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INTRODUCTION

The Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Strategy and Guidelines builds on and is informed by the Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment (CLCA), which in turn forms part of the strategic countywide Environmental Character Assessment (ECA). It should therefore be used in conjunction with these overarching documents. By way of introduction these documents are briefly reviewed below in order to provide the context for setting out the process and purpose of the Landscape Strategy and Guidelines.

THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISATION PROCESS

The Northamptonshire Environmental Characterisation Project provides a comprehensive, robust and transparent environmental characterisation of the county at a sub regional level. This county Environmental Characterisation Process (ECP) has developed an holistic approach by integrating the three primary environmental aspects comprising the historic, the biodiversity and the current landscape character, which together underpin and inform the countywide Environmental Character Assessment (ECA).

THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CURRENT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (CLCA)

The Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment (CLCA) (2005) provides a detailed review and description of the current character of the Northamptonshire landscape. A complex interplay of physical and human influences has shaped the landscape. An understanding of these influences is central to the assessment process and has provided the basis on which to define and describe the landscape character of Northamptonshire. The CLCA has examined the physical (geology and soils, landform, hydrology, land use and land cover, woodland and trees) and human (buildings and settlement, heritage features, boundaries, communications, infrastructure and recreation) influences and described the manifestation of these physical and human influences on the landscape.

In order to be consistent with the Countryside Agency (CA) methodology, the Northamptonshire CLCA has worked within the framework of Countryside Character Areas, and through the process of characterisation, the identification of Landscape Character Types and Areas. The assessment has also taken advantage of the most up-to-date technology for data interpretation and analysis and used as a baseline a large number of detailed GIS datasets.

THE CHARACTERISATION PROCESS

Characterisation is the process by which areas of distinctive character are classified, mapped and described. In the Northamptonshire CLCA, Landscape Character Types and Landscape Character Areas have been identified. Landscape Character Types are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different parts of the county, and indeed the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, landform, drainage patterns, vegetation, and historical land use and settlement pattern. By comparison, Landscape Character Areas are unique and geographically discrete, sharing characteristics of the broader landscape type to which they belong. An important feature of the character assessment process is that it is objective; no judgment is made of a particular landscape's value or quality. However, attention is given to identifying characteristics that are distinctive, rare or special as well as those that are more commonplace.
THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CLCA IDENTIFIED 19 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES ACROSS THE COUNTY:

1. Ironstone Uplands
2. Ironstone Hills
3. Ironstone Quarried Plateau
4. Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes
5. Clay Plateau
6. Undulating Claylands
7. Wooded Clay Plateau
8. Low Wooded Clay Ridge
9. Farmed Claylands
10. Limestone Plateau
11. Wooded Limestone Hills and Valleys
12. Limestone Valley Slopes
13. Undulating Hills and Valleys
14. Rolling Agricultural Lowlands
15. Farmed Scarp Slopes
16. Low Pastoral Hills
17. River Valley Floodplain
18. Broad River Valley Floodplain
19. Broad Unwooded Vale

These are shown on the attached plan, Figure 1, Current Landscape Character Types.

THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CURRENT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines: Scope and Purpose

The Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Strategy and Guidelines builds on the Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment (CLCA) and should be read in conjunction with this more detailed document.

The purpose of the Landscape Strategy and Guidelines is to provide a strategic framework in respect of Northamptonshire’s landscape character. It is aimed at Local Planning Authorities and Local Delivery Vehicles, developers and land managers, as well as other organisations and individuals who have the ability to influence and implement land use changes across the county. It provides a brief review of the 19 Landscape Character Types that were identified in the Northamptonshire CLCA and identifies Key Landscape Character Features. It then sets out a Landscape Strategy for each of the Types followed by Generic Landscape Guidelines for the conservation, enhancement, restoration and creation of the distinctive range of landscapes, and landscape elements and features, which are characteristic of each Type.

Key Landscape Character Features

The Landscape Strategy and Guidelines focuses on the Key Landscape Character Features (KLCFs) that have been identified for each of the Landscape Character Types. These build on the Key Characteristics that were identified in the Northamptonshire CLCA for each of the Character Types, and highlight the positive landscape characteristics, features and elements that if lost, damaged, degraded or obscured would result in a significant change in the landscape and a blurring of the distinction between the various landscape types across the county. A failure to act on these at a strategic scale, both at a policy level and in respect of management guidance, would lose the distinctive sense of place attributed to each type and ‘sterilize’ or have an adverse effect on the rural and built environment. A brief explanation of each KLCF is given which explains why they are important, as they form the basis of the Guidelines and inform the structure and direction that the Guidelines should take.

THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES: INTRODUCTORY DESCRIPTION

In order to provide the context for the Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, a brief description of each of the Generic Landscape Character Types is given, setting out the geographical distribution within the county, and drawing out the essential characteristics and elements that together inform the character of that Type.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

A brief Landscape Strategy Statement is provided for each Landscape Type, which provides the context for and introduction to the more detailed generic Landscape Guidelines.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

The Landscape Guidelines for each of the Landscape Character Types is developed from the range of KLCFs that have been identified for that Type. The Guidelines are generic, and applicable to the whole type rather than for specific sites or areas. They provide a strategic framework for managing change in the landscape in order to conserve and enhance landscape character. The management objectives encompassing ‘Conserve’, ‘Enhance’, ‘Restore’ and ‘Create’ are the terms applied to describe the mechanisms and processes for managing positive change, in order to enrich and sustain Northamptonshire’s future landscape.
1 IRONSTONE UPLANDS

CHARACTER AREAS

1a Guilsborough Ironstone Uplands
1b Spratton and Creaton Ironstone Uplands

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

- **Elevated, undulating upland landform** provides intermittent long distance views and expansive character.

- **Ironstone geology expressed in local vernacular buildings and in rich red soils. While building materials vary, vernacular architecture and churches display the local ironstone.** This provides a strong sense of connection with the underlying geology and memorable local landmarks and features.

- **Distinct broad backed ridges aligned on a northwest to southeast orientation** impart a distinctive grain to the landform.

- **Arable farmland in medium and large-scale fields predominates on elevated land although sheep pastures also prevalent, often in smaller fields on sloping landform.** This strengthens the distinction between a broader scale field pattern on the open and gently sloping elevated land and ridge tops, with *agricultural practices creating* a seasonally changing *patchwork of contrasting colours and textures*; and a network of smaller scale pasture fields on steeper slopes and lower lying areas.

- **Limited woodland cover, comprising occasional small coverts and spinneys on valley slopes below the spring line and small shelter belts close to farmsteads** emphasises the distinction between the simple and more open elevated areas and more enclosed and verdant valley slopes below the crest of the upland ridges.

- **Hedgerow trees are an important landscape feature, particularly given the landscape’s un-wooded character** and provide locally important features within an otherwise generally open character.

- **Hedgerows generally low and well clipped although intermittent sections show evidence of decline.** The pattern of fields is evocative of centuries of land management and changing agricultural practices.

- **Settlement pattern of small nucleated villages located along principal direct routes across the uplands together with a wider settlement pattern of isolated farmsteads off tracks located at right angles to the main arterial routes.** This generally sparse and simple settlement pattern imparts a quiet and deeply rural character to the landscape.
### Key Landscape Character Features

#### Landform and Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature Description</th>
<th>Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Elevated, undulating upland landform** provides intermittent long distance views and expansive character. | • **Conserve** long distance views and expansive character on areas of upland landform by encouraging sensitive woodland planting and agricultural land use. Consider further the impact of hedgerow management on visibility and perceptions of openness.  
• **Enhance** where appropriate long distance or expansive views by sensitive management of woodlands/ tree belts/ hedges in upland areas. |
| **Distinct broad backed ridges aligned on a northwest to southeast orientation** impart a distinctive grain to the landform. | • **Conserve** and **Enhance** landscape elements that are aligned with and reinforce the distinctive grain of the landform, such as settlement form and hedged field boundaries.  
• **Restore** field boundaries and other landscape features that emphasise relief features and the underlying physical grain of the landscape. |

#### Land Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature Description</th>
<th>Guidelines</th>
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</table>
| **Arable farmland in medium and large-scale fields predominates on elevated land although sheep pastures also prevalent, often in smaller fields on sloping landform.** This strengthens the distinction between a broader scale field pattern on the open and gently sloping elevated land and ridge tops, with agricultural practices creating a seasonally changing **patchwork of contrasting colours and textures**; and a network of smaller scale pasture fields on steeper slopes and lower lying areas. | • **Conserve** the distinctive field pattern of hedgerows and fences enclosing medium and large scale arable fields across the more open, elevated land, and smaller scale grazed fields on steeper sloping landform and lower lying areas.  
• **Discourage** hedgerow removal and field amalgamation that lead to broader areas of monoculture, and a consequent reduction in the visual interest associated with the mosaic of fields and cropping patterns. |
### Hedgerow trees

Hedgerow trees are an important landscape feature, particularly given the landscape’s unwooded character and provide locally important features within an otherwise generally open character.

- **Conserve** existing hedgerow trees and initiate new hedgerow tree planting, particularly in areas where significant tree loss has occurred or is likely due to the ageing of surviving examples. Planting should be in accordance with other guidelines (above) in respect of retaining the open character of upland areas.

Hedgerows generally low and well clipped although intermittent sections show evidence of decline. The pattern of fields and hedgerow enclosure is evocative of centuries of land management and changing agricultural practices.

- **Conserve** hedgerows and hedgerow patterns to reflect various episodes of enclosure and subsequent land management and as features of the landscape emphasizing relief and creating a distinctive patchwork pattern enclosing a mosaic of fields of varying colours and textures. Gap up existing hedgerows and seek to initiate more sensitive hedgerow management that encourages more natural growth and encourages hedgerow trees to regenerate.

### Woodland and Trees

Limited woodland cover, comprising occasional small coverts and spinneys on valley slopes below the spring line and small shelter belts close to farmsteads emphasises the distinction between the simple and more open elevated areas and more enclosed and verdant valley slopes below the crest of the upland ridges.

- **Conserve** and **Enhance** existing small coverts, spinneys on valley slopes and shelterbelts close to farms by appropriate management and encouragement of natural regeneration. Where appropriate, restore lost or denuded coverts and initiate replanting of native species in favour of conifers.

- **Conserve** the open and simple character of the upland areas by limiting new woodland planting, particularly in locations where these would restrict long distance or expansive views or break the skyline and impact on the silhouette of hills against the sky.
Ironstone geology expressed in local vernacular buildings and in rich red soils. While building materials vary, vernacular architecture and churches display the local ironstone. This provides a strong sense of connection with the underlying geology and memorable local landmarks and features.

- **Conserve** buildings, and their setting that express the local ironstone geology and strengthen the connection between built development and the underlying geology.
- **Restore** stone walls and other features using local stone that express the local ironstone geology and strengthen the connection between built development and the underlying geology.
- **Create** new buildings that utilise local stone sources. In the absence of viable quarrying, source appropriate reclaimed building stone for reuse. Seek wherever possible to respect local building vernacular, but not necessarily to copy detailing, buildings styles directly.

Settlement pattern of small nucleated villages located along principal direct routes across the uplands together with a wider settlement pattern of isolated farmsteads off tracks located at right angles to the main arterial routes. This generally sparse and simple settlement pattern imparts a quiet and deeply rural character to the landscape.

- **Conserve** the simple pattern of small, nucleated villages along principal routes across the uplands and wider pattern of isolated farms off tracks.
- **Conserve and Enhance** the setting of villages in particular in respect of new development on the edges of villages. Undertake research into the setting of villages, and village features such as materials, architectural detailing, layout and massing, in advance of significant settlement expansion, and seek to minimise new development obscuring important views of historic cores.
2 IRONSTONE HILLS

CHARACTER AREAS

2a Eydon Hills
2b Staverton Hills

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

- **Elevated, rolling upland landform with distinctive isolated hills** provides a memorable skyline and reference points in the wider landscape. The summit profiles of the isolated hills and ‘knolls’ are a particularly notable feature within the landscape.

- **Ironstone geology expressed in local vernacular buildings and in rich red soils. While building materials vary, vernacular architecture and churches display the local ironstone.** This provides a strong sense of connection with the underlying geology and memorable local landmarks and features.

- **Varied landform, extensive views and sense of exposure on some prominent hilltops** with intermittent long distance views and an expansive character.

- **Sense of remoteness in some areas** contributes to a perception of peace and tranquillity.

- **Steep slopes adjacent to more elevated landscapes** provide a contrast in the landform pattern and are often associated with more secluded and intimate landscapes with a quiet rural character.

- **Limited standing or flowing water, although springs rising below the Ironstone feed three principal watercourses**, and serve as reminder of the significance of this area as a national watershed with the upper reaches of the streams draining into the Severn, Thames and Nene, and eventually The Wash.

- **Productive arable farmland in medium and large-scale fields predominates on elevated land with agricultural practices creating a seasonally changing patchwork of contrasting colours and textures.** However, sheep and cattle pastures are also prevalent, often in smaller fields on the lower slopes and also surrounding settlements. The mosaic of agricultural land use contributes to a well managed and productive character.
THE IRONSTONE HILLS

The Ironstone Hills comprise two separate areas of undulating hills that rise above the surrounding landscape on the western perimeter of the county. In addition to their elevation, they are distinguished by the distinctive form and visual prominence of the isolated hills that are evident within the wider elevated landform, notably Arbury Hill, the highest point in the county and other hill tops such as Sharman’s and Hinton Hills. This is a deeply rural area with a generally remote, quiet and often tranquil character. Settlement is limited and where it does occur many of the buildings are constructed in the rich red brown hues of the locally sourced Ironstone, which imparts a sense of unity and connection with the underlying geology.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

New development, change and land management practices should be controlled to avoid the more elevated areas, and particularly any encroachment onto the upper slopes and summits of the isolated hills to ensure that their distinctive profile remains open and unobstructed. The integrity of the Ironstone villages should remain intact and new and infill development should respect the form and local vernacular of these distinctive settlements including the use of the local Ironstone building stone or compatible materials. Where development is considered appropriate, reference should also be made to the layout and arrangement of new elements, such as the massing and scale of built development, to ensure it integrates into the landscape.

Land use changes and associated development that adversely affect the sense of remoteness and tranquility that is evident within the more secluded parts of the Ironstone Hills should also be avoided. The verdant character evident on the lower slopes associated with the mosaic of woodlands and hedgerows should be also retained and where possible enhanced. The hedgerow network is an important characteristic of the landscape and the conservation and enhancement of hedgerows to strengthen their visual contribution to the landscape as well as their biodiversity value should be encouraged.
### Key Landscape Character Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Guidelines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elevated, rolling upland landform with distinctive isolated hills</strong> provides a memorable skyline and reference points in the wider landscape. The summit profiles of the isolated hills and ‘knolls’ are a particularly notable feature within the landscape.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the perception of the distinctive profile of rolling upland landform and isolated hills and knolls. Consider how these hills are viewed from the surrounding landscapes and seek to ensure that woodland and development is not sited in locations that compromise the perceived form and profile of the hills, punctuates skylines or affects perceptions of scale.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Varied landform, extensive views and sense of exposure on some prominent hilltops** with intermittent long distance views and an expansive character. | • **Conserve** long distance views and expansive character on areas of upland landform by encouraging sensitive woodland planting and agricultural land use. Consider further the impact of hedgerow management on visibility and perceptions of openness.  
  • **Enhance** where appropriate long distance or expansive views by sensitive management of woodlands/ tree belts/ hedges in upland areas. |
| **Sense of remoteness in some areas** contributes to a perception of peace and tranquility. | • **Conserve** the sense of remoteness in rural areas where this is a characteristic feature. In some areas it may be appropriate to enhance the sense of remoteness by screening obtrusive visual or acoustic influences. |
| **Steep slopes adjacent to more elevated landscapes** provide a contrast in the landform pattern and are often associated with more secluded and intimate landscapes with a quiet rural character. | • **Conserve** secluded and intimate landscapes where landform patterns create a contrast to the more open and exposed hilltops. Seek to conserve or enhance the more intricate patterns of fields and land uses in these locations. |
Hydrology

Limited standing or flowing water, although springs rising below the Ironstone feed three principal watercourses and serve as reminder of the significance of this area as a national watershed with the upper reaches of the streams draining into the Severn, Thames and Nene, and eventually The Wash.

| Conserve and Enhance the appearance and quality of water courses that form the upper reaches of the Nene, Severn and Thames. Seek opportunities to improve interpretation in this area, given its significance as a major watershed between England’s most significant river systems. |

Land Management

Productive arable farmland in medium and large-scale fields predominates on elevated land with agricultural practices creating a seasonally changing patchwork of contrasting colours and textures. However, sheep and cattle pastures are also prevalent, often in smaller fields on the lower slopes and also surrounding settlements. The mosaic of agricultural land use contributes to a well managed and productive character.

| Conserve the distinctive field pattern with hedgerows and fences enclosing medium and large scale arable fields across the elevated land, and smaller grazed fields on the lower slopes and often surrounding settlements. Discourage hedgerow removal and field amalgamation that lead to broader areas of monoculture, and a consequent reduction in the visual interest associated with the mosaic of fields and cropping patterns. |

Hedgerows generally low and well clipped although intermittent sections show evidence of decline. The hedgerow network creates a neat patchwork and texture across the varied landform and serves as a reminder of a pattern that has evolved over centuries of land management and changing agricultural practices.

| Conserve and Enhance hedgerows and hedgerow patterns to reflect various episodes of enclosure and subsequent land management and as features of the landscape emphasizing relief and creating a patchwork of varying colours and textures. Seek to initiate more sensitive hedgerow management that encourages more natural growth and encourages hedgerow trees to regenerate. Conserve the integrity of field patterns by replanting stretches of lost hedgerow or gapping up of broken stretches. |
Woodland and Trees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium sized broadleaved woodlands and mature hedgerow trees combine to give the sense of a well treed landscape and provide a valued sense of enclosure in contrast with the more open and elevated hill tops. Areas of ancient woodland, notably Badby Wood are important visually as well as for their biodiversity value.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Conserve the well treed character of the landscape by woodland and tree management. Seek opportunities and initiatives for natural regeneration of woodlands and hedgerow trees and replanting conifer blocks with native broadleaved species. Gap up denuded hedgerows and ensure appropriate management is in place to allow healthy hedgerow growth and long term regeneration of native species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conserve the species diversity, character and visual appeal of ancient woodlands and seek opportunities for sensitive management through coppicing where appropriate. Consider how hilltop woodlands appear from lower areas when determining woodland expansion or new plantings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Settlement and Built Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ironstone geology expressed in local vernacular buildings and in rich red soils. While building materials vary, vernacular architecture and churches display the local ironstone. This provides a strong sense of connection with the underlying geology and memorable local landmarks and features.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Conserve building, and their setting that express the local ironstone geology and strengthen the connection between built development and the underlying geology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Restore stone walls and other features using local stone that express the local ironstone geology and strengthen the connection between built development and the underlying geology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create new buildings that utilise local stone sources. In the absence of viable quarrying, source appropriate reclaimed building stone for re-use. Seek wherever possible to respect local building vernacular, but not necessarily to directly copy detailing, or building styles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement pattern beyond the main villages comprise isolated farmsteads accessible off long tracks. The quiet and compact Ironstone Villages with their rich Ironstone vernacular buildings are complemented by the pattern of isolated farms, many in secluded locations, which are also frequently constructed in Ironstone. This imparts a sense of harmony with the landscape reinforced by a deeply rural and peaceful character dominated by agriculture.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Conserve the simple pattern of small villages and of isolated farms off tracks. Conserve and Enhance the setting of villages and in particular in respect to new development on the edges of villages. Undertake research into the setting of villages, and village features (materials, architectural detailing, layout massing) in advance of significant settlement expansion, and seek to minimise new development obscuring important views of historic cores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conserve and Enhance the contribution farm buildings make to rural character and consider the direct impact of barn and farm building conversions and indirect impact caused by road improvements, lighting and introduction of domestic/suburban features in rural locations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHARACTER AREAS

3a Kirby and Gretton Plateau

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

- **Broad, elevated, gently undulating plateau area dissected by valleys with distinctive convex profile valley sides** contributes to the perception of a simple large-scale landscape.

- **Expansive long distance views across the open plateau and into neighbouring counties** emphasises the scale and open character of the landscape. The wide sweeping vistas are often framed by bold woodlands that form a backdrop or frame views.

- **Predominantly arable land use with some improved pasture and limited areas of calcareous grassland, often on former quarry sites. The seasonal rotation of arable cropping patterns and improved grassland contrasts with an otherwise homogenous and simple land cover resulting in changes in colours and textures across the landscape.**

- **Large scale, regular fields mainly enclosed by hedgerows and post and wire fencing.** Hedgerows are generally low and well clipped although intermittent sections show evidence of decline and lack of maintenance. This network of field enclosure imparts a sense of order and productive agricultural management and a record of centuries of land management and change.

- **Numerous moderately sized woodlands, many comprising small coniferous and broadleaved plantations.** Although many parts of the Ironstone Quarried Plateau are unwooded and open, a mosaic of woodlands is present, particularly within the valley bottom areas, for example adjacent to the Gretton and Willow Brooks. These woodlands contribute to a local sense of enclosure and visual interest.

