Moderate high	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change.
Moderate	Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change.
Low-moderate	Few of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change.

Sensitivity judgement	Definition
Low	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are robust and are unlikely to be subject to change.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria

Physical character

2.15 This considers the shape and scale of the landform, landscape pattern and landscape elements in relation to the scale of potential development. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with a dramatic landform, distinct landform features or incised valleys with prominent slopes. This is because developments may mask distinctive topographical features which contribute to landscape character.

2.16 This criterion also considers how developments fit with the scale of the landform (understanding the scale of the development proposed is important when applying this criterion). Larger scale, simple landforms are likely to be less sensitive to larger scale developments than smaller scale, enclosed landforms (where large scale developments could appear out of scale with the underlying landform). Conversely, smaller developments may be able to be screened within enclosed landforms, therefore reducing landscape sensitivity. Existing small-scale features in the landscape in the form of existing buildings or trees will influence the scale of development that can be accommodated in the landscape.

Table 2.7: Physical character sensitivity rating

Sensitivity	Examples
High	The landscape has a dramatic landform or distinct landform features that contribute positively to landscape character; the area has a high density of small-scale landscape features and is overlain by a small-scale field pattern.
Moderate high	The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both high and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.
Moderate	The landscape has an undulating landform and some distinct landform features; it is overlain by a mixture of small-scale and larger scale field patterns and a moderate density of small-scale landscape features.
Low-moderate	The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both low and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.
Low	The landscape has smooth, gently undulating or featureless landform with uniform large-scale landscape pattern and low density of overlying landscape features.

Natural character

2.17 This criterion considers the ‘naturalistic’ qualities of the landscape in terms of coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees, hedgerows) which could be vulnerable to loss from development. Parcels with frequent natural features (including large areas of nationally or internationally designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscapes with limited natural features (including intensively farmed areas or areas with high levels of existing development) will be less sensitive.

Table 2.8: Natural character sensitivity rating

Sensitivity	Examples
High	Large areas of the landscape are nationally or internationally designated for their nature conservation interest; there is a frequent occurrence of valued natural features.
Moderate high	The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both high and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.
Moderate	There are areas of valued semi-natural habitats and features found in parts of the landscape, whilst other parts are intensively farmed or developed across the landscape.
Low-moderate	The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both low and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.
Low	Much of the landscape is intensively farmed or developed with little semi-natural habitat coverage and few valued natural features.

Historic landscape character

1.1 This considers the extent to which the landscape has ‘time-depth’ (a sense of being an historic landscape, with reference to the Historic Landscape Characterisation) and/or the presence of heritage assets that are important to landscape character (i.e. Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features and remains or other features listed in the landscape character assessment). Landscapes with small-scale, more irregular field patterns of historic origin are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscapes with large, regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.

Table 2.9: Historic landscape character sensitivity rating

Sensitivity	Examples
High	A landscape with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area and great time depth (i.e. piecemeal enclosure with irregular boundaries, ridge and furrow)
Moderate high	The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both high and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.
Moderate	A landscape with some visible historic features of importance to character, and a variety of time depths.
Low-moderate	The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both low and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.
Low	A landscape with relatively few historic features important to the character of the area and little time depth (i.e. large intensively farmed fields).

Form, density and setting of existing settlement

1.2 This considers the overall settlement form and character of existing settlement edges and considers whether development in the landscape would be in accordance with the general pattern, setting and form of current development. It also relates to the landscape pattern associated with existing settlement edges (where relevant), for example if it is well integrated by woodland cover or open and exposed to form a 'hard edge' to the adjoining landscape.

1.3 This criterion also considers the extent to which the landscape contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of settlements, by way of its character and/or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop/ setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement. This also considers the extent to which the parcel contributes to a perceived gap between settlements (the loss of which would increase coalescence).

Table 2.10: Form, density and setting of existing settlement sensitivity rating

Sensitivity	Examples
High	The area provides an attractive backdrop/ setting to the settlement, plays an important part in views from the settlement, or forms an important part in the perception of a gap between settlements. Development in the assessment area would have a poor relationship with the existing settlement form/pattern and would adversely affect an existing settlement edge (which may be historic or distinctive).
Moderate high	The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both high and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.
Moderate	The area provides some contribution to the setting of the settlement by providing, or plays some part in views from the settlement, or play a role in the perception of a gap between settlements. Development in the assessment area may be slightly at odds with the settlement form/ pattern and may adversely affect the existing edge to some extent.
Low-moderate	The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both low and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.
Low	The area does not contribute positively to the setting of the settlement or play a separation role. Development in the assessment area would have a good relationship with the existing settlement form/ pattern and could provide the opportunity to improve an existing settlement edge.