- **Large, principally coniferous, plantations bordering Corby** provide important enclosure and soften the setting and visual impact of the eastern and southern sides of the town where it extends up to the elevated plateau landscape.
• Settlement very limited across the plateau, which typically consists of occasional isolated farmsteads and individual dwellings. The only notable exceptions to this perception of a very limited presence of settlement and buildings is the imposing Elizabethan Mansion of Kirby Hall to the northeast of Corby in the Gretton Brook valley, and the nucleated Ironstone village of Gretton in the northern perimeter of the plateau.

• Network of mainly minor country lanes following elevated land, linking settlements to Corby. These have limited effect on the quiet rural character.

• Occasional active and disused quarries located across the plateau indicative of the value of the locally quarried iron ore and Ironstone deposits to the growth of Corby. These have resulted in areas of derelict or disturbed land some of which have been restored to new uses.

• Use of locally quarried stone for both walls and houses, frequently constructed in distinctive local vernacular. The locally quarried Ironstone and Limestone contribute to the variations and distinctiveness in the built fabric of villages and buildings as well as a strong sense of connection and harmony with the underlying geology. Ironstone is predominant in the village of Gretton but with some Limestone including banding evident, while the distinctive paler Lincolnshire Limestone, Weldon Stone, has been used for many properties within Weldon on the southeastern perimeter of Corby, and also in the Elizabethan mansion at Kirby Hall to the east of Corby adjacent to the Gretton Brook.

THE IRONSTONE QUARRIED PLATEAU

The Ironstone Quarried Plateau is only present in one part of the county, extending across the northeastern and eastern side of Corby. It comprises an elevated shallow sloping plateau that has been gently dissected by small watercourses notably the Gretton Brook, which follows an east - west course extending into the heart of Corby. The landscape has been exploited in the past to recover the underlying iron ore deposits that lie beneath the Inferior Oolite limestone strata. As a consequence some parts of the landscape show evidence of disturbance. A simple palette of features prevail across the Ironstone Quarried Plateau with a predominance of agricultural land, intermittent mainly broadleaved woodlands and bolder, mainly coniferous plantations on the perimeter of Corby.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

New development, change and land management practices should be controlled or encouraged to conserve the simplicity and limited palette of characteristics that define this quiet rural landscape that provides a valued setting to the eastern side of Corby, and a benefit for the communities within the town who can readily access this area. Intrusion of development onto the more elevated sections of the plateau should be resisted to retain the open and unobstructed views to the wider landscape and beyond the county. New built development and associated landscape elements should be drawn from a limited palette, although reference should be made to the locality for particular details of vernacular building styles, materials, layout and arrangement of features in the landscape.

The landscape setting of Kirby Hall should be respected to ensure that new development does not intrude into the views from this nationally important heritage feature and its surrounding Gardens, or adversely affect the undeveloped simplicity of the valley landscape within which the building is located.
### Key Landscape Character Features

#### Landform and Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature Description</th>
<th>Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad, elevated, gently undulating plateau area dissected by valleys with distinctive convex profile valley sides</td>
<td><em>Conserve</em> and where appropriate <em>Enhance</em> the simple large-scale character of the plateau landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansive long distance views across the open plateau and into neighbouring counties</td>
<td><em>Conserve</em> long distance views across the open plateau by encouraging sensitive woodland planting and agricultural land use. Consider further the impact of hedgerow management on visibility and perceptions of openness. Manage woodlands to maintain their function as a frame or backdrop to views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly arable land use with some improved pasture and limited areas of calcareous grassland, often on former quarry sites. The seasonal rotation of arable cropping patterns and improved grassland contrasts with an otherwise homogenous and simple land cover resulting in changes in colours and textures across the landscape.</td>
<td><em>Conserve</em> and <em>Enhance</em> calcareous grasslands on former quarry sites and in other appropriate locations to contribute to the diversity of land cover elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large scale, regular fields mainly enclosed by hedgerows and post and wire fencing. Hedgerows are generally low and well clipped although intermittent sections show evidence of decline and lack of maintenance.</td>
<td><em>Conserve</em> the distinctive patterning of large arable fields created by hedged boundaries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Hedgerows on the Jurassic Way over the Plateau.*
Woodland and Trees

Numerous moderately sized woodlands, many comprising small coniferous and broadleaved plantations. Although many parts of the Ironstone Quarried Plateau are unwooded and open, a mosaic of woodlands is present, particularly within the valley bottom areas, for example adjacent to the Gretton and Willow Brooks. These woodlands contribute to a local sense of enclosure and visual interest.

- **Conserve** and **Enhance** woodlands, particularly the mosaic of woods along valleys draining the plateau landscapes. Conserve the character and identity of woodlands by sensitive management and encouragement of natural regeneration.
- **Conserve** and **Enhance** the open character of the plateau by avoiding significant new woodland planting. Where new woodland is proposed, seek to site and design in consideration of visual and perceptual factors and locate where possible on former ancient woodland sites, and encourage natural regeneration.

Large, principally coniferous, plantations bordering Corby provide important enclosure and soften the setting and visual impact of the eastern and southern sides of the town where it extends up to the elevated plateau landscape.

- **Conserve** and **Enhance** significant woodland blocks fringing Corby. Seek opportunities to enhance woodlands by appropriate management and structured removal of conifers in favour of broadleaved species.
- **Create** new woodlands of appropriate species and structure, design and location to help integrate new housing growth and development around Corby into the landscape.

Settlement, Built Form and Infrastructure

Settlement very limited across the plateau, which typically consists of occasional isolated farmsteads and individual dwellings. The only notable exceptions to this perception of a very limited presence of settlement and buildings are the imposing Elizabethan Mansion of Kirby Hall to the northeast of Corby in the Gretton Brook valley, and the nucleated Ironstone village of Gretton in the northern perimeter of the plateau.

- **Conserve** the limited and sparse settlement pattern across the plateau. Enhance the distinctive ‘necklace of jewels’ settlement pattern around the fringes of Corby.
- **Conserve** and **Enhance** the integrity and identity of individual settlements by avoiding development that causes or threatens actual or perceived coalescence.

Network of mainly minor country lanes following elevated land, linking settlements to Corby, but have limited effect on the quiet rural character.

- **Conserve** the rural character of the network of minor roads throughout the plateau. Avoid development such as road improvement schemes that bring urbanising influences, such as kerbs, roundabouts, and lighting to otherwise rural locations.

Occasional active and disused quarries located across the plateau indicative of the value of the locally quarried iron ore and Ironstone deposits to the growth of Corby. These have resulted in areas of derelict or disturbed land, and gullets, some of which have been restored to new uses, including forestry.

- **Conserve** and **Enhance** former quarry sites and remains as a cultural record of past activity. Seek opportunities to enhance their educational value and nature conservation interest through interpretation and land management / habitat creation and restoration. Seek opportunities for new active and passive recreational uses in former quarry sites where this is appropriate.
Use of locally quarried stone for both walls and houses, frequently constructed in distinctive local vernacular. The locally quarried Ironstone and Limestone contribute to the variations and distinctiveness in the built fabric of villages and buildings as well as a strong sense of connection and harmony with the underlying geology. Ironstone is predominant in the village of Gretton but with some Limestone, including banding, evident. The distinctive paler Lincolnshire Limestone, Weldon Stone, has been used for many properties within Weldon on the southeastern perimeter of Corby, and also in the Elizabethan mansion at Kirby Hall to the east of Corby adjacent to the Gretton Brook.

- **Conserve** buildings, and their setting, that express the local ironstone and limestone geology and strengthen the connection between built development and the underlying geology.
- **Restore** stone walls and other features using local stone that express the local ironstone geology and strengthen the connection between built development and the underlying geology.
- **Create** new buildings that utilise local stone sources. In the absence of viable quarrying, source appropriate reclaimed building stone for re-use. Seek wherever possible to respect local building vernacular, but not necessarily to directly copy detailing, or building styles.
CHARACTER AREAS

4a Harlestone Heath and the Bramptons
4b Moulton Slopes
4c Ecton and Earls Barton Slopes
4d Hanging Houghton
4e Pitsford Water
4f Kettering and Wellingborough Slopes
4g Irthlingborough Slopes

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

- **Broad valley slopes dissected by numerous tributary streams** that provide a surface expression of the dendritic drainage network and its interrelationship with the variety and complexity of the topography.

- **Ironstone geology expressed in local vernacular buildings and in rich red soils.** While building materials vary, vernacular architecture and churches display the local ironstone. This provides a strong sense of connection with the underlying geology and memorable local landmarks and features.

- **Rolling landform, extensive views and sense of exposure on some prominent locations** create an expansive and open character in contrast to lower and more secluded areas.

- **Steep slopes adjacent to more elevated landscapes** provide diversity to the landscape. These areas are often more secluded and support farm management regimes including smaller fields and pastures that contrast with the more elevated and open areas.

- **Numerous water bodies, including the county’s largest reservoir** at Pitsford provide focal features, and can enrich the diversity of the landscape subject to ensuring the appropriate location of man made waterbodies that do not detract from the character of riverine or watershed landscapes. Whilst often the result of more recent development, larger water bodies are particularly arresting through their reflective quality and constantly changing appearance in response to both light changes and weather conditions.

- **Productive arable farmland in medium and large-scale fields predominates on elevated land although sheep and cattle pastures are also prevalent, often in smaller fields adjacent to watercourses.** Agricultural practices create a patchwork of contrasting colours and textures extending across valley slopes and provide seasonal interest and diversity to the experience of the landscape. These contrasting farming practices create a dynamism and diversity to the landscape and reflect the interrelationship with and response to differing landforms and drainage pattern.
4 ROLLING IRONSTONE VALLEY SLOPES

- Where broadleaved woodlands and mature hedgerow trees combine, these impart a sense of a well treed landscape. The location of this mosaic of woodland and tree cover is an important feature particularly the topographical association with steeper slopes or adjacent to the numerous watercourses, and a land management association, notably as coverts within the agricultural landscape or within the designed parklands that are also evident within the Ironstone Valley Slopes.

- Hedgerows generally low and well clipped although intermittent sections show evidence of decline. The pattern of hedgerows, many of which contain mature and semi-mature Oak and Ash, creates a rich tapestry across the landscape and is indicative of the many centuries of evolving land management and changing agricultural practices.

- Well settled with numerous villages and towns with landscape directly and indirectly influenced by the close proximity of many of the county’s urban areas. The predominantly agricultural landscape surrounding and forming the setting for settlements has an active and productive character with visual and physical connectivity with local communities.

THE ROLLING IRONSTONE VALLEY SLOPES

The Rolling Ironstone Valley Slopes extend across the heart of Northamptonshire. Unlike the boulder clay masked Clay Plateaux that rise above these extensive valley slopes of the Ise and Brampton Arm, and the Wooded Clay Plateau to the northeast, there are very limited drift deposits within this area. Consequently the underlying complex succession of ironstone rich and limestone Jurassic geology has had a more direct effect on the landform as well as the soils and vegetation cover resulting in a more diverse and rich landscape in comparison to surrounding areas.

Superimposed on the principal valley form, the erosive effect of the dendritic pattern of the many watercourses and tributary streams has resulted in a complex landform pattern that brings interest to the local landscape. This diversity is strengthened by the pattern of land uses that range from simple palette of predominantly arable cultivation in the more open upper slopes, to a more intimate and smaller scale landscape, often with pastures, on the steeper and more enclosed areas. The woodland matrix emphasises this diversity, with small and moderate size woodlands favouring steeper slopes, watercourses and within planned parklands.

This is a very settled landscape. In addition to the numerous villages and hamlets that are located within it, many of the county’s urban areas also extend up to or lie within this landscape type. There are also a number of fine historic parks and associated houses, notably Boughton Park and the wooded parkland at Ecton and Thorpe Malsor all of which have a significant influence on the local landscape.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

New development, change and land management should be controlled or encouraged to conserve and enhance the diversity and richness of the landscape, and provide opportunities to emphasise the variations that contribute to local distinctiveness.

In view of the proximity of the many urban areas within and surrounding this landscape, it is likely to be particularly vulnerable to development pressures and change. It is important, therefore, that where development is considered, its integration with the local landform is carefully considered, as well as its wider setting and relationship with existing built areas. Reference should also be made to the locality to integrate with particular details of local vernacular building styles, materials, and layout. Woodland cover should also be retained wherever possible and conserved and enhanced to strengthen this resource.
## Key Landscape Character Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landform, Hydrology and Views</th>
<th>Landscape Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broad valley slopes dissected by numerous tributary streams</strong> that provide a surface expression of the dendritic drainage network and its interrelationship with the variety and complexity of the topography.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve and Enhance</strong> the appearance, integrity and quality of rivers and streams. Seek to avoid change that would compromise the characteristic dendritic pattern of watercourses and the relationship these have with complex landform features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rolling landform, extensive views and sense of exposure on some prominent locations</strong> creates an expansive and open character in contrast to lower and more secluded areas.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the expansive and open character of prominent locations in the landscape and <strong>Enhance</strong> the contrast between these areas and more secluded, intimate and intricate landscapes elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steep slopes adjacent to more elevated landscapes</strong> provide diversity to the landscape. These areas are often more secluded and support farm management regimes including smaller fields and pastures that contrast with the more elevated and open areas.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the intricate and diverse land use character of steeper slopes and seek to <strong>Enhance</strong> the sense of intimacy and seclusion that forms a direct contrast to the more expansive and open elevated areas of landscape. • <strong>Restore</strong> hedgelines, woodlands and declining habitat such as grasslands where appropriate to contribute to the diversity and intricate character of areas of steeply sloping landform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numerous water bodies, including the county’s largest reservoir</strong> at Pitsford, provide focal features and can enrich the diversity of the landscape subject to ensuring the appropriate location of man made waterbodies that do not detract from the character of riverine or watershed landscapes. Whilst often the result of more recent development, larger water bodies can be particularly arresting through their reflective quality and constantly changing appearance in response to both light changes and weather conditions.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> large water bodies for their intrinsic visual appeal, as well as their recreational and nature conservation value. • <strong>Enhance</strong> the setting and fabric of reservoirs by seeking opportunities for enhanced recreational and nature conservation facilities. Seek to ensure that the character of the landscape is enhanced through habitat management and creation. • <strong>Restore</strong> and <strong>Enhance</strong> structures and landscape features that form part of the historic landscape associated with reservoirs, such as Edwardian structures, and the arboretum at Sywell reservoir.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**4 ROLLING IRONSTONE VALLEY SLOPES**

**Land Management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Productive arable farmland in medium and large-scale fields predominates on elevated land although sheep and cattle pastures are also prevalent, often in smaller fields adjacent to watercourses. Agricultural practices create a patchwork of contrasting colours and textures extending across valley slopes and provide seasonal interest and diversity to the experience of the landscape. These contrasting farming practices create a dynamism and diversity to the landscape and reflect the interrelationship with and response to differing landforms and drainage pattern.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> the distinctive patterning of large arable fields created by hedged boundaries on elevated land and pasture in smaller fields on sloping land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enhance</strong> hedgerows by sensitive management that encourages diversity, whilst maintaining a neat network of boundaries that impart a sense of order, and of productive agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourage hedgerow removal and field amalgamation that lead to broader areas of monoculture, and a consequent reduction in the visual interest associated with the mosaic of fields and cropping patterns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Hedgerows generally low and well clipped although intermittent sections show evidence of decline. The pattern of hedgerows, many of which contain mature and semi-mature Oak and Ash, creates a rich tapestry across the landscape and is indicative of the many centuries of evolving land management and changing agricultural practices.</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enhance or Restore</strong> where appropriate metal ‘parkland’ fencing features at junctions and road intersections that are showing signs of decline and loss.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Cattle and sheep in well hedged pastures*
### Woodland and Trees

| Where broadleaved woodlands and mature hedgerow trees combine, these impart a sense of a well treed landscape. The location of this mosaic of woodland and tree cover is an important feature particularly the topographical association with steeper slopes or aligning the numerous watercourses, and a land management association, notably as coverts within the agricultural landscape or within the designed parklands that are also evident within the Ironstone Valley Slopes. | • **Conserve** and where possible **Enhance** the mosaic of woodland cover across the landscape.  
• **Restore** declining woodland or **Create** new woodland on former ancient woodland sites on sloping land where this is appropriate. On elevated land avoid significant planting that would compromise the open and elevated character of the landscape.  
• **Conserve** and **Enhance** the fabric of parkland landscapes. Consider the setting as potentially extending some distance beyond the boundary of the park to include eye catchers or other landscape features, and seek to conserve and enhance characteristic built features or planting that form part of the designed landscape. |

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**Broadleaved woodlands and mature hedgerow trees give sense of a well treed landscape**
Settlement and Built Form

Ironstone geology expressed in local vernacular buildings and in rich red soils. While building materials vary, vernacular architecture and churches display the local ironstone. This provides a strong sense of connection with the underlying geology and memorable local landmarks and features.

- **Conserve** buildings, and their setting, that express the local ironstone geology and strengthen the connection between built development and the underlying geology.
- **Restore** stone walls and other features using local stone that express the local ironstone geology and strengthen the connection between built development and the underlying geology.
- **Create** new buildings that utilise local stone sources. In the absence of viable quarrying, source appropriate reclaimed building stone for re-use. Seek wherever possible to respect local building vernacular, but not necessarily to directly copy detailing, or building styles.

Well settled with numerous villages and towns with landscape directly and indirectly influenced by the close proximity of many of the county’s urban areas. The predominantly agricultural landscape surrounding and forming the setting for settlements has an active and productive character with visual and physical connectivity with local communities.

- **Conserve** the rural character of the landscape surrounding towns, and avoid visual, actual or perceptual coalescence of neighbouring settlements to maintain the integrity and identity of each.
- **Conserve** and **Enhance** the character and identity of individual settlements and seek to approve only new development that performs this objective.
- **Create** a vibrant and visually appealing urban rural fringe or interface that is functional, visually appealing and sensitive to variations in local landscape and townscape character without compromising views of the historic settlement core.
CHARACTER AREAS

5a Naseby Plateau
5b Sywell Plateau
5c Burton Wold

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

• **Boulder Clay deposits overlie almost the entire landscape, obscuring variations in the underlying solid geology and giving a unity of character.** This has influenced the development of a simple landscape particularly across the more elevated plateau areas, with a land use dominated by agricultural production.

• **Broad, elevated undulating plateau dissected and drained by numerous valleys with convex profile valley sides.** This smoother undulating landform pattern on the plateau reinforces the simplicity of the landscape. The local variations that occur, primarily on the lower slopes and valley sides, introduce diversity and local interest within an otherwise uniform pattern.

• **Expansive, long distance and panoramic views across open areas of plateau, with a sense of exposure on some prominent locations** reinforces the sense of elevation and separation from the principal urban areas in the county.

• **Limited woodland and tree cover comprising broadleaved woodlands and mature hedgerow trees.** The occasional mainly geometric coverts that occur within the otherwise open agricultural landscape across the plateau provide important landscape features within this otherwise simple landscape. Where trees, woodlands and undulating landform combine, they limit or define views and create a more intimate character.

• **Numerous water bodies including small reservoirs on the Naseby Plateau** enrich the diversity of the landscape and provide features of local interest.

• **Productive arable farmland within medium and large-scale fields predominates on elevated land although sheep and cattle pastures also prevalent, often in smaller fields adjacent to watercourses.** The smaller scale and more intricate field pattern across the lower slopes emphasises the contrast with the predominance of an intensively farmed landscape that extends across the plateau with large scale and monochromatic arable fields and a simpler and more limited palette of features.
• **Hedgerows are often low and well clipped, although intermittent sections show evidence of decline, and emphasise the undulating character of the landscape.** The patchwork of fields often encloses large fields, particularly on the plateau tops, and imparts a productive and managed character and a record of centuries of land management and evolving agricultural practices.

• **Sparsely settled with small villages and isolated farms prevalent,** contributing to a generally quiet and remote landscape.

• **Monuments and landscape features associated with the Battle of Naseby are distinctive elements of the local landscape** and provide a tangible reminder of the Civil War battle.

**THE CLAY PLATEAU**

The Clay Plateau extends across the central and northwestern part of Northamptonshire and is represented in three separate areas. These broad, elevated areas rise above more undulating landscapes, which unlike the Clay Plateau, have not been masked by extensive deposits of boulder clay. Much of the Plateau is characterised by a smooth gently sloping landform, which reinforces the simplicity of this landscape with its limited palette of characteristics. These derive from the dominant land use of arable production, and limited woodland and tree cover, and a generally productive and intensively managed agricultural landscape. Across the more elevated areas where woodland is absent there is a sense of openness and exposure with wide panoramic views. Where woodlands occur, these often comprise geometric broadleaved coverts, and provide local landmark features. Some are ancient in origin, such as the ancient replanted Hardwick and Sywell Woods and may indicate remnants of an earlier more extensive woodland cover.

On the perimeter of the Clay Plateau areas, at the transition with the more undulating landscapes below the plateaux, numerous watercourses have eroded through the boulder clay to form a series of gentle convex profile valleys. These transitional lower slopes, with their more complex and dissected landform, introduce diversity to an otherwise uniform pattern, and support a wider palette of characteristics with smaller scale fields, areas of pasture as well as arable land, and tree cover.

A limited number of small villages occupy the plateau area but beyond these the area is sparsely settled with isolated farmstead, emphasising the generally isolated character. While heritage features are generally limited, notable areas of ridge and furrow are evident in the Naseby Plateau in the northwest of the county, where the Registered Civil War battle site of 1645 is also located.

A wind farm consisting of 10 turbines, each with a hub height of 60m, is a new introduction to the plateau landscape at Burton Wold.

**LANDSCAPE STRATEGY**

New development, change and land management changes should be controlled or encouraged to conserve the simplicity and the limited palette of characteristics of the more open plateau areas, but also strengthen the local variations that occur particularly within the more diverse landscape of the valleys that dissect the plateau rim. In view of the openness and high visibility of the elevated plateau landscapes, development should be discouraged to ensure there is no intrusion onto the skyline. Where development is considered within the lower and more secluded valleys, and the rural villages, reference should be made to the locality for the effect on the wider landscape setting together with particular details of local vernacular building styles, materials, and layout.

Although limited woodland cover is a characteristic of the area, there may be appropriate locations and opportunities to introduce new broadleaved woodlands within the plateau to provide further landmarks within an otherwise simple and often featureless area. Further woodland and tree planting may also be appropriate within the more diverse landscapes of the lower slopes and valley areas.

Valued historic landscape features and symbols within the landscape should be retained, and protected from degradation, including the effect of agricultural practices. Where appropriate, opportunities for wider observation and interpretation should be encouraged, including the possible re-creation of earlier field patterns to demonstrate key historic sites and events, such as the setting of the Naseby Battle Field.
### Key Landscape Character Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Boulder Clay deposits overlie almost the entire landscape, obscuring variations in the underlying solid geology and giving a unity of character. This has influenced the development of a simple and orderly landscape across large parts of the landscape, particularly across the more elevated plateau areas, with a land use dominated by agricultural production.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> the simple, unified and orderly character of the productive agricultural landscape that extends across much of the plateau areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad, elevated undulating plateau dissected and drained by numerous valleys with convex profile valley sides. This smoother undulating landform pattern on the plateau reinforces the simplicity of the landscape. The local variations that occur, primarily on the lower slopes and valley sides, introduce diversity and local interest within an otherwise uniform pattern.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> and <strong>Enhance</strong> local variations in the prevailing simple and unified character of the landscape, particularly along lower slopes and valleys where a more diverse land use pattern and landscape patterning are characteristic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansive, long distance and panoramic views across open areas of plateau, with a sense of exposure on some prominent locations reinforces the sense of elevation and separation from the principal urban areas in the county.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> and <strong>Enhance</strong> expansive, panoramic views across elevated, open areas of plateau landscape. Seek to enhance the sense of elevation and separation from surrounding urban areas by appropriate land management and development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Numerous water bodies including small reservoirs on the Naseby Plateau enrich the diversity of the landscape and provide features of local interest. | **Conserve** large water bodies for their intrinsic visual appeal, as well as their recreational and nature conservation value.  
**Enhance** the setting and fabric of reservoirs, by seeking opportunities for enhanced recreational and nature conservation facilities. Seek to ensure that the character of the landscape is enhanced through habitat management and creation.  
**Restore** and **Enhance** structures and landscape features that form part of the historic landscape associated with reservoirs. |
Land Management

**Productive arable farmland** within medium and large-scale fields predominates on elevated land although sheep and cattle pastures also prevalent, often in smaller fields adjacent to watercourses. The smaller scale and more intricate field pattern across the lower slopes emphasises the contrast with the predominance of an intensively farmed landscape that extends across the plateau with large scale and monochromatic arable fields and a simpler and more limited palette of features.

- **Conserve** the distinctive patterning of large arable fields created by hedged boundaries.
- **Enhance** hedgerows by sensitive management that encourages diversity, whilst maintaining a neat network of boundaries that impart a sense of order and of productive agriculture.
- Discourage hedgerow removal and field amalgamation that lead to broader areas of monoculture, and a consequent reduction in the visual interest associated with the mosaic of fields and cropping patterns.

**Hedgerows** are often low and well clipped, although intermittent sections show evidence of decline, and emphasise the undulating character of the landscape. The patchwork of fields often encloses large fields, particularly on the plateau tops, and imparts a productive and managed character and a record of centuries of land management and evolving agricultural practices.

- **Conserve** and **Enhance** hedgerows by sensitive management that encourages diversity, whilst maintaining a neat network of boundaries that impart a sense of order and of productive agriculture.

**Woodland and Trees**

**Limited woodland and tree cover** comprising broadleaved woodlands and mature hedgerow trees. The occasional mainly geometric coverts that occur within the otherwise open agricultural landscape across the plateau provide important landscape features within this otherwise simple landscape. Where trees, woodlands and undulating landform combine, they limit or define views and create a more intimate character.

- **Conserve** and **Enhance** the geometric coverts and woodlands, whilst maintaining the open and expansive character of the more elevated plateau landscapes.

Trees and hedgerows providing a more intimate character
## Heritage and Settlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sparsely settled with small villages and isolated farms prevalent, contributing to a generally quiet and remote landscape.</th>
<th><strong>Conserve</strong> the sparsely settled character of the landscape by limiting new development on the elevated and remote plateau.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monuments and landscape features associated with the Battle of Naseby are distinctive elements of the local landscape and provide a tangible reminder of the Civil War battle.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> and <strong>Enhance</strong> landscape features associated with the Battle of Naseby. Seek to <strong>Restore</strong> lost features or create features that might aid the interpretation of this important event.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Views from Naseby Monument, a tangible reminder of the Civil War battle fought on this landscape.
CHARACTER AREAS

6a The Tove Catchment
6b Hackleton Claylands
6c Bozeat Claylands

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

- **Wide panoramic views across elevated areas**, although the undulating landform creates more contained and intimate areas. The shallow valleys are generally not perceptible below the more open, elevated areas and interflues, resulting in expansive views and wide horizons.

- **A productive rural landscape** with an equal balance of arable and pastoral farming with the former predominating on more elevated land and often larger in scale, although arable land can be found along valley bottoms where sand and gravel deposits are located. Improved and semi-improved pastures located along narrow floodplains and sloping land bordering them, often more intricate and smaller in scale. This mosaic of agricultural land enriches the landscape and emphasises the interrelationship between land use and landform.

- **Large woodlands** are not a characteristic feature, although woodland in surrounding landscape types, small deciduous copses and hedgerow trees can together create the sense of a well-wooded character. Where this coalescence of woodland and trees occurs, the sense of enclosure results in the perception of a smaller scale landscape.

- **Concentrations of small woodlands** apparent around designed parklands. This further enriches the woodland cover and provides memorable landmark features, including distinctive avenues as at Castle Ashby.

- **Hedgerows** are often low and well clipped emphasising the undulating character of the landscape with scattered hedgerow oak and ash trees. The pattern and scale of the hedgerow network is an important feature within the landscape and reinforces the relationship between land use and grain of the landform.

- **Numerous villages** located throughout the landscape with varying morphology. Settlement beyond the villages includes scattered Enclosure farmsteads and isolated dwellings, located at the end of short access tracks and adjacent to the roadside. The settlement pattern is indicative of a quiet and deeply rural landscape focused on agricultural production.
A long settled landscape with evidence dating back to the Bronze Age and evidence of Roman occupation. Many historic remnants evocative of the medieval period, including rural villages, moated sites, and extensive areas of ridge and furrow. Historic parklands also provide important landscape features along with remnants of the industrial age, including disused railways and canals. These wide ranging heritage features contribute to the local diversity and richness of the landscape and are tangible evidence of occupation over a long period of time.

Recreational opportunities are diverse, including listed manors and parkland estates, canal trips, llama trekking and numerous national trails. These are indicative of a busy and well frequented landscape serving the needs of both local communities and visitors from a wider area.

**THE UNDULATING CLAYLANDS**

The Undulating Claylands extend across the southeastern perimeter of the county and form the broad upper catchment areas of the Tove to the west and Nene to the east. A broad mantle of boulder clay has largely obscured the complexity of the solid geology that underlies the areas. A dendritic pattern of watercourses and tributaries of the Tove and Nene drain the Undulating Claylands. These have eroded through the boulder clay to create a succession of shallow valleys and rounded interfluvies to form the elevated, soft and gently undulating landform that characterises the landscape.

A land use of mixed arable and pasture extends across the landscape creating a patchwork of fields. Smaller scale fields are generally confined to the valley areas. With a predominance of arable fields on the elevated interfluvies, views across these areas can give the impression that the area is confined to arable cultivation.

Although this is not a well wooded landscape, the combination in some areas of small belts of woodland, together with shelterbelts and tree cover associated with farmsteads, and also hedgerow trees, can coalesce to give the impression of a well treed landscape. Woodland associated with historic parklands and estates are also notable features, such as at Stoke Bruerne Park and Courteen Hall. The woodland and avenue associated with the park at Easton Neston, and the long avenue running south from Castle Ashby are also distinctive landmarks.

This quiet, rural landscape is well settled with numerous small villages evident across the landscape. Beyond the villages, the scattered farmsteads emphasise the focus on agricultural production.

**LANDSCAPE STRATEGY**

New development, change and land management practices should be controlled or encouraged to conserve the simplicity and the limited palette of characteristics that define this generally quiet and settled rural landscape. Intrusion of development onto the more elevated sections and interfluvies within the Undulating Claylands should be resisted to retain the open and unobstructed views to the wider landscape. New landscape elements that are introduced should make reference to the locality for particular details of local vernacular building styles, materials, layout and arrangement of features to ensure they integrate into the landscape. Further areas of broadleaved woodland planting may be appropriate, particularly in the lower valley areas to emphasise the landform pattern and its undulating form that derives from the succession of valleys and interfluvies.
6 UNDULATING CLAYLANDS

Key Landscape Character Features | Landscape Guidelines
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**Landform and Views**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Guidelines</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wide panoramic views across elevated areas, although the undulating landform creates more contained and intimate areas. The shallow valleys are generally not perceptible below the more open, elevated areas and interfluves, resulting in expansive views and wide horizons.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> wide panoramic views across the landscape from elevated areas. • <strong>Enhance</strong> the contrast between open elevated areas and more intimate and visually contained areas along shallow valleys by appropriate land management regimes and development planning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Land Management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A productive rural landscape with an equal balance of arable and pastoral farming with the former predominating on more elevated land and often larger in scale, although arable land can be found along valley bottoms where sand and gravel deposits are located. Improved and semi improved pastures located along narrow floodplains and sloping land bordering them, often more intricate and smaller in scale. This mosaic of agricultural land enriches the landscape and emphasises the interrelationship between land use and landform.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> and <strong>Enhance</strong> the characteristic patterns and distribution of agricultural land use to further emphasise the relationship between land use and landform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedgerows are often low and well clipped emphasising the undulating character of the landscape with scattered hedgerow oak and ash trees. The pattern and scale of the hedgerow network is an important feature within the landscape and reinforces the relationship between land use and grain of the landform.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> and <strong>Enhance</strong> hedgerows by sensitive management that encourages diversity, whilst maintaining a neat network of boundaries that reinforce the relationship between land use and emphasise the grain of the landscape and landform features. Replace post and wire fencing where possible and gap up hedgerows with new hedgerow planting of appropriate species.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Woodland and Trees

Large woodlands are not a characteristic feature, although woodland in surrounding landscape types, small deciduous copses and hedgerow trees can together create the sense of a well-wooded character. Where this coalescence of woodland and trees occurs, the sense of enclosure results in the perception of a smaller scale landscape.

- **Conserve** the predominantly unwooded character of the landscape by discouraging the planting of large scale woodland planting.
- **Conserve and Enhance** the smaller scale woodlands and copses and hedgerow trees that contribute to the changing pattern and mosaic of a perceived local enclosure within a wider open character.

Concentrations of small woodlands apparent around designed parklands. This further enriches the woodland cover and provides memorable landmark features, including distinctive avenues as at Castle Ashby.

- **Conserve and Enhance** the characteristic pattern of small woodlands and particular those associated with historic and designed parklands. Create new small woodlands, ideally on the site of ancient woodlands to further strengthen this characteristic feature.

Although not a characteristic feature, Plumpton Wood and the hedgerow trees give sense of a well-wooded character.
Heritage and Settlement

Numerous villages located throughout the landscape with varying morphology. Settlement beyond the villages includes scattered enclosure age farmsteads and isolated dwellings, located at the end of short access tracks and adjacent to the roadside. The settlement pattern is indicative of a quiet and deeply rural landscape focused on agricultural production.

- Conserve the diversity of settlement morphologies evident throughout the landscape and enhance local variations through sympathetically sited and well planned and designed new development.
- Conserve the character and integrity of enclosure age farmsteads and associated structures, in addition to field patterns. Avoid new development that compromises the intact rural and historic character of the rural landscape.

A long settled landscape with evidence dating back to the Bronze Age and evidence of Roman occupation. Many historic remnants evocative of the medieval period, including rural villages, moated sites, and extensive areas of ridge and furrow. Historic parklands also provide important landscape features along with remnants of the industrial age, including disused railways and canals. These wide ranging heritage features contribute to the local diversity and richness of the landscape and are tangible evidence of occupation over a long period of time.

- Conserve historic sites and features that contribute to an understanding of time depth in the landscape. Seek to Enhance the setting of these sites and monuments.

Recreation

Recreational opportunities are diverse, including listed manors and parkland estates, canal trips, llama trekking and numerous national trails. These are indicative of a busy and well frequented landscape serving the needs of both local communities and visitors from a wider area.

- Conserve the existing network of recreational opportunities that have developed and Encourage the provision of further developments to serve the leisure requirements of local and wider communities, but ensuring that they are appropriately and sensitively sited and accord with the principles of sustainable tourism.
CHARACTER AREAS

7a Geddington Chase
7b Deene Plateau
7c Rockingham Plateau

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

• Boulder Clay deposits overlie almost the entire landscape, obscuring variations in the underlying geological framework and giving a unity of character. These have influenced the evolution of the landscape, particularly its limited capacity for agriculture and the development of the Rockingham Royal Hunting Forest resulting in a simple palette of landscape features and elements.

• Broad, elevated undulating plateau dissected and drained by numerous valleys with convex profile valley sides creates a distinctive undulating topography, with contrasting local variations and a diverse landscape experience.

• Undulating landform, extensive views and sense of exposure on some prominent locations provides wide panoramas across extensive areas of the landscape, and a dramatic contrast to areas where woodland or undulating landform intercepts or limits views.

• Large woodlands on elevated ground form a backdrop to foreground farmland and provide an intimate human scale landscape. The combination of extensive woodland cover, along with agricultural fields and villages create a distinctive and instantly recognizable landscape pattern that is evocative of the area’s land use history.

• Woodlands are of high scenic and nature conservation value and an important remnant of the Royal Hunting Forest of Rockingham. The type, age and management regime of different woodlands has resulted in a wide variety of woodland experiences. Significant areas of Ancient Woodland survive, making an important contribution to visual, historic and biodiversity value.

• Foreground views are occupied by productive arable fields with low hedges and intermittent hedgerow trees that provide colourful and active landscapes in contrast with the simpler ‘structural’ woodland component of the landscape. The pattern of fields is evocative of centuries of woodland clearance and land management and changing agricultural practices.
PRODUCTION LANDSCAPE CHARACTER STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES

• Productive arable farmland in medium and large-scale fields predominates on elevated land although sheep and cattle pastures also prevalent, often in smaller fields adjacent to watercourses and villages. Contrasting farming practices and land management regimes bring a visual diversity and dynamism to the landscape that is in contrast to the coniferous woodlands that change little season to season.

• Hedgerows are often low and well clipped and emphasise the undulating character of the landscape, and contribute to the well treed character of the landscape by visually coalescing with woodlands and copses.

• Mature landscaped parks and gardens add to wooded character of the landscape and also contribute verdant, pastoral landscapes which contrast with the wider wooded and agricultural landscape. The parks also add to the perception of time depth and history in the landscape with a number having their origins as deer parks.

• Sparsely populated central plateau areas contribute to a distinct sense of remoteness and tranquility despite the proximity of large towns fringing the plateau. The relative absence of settlement is an important reminder of the area’s history as the Royal Hunting Forest of Rockingham.

• Larger settlements and urban areas fringe the plateau landscapes providing a marked contrast to the more remote and sparsely settled forested areas.

• Distinctive stone villages in sheltered locations provide attractive and architecturally rich features within the wooded and agricultural landscapes of the plateau. Many display an intimate relationship with their surrounding landscape, through their siting and use of local stone.

• Deeply rural quality, despite proximity of large urban areas, that is attractive to visitors for its landscape quality, diverse flora and fauna and historic associations.

THE WOODED CLAY PLATEAU

The Wooded Clay Plateau extends across the northeastern part of the county, surrounding the town of Corby and encompassing much of the Rockingham Forest area. It also extends westwards to the county boundary in the vicinity of Market Harborough. It comprises an elevated area that has been masked by extensive deposits of boulder clay resulting in a smooth and gently sloping landform.

The Wooded Clay Plateau is a landscape comprised of a limited palette of simple characteristics. Despite recent change, the combination of extensive areas of woodland, many of which are ancient, hedged fields and stone villages has maintained its strength of character, sense of place and strong historical associations. Variations in woodland and agricultural management and historic land use contribute to a visually rich landscape, with significant heritage and nature conservation interest and local diversity.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

New development, change and land management should be controlled to conserve and enhance the boldness of this historic wooded landscape, but at the same time emphasise local variations and the richness of the landscape. New elements introduced into the landscape, such as the creation of characterisic woodland habitats, or extension to or replanting of the existing woodlands, should take account of and be drawn from the limited palette of characteristics of this area. In respect of new built development, reference should be made to the locality for particular details of local vernacular building styles, materials, layout and arrangement of features in the landscape. Of particular significance is the intrinsic sense of remoteness and tranquillity, and change should seek to retain and enhance these qualities wherever possible.

The contrast between open, bold landscapes of agricultural fields contained within wooded skylines and commanding long distance views, and the more intimate and intricate landscapes along valleys should also be emphasised.
### Key Landscape Character Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landform and Views</th>
<th>Landscape Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boulder Clay deposits overlie almost the entire landscape, obscuring variations in the underlying geological framework and giving a unity of character. These have influenced the evolution of the landscape, particularly its limited capacity for agriculture and the development of the Rockingham Royal Hunting Forest resulting in a simple palette of landscape features and elements.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> and <strong>Enhance</strong> the unity of character of the landscape by the use of a limited palette of landscape features and elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad, elevated undulating plateau dissected and drained by numerous valleys with convex profile valley sides creates a distinctive undulating topography, with contrasting local variations and a diverse landscape experience.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the distinctive variations of landscape experience between the undulating plateaus and the more intimate valleys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undulating landform, extensive views and sense of exposure on some prominent locations provides wide panoramas across extensive areas of the landscape, and a dramatic contrast to areas where woodland or undulating landform intercepts or limits views.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the sense of exposure and extensive views across the landscape from prominent locations on the plateau, and the contrast between these areas and more intimate areas of the landscape.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Land Management

| Foreground views are occupied by productive arable fields with low hedges and intermittent hedgerow trees that provide colourful and active landscapes in contrast with the simpler ‘structural’ woodland component of the landscape. The pattern of fields is evocative of centuries of woodland clearance and land management and changing agricultural practices | • **Conserve** the balance of open agricultural landscape to woodland, and seek to maintain the relationship between structural woodland planting and open areas.  
• **Conserve**, and where appropriate **Restore** the various patterns created across the landscape by hedgerows and woodlands that contribute to the historic character and visual appeal of the landscape. |
| Productive arable farmland in medium and large-scale fields predominates on elevated land although sheep and cattle pastures also prevalent, often in smaller fields adjacent to watercourses and villages. Contrasting farming practices and land management regimes bring a visual diversity and dynamism to the landscape in contrast to the coniferous woodlands that change little season to season. | • **Conserve** the diversity of agricultural land uses across the plateau.  
• **Conserve** land use patterns, with a predominance of pasture in smaller fields adjacent to water courses and villages, and arable farming in the larger fields across the plateau.  
• **Conserve** riparian habitats along watercourses. |
| Hedgerows are often low and well clipped and emphasise the undulating character of the landscape, and contribute to the well treed character of the landscape by visually coalescing with woodlands and copses. | • **Conserve** hedgerow patterns and where appropriate, manage more sympathetically for their nature conservation value and encourage more hedgerow trees to develop to further contribute to the well treed character of the landscape. Whilst encouraging a more sympathetic hedgerow management regime, seek to ensure that the pattern of fields can still be appreciated. |
Woodland and Trees

| Large woodlands on elevated ground form a backdrop to foreground farmland and provide an intimate human scale landscape. The combination of extensive woodland cover, along with agricultural fields and villages create a distinctive and instantly recognizable landscape pattern that is evocative of the area’s land use history. | • **Conserve** the significant woodland blocks on the plateau and hill tops and encourage the reconfiguration of coniferous plantations to follow landform more sympathetically, replanting wherever possible with deciduous species.

| Woodlands are of high scenic and nature conservation value and an important remnant of the Royal Hunting Forest of Rockingham. The type, age and management regime of different woodlands has resulted in a wide variety of woodland experiences. Significant areas of Ancient Woodland survive. | • **Restore** areas of ancient woodland to broadleaved species as part of long-term management of coniferous plantations.  
• **Restore** and **Enhance** ancient woodland sites through encouraging natural woodland regeneration where appropriate.  
• **Enhance** the understanding of the heritage and biodiversity value of the ancient woodland and establish a network of woodland trails supported by interpretation facilities and guidance.  
• **Create** new areas of broadleaf woodland on former ancient woodland sites which are appropriate in scale, location and design.

| Mature landscaped parks and gardens add to wooded character of the landscape and also contribute verdant, pastoral landscapes which contrast with the wider wooded and agricultural landscape. The parks also add to the perception of time depth and history in the landscape with a number having their origins as deer parks. | • **Conserve** the parkland character of registered and non registered sites, and seek to conserve features, and in the wider landscape associated with these sites such as particular tree groups, estate villages or monuments. **Conserve or Restore** the setting of these features.  
• **Conserve**, and where possible **Restore** historic features associated with the management of hunting grounds such as traditional fencing, boundary ditches and banks, and clearings.