Access and Recreation

1.4 This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. They may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land, and outdoor tourist/visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation as long-distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local

population, presence of National Trust land ownership, and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordnance Survey maps.

Table 2.11: Access and recreation sensitivity rating

Sensitivity	Examples
High	<p>Landscapes regionally important for access and enjoyment of the landscape, e.g. with popular outdoor tourist attractions, country parks, land under National Trust ownership, or a concentration of locally important outdoor attractions with visitor facilities.</p> <p>Presence of well-connected long-distance routes and public rights of way linking centres of population.</p>
Moderate high	<p>The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both high and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.</p>
Moderate	<p>Landscapes with green spaces or recreation areas valued in the local context.</p> <p>Well-used landscapes with some access land, footpaths and public rights of way, possibly with long distance recreation routes or presence of land under National Trust ownership.</p>
Low-moderate	<p>The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both low and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.</p>
Low	<p>Recreation value limited to community sports facilities and local open spaces.</p> <p>Very limited provision of access routes which are likely to be of community importance, e.g. local footpaths, bridleways and limited areas of open access land.</p>

Views and visual character including skylines

1.5 This considers the visual prominence of the assessment parcel, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform or land cover), and the degree of intervisibility with the surrounding landscape (i.e. the extent to which potential development would be visible).

1.6 Visually prominent landscapes are likely to be more sensitive to development than those which are not so visually prominent. Landscapes which are visually

Chapter 2 Methodology

prominent and inter-visible with adjacent landscapes (both urban and rural) are likely to be more sensitive to development than those which are more hidden or less widely visible.

1.7 It also considers the skyline character of the parcel including whether it forms a visually distinctive skyline or an important undeveloped skyline. Prominent and distinctive and/or undeveloped skylines, or skylines with important landmark features, are likely to be more sensitive to development because new buildings/structures may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape. Important landmark features on the skyline might include historic features or monuments.

Table 2.12: Views and visual character (including skylines) sensitivity rating

Sensitivity	Examples
High	The area is open and/or has a high degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes, and/or the area forms a visually distinctive skyline or an important undeveloped skyline.
Moderate high	The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both high and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.
Moderate	The area is semi-enclosed or has some enclosed and some open areas. It is likely to have some inter-visibility with surrounding landscapes and may have some visually distinctive or undeveloped skylines within the area.
Low-moderate	The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both low and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.
Low	The area is enclosed/visually contained and/or has a low degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes and the area does not form a visually distinctive or important undeveloped skyline.

Perceptual and experiential qualities

1.8 This considers qualities such as the rural character of the landscape (traditional land uses with few modern human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquillity. Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil (due to freedom from human activity and disturbance and having a perceived naturalness or a traditional rural feel with few modern human influences) tend to increase levels of sensitivity to development compared to landscapes that contain signs of modern development. High scenic value and dark night skies also add to sensitivity in relation to this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness/naturalness.

Table 2.13: Perceptual and experiential qualities sensitivity rating

Sensitivity	Examples
High	A tranquil or highly rural landscape, lacking strong intrusive elements. A landscape of high scenic value with dark skies and a high perceived degree of rural character and naturalness.
Moderate high	The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both high and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.
Moderate	A landscape with some sense of rural character, but with some modern elements and human influences.
Low-moderate	The landscape has characteristics that contribute to both low and moderate sensitivity but not enough to justify being in either category.
Low	The area is significantly influenced by development/human activity, where new development would not be out of character.

Stage 1: Desk-based Assessment

2.18 The first stage of the assessment process was to carry out a desk-top analysis of each parcel.

2.19 Relevant documents and available GIS data were compiled and reviewed to form the starting point and overall context for the study.

2.20 Existing published evidence and the analysis of spatial data was used to identify the potential sensitivities of each parcel. This process considered parcels within their wider landscape context drawing on the published landscape character assessment information.

1.9 The interim sensitivity assessment for each of the assessment parcels included draft justifications against each sensitivity criteria, providing a basis for testing, verifying and refining during field survey work. This process also helped identify missing or uncertain information, providing a focus for the survey work.