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Woodland and parkland trees at Drayton Park

Large woodlands on elevated ground form a backdrop to farmland and create an intimate landscape.
Settlement

**Sparsely populated central plateau areas** contribute to a distinct sense of remoteness and tranquility despite the proximity of large towns fringing the plateau. The relative absence of settlement is an important reminder of the area’s history as a Royal Hunting Forest of Rockingham.

- **Conserve** the distinctive patterns of settlement across the plateau, with an emphasis on settlement along valleys and retaining more sparsely populated plateau tops.
- **Conserve** the sense of remoteness and tranquility in areas of low population density by limiting built and other forms of development.

**Larger settlements and urban areas fringe the plateau landscapes** providing a marked contrast to the more remote and sparsely settled forested areas.

- **Conserve** the marked distinction between urban and rural, by seeking to avoid urban influences extending into the wider landscape. Look at the treatment of settlement edges and seek to soften these wherever possible with woodland planting.

**Distinctive stone villages in sheltered locations** provide attractive and architecturally rich features within the wooded and agricultural landscapes of the plateau. Many display an intimate relationship with their surrounding landscape, through their siting and use of local stone.

- **Conserve** the integrity of the remote forest villages by limiting inappropriate infill and settlement edge development.
- **Conserve** the architectural heritage of these villages and where appropriate restore existing stone buildings in preference to demolition and new build.
- **Conserve** the intimate relationship between the villages to their landscape setting.
- **Conserve or Restore** stone walls and other features that ‘tie’ the settlement into the landscape.
- **Conserve** distinctive building traditions and use of materials in the forest villages.

**Deeply rural quality, despite proximity of large urban areas,** that is attractive to visitors for its landscape quality, diverse flora and fauna and historic associations.

- **Conserve** the rural characteristics of the landscape in addition to the diverse historic and natural characteristic features that attract visitors to the area.
- **Create** opportunities through low key interpretation facilities for visitors to more fully appreciate the diversity of the natural resource, and the evolution of the landscape.
CHARACTER AREAS

8a Whittlewood Plateau
8b Salcey Forest and Yardley Chase

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

- **Boulder Clay deposits overlie almost the entire landscape, obscuring variations in the underlying solid geology.** These have influenced the evolution of the landscape, particularly its limited capacity for agriculture and the development of the Royal Hunting Forests at Whittlewood Forest, and at Salcey Forest and Yardley Chase, resulting in a simple palette of landscape features and elements.

- **Broad, elevated plateau with shallow soils, elevated above adjacent lowland landscapes** provides an expansive character where intermittent long distance views are obtained between the woodland enclosure.

- **Extensive areas of ancient woodland form a backdrop to a foreground of farmland** and define a strong and recognisable skyline where the woodland extends across the ridgeline. The network of ancient woodlands are of considerable visual and biodiversity value, and have the potential for forming the core areas for a long term programme to create a wider landscape scale biodiversity reservoir and an associated mosaic of habitats.

- **Strong historic character derived from the landscape’s ancient woodlands and Forest villages.** The identifiable pattern of the Hunting Forests, the ‘lawns’ for pasture and nucleated Forest villages, such as Silverstone, Whittlebury and Yardley Hastings, are an important physical and visual record of an evolving landscape.

- **Mixed land use of pasture and arable farmland extending between wooded areas** form an intimate and human scale landscape that integrates harmoniously within the woodland setting and contributes to a well managed and productive landscape.

- **Medium sized fields defined by full hedges containing numerous hedgerow trees** complement and enhance the sense of a well wooded landscape and visual enclosure.

- **Low density of settlement and sparse road patterns** contribute to the sense of remoteness and tranquility.
THE LOW WOODED CLAY RIDGE

The Low Wooded Clay Ridge displays a limited palette of characteristics arising from the interplay of the simple, gently sloping landform of the low ridge over which extends numerous large scale mature woodlands enclosing a mosaic of productive agricultural land. The ridge follows the southeastern boundary of the county with the landscape type represented in two separate areas at Whittlewood, and at Salcey Forest and Yardley Chase. The boulder clay drift deposits that mask much of this area have been a constraint to agricultural practices and many areas have remained forested since the 13th century when the ridges were appropriated as Royal Hunting Forests, at Whittlewood, and also at Salcey and Yardley Chase. Extensive areas of woodland cover still remain, and include important areas of ancient woodland. The woodland is an important element in defining the character of these landscapes, with the bold skyline of the wooded ridge clearly recognisable from the surrounding more open lowlands. Between the woodland areas, productive arable farmland and pastures form a patchwork of contrasting colours and textures. Fields are often contained within species rich hedgerows and mature hedgerows trees that further contribute to the well wooded character. This is a quiet and deeply rural area. The strong woodland enclosure, and limited settlement and roads, often evokes a sense of remoteness and tranquility.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

New development, change and land management should be controlled to conserve and enhance the simplicity and boldness of the landscape, but also enable local variations to be accommodated. New features should be drawn from the limited palette of characteristics and respect the changing pattern and interplay of woodland and open areas. However, reference should be made to the locality for particular details of local vernacular building styles, materials, layout and arrangement of features in the landscape. The distinctive wooded skylines should remain unbreached. In particular, care should be taken to ensure that the significant heritage and nature conservation interest of the ancient woodlands is not adversely affected and that opportunities are sought to enhance and extend the woodland. Land use changes and associated development that adversely affect the sense of remoteness and tranquility that can be experienced within the more secluded parts of the Low Wooded Clay Ridge should be avoided.

Opportunities should be sought where possible, notably through a long term programme of Environmental Stewardship guidance and support, to buffer the areas of ancient woodland and introduce further areas of broadleaved woodland to extend and link these irreplaceable habitat reservoirs. The Low Wooded Clay Ridge has the potential for contributing to the development of a landscape scale biodiversity reservoir that could extend across the southeastern side of Northamptonshire and consolidating the woodlands and associated habitats at a county and, indeed, sub regional scale.
### Key Landscape Character Features

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<td>• <strong>Enhance</strong> the unity of character of the landscape by the use of a limited palette of landscape features and elements.</td>
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<td><strong>Broad, elevated plateau with shallow soils, elevated above adjacent lowland landscapes</strong> provides an expansive character where intermittent long distance views are obtained between the woodland enclosure.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the distinctive variations of landscape experience between the elevated plateau and lower lying areas. • <strong>Conserve and Enhance</strong> the sense of exposure and extensive views across the landscape from prominent locations and the contrast between these areas and more intimate wooded areas of the landscape.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Land Management

| **Mixed land use of pasture and arable farmland extending between wooded areas** form an intimate and human scale landscape that integrates harmoniously within the woodland setting and contributes to a well managed and productive landscape. | • **Conserve** the pattern of mixed agricultural land uses between areas of woodland. |
| **Medium sized fields defined by full hedges containing numerous hedgerow trees** complement and enhance the sense of a well wooded landscape and visual enclosure. | • **Conserve** hedgerows and hedgerow trees through appropriate long-term management that encourages diversity. Where declining, seek opportunities to gap up hedgerows and replant hedgerow trees where previous management has removed them or prevented natural regeneration. • **Enhance** hedgerow biodiversity by encouraging natural regeneration and appropriate long term management. |

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*Chase Park Lane, Mixed land use of pasture and arable farmland extending between wooded areas*
Woodland and Trees

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**Extensive areas of ancient woodland form a backdrop to a foreground of farmland** and define a strong and recognisable skyline where the woodland extends across the ridgeline. The network of ancient woodlands are of considerable visual and biodiversity value, and have the potential for forming the core areas for a long term programme to create a wider landscape scale biodiversity reservoir and an associated mosaic of habitats.

- **Conserve** the visually significant blocks of predominantly ancient woodland on the ridges and hill tops and encourage the reconfiguration of coniferous plantations to follow landform more sympathetically, replanting wherever possible with deciduous species.
- **Restore** areas of ancient woodland to broadleaved species as part of long-term management.
- **Restore** and **Enhance** ancient woodland sites through encouraging natural woodland regeneration where appropriate. Seek opportunities for woodland management through coppicing.
- **Enhance** the understanding of the heritage and biodiversity value of the ancient woodland and establish a network of woodland trails supported by interpretation facilities and guidance.
- **Seek** to **Enhance** and **Create** appropriate habitats as part of a landscape scale and coordinated initiative in preference to small scale and isolated initiatives.

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The Church Oak, Salcey Forest
Heritage and Settlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong historic character derived from the landscape’s ancient woodlands and Forest villages. The identifiable pattern of the Hunting Forests, the ‘lawns’ for pasture and nucleated Forest villages such as Silverstone, Whittlebury and Yardley Hastings, are an important physical and visual record of an evolving landscape.</th>
<th>Conserve and Enhance the historic character of the landscape by preserving characteristic features such as forest lawns and the pattern of nucleated forest villages.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low density of settlement and sparse road patterns contribute to the sense of remoteness and tranquility.</td>
<td>Conserve the sense of remoteness and tranquility by avoiding new development or activities that compromise this. Direct impacts from development should be considered in conjunction with indirect impacts such as urbanisation of rural roads, lighting, noise and additional traffic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHARACTER AREAS

9a Chelveston and Caldecott Claylands
9b Polebrook Claylands

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

• **Extensive drift deposits of Boulder Clay mask the underlying solid geology** and contribute to the simple and bold landscape character and limited palette of landscape elements.

• **Expansive, flat or gently undulating landscape where plateau areas are divided by broad shallow valleys.** The landform reinforces the simplicity and expansive open character of the landscape.

• **Wide views give the landscape an expansive and sometimes exposed character** with uninterrupted vistas to the lower lying Nene Valley and the wider Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire countryside. The broad scale and open skies present an exhilarating contrast to the smaller scale and busy landscapes of the adjacent Nene Valley.

• **Open and intensively farmed arable landscape with large scale fields bounded by open ditches or sparse, closely trimmed hedges.** The intensive farming regime has created a highly managed landscape focused on efficient production, with hedgerow removal and open fields emphasising the effect of economic drivers to maximise arable production outputs.

• **Limited woodland cover and hedgerow removal contributes to open character.** The occasional areas of ancient woodlands, such as Ashton Wold, are significant landmarks within the now sparse woodland cover and remnants of a once more extensive woodland cover. The occasional woodlands and geometric shelterbelts punctuate the landscape and create local landmarks and reference points within an otherwise sometimes featureless landscape.

• **Thinliney settled landscape, feeling remote in some particularly sparsely settled areas,** contributes to the empty and uncluttered character.
9 FARmed CLayLANDS

- Often direct rural roads and tracks, frequently bordered by ditches, cross the landscape in a consistent orientation, giving it a distinctive grain and an ordered character as a result of the rigid geometry of the road alignment.

- Farms and isolated houses at end of tracks form part of the ordered and agricultural landscape. Large-scale agricultural barns and storage buildings can be dominant features where they are located on the skyline and without the softening effect of tree cover.

- Diversity of building materials including brick and limestone reflect the progressive development of the area and availability of a wider range of materials for construction.

THE FARmed CLayLANDS

The Farmed Claylands extend along the northeastern perimeter of the county forming two separate areas to the south and north of Thrapston. Rising gently above the limestone slopes and valley bottom of the River Nene, they merge seamlessly into the broad expanse of the farmland and woodlands within the neighbouring county of Cambridgeshire. The mantle of boulder clay, which extends across the area has obscured the underlying solid geology and softened and simplified the landform, and influenced the development of heavy clay soils. This is an intensively farmed, highly managed and ordered agricultural landscape focused almost entirely on a monoculture of arable production set within large fields within sparse and closely trimmed hedgerows. Many hedgerows have been removed and fields, often demarcated by ditches that mark former hedgerow boundaries.

Although the area only reaches a moderate elevation around 100m, its open and simple character and limited woodland and tree cover allow uninterrupted views across the Nene Valley to the north of the county. This gives the impression of a greater altitude, and the broad vistas can be exhilarating when seen against the expansive scale of the landscape and open skies.

Woodland cover across the Farmed Claylands is sparse and limited to occasional woodlands and geometric shelterbelts that form local landmarks and reference points within an otherwise generally featureless landscape. The occasional areas of ancient woodlands, notably at Ashton Wold, are significant landmarks within the now sparse woodland cover and represent surviving remnants of a once more extensive woodland cover. Settlement across the Farmed Claylands is sparse and confined to a small number of villages and a pattern of isolated farmstead, a number of which have large storage barns and buildings which are prominent and sometimes visually intrusive features in the open landscape where tree cover is absent. The geometric and ordered character of the landscape is further emphasised by a network of direct rural roads that often follow the grain of the landform.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

The open and simple character and broad vistas of the Farmed Claylands has resulted in a strong sense of identity, which differentiates it from other Landscape Character Types. New development, change and land management should conserve and enhance the simplicity and boldness of the landscape, to ensure that this identity is not diminished. It may therefore be inappropriate, as well as unrealistic, to restore pre war landscapes of smaller hedged fields. However, within this wider remit, the intensive agricultural management practices has significantly reduced the biodiversity value of the area through the removal over many years of extensive areas of woodland, as well a hedgerows. While the broad scale and wide vistas should be retained, this open landscape has the capacity to accommodate some further areas of woodland that can be integrated into the managed and geometric form of the landscape. New woodlands could complement this overall bold structure and introduce further biodiversity interest within an otherwise impoverished area. In addition, opportunities for enhanced hedgerow management to provide greater biodiversity value should also be encouraged. In addition, the establishment of new hedgerows, especially along road margins, could provide some enclosure as well as biodiversity benefits without compromising the wider scale of the farmed landscape and field sizes.

New built development should be resisted on this open and exposed area and confined to changes related to farm holdings or in association with the small villages. Here, reference should be made to the locality for particular details of vernacular building styles, materials, layout and arrangement of features in the landscape. In the case of farms, new barns and farm premises, these should be carefully sited and mitigated by planting to soften their impact in the open landscape.
### Key Landscape Character Features

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<tr>
<td><strong>Extensive drift deposits of Boulder Clay mask the underlying solid geology</strong> and contribute to the simple and bold landscape character and limited palette of landscape elements.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the simple and bold character of the landscape by new development drawing from a limited palette of elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expansive, flat or gently undulating landscape where plateau areas are divided by broad shallow valleys.</strong> The landform reinforces the simplicity and expansive, open character of the landscape.</td>
<td>• <strong>Enhance</strong> the simplicity and expansive character of the landscape by careful siting of new development or woodland planting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wide views across large-scale fields give the landscape an expansive and sometimes exposed character with uninterrupted vistas to the lower lying Nene Valley and the wider Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire countryside.</strong> The broad scale and open skies present an exhilarating contrast to the smaller scale and busy landscapes of the adjacent Nene Valley.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> uninterrupted vistas across the landscape to lower lying areas and the Nene Valley. Seek to enhance views wherever possible by opening up particularly impressive vistas. Avoid development that breaks the skyline, or interrupts the clear profile of the horizon.</td>
</tr>
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### Land Management

<table>
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<td><strong>Open and intensively farmed arable landscape with large scale fields bounded by open ditches or sparse, closely trimmed hedges.</strong> The intensive farming regime has created a highly managed landscape focused on efficient production, with hedgerow removal and open fields emphasising the effect of economic drivers to maximise arable production outputs.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the pattern of large fields and open boundary ditches with hedgerows. • <strong>Enhance</strong> hedgerows by gapping up, encouraging natural regeneration and appropriate management. • <strong>Enhance</strong> the nature conservation interest of boundary ditches and hedgerows by encouraging appropriate long term management and use of field margin strips in otherwise sterile arable farmland.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Woodland and Trees

Limited woodland cover and hedgerow removal contributes to open character. The occasional areas of ancient woodlands, such as Ashton Wold, are significant landmarks within the now sparse woodland cover and remnants of a once more extensive woodland cover. The occasional woodlands and geometric shelterbelts punctuate the landscape and create local landmarks and reference points within an otherwise sometimes featureless landscape.

• **Conserve** uninterrupted vistas across the landscape to low lying areas and the Nene Valley. Seek to enhance views wherever possible by opening up particularly impressive or important vistas. Avoid development that breaks the skyline, or interrupts the clear profile of the horizon and vastness of the skylines.
• **Conserve** the limited areas of woodland within the landscape, with particular emphasis on areas of ancient woodland that represent the remnants of a former more extensive woodland cover.
• **Restore** declining woodland and **Create** limited areas of new woodland on former ancient woodland sites with bold simple forms to complement the ordered character of the landscape. Avoid significant planting that would compromise the open and elevated character of the landscape.
### Settlement, Built Form and Infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinly settled landscape, feeling remote in some particularly sparsely settled areas, contributes to the empty and uncluttered character.</th>
<th><strong>Conserve</strong> the sparsely settled character of the landscape and sense of remoteness by siting new development in close proximity to existing settlement, without compromising views of the historic core, in preference to locations within the wider agricultural landscape.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often direct rural roads and tracks, frequently bordered by ditches, cross the landscape in a consistent orientation, giving it a distinctive grain and an ordered character as a result of the rigid geometry of the road alignment.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> the character of rural roads and avoid urbanisation through the introduction of features such as concrete kerbs, roundabouts and lighting. Enhance the distinctive ‘grain’ of the landscape created by roads and field boundaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farms and isolated houses at end of tracks form part of the ordered and agricultural landscape. Large-scale agricultural barns and storage buildings can be dominant features where they are located on the skyline and without the softening effect of tree cover.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> the distinctive small footprint occupied by rural farmsteads, by encouraging re-use of existing structures or new building close to existing structures. Seek to soften the visual intrusion of farms and farm buildings with deciduous tree plantings or mixed screen planting of native species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of building materials including brick and limestone reflect the progressive development of the area and availability of a wider range of materials for construction.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> the tradition of using brick or limestone in domestic buildings across the landscape.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*View across large scale fields to Raunds*
CHARACTER AREAS

10a Croughton, Aynho and Farthinghoe Plateau
10b Collyweston Limestone Plateau
10c King’s Cliffe Plateau

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

- **Limestone geology evident in local buildings, structures and walls, and as stones in ploughed fields.** This provides a strong sense of identity and connection with the underlying geology and a harmonious relationship between built and natural elements. The distinctive pale cream and weathered grey colours of the limestones distinguish these areas from the Ironstone rich landscapes that occur elsewhere across the county.

- **Gently undulating and elevated open plateau,** and in places almost flat, **with long distance views and wide panoramas** emphasising the open, expansive character and uninterrupted vistas.

- **Predominance of arable land with isolated areas of improved pasture and setaside land** reinforces the simple character derived from a limited palette of landscape characteristics.

- **Limited areas of calcareous grassland** are of biodiversity value and reflect the effect of intensive agricultural practices in diminishing the extent of this valuable species rich habitat.

- **Sparse woodland cover comprising small deciduous and occasionally coniferous farm woodlands and shelterbelts limit the sense of exposure locally,** and create landmarks and reference points within an otherwise open and often treeless character.

- **Fields predominantly large and medium to large, and a mix of both geometric and regular in shape; small, and small to medium sized fields conspicuous surrounding settlements and farmsteads.** This diversity of field sizes and network of enclosure imparts a sense of order and productive agricultural management and a record of centuries of land management and change.
**LIMESTONE PLATEAU**

The Limestone Plateau is represented in the two extremities of the county, in the northeast in the vicinity of Collyweston and to the east of King’s Cliffe, and southwest of the county surrounding Croughton and Aynho. The limestone geology that underlies these areas has had a strong influence on the overall character of the plateaux. This derives from the flat or very gentle rolling landform, and the colour of the landscape, with the pale cream stone represented in local buildings and structures, and in stone walls, particularly in the northeast of the county. It is also evident in the pale stones that are strewn across ploughed fields. This organic relationship with the bedrock imparts a strong unity between the natural and built form, and underpins the strong sense of identity that makes these plateaux so readily distinguishable from other parts of the county.

The Limestone Plateaux have a very open, expansive and sometimes exposed character with long distance views to wide horizons. This openness is accentuated by the preponderance of arable cultivation contained by low hedgerow or stone walls, the limited woodland and tree cover, and the sparsity of settlements, confined to small villages and scattered farmsteads. This can evoke the sense of an empty and remote landscape. Although not high in elevation, the gently sloping and almost flat landform, and exposed and open character can give the impression of a much larger scale landscape than it is in reality.

In contrast to the lack of settlement, military airfields were established on these plateaux, taking advantage of the flat and featureless landscape. In comparison with the simple landscape and limited palette of features across much of the plateaux, these airfields introduce a busier and developed character, with the associated infrastructure and fencing intruding into an otherwise unspoilt rural landscape.

**LANDSCAPE STRATEGY**

New development, change and land management practices should be controlled or encouraged to conserve the simplicity and limited palette of characteristics within the Limestone Plateau areas, but also strengthen the local variations that occur particularly within the more diverse landscape of the valleys that dissect the plateau rim. In view of the openness and high visibility of the elevated plateau landscapes, development that would intrude on the skyline should be resisted. Where development is considered within the rural villages, reference should be made to the locality for the effect on the wider landscape setting together with particular details of local vernacular building styles, materials, and layout.

Although the sparse woodland cover is a characteristic of the area, there may be appropriate locations and opportunities to introduce limited new broadleaved woodlands within the plateau to provide further landmarks within an otherwise simple and often featureless landscape, with the exception of the airfields and associated development. Further woodland and tree planting may also be appropriate within the more diverse landscapes of the lower slopes and valley areas.
### Key Landscape Character Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landform and Views</th>
<th>Landscape Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gently undulating and elevated open plateau, and in places almost flat, with long distance views and wide panoramas emphasising the open, expansive character and uninterrupted vistas.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> and <strong>Enhance</strong> the open and expansive character of the plateau, long distance views, and wide panoramas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Management</th>
<th>Landscape Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predominance of arable land with isolated areas of improved pasture and setaside land reinforces the simple character derived from a limited palette of landscape elements.</td>
<td><strong>Encourage</strong> farming practices to retain and <strong>Conserve</strong> the limited palette of land uses across the plateau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited areas of calcareous grassland are of biodiversity value and reflect the effect of intensive agricultural practices in diminishing the extent of this valuable species rich habitat.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> existing areas of calcareous grassland and seek to <strong>Restore</strong> the resource by arable reversion and expansion of non improved pasture. <strong>Create</strong> new areas of calcareous grassland by appropriate intervention and management. <strong>Seek</strong> to <strong>Enhance</strong> and <strong>Create</strong> appropriate habitats as part of a landscape scale and coordinated initiative in preference to small scale and isolated initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fields predominantly large and medium to large, and a mix of both geometric and regular in shape; small, and small to medium sized fields conspicuous surrounding settlements and farmsteads. This diversity of field sizes and network of enclosure imparts a sense of order and productive agricultural management and a record of centuries of land management and change.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> the characteristic pattern and mix of field patterns across the plateau and in particular the distinction between smaller and more intricate patterns around farmsteads and settlements and larger, geometric field patterns across the plateau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network of dry stone walls enclosing geometric fields on the Collyweston Limestone Plateau is a distinctive feature in the landscape and emphasises the connection with the underlying geology and wider relationship with the Jurassic Limestone belt, which displays similar characteristics across the country.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> the characteristic dry stone limestone walls and geometric field patterns on the Collyweston Plateau. Clear scrub encroachment and other vegetation where this threatens the long-term survival of the walls. <strong>Restore</strong> lengths of drystone walls with appropriate drystone walling material, techniques and coping detailing. Seek to integrate any lengths of new walling with the existing resource paying particular attention to detailing, height and choice of materials. <strong>Create</strong> lengths of new drystone walling in association with new development using locally available and appropriate stone sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fields generally enclosed by hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees in other parts of the Limestone Plateau superimposes a regular and neat patchwork pattern across the otherwise simple and open landscape.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> existing hedgerows and field patterns. <strong>Enhance</strong> the health and vitality of hedgerows by appropriate long-term management. Encourage natural regeneration of hedgerow trees, but avoid significant numbers of new trees changing the open character of the plateau.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Woodland and Trees

Sparse woodland cover comprising small deciduous and occasionally coniferous farm woodlands and shelterbelts limit the sense of exposure locally, and create landmarks and reference points within an otherwise open and often treeless character.

- **Conserve** the open and sparsely wooded character of the plateau. Consider removing new and inappropriately planted woodlands and shelterbelts where these compromise the sense of openness and particularly important vistas and views.
- **Conserve** existing small plateau woodlands and shelterbelts. Seek to enhance the quality of these elements by appropriate woodland management and natural regeneration.
- **Create** new deciduous shelterbelts and small woodlands in locations where these would frame important views, provide a new landmark feature, screen unattractive or prominent new development or enhance the sense of intimacy in locations where this is compromised.

Settlement, Built Form and Infrastructure

Limestone geology evident in local buildings, structures and walls, and as stones in ploughed fields. This provides a strong sense of identity and connection with the underlying geology and a harmonious relationship between built and natural elements. The distinctive pale cream and weathered grey colours of the limestones distinguish these areas from the Ironstone rich landscapes that occur elsewhere across the county.

- **Conserve** the architectural heritage of stone buildings and where appropriate **Restore** existing stone buildings in preference to demolition and new build.
- **Conserve** and **Restore** stone walls. Consider the use of local stone sources or reclaimed stone for detailing of features such as new boundary walls to new properties.
### Current Landscape Character Strategy and Guidelines

**Sparsely settled beyond isolated farmsteads and a small number of villages; communication routes principally limited to direct, minor roads connecting small settlements and individual dwellings.** The limited evidence of settlement, and ordered road network serves to underline the simplicity of this open and quiet rural landscape focused on productive land management.

- **Conserve** the sparsely settled character of the plateau by avoiding significant new development in the countryside.
- **Conserve** the rural character of the road network by avoiding schemes that urbanise stretches of rural roads by the introduction of kerbing, roundabouts and other features such as lighting.

**Vertical elements gain visual prominence in the flat, open landscape** forming notable landmark features.

- **Conserve** open horizons and avoid new development that punctuates the skyline and forms prominent negative landmark features. Opportunities to create iconic landmark features may be possible, however, but would need to be appropriately sited and designed and not compromise other key characteristics.

**Conspicuous use of plateau landscape for military airfields** that have utilised the flat, open and uncluttered landscape.

- **Conserve** the architectural heritage of the military airfields as a tangible link to wartime activity.
CHARACTER AREAS

11a King’s Cliffe Hills and Valleys

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

- **A series of broad valleys and broad low hills, dipping gradually to the east** define a gently rolling landform with a generally enclosed character. **Limited long distance views due to screening landform and woodland blocks**, particularly in the valley bottoms or where woodland cover is more extensive. Intermittent wider views from the crest and upper slopes of the low hills across breaks between the woodland cover.

- **Willow Brook provides the main drainage feature, dammed in a number of places to form a series of lakes with other minor tributaries also draining the area.** The watercourses provide diversity and local interest, notably where they have been integrated into designed parklands, as at Deene Park.

- **Predominance of arable land with areas of improved pasture and calcareous grassland frequent along watercourses.** Arable fields frequently large in scale, whilst grazed pastures and calcareous grassland are generally smaller. Fields a mixture of regular and sub regular shapes enclosed mainly by low to medium height well trimmed hedgerows with infrequent hedgerow trees. This mosaic of enclosure patterns and the changing colours and textures of the cropping pattern add to the diversity of the agricultural landscape, enhanced and framed by the simpler and more uniform outlines of the enclosing woodlands.

- **Limited limestone walls evident across the landscape.** Their presence is indicative of the underlying limestone geology and a harmonious relationship between the built and natural elements.

- **Significant woodland cover of varying composition with large areas designated as ancient woodland,** particularly in the northern and eastern areas, where they make an important contribution to the biodiversity resource. The woodland provides a strong sense of enclosure. A number of the woodlands are accessible to the public, such as at Wakerley Great Park and in the Forestry Commission’s Top Lodge and Fineshade Woods within the Westhay Wood complex, and are a valuable recreation resource.
Villages of varying size generally located on lower slopes adjacent to watercourses; elsewhere, the area is thinly settled with farms and individual dwellings. Many of the village dwellings and churches are constructed in local limestone, including the locally quarried Upper Lincolnshire Limestone. This strengthens the connection with the underlying geology. The distinctive local vernacular of many older village properties is also an important unifying feature.

Country houses and gardens, although limited, are important features in the landscape; notable examples are Deene Park and Apethorpe Park. These enrich the local landscape character providing landmarks and destinations within this peaceful rural landscape.

Communication routes principally confined to minor roads connecting small settlements and individual dwellings, and frequently aligned adjacent to watercourses. There is a well-defined relationship between the local road network and the settlement form and location, which is often associated with bridging points, as at Blatherwyke. This displays a close relationship with the landform and the organic growth and development of the area over many centuries.

Wooded Limestone Hills and Valleys

The Wooded Limestone Hills and Valleys are located in the northeastern side of the county and extend from the eastern side of Corby at Deene to the villages of Yarwell and Nassington, which overlook the Nene Valley and the county boundary. The valley of the Willow Brook is a principal landscape component, above which rise a series of broad low wooded hills that form local watersheds for the numerous tributary streams and watercourses of the Willow Brook. A tributary of the River Welland that rises on the adjacent Ironstone Quarried Plateau also flows through the area.

The landscape is sparsely settled with a series of small distinctive stone villages located along the valley bottom. Use of the local limestone is evident both in local vernacular buildings and stone walls, strengthening the connection with the underlying geology. King’s Cliffe is the principal village within the area, but the compact valley bottom settlements of Deene, Bulwick and Blatherwyke are also of note. The extensive woodland cover is a defining feature of the Wooded Limestone Hills and Valleys. The numerous woodlands contain and limit views contributing to an enclosed and peaceful rural landscape. Where intermittent views are possible on the higher land and through breaks in the woodlands, wider views are possible both to the surrounding landscape and northwards across the Welland Valley. Many of the woodlands are broadleaved and ancient in origin forming the northeastern part of the once more extensive Rockingham Forest. Substantial woodlands are located at Westhay Wood and Top Lodge above Fineshade, and Wakerley Great Wood. These extend across the valley slopes of the Welland tributary and are managed by the Forestry Commission and have public access. There are some notable historic houses and associated Parks. The designed parkland contributes to the woodland resource and local landscape character, and also provides notable landmarks and destinations for public access.

Contained within the woodlands, the open land is predominantly under arable cultivation, although pastoral land is also evident particularly in the valley bottoms, and surrounding the villages. The area also supports some areas of biodiverse rich calcareous grassland. The field pattern, cropping regimes and network of hedgerows and walls contribute texture and colour within the simpler tree cover.

landscape strategy

New development, change and land management practices should be controlled or encouraged to conserve the small scale and enclosed character of the peaceful and secluded rural landscape of the Wooded Limestone Hills and Valleys. The woodland resource, and the enclosure it provides, is of particular importance and it should therefore be conserved and enhanced to ensure that the resource is not diminished. Opportunities to extend the woodlands should also be encouraged, including management of the ancient woodlands to ensure their continuity, and also the promotion of wider public access of woodlands where possible. In addition to the woodland areas, there are a number of areas of calcareous grassland, which should be conserved and enhanced. Opportunities to extend this resource should also be encouraged.

The peaceful rural character of this landscape is an inherent part of its character so the introduction of elements that would devalue and disturb this quality should be resisted. New development should therefore be limited to visually contained locations and where the tranquility would not be diminished. Where development is considered within the rural villages, reference should be made to the locality for the effect on the wider landscape setting together with particular details of local vernacular building styles, materials, and layout to ensure they integrate into the landscape.
**Key Landscape Character Features**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landform, Hydrology and Views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A series of broad valleys and broad low hills, dipping gradually to the east define a gently rolling landform with a generally enclosed character. <strong>Limited long distance views due to screening landform and woodland blocks,</strong> particularly in the valley bottoms or where woodland cover is more extensive. Intermittent wider views from the crest and upper slopes of the low hills across breaks between the woodland cover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Brook provides the main drainage feature, dammed in a number of places to form a series of lakes with other minor tributaries also draining the area. The watercourses provide diversity and local interest, notably where they have been integrated into designed parklands, as at Deene Park.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the intimate and enclosed character of the valley bottom landscapes and where woodlands limit views. Seek to enhance this characteristic feature with new woodland planting along valleys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the intermittent panoramic views from locations on the crest and upper slopes of the low hills between areas of woodland cover and manage woodland to retain these vistas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Conserve and Enhance</strong> the riverscape and landscape setting of the Willow Brook with particular reference to variations in character along its course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Restore</strong> degraded river sections.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Land Management**

| Predominance of arable land with areas of improved pasture and calcareous grassland frequent along watercourses. Arable fields frequently large in scale, whilst grazed pastures and calcareous grassland are generally smaller. Fields a mixture of regular and sub regular shapes enclosed mainly by low to medium height well trimmed hedgerows with infrequent hedgerow trees. This mosaic of enclosure patterns and the changing colours and textures of the cropping pattern add to the diversity of the agricultural landscape, enhanced and framed by the simpler and more uniform outlines of the enclosing woodlands. | • **Conserve and Enhance** the mosaic of land uses across the hills and valleys, field patterns and boundary features. Conserve the simple distinction between arable farming in large-scale plots on higher ground with increased pasture and unimproved grassland along watercourses.  
• **Conserve** areas of calcareous grassland and where appropriate introduce management regimes to **Restore** and **Create** further areas of calcareous grassland. Seek opportunities to coordinate restoration and creation in order to maximize connectivity of like habitat. |
|---|---|
| Limited limestone walls evident across the landscape. Their presence is indicative of the underlying limestone geology and a harmonious relationship between the built and natural elements. | • **Conserve** the characteristic dry stone limestone walls.  
• **Restore** lengths of drystone walls with appropriate drystone walling materials, techniques and coping detailing. Seek to integrate any lengths of new walling with the existing resource paying particular attention to detailing, height and choice of materials.  
• **Create** lengths of new drystone walling in association with new development using locally available and appropriate stone sources. |
Woodland and Trees

**Significant woodland cover of varying composition with large areas designated as ancient woodland**, particularly in the northern and eastern areas, where they make an important contribution to the biodiversity resource. The woodland provides a strong sense of enclosure. A number of the woodlands are accessible to the public, such as at Wakerley Great Park and in the Forestry Commission’s Top Lodge and Fineshade Woods within the Westhay Wood complex, and are a valuable recreation resource.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> the significant woodland blocks and encourage the reconfiguration of coniferous plantations to follow landform more sympathetically, replanting wherever possible with deciduous species.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restore</strong> areas of ancient woodland to broadleaved species as part of long-term management.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restore</strong> and <strong>Enhance</strong> ancient woodland sites through encouraging natural woodland regeneration where appropriate. Seek opportunities for woodland management through coppicing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enhance</strong> the understanding of the heritage and biodiversity value of the ancient woodland and establish a wider network of woodland trails supported by interpretation facilities and guidance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Settlement and Infrastructure

| Villages of varying size generally located on lower slopes adjacent to watercourses; elsewhere, the area is thinly settled with farms and individual dwellings. Many of the village dwellings and churches are constructed in local limestone, including the locally quarried Upper Lincolnshire Limestone. This strengthens the connection with the underlying geology. The distinctive local vernacular of many older village properties is also an important unifying feature. | • **Conserve** the sparsely settled character of the landscape and sense of remoteness by siting new development in close proximity to existing valley settlement in preference to locations within the wider agricultural landscape.  
• **Conserve** the appearance and setting of valley villages with appropriate siting and design of new development. Seek to ensure that new development is sensitive to localised variations in scale, massing, use of materials and vernacular detailing. |
| --- | --- |
| Country houses and gardens, although limited, are important features in the landscape. Notable examples are Deene Park and Apethorpe Park. These enrich the local landscape character providing landmarks and destinations within this peaceful rural landscape. | • **Conserve** the parkland character of registered and non registered sites, and seek to conserve features, and in the wider landscape associated with these sites such as particular tree groups, estate villages or monuments. **Conserve or Restore** the setting of these features.  
• **Conserve**, and where possible **Restore** historic features associated with the management of hunting grounds such as traditional fencing, boundary ditches and banks, and clearings. |
| Communication routes principally confined to minor roads connecting small settlements and individual dwellings, and frequently aligned adjacent to watercourses. There is a well defined relationship between the local road network and the settlement form and location, which is often associated with bridging points, as at Blatherwycke. This displays a close relationship with the landform and the organic growth and development of the area over many centuries. | • **Conserve** the rural character of communication routes in the landscape. Conserve the close relationship between routes and watercourses, settlements and bridging points. Where possible enhance characteristic features that emphasise this close relationship. |

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**Country houses and gardens, although limited, are important features in the landscape as at Blatherwycke**
CHARACTER AREAS

12a Wollaston to Irchester
12b Higham Ferrers to Thrapston
12c Thrapston to Warmington
12d Harper’s Brook
12e Aldwincle to Oundle
12f Oundle to Nassington

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

- **Transitional landscape displaying characteristics of surrounding landscape character types.** The area is underlain by a complex and changing geology. This sequence of rock types is matched by local and often subtle variations in landform, soils and changing patterns of land use. The overall character, however, is that of a quiet, productive and managed landscape with a local diversity of patterns of field scale, cropping and tree cover.

- **Limestone geology evident in local buildings.** This provides a strong connection with the underlying geology and relationship between built and natural elements. The distinctive local vernacular enriches the character and quality of the built environment.

- **Expansive long distance views and wide panoramas across the valley to neighbouring landscapes** emphasises the more open character of some parts of the Valley Slopes.

- **Predominance of arable land with isolated areas of improved and semi improved pasture and setaside land.** This is a predominantly managed and productive landscape with a mosaic of intensively farmed arable fields balanced by intermittent more gentle pastoral areas.

- **Very sparse woodland cover confined to small deciduous and occasionally coniferous shelterbelts,** particularly to the north of Thorpe Waterville, **limiting the sense of exposure locally.** Elsewhere, beyond these intermittent woodlands, an open character prevails.

- **Fields predominantly large, and medium to large; small to medium sized pasture fields conspicuous surrounding villages; fields generally enclosed by hedgerows with intermittent mature hedgerow trees, often showing signs of decline.** The patchwork of fields and hedgerow enclosure is clearly evident across the rising slopes of the valleys, and form and an important feature.
Numerous villages display close relationship to landform in their morphology and orientation, and demonstrate the organic growth of the settlements, and their wider context and setting in the landscape. The proximity of larger settlements adjacent to and within the Valley Slopes, together with road infrastructure, influences the character and imparts a settled and busier character than in the more secluded sections.

Communication routes principally limited to direct roads parallel to the course of the main river channel, minor roads connecting small settlements and individual dwellings running along tributaries at right angles to the main route. The network of roads demonstrates the relationship between form and function, with the principal roads located along the valley bottom or lower slopes, and crossing the valleys at key bridging points.

**LIMESTONE VALLEY SLOPES**

The Limestone Valley Slopes are located at the transition between the low lying riverine landscapes and floodplain of the Nene, and the more elevated land that rise above these slopes. Between Northampton and the county boundary at Wansford, the Limestone Valley Slopes extend along the east side of the Nene Valley, and also along the west bank north of Thrapston. The section of the Harper’s Brook from Islip to Stanion on the southern perimeter of Corby is also included within this landscape type, together with further minor tributary valleys of the Nene.

The landscape is characterised by a gently undulating and productive farmland with a predominance of arable land, although pastoral areas are also evident particularly on the lower slopes. Woodland cover is generally sparse, although a pattern of intermittent broadleaved copses and plantations woodlands is evident to the north of Thorpe Waterville. Hedgerows, although generally low, together with intermittent hedgerow trees, are often the only vegetation cover. This is generally an open landscape, with long distance views possible, although more enclosed areas can occur where local landform and woodlands contain views.

In view of the proximity of many urban areas within and surrounding the Limestone Valley Slopes, and the series of villages that thread though this rural area, this is a settled and sometimes active landscape, particularly in the vicinity of the principal roads that follow the grain of the landform and the valley side slopes. The underlying limestone bedrock is evident in many of the local buildings, strengthening the connection with natural and built elements.