Stage 2: Field Survey

2.21 The field verification assessment was undertaken in August 2024.

2.22 A structured process of field survey verification was undertaken by landscape experts in order to verify and refine the outputs from the desk study. Each of the parcels was visited to record information against each assessment criterion and take photographs. The field survey was undertaken from roads and public rights of way to gain an understanding of landscape sensitivity, with no access to private land. The fieldwork focused in particular on the relationships between the assessment parcels and adjoining settlement, landscape settings and wider views, and perceptual qualities (i.e. levels of tranquillity).

Stage 3: Reporting

2.23 A summary of the assessment results is provided in **Chapter 3**, while the assessment profiles are included in **Appendix A**. The assessment parcels are ordered by site type.

1.10 Each of the assessment profiles is structured in a common format as follows:

- Information about the site including location maps;
- Assessment judgements for each of the seven landscape criteria;
- An overall landscape sensitivity judgement for the residential or employment development being considered; and
- Guidance on potential mitigation where applicable. Generic mitigation guidance is provided in **Chapter 4**.

Chapter 3

Overview of findings

3.1 Tables 3.1 – 3.5 provide a summary of the overall landscape sensitivity scores for each of the assessment parcels. These are presented in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

3.2 Please note that the overall judgement scores should always be interpreted in conjunction with the information contained in the detailed profile for each parcel in Appendix A.

Table 3.1: Overall sensitivity scores - strategic sites

Parcel	Overall sensitivity to residential	Overall sensitivity to employment
STO026 and SAP013	Low-moderate	Moderate
WHE027 and COS010	Moderate	Moderate high

Table 3.2: Overall sensitivity scores - large sites (extended PUA)

Parcel	Overall sensitivity to residential	Overall sensitivity to employment
BLA030/ BLA032/ BLA033 / BLA038/ EBLA002/ EBLA003/ EBLA004	Low-moderate	Moderate
BLA031, BLA034, BLA039 and BLA040	Moderate	Moderate
COU037	Low-moderate	N/A
COU038 / COU022 / COU050	Low-moderate	N/A
COU045	Low-moderate	N/A
COU042/COU047/COU051/COU052	Low-moderate	Moderate
COU49	Low-moderate	N/A
ELM008	Low-moderate	Moderate
END022	Low-moderate	Moderate

Parcel	Overall sensitivity to residential	Overall sensitivity to employment
END024/ NAR018 and NAR020	Low-moderate	Low-moderate
GLE030	Low-moderate	N/A
GLE031	Moderate	Moderate high
GLE032	Low-moderate	Moderate
GPA025 /GPA026	Low-moderate	N/A
KMU009	Moderate	N/A
KMU025	Moderate	N/A
KMU026	Moderate high	N/A
LFE019 and LFE020	Low-moderate	N/A
NAR022, NAR016, NAR002 and ENDO028	Moderate	Moderate
EWHE031 and WHE026	Low-moderate	Moderate
WHE032	Low	N/A

Table 3.3: Overall sensitivity scores - large village sites

Parcel	Overall sensitivity to residential
COS009	Low-moderate
COS012 / COS014 and COS015	Low-moderate
COS013	Low-moderate
CRO006/ CRO009	Low-moderate
HUN013	Moderate
HUN019, HUN017, HUN016 and HUN021	Moderate
LIT022	Low-moderate
LIT023	Low-moderate
LUB002	Low-moderate

Parcel	Overall sensitivity to residential
SAP035 (including SAP025 and SAP019)	Low-moderate
SAP024, SAP029 and SAP034	Low-moderate
STO009	Low-moderate
STO023	Low-moderate
STO024 and STO025	Moderate

Table 3.4: Overall sensitivity scores - small village sites

Parcel	Overall sensitivity to residential	Overall sensitivity to employment
ELM010	Moderate	Moderate high
ELM011	Low	N/A
KIL002 and KIL008	Low-moderate	N/A
KIL006	Low-moderate	N/A
LIT008, LIT009 and LIT024	Low-moderate	N/A
SHA008 and SHA009	Low	N/A
SHA010	Low-moderate	N/A
THU004 and THU005	Low-moderate	N/A
THU008	Low-moderate	N/A
THU009	Low-moderate	N/A

Table 3.5: Overall sensitivity scores - employment only sites

Parcel	Overall sensitivity to residential	Overall sensitivity to employment
EAST001	N/A	Low-moderate
EBLA002 / EBLA003, EBLA004 and BLA038	N/A	Moderate
ELUB002	N/A	Low-moderate
EELM001	N/A	Moderate high
ESHA001	N/A	Moderate
ETHU001	Low-moderate	Low-moderate