**LANDSCAPE STRATEGY**

New development, and land use and land management changes should be controlled and encouraged to conserve and enhance the diversity of this settled and productive rural landscape of the Limestone Valley Slopes. In view of the very limited woodland cover, existing woodlands should be retained wherever possible, and enriched to strengthen this resource and its biodiversity value. However, the changing patterns of openness and enclosure that form an integral part of the diversity of the landscape should remain. In view of the proximity of the many urban areas within and surrounding this landscape, it is likely to be vulnerable to development pressures and change. It is therefore particularly important that where development is considered, the subtle variations in the landform are responded to and incorporated in a creative and positive way. Reference should also be made to the locality to integrate with particular details of local vernacular building styles, materials, and layout.
### Key Landscape Character Features and Landscape Guidelines

#### Landform and Views

| **Transitional landscape displaying characteristics of surrounding landscape character types.** The area is underlain by a complex and changing geology. This sequence of rock types is matched by local and often subtle variations in landform, soils and changing patterns of land use. The overall character, however, is that of a quiet, productive and managed landscape with a local diversity of patterns of field scale, cropping and tree cover. | **Conserve** the intrinsic character of the quiet, productive and managed landscape, retaining the local diversity of field scale, cropping and tree cover. |
| **Expansive long distance views and wide panoramas across the valley to neighbouring landscapes** emphasises the more open character of some parts of the Valley Slopes. | **Conserve** opportunities to experience long distance views across the landscape to the wider landscape by encouraging sensitive woodland planting and agricultural land use, and hedgerow management. |

#### Land Management

| **Predominance of arable land with isolated areas of improved and semi improved pasture and setaside land.** This is a predominantly managed and productive landscape with a mosaic of intensively farmed arable fields balanced by intermittent more gentle pastoral areas. Fields predominantly large, and medium to large; small to medium sized pasture fields conspicuous surrounding villages; fields generally enclosed by hedgerow with intermittent mature hedgerow trees, often showing signs of decline. The patchwork of fields and hedgerow enclosure is clearly evident across the rising slopes of the valleys, and form and an important feature. | **Conserve** the distinctive patterning of medium and large arable fields, with strong network surrounding villages, enclosed by hedged boundaries.  
**Conserve** hedgerow patterns and where appropriate, manage more sympathetically for their nature conservation value and encourage more hedgerow trees to develop to further contribute to the character of the landscape. Whilst encouraging a more sympathetic hedgerow management regime, seek to ensure that the pattern of fields can still be appreciated.  
**Discourage** hedgerow removal and field amalgamation that lead to broader areas of monoculture, and a consequent reduction in the visual interest associated with the mosaic of fields and cropping patterns. |

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**Predominance of arable land with isolated areas of improved and semi improved pasture and setaside land**
Woodland and Trees

**Very sparse woodland cover confined to small deciduous and occasionally coniferous shelterbelts**, particularly to the north of Thorpe Waterville, limiting the sense of exposure locally. Elsewhere, beyond these intermittent woodlands, an open character prevails.

- **Conserve and Enhance** existing woodlands and shelterbelts on valley slopes by appropriate management and encouragement of natural regeneration. Where possible initiate replanting of native species in favour of coniferous species.
- **Conserve** the open character of the valley slopes by discouraging extensive woodland planting and particularly in locations where these would restrict long distance or expansive views.

Settlement and Infrastructure

**Limestone geology evident in local buildings.** This provides a strong connection with the underlying geology and relationship between built and natural elements. The distinctive local vernacular enriches the character and quality of the built environment.

- **Conserve** buildings, and their setting that express the local limestone geology and strengthen the connection between built development and the underlying geology.
- **Create** new buildings that utilise local stone sources. In the absence of viable quarrying, source appropriate building stone, including reclaimed stone for re-use. Seek wherever possible to respect local building vernacular, but not necessarily to directly copy detailing, or building styles.
Numerous villages display close relationship to landform in their morphology and orientation, and demonstrate the organic growth of the settlements, and their wider context and setting in the landscape. The proximity of larger settlements adjacent to and within the Valley Slopes, together with road infrastructure, influences the character and imparts a settled and busier character than in the more secluded sections.

- **Conserve** the simple pattern of small, nucleated villages along principal routes across the uplands and wider pattern of isolated farms off tracks.
- **Conserve and Enhance** the setting of villages in particular in respect of new development on the edges of villages. Undertake research into the setting of villages, and village features such as materials, architectural detailing, layout and massing, in advance of any settlement expansion.
- **Create** a vibrant and visually appealing urban rural fringe or interface that is functional, visually appealing and sensitive to variations in local landscape and townscape character.

Communication routes principally limited to direct roads parallel to the course of the main river channel, minor roads connecting small settlements and individual dwellings running along tributaries at right angles to the main route. The network of roads demonstrates the relationship between form and function, with the principal roads located along the valley bottom or lower slopes, and crossing the valleys at key bridging points.

- **Conserve** the rural character of the network of minor roads throughout the Limestone Valley Slopes. Ensure that the alignment and detailing of any new road construction is responsive to the local landform Avoid road improvement schemes that bring urbanising influences, such as kerbs, roundabouts, and lighting to otherwise rural locations.
CHARACTER AREAS

13a Middleton Cheney and Woodford Halse
13b Bugbrooke and Daventry
13c Long Buckby
13d Cottesbrooke and Arthingworth
13e Stoke Albany and Ashley

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

- **Extensive undulating and productive rural landscape stretching across the west of the county with a cohesive and recognisable unity of character despite scale and extent.** This is the quintessential agricultural landscape of the Midlands with its broad sweeping undulating landform, rich and productive agricultural land contained by a strong hedgerow enclosure, and a deeply rural character.

- **Variations in the underlying geology influence local landform** and introduce an ever changing pattern of local distinctiveness within the broader undulating landform.

- **Watercourses form part of three principal river catchments of the Cherwell, Nene and Welland,** and have eroded a dendritic drainage pattern and a complex network of interconnected valley forms.

- **Reservoirs and man made lakes are conspicuous features in the local landscape displaying a wide range of size, function and age.** This can vary from reservoirs as at Ravensthorpe, Drayton and Daventry, designed lakes in historic parkland as at Fawsley Hall and Cottesbrooke Park, and natural water bodies as in the Cherwell Valley to the south of Aynho. These create diversity and focal points in the landscape.

- **Navigable canals are an important visual component of the landscape and linear wildlife and recreational asset.** This important heritage resource has adapted in response to their popularity as a recreational resource for use by local communities and wider public, with wider use likely as a consequence of the growing population within the county and wider region.

- **Mixed farming predominates across the landscape although local land use and field patterns are strongly influenced by changes in landform.** The land use introduces local variety and diversity to the landscape and an intricate patchwork pattern of fields of contrasting colours and textures, contained by generally well managed hedgerows.

- **Numerous small deciduous woodlands, copses and shelterbelts punctuate the rural landscape and contribute to the impression of a well treed landscape.** While evident across the whole landscape they tend to be associated with steeper land and follow watercourses, emphasising the relationship with the landform.
UNDULATING HILLS AND VALLEYS

The Undulating Hills and Valleys Landscape Type covers the greatest land area within Northamptonshire. It extends across the western and central part of the county from the most southerly part near Aynho, sweeping northwards in a broad arc to the northern boundary near Weston by Welland. It includes much of the upper catchment area of the Nene, and its tributary the Brampton Arm.

This is the quintessential agricultural landscape of the Midlands with a strong sense of unity derived from a palette of well defined characteristics. The broad sweeping undulating landform supports a rich agricultural land use of mixed farming, with a patchwork pattern of fields contained within a strong hedgerow network with hedgerow trees. On more elevated land at the crest of the undulations, and where there are gaps in the hedgerows, there are wide vistas across this productive landscape, and the mosaic of hedgerows and fields. Elsewhere, a more intimate, human scale prevails as a consequence of the more enclosed landform and the containment provided by hedgerows and hedgerow tree cover, and the succession of small, mainly deciduous woods. Narrow winding lanes, often bordered with strong hedgerows, and small villages nestling into the folds of the landscape or on hill tops, often identifiable by their church tower or spire, creates a sense of harmony with this deeply rural landscape.

The many heritage features within this landscape type are indicative of a long period of settlement and enrich the experience of the landscape. These include Iron Age sites, such as the Borough Hill and Castle Dykes defensive structures, Roman roads, and numerous motte and bailey and manorial medieval sites, as well as more recent features associated with the canal network. The area is particularly renowned for the well preserved areas of ridge and furrow. Many historic houses and designed parklands add richness to the landscape, with Holdenby House and Althorp of particular note. Their parklands contribute to the tree cover, with the houses forming memorable landmark features. Larger settlements on the perimeter of the Landscape Type, notably Daventry and Brackley, and principal roads such as the M1 and A5, introduce urban influences that detract from the otherwise quiet and remote rural character.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

New development, change and land management should be controlled to conserve and enhance the balance of the rural elements that contribute to the intrinsic character of this productive agricultural landscape. In particular, the scale and pattern of the fields enclosed by a robust hedgerow network, the woodland mosaic, and village form and setting and their relationship with the undulating landform should be retained. Wherever possible, the distinctive and strong hedgerow network should remain intact, particularly where historic field patterns are evident, and conserved and managed to encourage species diversity and enhanced wildlife habitats. Valued intact historic landscapes and features should be retained, and protected from degradation, and agricultural practices should be encouraged to conserve and protect valued features from any further loss, notably the irreplaceable areas of ridge and furrow.

Large scale development should be resisted within this rural landscape and particularly in the open and remote areas. However, in view of the potential growth of urban areas surrounding this landscape, it is likely that areas adjacent to principal settlements may need to accommodate development and change. In addition, there may be opportunities for limited development within the lower and more secluded locations and in association with the rural villages. Where such development is considered, reference should be made to the locality for the effect on the landscape resource and wider setting, together with particular details of local vernacular building styles, materials, and layout and arrangement of features in the landscape.
### Landform and Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Landscape Character Features</th>
<th>Landscape Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extensive undulating and productive rural landscape stretching across the west of the county with a cohesive and recognisable unity of character despite scale and extent.</strong> This is the quintessential agricultural landscape of the Midlands with its broad sweeping undulating landform, rich and productive agricultural land contained by a strong hedgerow enclosure, and a deeply rural character.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve and Enhance</strong> the cohesive and recognisable unity of character across the Undulating Hills and Valleys and ensure that the integrity of this quintessential rural agricultural landscape is not diminished through inappropriate development and loss of the characteristic combination of elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variations in the underlying geology influence local landform</strong> and introduce an ever changing pattern of local distinctiveness within the broader undulating landform.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve and Enhance</strong> the changing patterns of local distinctiveness that relate to the subtle variations in landform and land use patterns, and in respect of scale and enclosure, but within the wider character of a productive agricultural landscape.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Hydrology and Water Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Landscape Character Features</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Watercourses form part of three principal river catchments of the Cherwell, Nene and Welland,** and have eroded a dendritic drainage pattern and a complex network of interconnected valley forms. | **Conserve and Enhance** the quality of watercourses that flow within the upper catchment areas of the Cherwell, Nene, and Welland.  
**Create** opportunities to strengthen the identity and presence of the watercourses by encouraging management practices that establish or enhance bank side planting and linear woodlands adjacent to the watercourses. |
| **Reservoirs and man made lakes are conspicuous features in the local landscape displaying a wide range of size, function and age.** This can vary from reservoirs as at Ravensthorpe, Drayton and Daventry, designed lakes in historic parkland as at Fawsley Hall and Cottesbrooke Park, and natural water bodies as in the Cherwell Valley to the south of Aynho. These create diversity and focal points in the landscape. | **Conserve** lakes and man made water bodies for their intrinsic visual appeal, as well as their recreational and nature conservation value.  
**Enhance** the setting and fabric of reservoirs, by seeking opportunities for enhanced recreational and nature conservation facilities. Seek to ensure that the character of the landscape is enhanced through habitat management and creation.  
**Restore and Enhance** structures and landscape features that form part of the historic landscape associated with reservoirs. |
Navigable canals are an important visual component of the landscape and linear wildlife and recreational asset. This important heritage resource has adapted in response to their popularity as a recreational resource for use by local communities and wider public, with wider use likely as a consequence of the growing population within the county and wider region.

- **Conserve** and where applicable **Restore** neglected sections of the network of canals and encourage opportunities for their further **Enhancement** to serve the leisure requirements of local and wider communities, but ensuring that they appropriately and sensitively undertaken and accord with the principles of sustainable tourism.
- **Conserve** and **Enhance** the biodiversity value of habitats associated with these linear networks through appropriate management and strengthen their role as habitat links.

**Land Management**

Mixed farming predominates across the landscape although local land use and field patterns are strongly influenced by changes in landform. The land use introduces local variety and diversity to the landscape and an intricate patchwork pattern of fields of contrasting colours and textures, contained by generally well managed hedgerows.

- **Conserve** field patterns to reflect various episodes of enclosure and subsequent land management and as features of the landscape that emphasise the grain of the landform.
- **Discourage** hedgerow removal and field amalgamation that lead to broader areas of monoculture, and a consequent reduction in the visual interest associated with the mosaic of fields and cropping patterns.

**Woodland and Trees**

Numerous small deciduous woodlands, copses and shelterbelts punctuate the rural landscape and contribute to the impression of a well treed landscape. While evident across the whole landscape they tend to be associated with steeper land and water courses, emphasising the relationship with the landform.

- **Conserve** and **Enhance** the existing small woodlands and copses, including shelterbelts close to farms, by appropriate management and encourage natural regeneration and replanting with broadleaved native species.
- **Create** new woodlands where appropriate but with a preference for locations that relate to and strengthen the local landform pattern. Encourage the use of broadleaved native species for woodland planting to enhance biodiversity.
### Hedgerow trees
Within a strong hedgerow network, contribute to the perception of a well-treed landscape and combine with other landscape and landform features to create an intimate, human-scale landscape. They are important features that add richness and a sense of maturity to this productive agricultural landscape.

#### Conservation
- **Conserve** hedgerow patterns to reflect various episodes of enclosure. Where appropriate, manage more sympathetically for their nature conservation value and encourage more hedgerow trees to develop to further contribute to the character of the landscape. Whilst encouraging a more sympathetic hedgerow management regime, seek to ensure that the pattern of fields can still be appreciated.

### Heritage, Settlement and Infrastructure

#### Strong historic character underlies this deeply rural landscape
With evidence of a long period of settlement with wide-ranging examples of heritage features and historic landscapes from many periods of occupation. The notable and rich remnants of ridge and furrow that occur within this Landscape Type are an iconic symbol of the Midlands agricultural landscape, and evidence of a long period of cultivation and production.

#### Conservation
- **Conserve** the heritage features within the landscape that are an irreplaceable representation of past layers of occupation of the land, and enrich the experience and character of the landscape. Encourage farmers and landowners through guidance to limit damage to the heritage resource through sensitive land management. Limit any further loss or damage of the irreplaceable and well-preserved areas of ridge and furrow by contemporary ploughing methods.

#### Numerous villages linked by winding country lanes contribute to rural character
The dense network of narrow winding lanes, often bordered by tall hedgerows, and linking the wide distribution of villages and hamlets, contributes to the sense of a long settled area focused on agricultural production.

#### Conservation
- **Conserve** the character of rural lanes in the landscape with their hedged enclosure and close relationship with the pattern of villages, hamlets, and scattered farmsteads that they connect. Ensure that road improvements do not adversely affect their rural character through the introduction of kerbing, roundabouts and other features such as lighting.

#### Communication routes and urban influences and infrastructure have, where present, eroded the local rural landscape character
With the noise and movement associated with traffic and visual influences of urban activities contrasting with the sense of rural isolation and tranquility elsewhere.

#### Conservation
- Seek to limit the effects of infrastructure and urban influences on the wider rural landscape through sensitive siting of any necessary developments and through creative mitigation that is in keeping with local landscape character.
- **Create** a vibrant and visually appealing urban rural fringe or interface that is functional, visually appealing and sensitive to variations in local landscape and townscape character.
CHARACTER AREAS

14a Newbold Grounds

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

- **Rolling agricultural landscape drained by the River Leam and its tributaries.** The dendritic system of watercourses has dissected the area to create a series of small interconnected valleys. The gently rolling landform, above which rise occasional low rounded hills, and succession of valleys provide a changing pattern and subtle variations in the topography.

- **Open views into the surrounding countryside including the neighbouring county of Warwickshire is possible from more elevated areas** and provides connectivity with the wider landscape.

- **Productive arable farmland in medium and large scale fields predominate although sheep and cattle pastures also evident to the south, often associated with watercourses.** The mosaic of agricultural land use contributes to a well managed and productive character. Occasional areas of calcareous grassland are also evident adjacent to the River Leam.

- **Fields enclosed mainly by hedgerows of varying condition, frequently reinforced with post and wire fencing,** and often following the grain and reinforcing the effect of the rolling landform.

- **Woodland cover is very limited,** confined to occasional broadleaved geometric copses, resulting in a generally open character. **The tree cover associated with boundary lines and watercourses** emphasises the rolling landform by defining the wooded stream courses that follow the base of the undulations and creating a more enclosed and secluded character in these lower areas.

- **Settlement very limited across the landscape** and confined to a single hamlet at Lower Catesby and occasional isolated farmsteads and individual dwellings. The absence of development emphasises the quiet and generally uninhabited character, despite the proximity of urban areas and associated influences to the east, at Daventry and Staverton.

- **A generally inaccessible landscape with limited minor country lanes and small stretches of ‘A’ roads and limited infrastructure elements present** further emphasises the overriding sense of a quiet, simple rural landscape.
ROLLING AGRICULTURAL LOWLANDS

The Rolling Agricultural Lowlands are located on the western perimeter of Northamptonshire, to the west of Daventry. They are represented within a very limited area of the county with the landscape type extending further west into Warwickshire.

The rolling form of the agricultural landscape is emphasised by the pattern of fields, hedgerows and tree lined and wooded stream courses that follow the base of the undulations. This relationship with the gentle undulations is reinforced by the field pattern, which often follows the grain of the landform.

This is a peaceful productive agricultural landscape, principally focused on arable cultivation although pastoral fields and some limited areas of calcareous grassland occur in the valley bottoms. The landscape is characterised by very limited settlement or roads which restricts access and reinforces the generally quiet, simple and sparsely settled character despite the proximity of urban areas to the east at Daventry and Staverton.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

New development, change and land management practices should be controlled or encouraged to retain the quiet and sparsely settled character of the Rolling Agricultural Lowlands. While areas of extensive development would be inappropriate in this agricultural landscape, potential new built development may arise in association with farming practices. It is therefore important that should such development be considered, the subtle variations in the landform are responded to and incorporated in a creative and positive way, and any built development avoids the higher and more prominent crests of the rolling landform. Reference should also be made to the locality to integrate with particular details of local vernacular building styles, materials, and layout that are common in traditional farm premises. Although woodland cover across the landscape type is low, the pattern of tree lines and linear woodlands along the watercourses are important local characteristics, which emphasise the rolling landform and sequence of crests and valleys. This pattern of tree cover should be conserved, and where possible enhanced. Areas of species rich calcareous grassland should also be conserved, and management regimes encouraged that will extend this valuable resource.
**Key Landscape Character Features**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landform and Views</th>
<th>Landscape Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rolling agricultural landscape drained by the River Leam and its tributaries. The dendritic system of watercourses has dissected the area to create a series of small, interconnected valleys.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the profile of Rolling Agricultural Lowland. Consider how the low hills are viewed from the surrounding landscapes and seek to ensure that woodland or development is not sited in locations that intrude onto the crests of the rolling landform or affects perceptions of scale. • <strong>Conserve</strong> and <strong>Enhance</strong> the appearance and quality of watercourses. • <strong>Create</strong> opportunities to strengthen the presence of watercourses by encouraging management practices that establish or enhance bank side planting and linear woodlands adjacent to the watercourses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open views into the surrounding countryside including the neighbouring county of Warwickshire is possible from more elevated areas and provides connectivity with the wider landscape.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the wide vistas from the elevated areas of land by retaining a generally open character, and limiting woodland cover or overgrown hedgerows on the crest of the low hills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Land Management**

| Productive arable farmland in medium and large scale fields predominate although sheep and cattle pastures also evident to the south, often associated with watercourses. The mosaic of agricultural land use contributes to a well managed and productive character. Occasional areas of calcareous grassland are also evident adjacent to the River Leam. | • **Conserve** the distinctive pattern of medium and large scale arable fields on elevated land and smaller grazed fields on the land to the south. • **Conserve** existing areas of calcareous grassland and seek to enhance the resource by arable reversion and expansion of non improved pasture. Create new areas of calcareous grassland by appropriate intervention and management. |
| Fields enclosed mainly by hedgerows of varying condition, frequently reinforced with post and wire fencing, and often following the grain and reinforcing the effect of the rolling landform. | • **Conserve** and **Enhance** field and hedgerow patterns that follow the grain of the rolling landform. • **Conserve** hedgerows and hedgerow trees through appropriate long term management that encourages diversity. Where declining, seek opportunities to gap up hedgerows and replant hedgerow trees where previous management has removed them or prevented natural regeneration. • **Enhance** hedgerow biodiversity by encouraging natural regeneration and appropriate long term management. |
Woodland and Trees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Woodland cover is very limited</th>
<th>Conserve the generally open character of the area and reinforce the rolling form of the landform by limiting woodland cover to the lower slopes and adjacent to watercourses.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodland cover is very limited, confined to occasional broadleaved geometric copses, resulting in a generally open character. The tree cover associated with boundary lines and watercourses emphasises the rolling landform by defining the wooded stream courses that follow the base of the undulations and creating a more enclosed and secluded character in these lower areas.</td>
<td>Conserve and Enhance the existing small woodlands and copses by appropriate management and support the continued use of broadleaved native species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create new woodlands within valley bottoms and lower slopes to strengthen the local landform pattern. Encourage the use of broadleaved native species for woodland planting to enhance biodiversity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Woodland cover, as at Newbold Grounds, is very limited
### Settlement and Infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement very limited across the landscape and confined to a single hamlet at Lower Catesby and occasional isolated farmsteads and individual dwellings. The absence of development emphasises the quiet and sparsely settled character, despite the proximity of urban areas and associated influences to the east, at Daventry and Staverton.</th>
<th>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the quiet and sparsely settled character of the rural landscape and absence of settlement. Where new development is considered, this should be confined to small-scale change and in close proximity to existing hamlets and farmsteads.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A generally inaccessible landscape with limited minor country lanes and small stretches of ‘A’ roads and limited infrastructure elements present further emphasises the overriding sense of a quiet, simple rural landscape.</td>
<td>• <strong>Conserve</strong> the generally inaccessible character of the area. • <strong>Conserve</strong> and retain the rural character of the limited minor roads and country lanes through the area. Ensure that road improvements do not adversely affect their character through the introduction of kerbing, roundabouts and other features such as lighting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**15 FARmed SCARP SLOPES**

**CHARACTER AREAS**

15a  Hothorpe Hills to Great Oxendon
15b  Cottingham to Harringworth
15c  Harringworth to Duddington
15d  Duddington to Easton on the Hill

**KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES**

- **Relatively steep elevated northwest facing scarp slope with a sense of elevation and dramatic panoramic views over the Welland to neighbouring Leicestershire and Rutland.** The steep slopes present a distinctive and immediately recognisable feature, with a strong character contrasting with the pastoral riverine landscapes of the Welland Valley to the north. **Relief often makes the scarp slopes poorly suited to arable farming although gentler slopes are often cultivated.**

- **Limited areas of calcareous and neutral grassland and linear belts of woodland mark particularly steep slopes** and contribute to the mosaic of land uses and range of biodiversity interest. Woodland is a particularly important component of the landscape and provides a strong textural backdrop when viewed from the vale.

- **Distinct break of slope and steep landform often marks a clear transition with neighbouring upland landscapes; gentler landform on lower slopes.** More open fields often roll over the crest of the scarp as well as into adjacent riverine landscapes, blurring the transition with these neighbouring landscape types.

- **Limited settlement, generally found on the fringes of the landscape spilling over from neighbouring ‘upland’ landscapes and extending up from the adjacent lowland vale.** The sparse settlement is indicative of the limiting effect of the landform on development and the need for careful control of potential new development on this prominent location. Where present settlements display close relationship with locally sourced stone with buildings constructed in distinctive local vernacular.
Where present, neat and sometimes more mature hedgerows emphasise landform features and create a patchwork effect across the slopes. Some hedgerows also show evidence of neglect indicating variations in hedgerow management.

Widespread ridge and furrow evident in areas of permanent pasture and on steeper land are important heritage features, indicative of a long history of farming across the slopes where the gradients has precluded ploughing and intensive agricultural practices.

Castles sited to exploit strategic positions overlooking the vale. These form distinctive features in the landscape, notably Rockingham Castle and the motte and bailey earthworks northeast of Sibbertoft, and are valued heritage features and landmarks.

**Farmed Scarp Slopes**

The Farmed Scarp Slopes comprise a narrow, linear belt of steeply sloping land that rises above the Welland Floodplain close to the northwestern boundary of the county. A western section extends through Northamptonshire between and in the vicinity of the Leicestershire settlements of Husband’s Bosworth and Market Harborough. A more substantial section occurs further east, between the village of East Carlton to the north of Easton on the Hill at the most northerly limit of the county, south of Stamford.

The Farmed Scarp Slopes are a distinctive and instantly recognisable landscape, contrasting with the more subtle and gently sloping landforms that are evident in other parts of the county. They present a dramatic and prominent landscape feature with the clearly defined steep slopes rising above the pastoral landscapes of the Welland Valley, and providing a backdrop to these lowland areas. Wide views across the Welland Valley are possible from more open and elevated sections. The mosaic of woodlands that extend across the scarp slopes are a particularly important feature. Generally confined to the steeper slopes, the woodlands form a dark textural background in views from the vale and where they extend over the crest of the escarpment, can also accentuate the perceived height of the scarp, and hence its visual prominence.

Land use varies across the Scarp Slopes, and in addition to the woodlands, supports a mixed farming regime of permanent pasture mainly on the steeper slopes or more marginal land, and arable cultivation where the slopes are gentler. These more open fields often roll over the crest of the scarp as well as into adjacent riverine landscapes, blurring the transition with these neighbouring landscape types. A network of hedgerows of varying heights and management regimes create a patchwork effect across the slopes, and emphasise the more subtle variations in the landform.

Settlement is generally sparse across the Farmed Scarp Slopes, confined to a series of mainly stone built villages. The distinctive Ironstone village of Rockingham is particularly notable, and also Harringworth to the east. Other villages, such as Gretton and Collyweston are partly located on the adjacent plateau, but spill down onto the scarp slopes. Visible heritage feature also enrich the character of the area. The impressive and prominently sited Rockingham Castle and Park, and the motte and bailey earthworks near Sibbertoft, together with areas of well preserved ridge and furrow, are evidence of the long period of settlement.

**Landscape Strategy**

New development, change and land management practices should be controlled or encouraged to conserve and enhance the bold and distinctive character of the Farmed Scarp Slopes. In view of the highly visible nature of the escarpment from the adjacent lowland areas, development that could adversely affect the mosaic and balance of land uses across the slopes should be avoided. Breaching of the skyline by prominent buildings and structures should also be avoided, in particular, as this would dominate views and could distort the perceived scale and outline of the escarpment. Towards the base of the scarp slopes, where more contained landscapes occur, there may be opportunities for accommodating sensitively designed developments that can be integrated into the landscape, in association with existing rural settlements. Where new development is introduced, reference should be made to the locality for particular details of local vernacular building styles, materials, layout and arrangement of features in the landscape.

Woodland is a particularly important component of the mosaic of land uses across the Farmed Scarp Slopes. The conservation and enhancement of the woodland should be encouraged, together with opportunities for the establishment of further areas of broadleaved woodland to enrich and extend the habitat resource. Similarly, the retention and enhancement of hedgerows to strengthen their visual contribution to the landscape as well as their biodiversity value should be encouraged.
### Key Landscape Character Features

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| **Relatively steep elevated northwest facing scarp slope with a sense of elevation and dramatic panoramic views over the Welland to neighbouring Leicestershire and Rutland.** The steep slopes present a distinctive and immediately recognisable feature, and a strong character contrasting with the pastoral riverine landscapes of the Welland Valley to the north. **Relief often makes the scarp slopes poorly suited to arable farming although gentler slopes are often cultivated.** | • **Conserve** the strength of character of the Farmed Scarp Slopes and ensure that the close relationship between land use and landform is not diminished, retaining the mosaic of pastoral land and woodland on the steeper slopes and arable land on the gentler slope profiles.  
• **Conserve** opportunities for the wide and dramatic vistas across the Welland Valley and neighbouring counties from the elevated areas of the scarp. |
| **Distinct break of slope and steep landform often marks a clear transition with neighbouring upland landscapes; gentler landform on lower slopes.** More open fields often roll over the crest of the scarp as well as into adjacent riverine landscapes, blurring the transition with these neighbouring landscape types. | • **Conserve** the clarity of the distinctive profile of the scarp slopes, particularly at the breaks of slope, encouraging land uses that strengthen the visual separation between the steeper scarp slopes and the plateau and valley bottom areas |

### Land Management, including Woodland and Trees

| Limited areas of calcareous and neutral grassland and linear belts of woodland mark particularly steep slopes and contribute to the mosaic of land uses and range of biodiversity interest. Woodland is a particularly important component of the landscape and provides a strong textural backdrop when viewed from the vale. | • **Conserve** areas of calcareous and neutral grasslands. Where appropriate introduce management regimes to **Restore** and **Create** further areas of calcareous and neutral grassland. Seek opportunities to coordinate restoration and creation in order to maximize connectivity of like habitat.  
• **Conserve** and **Enhance** existing woodlands on scarp slopes by appropriate management and encouragement of natural regeneration. Where possible initiate replanting of native species in favour of coniferous species.  
• **Create** new woodlands where appropriate with a preference for locations that relate to and strengthen the local landform. Encourage the use of broadleaved native species for woodland planting to enhance biodiversity. |

*Where present, hedgerows emphasise landform features*
### Current Landscape Character Strategy and Guidelines

#### 15 Farmed Scarp slopes

| Where present, neat and sometimes more mature hedgerows emphasise landform features and create a patchwork effect across the slopes. Some hedgerows also show evidence of neglect indicating variations in hedgerow management. | **Conserve** hedgerows and hedgerow trees through appropriate long-term management that encourages diversity. Where declining, seek opportunities to gap up hedgerows and replant hedgerow trees where previous management has removed them or prevented natural regeneration.  
**Enhance** hedgerow biodiversity by encouraging natural regeneration and appropriate long-term management. |
| --- | --- |

#### Heritage and Settlement

| Limited settlement, generally found on the fringes of the landscape spilling over from neighbouring ‘upland’ landscapes and extending up from the adjacent lowland vale. The sparse settlement is indicative of the limiting effect of the landform on development and the need for careful control of potential new development on this prominent location. Where present settlements display close relationship with locally sourced stone with buildings constructed in distinctive local vernacular. | **Conserve** the sparse settlement cover on the Farmed Scarp Slopes.  
**Conserve** the predominantly undeveloped summit profile and avoid new development that punctuates the skyline and forms prominent negative landmark features.  
**Conserve** the appearance and setting of the villages with appropriate siting and design of new development. Seek to ensure that new development is sensitive to localised variations in scale, massing, use of materials, with reference to the local ironstone and limestones, and local vernacular detailing. |
| --- | --- |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Widespread ridge and furrow evident in areas of permanent pasture and on steeper land are important heritage features, indicative of a long history of farming across the slopes where the gradients has precluded ploughing and intensive agricultural practices.</th>
<th><strong>Conserve</strong> the irreplaceable areas of ridge and furrow that represent historic records of earlier cultivation methods, and enrich the experience and character of the landscape. Encourage farmers and landowners through guidance to limit damage to and loss of ridge and furrow through sensitive land management and control of contemporary ploughing methods.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Castles sited to exploit strategic positions overlooking the vale. These form distinctive features in the landscape, notably Rockingham Castle and the motte and bailey earthworks northeast of Sibbertoft, and are valued heritage features and landmarks. | **Conserve** and **Enhance** strategically located castles within the landscape that enrich the experience and character of the landscape.  
**Enhance** the understanding of the heritage value of the castles and their link with the wider historic landscape through interpretation facilities and guidance. |
| --- | --- |
CHARACTER AREAS

16a Boddington Hills

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

- Low lying broad hills distinctive within the surrounding Broad Unwooded Vale. The rounded profiles of these low hills are locally prominent features rising above the vale. Long distance views apparent from the hills into the neighbouring lower lying areas of Warwickshire and also eastwards to the rising Ironstone Hills of Northamptonshire.

- General predominance of improved pastures with pockets of calcareous grassland, although evidence of arable farmland to the west and east. The overall character is that of a quiet pastoral landscape with potential to enrich the biodiversity resource where calcareous grassland is present.

- Small scale pastoral land and larger scale arable fields enclosed by hedgerows and post and wire fencing provides a neat patchwork extending across the hills with contrasting colours and textures at the interface of pasture and arable areas.

- Woodland limited across the landscape, though numerous mature hedgerow trees are evident. The trees provide an important element in the landscape, and at a local level provide a strong sense of enclosure and cover within an otherwise open and unwooded area.

- Settlement very limited, generally consisting of occasional small villages, and isolated farms and dwellings. The sparse settlement cover of compact villages, and properties constructed in brick and stone sourced from the local area, is an integral part of this quiet rural landscape.

- Network of minor country lanes, linking settlement within the landscape to surrounding villages, complement the scale of this rural landscape and integrate harmoniously into the wider area.
LOW PASTORAL HILLS

The Low Pastoral Hills Landscape Type is located in the extreme western perimeter of Northamptonshire, to the west of Byfield. It is represented by a very small area within the county, focused around, and including the two small villages of Upper and Lower Boddington.

The area is distinguished by the series of low rounded hills that rise to an average of 170m. These merge into the surrounding soft undulating topography. Wide views are possible from the crest and upper slopes of these hills across the Warwickshire countryside and also eastwards into Northamptonshire, and in the foreground, the upper reaches of the Cherwell Valley, which includes Boddington Reservoir.

This is a quiet, simple and undistinguished rural landscape where pastoral farming is the principal land use. While much of this is improved pasture, there are intermittent pockets of calcareous grassland. Some arable cultivation is present in larger fields, mainly in the west and also west of the reservoir. It is generally well managed, with a neat patchwork of hedgerows, and numerous hedgerow trees, mainly Oak, Ash and Sycamore. These provide the principal tree cover as woodland is almost absent across the area, confined to a small broadleaved covert on the county boundary.

Settlement is sparse, confined to the two villages of Upper and Lower Boddington, and a few scattered farms. Dwellings are built in a range of materials, including brick, limestone and Ironstone reflective of the complexity of the geology within this area and range of local sources of construction materials.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

New development, change and land management should be controlled or encouraged to conserve and enhance the simple pastoral qualities of this landscape and ensure that its quiet and productive rural character is not diminished. In particular, prominent development on the upper slopes and crests of the low hills should be resisted to ensure that the profile and simplicity of these hills remain intact. Land management practices should be encouraged to conserve and manage the hedgerows, and ensure that hedgerow trees are retained, and new trees planted to ensure the continuity of the tree cover. The pockets of calcareous grassland should also be conserved and appropriately managed, and where appropriate, extended to reverse the decline of this diminishing resource.

New development and landscape elements that are introduced should make reference to the locality for particular details of local vernacular building styles, materials, layout and arrangement of features to ensure they integrate into the landscape.
Key Landscape Character Features | Landscape Guidelines
---|---
**Landform and Views**

**Low lying broad hills distinctive within the surrounding Broad Unwooded Vale.** The rounded profiles of these low hills are locally prominent features rising above the vale. *Long distance views apparent from the hills into the neighbouring* lower lying areas of Warwickshire and also eastwards to the rising Ironstone Hills of Northamptonshire.

- **Conserve** the locally distinctive profile of the low hills and resist development or extensive woodland that would affect the clarity and perception of their rounded form.
- **Conserve** the expansive character and long distance views across the Warwickshire vale landscape from the upper slopes and crests of the low hills.

**Land Management**

**Small scale pastoral land and larger scale arable fields enclosed by hedgerows and post and wire fencing** provides a neat patchwork extending across the hills with contrasting colours and textures at the interface of pasture and arable areas.

- **Conserve** the existing hedgerows and field patterns across the Low Pastoral Hills. Discourage hedgerow removal and field amalgamation that lead to broader areas of monoculture, and a consequent reduction in the visual interest associated with the mosaic of fields and cropping patterns.
- **Enhance** the health and biodiversity value of hedgerows by appropriate long-term management.

**General predominance of improved pastures with pockets of calcareous grassland, although evidence of arable farmland to the west and east.** The overall character is that of a quiet rural landscape with potential to enrich the biodiversity resource where calcareous grassland is present.

- **Conserve** the predominantly quiet rural character of the landscape.
- **Conserve** areas of calcareous grasslands. Where appropriate introduce management regimes to **Restore** and **Create** further areas of calcareous grassland. Seek opportunities to coordinate restoration and creation in order to maximize connectivity of like habitats.
Woodland and Trees

Woodland limited across the landscape, though numerous mature hedgerow trees are evident. The trees provide an important element in the landscape, and at a local level provide a strong sense of enclosure and cover within an otherwise open and unwooded area.

- **Conserve** the predominantly open and unwooded character of the hills to retain the simplicity of their low rounded profile, and foreground to the rising Northamptonshire Ironstone Hills.
- **Conserve** mature hedgerow trees and encourage their replacement and continuity as features in the landscape through natural regeneration within hedgerows, or by new planting.

Heritage, Settlement and Infrastructure

Settlement very limited, consisting of occasional small villages and isolated farms and dwellings. The sparse settlement cover of compact villages, and properties constructed in brick and stone is an integral part of this quiet rural landscape.

- **Conserve** the sparsely settled character of the area.
- **Conserve** buildings, and their setting, that express the local vernacular and use of locally sourced building stone and brick that strengthen the connection between built development and the underlying geology.

Network of minor country lanes, linking settlement within the landscape to surrounding villages, complement the scale of this rural landscape and integrate harmoniously into the wider area.

- **Conserve** and retain the rural character of the limited minor roads and country lanes within the area. Ensure that road improvements do not adversely affect their character through the introduction of kerbing, roundabouts and other features such as lighting.
CHARACTER AREAS

17a River Cherwell Floodplain
17b River Tove Floodplain
17c Brampton Valley Floodplain
17d River Ise Floodplain

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

- **Flat floodplain landscapes** that vary in width, surrounded by gently rising valley sides that contain and clearly define the low lying linear landscape, and strengthen its separate identity.

- **Wide views** over the predominantly open floodplain, contained by woodland and rising landform of surrounding landscape types create an expansive character and a sense of continuity along the floodplain and valley bottom.

- A productive agricultural landscape with varying cover of both arable and pastoral land, with a predominance of arable in the Cherwell and Tove valleys. Areas of neutral and calcareous grassland evident, often closely associated with areas of improved pasture. The changing pattern of fields and cropping regimes, and intermittent areas of species rich grassland and occasional wet meadows, creates a varied texture and colour across the valley bottom.

- **Woodland cover is generally sparse**, although limited small linear copses including pollarded willows are evident along the course of rivers, railways and canals; concentrations of small woodlands and large parkland trees apparent around designed parkland. This intermittent and varying mosaic of small-scale woodlands and trees provide visual diversity and interest, and highlight local features and sites of heritage interest.

- **Hedgerows** often gappy and grown out, with reinforcing post and wire fences frequent, in particular around pastoral fields, resulting in a neglected character in some areas.

- **Limited semi-mature and mature hedgerow and river edge trees** provide important vertical elements and local interest within the otherwise open character of the floodplain.
• Settlement extremely limited within the floodplain, confined to small village settlements and isolated farms and dwellings contributing to the open character. Settlements are often associated with bridging points across the river and command locally strategic locations.

• Significant urban influences on floodplain landscapes from surrounding large scale settlements and associated infrastructure elements introducing a busier and developed character, and detracting from the otherwise rural and more remote character of the floodplain.

• Few heritage features evident, confined primarily to fields of ridge and furrow. The outer edges of parkland landscapes are evident in many valleys. The heritage resource enriches the experience of the landscape through its evidence of the long period of occupation and use of the floodplain.

• Roads across the floodplains vary from minor country lanes crossing the floodplain to busier ‘A’ roads and, on occasions, motorways. Traffic on the network of roads, particularly the principal roads, introduces movement and noise to an otherwise generally quiet rural landscape.

• Recreational opportunities confined mainly to a network of footpaths, including numerous sections of national trails, and leisure parks such as Wicksteed Park and Cosgrove Park. These facilities create a range of experiences from active to passive for local communities and visitors to the area and provide a demonstration of the potential for further facilities.

RIVER VALLEY FLOODPLAIN

Linear and generally narrow areas of River Valley Floodplain are represented in four areas of the county. Two of these, comprising the Cherwell and the Tove Floodplains follow the boundary of, and extend beyond the county to the southwest, and southeast respectively, the latter connecting into the River Great Ouse. The other two River Valley Floodplains occur within the heart of the county, comprising tributaries of the River Nene. Here the valleys of the Brampton Arm of the Nene, and the Ise follow north–south aligned courses with generally narrow valley bottoms in comparison to the much broader floodplain of the Nene.

The river course and the associated low lying, flat and relatively narrow floodplain, contained by gently rising valley slopes, are the principal defining features of this Landscape Type. Within this clearly recognisable form, a simple pattern of characteristics are present comprising an agricultural landscape with a mix of pasture and arable, together with more limited areas of neutral and calcareous grassland. Wet meadows are rare, but there are occasional examples as at South Farm in the Ise Valley. Woodland cover is sparse, limited to intermittent mainly linear belts of woodland adjacent to sections of the watercourses, and along active or dismantled railways, and roads and canals passing through the landscape. Trees associated with historic parkland that extends up to the floodplain are also of note, for example Easton Neston Park on the Tove and Boughton Parks on the Ise. Fields vary in size contained either by hedgerows, which are often gappy, or with no boundaries adding to the generally open character of the floodplain.

Away from urban influences many sections of these river valley floodplains retain a quiet pastoral character. Where the river flows through or close to urban areas, however, such as the lower reaches of the Brampton Arm in Northampton, and the Ise in Wellingborough and Kettering, the influence of adjacent development and infrastructure has a significant effect on the local character of the floodplain. The floodplain also supports a number of recreational activities and sites such as Wicksteed Park in Kettering and Cosgrove Lodge Park on the Tove.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

New development, change and land management practices should be controlled or encouraged to conserve and enhance the simplicity of the quiet and open mixed farming and pastoral landscapes that characterise many sections of the River Valley Floodplains. In view of flooding constraints and regulations, there may be a presumption against development within most sections of the floodplain. However, potential limited built development may arise in association with farming practices or for new infrastructure requirements, such as roads. Here, particular care is needed to integrate change into this simple and often very visible landscape that is overlooked from more elevated land. Reference should be made to the locality for appropriate building styles and local vernacular, materials, layout and arrangement of features in the landscape. Woodland cover within the floodplains is low, with the local pattern of tree lines along watercourses, canals and roads forming important local features, as well as associations with historic parklands. The introduction of extensive woodlands would be inappropriate, but this more intricate pattern of tree cover should be conserved, and where possible enhanced. The enhancement of hedgerows to strengthen their visual contribution to the landscape as well as their biodiversity value should also be encouraged. Opportunities for further recreation and leisure sites to serve local communities and visitors should be sensitively sited and designed to take account of the need to retain the open and simple character of the floodplain landscape.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Landscape Character Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landform and Views</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Flat floodplain landscapes that vary in width, surrounded by gently rising valley sides that contain and clearly define the low lying linear landscape, and strengthen its separate identity.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> and <strong>Enhance</strong> the identity of the floodplain as a separate morphological unit by strengthening its distinctive character in comparison with the changing character of the rising valley sides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide views over the predominantly open floodplain, contained by woodland and rising landform of surrounding landscape types, create an expansive character and a sense of continuity along the floodplain and valley bottom.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> the wide views across the floodplain and the sense of containment within a distinctive linear low lying riverine landscape contained within gently rising valley sides.</td>
</tr>
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Wide views over the predominantly open floodplain, contained by woodland and rising landform of surrounding landscape types.
Land Management

A productive agricultural landscape with varying cover of both arable and pastoral land, with a predominance of arable in the Cherwell and Tove valleys. Areas of neutral and calcareous grassland evident, often closely associated with areas of improved pasture. The changing pattern of fields and cropping regimes, and intermittent areas of species rich grassland and occasional wet meadows, creates a varied texture and colour across the valley bottom.

- Encourage the reversion to wider areas of pasture to strengthen the association of a pastoral landscape within the floodplain.
- Discourage hedgerow removal and field amalgamation that lead to broader areas of monoculture, and a consequent reduction in the visual interest associated with the mosaic of fields and cropping patterns.
- Conserve existing areas of calcareous grassland and seek to enhance the resource by arable reversion and expansion of non improved pasture. Create new areas of calcareous grassland by appropriate intervention and management.

Hedgerows often gappy and grown out, with reinforcing post and wire fences frequent, in particular around pastoral fields, resulting in a neglected character in some areas.

- Conserve hedgerows through appropriate long-term management that encourages diversity. Where declining, seek opportunities to gap up hedgerows where previous management has removed them or prevented natural regeneration.
- Enhance hedgerow biodiversity by encouraging natural regeneration and appropriate long-term management.

Hedgerows often gappy and grown out, with post and wire fences frequent around pastoral fields
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<td><strong>Woodland and Trees</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> and <strong>Restore</strong> hedgerow and river edge trees to provide local features and enrich the riparian landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited semi-mature and mature hedgerow and river edge trees provide important vertical elements, and local interest within the otherwise open character of the floodplain.</td>
<td>• Conserve mature hedgerow trees and encourage their replacement and continuity as features in the landscape through natural regeneration within hedgerows, or by new planting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland cover is generally sparse, although limited small linear copses and river edge trees including pollarded willows are evident along the course of rivers, together with further linear woodlands along railways and canals; concentrations of small woodlands and large parkland trees apparent around designed parkland. This intermittent and varying mosaic of small-scale woodlands and trees provide visual diversity and interest, and highlight local features and sites of heritage interest.</td>
<td>• Conserve and Enhance the existing small linear woodlands and copses and river edge trees by appropriate management and support the continued use of broadleaved native species. • Create new small-scale woodlands in appropriate locations to continue the pattern of an intermittent intricate mosaic of small, mainly linear woodlands. Encourage the use of broadleaved native species for woodland planting to enhance biodiversity. • Conserve and Enhance woodlands and trees associated with parkland and designed landscapes that enrich the character and experience of the floodplain landscape.</td>
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Limited semi-mature and mature hedgerow and river edge trees provide important vertical elements.
### Settlement

**Settlement extremely limited within the floodplain, confined to small village settlements and isolated farms and dwellings contributing to the open character. Settlements are often associated with bridging points across the river and command locally strategic locations.**

- **Conserve** the sparsely settled character by resisting significant new development, and also taking account of the limitations imposed by the floodplain constraints. Where new development is considered, this should be located in close proximity to existing villages, hamlets and farmsteads and where flood risk is minimised and within acceptable levels.

### Significant urban influences

**Significant urban influences on floodplain landscapes from surrounding large scale settlements and associated infrastructure elements introducing a busier and developed character, and detracting from the otherwise rural and more remote character of the floodplain.**

- Seek to limit the effects of infrastructure and urban influences on the wider rural landscape through sensitive siting of any necessary developments and through creative mitigation that is in keeping with local landscape character.

### Few heritage features evident, confined primarily to fields of ridge and furrow. The outer edges of parkland landscapes are evident in many valleys. The heritage resource enriches the experience of the landscape through its evidence of the long period of occupation and use of the floodplain.

- **Conserve** the irreplaceable areas of ridge and furrow that represent historic records of earlier cultivation methods, and enrich the experience and character of the landscape. Encourage farmers and landowners through guidance to limit damage to and loss of ridge and furrow through sensitive land management and control of contemporary ploughing methods.
- **Conserve** the designed parkland landscapes located within some sections of the River Valley Floodplains, and their associated assemblage of historic features and planting. Seek to **Enhance** the setting and wider context of these sites and monuments which enrich the experience and character of the landscape.

### Roads across the floodplains vary from minor country lanes crossing the floodplain to busier ‘A’ roads and, on occasions, motorways. Traffic on the network of roads, particularly the principal roads, introduces movement and noise to an otherwise generally quiet rural landscape.

- **Conserve** the existing network of roads and where possible retain its largely rural character where it links rural settlements. Ensure that the alignment and detailing of any new road construction is responsive to the local area and rural context, avoiding the introduction of urbanising features such as kerbing, roundabouts and other features such as lighting.
- Seek to minimise the noise and urbanising effect of the principal roads through the otherwise quiet rural areas through sensitive mitigation.

### Recreation

**Recreational opportunities confined mainly to a network of footpaths, including numerous sections of national trails, and leisure parks such as Wicksteed Park and Cosgrove Park. These facilities create a range of experiences from active to passive for local communities and visitors to the area and provide a demonstration of the potential for further facilities.**

- **Conserve** and **Enhance** the existing network of recreational opportunities that have developed.
- Encourage the **Creation** of further developments to serve the recreation and leisure requirements of local and wider communities, but ensuring that they appropriately and sensitively sited in relation to landscape character, and accord with the principles of sustainable tourism.
CHARACTER AREAS

18a  The Nene – Long Buckby to Weedon Bec
18b  The Nene – Weedon Bec to Duston Mill
18c  The Nene – Duston Mill to Billing Wharf
18d  The Nene – Billing Wharf to Woodford Mill
18e  The Nene – Woodford Mill to Thrapston
18f  The Nene – Thrapston to Cotterstock
18g  The Nene – Cotterstock to Warmington
18h  The Nene – Warmington to Wansford
18i  The Welland – Market Harborough to Cottingham
18j  The Welland – Cottingham to Wakerley
18k  The Welland – Tixover to Wothorpe

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

• **Broad, flat and predominantly wide floodplain** with a generally open character surrounded by rising landform of adjacent landscape types. The character can vary from deeply rural and remote in more secluded locations to busy and settled in the vicinity of the surrounding urban areas and extractive industry operations.

• **River channel** with the impression of a slow flowing watercourse, with limited bank side vegetation in areas. Where river edge vegetation and trees is absent the course of the river is difficult to perceive.

• **Predominance of unimproved pasture with pockets of both neutral and improved grassland and scattered arable land in fields of varying size; arable land becomes more frequent within the western section of the Nene Valley.** The mosaic of pastoral land, with valuable areas of biodiverse rich grasslands and riparian vegetation, and arable land contributes to the changing patterns along the valley.

• **Limited woodland cover confined to occasional broadleaved copses scattered throughout the floodplain** together with areas of emerging young woodland, and scrub vegetation. The sparse woodland cover contributes to the generally open character of the floodplain.

• **Hedgerow trees, although infrequent, are an important feature where they do occur, creating localised well treed areas** and more intimate and enclosed areas in contrast to the generally more open character elsewhere. **Hedgerows are generally overgrown and reinforced with post and wire fencing with intermittent sections showing evidence of decline** and a neglected character. Where hedgerows are mature, these can combine with the hedgerow trees to create local enclosure.
**BROAD RIVER VALLEY FLOODPLAIN**

The Broad River Valley Floodplain occurs within the valley bottom of the county’s two major rivers, comprising the River Nene, which flows through the central and eastern part of the county, and the Welland, whose course defines the northern boundary of Northamptonshire. The main rivers, and the tributary watercourses that flow into them, follow a meandering course across the floodplain, which is clearly distinguishable by the flat, low lying riparian landscape. The drift deposits within the floodplain, including alluvium, silt, glacial tills and sand and gravel have influenced the land use pattern that has evolved across the floodplain including, within the last century, extraction of the substantial reserves of sand and gravel from sections of the Nene Valley, particularly between Northampton and Thrapston. Restoration of worked areas has resulted in the creation of a mosaic of lakes and wetland areas, which now support important bird communities and are designated for their biodiversity value. This extensive man made landscape and emergent and newly restored land has changed the character of this central section of the Nene Floodplain to a wetland dominated landscape.

The floodplains are generally flat and broad, merging into the adjacent gently sloping valley sides. Variations are evident, however, where the river courses are contained by rising landform, such as the sections of the Nene adjacent to the Limestone Valley Slopes, and along the Welland where the steeply rising scarp slopes form a backdrop to the floodplain landscape. Apart from the lakes and wetland areas, and active gravel extraction sites, much of the floodplain comprises a pastoral landscape including some species rich unimproved grasslands, together with arable land particularly in the west of the Nene Valley. Woodland cover is limited so when present, small woodlands and mature hedgerow trees assume local importance. The course of the river is often unnoticeable as bankside vegetation is often sparse.

While settlement is generally absent within the floodplain due to flooding constraints, a series of settlements have developed on the rising land immediately adjacent to the floodplain, often at bridging points. These range form small rural villages to major urban areas, notably Northampton and Wellingborough, resulting in very contrasting contexts to the Broad River Valley Floodplain setting. In addition to local roads that cross the floodplain a number of major road and rail routes pass through or close to the valley, either skirting or within the floodplain, taking advantage of the gentle gradients and connectivity through the area. These intrude into the otherwise quiet and peaceful riparian landscape as a result of traffic noise and movement.

**LANDSCAPE STRATEGY**

New development, change and land management practices should be controlled or encouraged to conserve and enhance the simplicity of the quiet and open pastoral landscapes that characterise many sections of the Broad River Valley Floodplain particularly within the Welland, and downstream from Thrapston in the Nene Valley. In view of flooding constraints and regulations, there would be a presumption against development within the floodplain. However, potential limited built development may arise in association with farming practices or for new infrastructure requirements, such as roads. Here,
particular care is needed to integrate change into this simple and often very visible landscape that is overlooked from more elevated land. Reference should be made to the locality for appropriate building styles including local vernacular, materials, layout and arrangement of features in the landscape. Woodland cover within the floodplain is low, with the local pattern of tree lines along watercourses, canals and roads forming important local features. The introduction of extensive woodlands would be inappropriate, but this more intricate pattern of tree cover should be conserved, and where possible enhanced. The enhancement of hedgerows to strengthen their visual contribution to the landscape as well as their biodiversity value should also be encouraged.

The legacy of sand and gravel extraction in the middle section of the Nene Valley has resulted in a progressive change in the floodplain’s character to a predominantly wetland landscape. Future extraction and restoration operations should seek to limit the creation of further lakes and encourage the establishment of a mosaic of pasture, and where possible, wet grasslands supported by traditional management systems, in order to re-establish this much diminished habitat that once formed a much greater part of the intrinsic character of the floodplain.

### Key Landscape Character Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landform, Hydrology and Views</th>
<th>Landscape Guidelines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broad, flat and predominantly wide floodplain</strong> with a generally open character surrounded by rising landform of adjacent landscape types. The character can vary from deeply rural and remote in more secluded locations to busy and settled in the vicinity of the surrounding urban areas and extractive industry operations.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve and Enhance</strong> the identity of the floodplain as a separate morphological unit by strengthening its distinctive character in comparison with the changing character of the rising valley sides.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>River channel</strong> with the impression of a slow flowing watercourse, with limited bank side vegetation in areas. Where river edge vegetation and trees is absent the course of the river is difficult to perceive.</td>
<td><strong>Strengthen the identity of the river course within the floodplain through the Creation of</strong> further areas of river edge trees and small-scale linear woodlands.</td>
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### Land Management

| Predominance of unimproved pasture with pockets of both neutral and improved grassland and scattered arable land in fields of varying size; arable land becomes more frequent within the western section of the Nene Valley. The mosaic of pastoral land, with valuable areas of biodiverse rich grasslands and riparian vegetation, and arable land contributes to the changing patterns along the valley. | **Conserve** and where possible **Encourage** the diversity of land use with a predominance of pastoral land, including areas of species rich grasslands, and areas of arable cultivation. Encourage the reversion to wider areas of pasture to strengthen the association of a pastoral landscape within the floodplain. **Conserve** existing areas of neutral grassland and seek to enhance the resource by arable reversion and expansion of non improved pasture. Encourage the creation of areas of neutral grassland by appropriate intervention and management. |
Woodland and Trees

**Limited woodland cover confined to occasional broadleaved copses scattered throughout the floodplain**, together with areas of emerging young woodland, and scrub vegetation. The sparse woodland cover contributes to the generally open character of the floodplain.

- **Conserve** and **Enhance** the existing small linear woodlands and copses and river edge trees by appropriate management and support the continued use of broadleaved native species.
- **Create** new small-scale woodlands in appropriate locations to continue the pattern of an intermittent intricate mosaic of small, mainly linear woodlands. Encourage the use of broadleaved native species for woodland planting to enhance biodiversity.

**Hedgerow trees, although infrequent, are an important feature where they do occur, creating localised well treed areas** and more intimate and enclosed areas in contrast to the generally more open character elsewhere. **Hedgerows are generally overgrown and reinforced with post and wire fencing with intermittent sections showing evidence of decline** and a neglected character. Where hedgerows are mature, these can combine with the hedgerow trees to create local enclosure.

- **Conserve** and **Restore** hedgerow and river edge trees to provide local features and enrich the riparian landscape.
- **Conserve** mature hedgerow trees and encourage their replacement and continuity as features in the landscape through natural regeneration within hedgerows, or by new planting.
- **Conserve** hedgerows through appropriate long-term management that encourages diversity. Where declining, seek opportunities to gap up hedgerows where previous management has removed them or prevented natural regeneration.
- **Enhance** hedgerow biodiversity by encouraging natural regeneration and appropriate long-term management.
### Heritage, Settlement and Infrastructure

**Settlement is very limited within the floodplain as a consequence of the flooding constraints, with a sequence of small nucleated villages on the lower valley slopes and occasional settlements adjacent to the river and floodplain as at Nether Heyford on the Nene and Duddington on the Welland, together and a wider settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and individual dwellings.** The settlements on the rising land immediately adjacent to the floodplain are indicative of the close relationship between settlement location and river accessibility, including bridging points.

**Urban influences arising from the proximity of large urban areas and associated road infrastructure on the perimeter of some sections of the floodplain, and introducing a busier and developed character, and detracting from the otherwise rural and more remote character of the floodplain.**

**Minor roads generally cross the floodplain landscape at right angles to the river, with major roads following the valley course and marking the boundary of the type.** Traffic on the network of roads, particularly the principal roads, introduces movement and noise to an otherwise generally quiet rural landscape.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Conserve</strong> the sparsely settled character by resisting significant new development, and also taking account of the limitations imposed by the floodplain constraints. Where new development is considered, this should be located in close proximity to existing villages, and farmsteads and where flood risk is minimised and within acceptable levels.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek to limit the effects of infrastructure and urban influences on the wider rural landscape through sensitive siting of any necessary developments and through creative mitigation that is in keeping with local landscape character.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Seek to conserve the existing network of roads and where possible retain its largely rural character where it links rural settlements. Ensure that the alignment and detailing of any new road construction is responsive to the local area and rural context, avoiding the introduction of urbanising features such as kerbing, roundabouts and other features such as lighting.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Seek to minimize the noise and urbanising effect of the principal roads through the floodplain areas through sensitive mitigation.</td>
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Mineral Extraction

Evidence of long periods of gravel extraction and restoration within the Nene Valley, particularly along the middle section of the Valley, with patterns of restored landscapes with numerous areas of wetland and lakes. These have had a significant effect on the character of the floodplain within this section of the Nene Valley changing the floodplain from a simple pattern of arable and pastoral land to one dominated by active mineral extraction and significant areas of man made wetland and lakes interspersed between retained agricultural activities and scrub areas.

• Seek to limit the creation of further lakes in connection with any future extraction and restoration operations. Encourage the Creation of a mosaic of pasture, and where possible, wet grasslands supported by traditional management systems, in order to re-establish this much diminished habitat that once formed a much greater part of the intrinsic character of the floodplain.

Recreation

Significant recreational activities within the Nene Valley landscape, mainly focused on the restored lakes but also extending into the wider riparian landscape creates a range of experiences from active to passive for the local communities and visitors to the area.

• Conserve and Enhance the wide ranging recreational activities that have developed in association with the restored gravel extraction lakes and also in association with the River Nene.
• Encourage the Creation of further developments to serve the recreation and leisure requirements of local and wider communities, but ensuring that they appropriately and sensitively sited in relation to landscape character, and accord with the principles of sustainable tourism.
19  BROAD UNWOODED VALE

CHARACTER AREAS
19a  Boddington Vale Farmland
19b  Vale of Rugby
19c  Welland Vale

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FEATURES

• Extensive landscape defining the western boundary of the county merging seamlessly with the wider vale areas to the west and northwest of Northamptonshire. Expansive long distance, panoramic views across the open vale landscape. The broad scale and simple palette of elements can be exhilarating in contrast to the smaller scale and more intimate landscapes to the east.

• Landscape drained by numerous small watercourses that flow within shallow undulations into the rivers and streams on the county boundary. The subtle valley forms and other minor undulations gain prominence in an otherwise broad, flat landscape, and provide diversity and interest at a local scale within the otherwise simple, open and unified vale.

• Woodland cover extremely limited, with tree cover confined mainly to hedgerow trees and overgrown hedgerows. The general absence of woodland contributes to the open and sometimes exposed character of the vale.

• Productive arable and pastoral farmland in generally equal proportions in fields of varying size contributes to a changing mosaic of patterns and textures and a generally well managed and productive agrarian character.

• Hedgerows generally low and well clipped, although limited sections show evidence of decline with reinforcing post and wire fences. These more neglected sections detract from an otherwise generally well managed hedgerow network and character.

• Sparsely settled with small villages and isolated farms and dwellings prevalent contribute to the quiet and sometimes remote character of this simple agrarian landscape. Large urban areas are evident in distant views, notably Rugby and Market Harborough, which distract from the otherwise generally rural character.

• Significant communication routes evident, including motorways and major ‘A’ roads. These generate noise, traffic movement and light sources at night and distract from the otherwise quiet rural landscape.
The Broad Unwooded Vale is located on the western perimeter of the county lying below the more elevated land that rises to the east. It is represented in a series of fragmented areas, forming part of the much broader Vale areas that extend beyond the county boundary. The most southerly section merges into the vale to the north of Banbury that incorporates the Cherwell Valley and the upper tributaries within the Avon catchment. Further north sections of the Vale extend to the county boundary and again merge seamlessly into the broad vale that surrounds Rugby, and also Market Harborough.

The Vale is distinguishable by its generally flat and open character, with wide panoramas across an expansive landscape. Minor undulations occur, however, particularly at the transition with the adjacent Landscape Type and also in association with the series of watercourses that drain the vale and which have eroded shallow valleys. In addition to these watercourses, sections of the Oxford and the Grand Union Canals flow through the vale.

The vale areas are generally intensively managed with a mix of arable and pasture that create a patchwork effect across the landscape. Woodland cover is very limited, with hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and tree lined watercourse, canals or railway lines providing local enclosure and landmark features.

Settlement within the vale is generally sparse, limited to a series of small villages and intermittent and often isolated farms with many areas difficult to access. In the vicinity of Rugby and Market Harborough, however, the perception of a simple, isolated rural landscape is affected by more urban influences. In addition to the areas of built development, a number of roads leading into these large settlements also affect the peaceful quality, notably the M45, M1 and A14 (T) in the vicinity of Rugby, where a busier character and diverse land uses contrasts with more remote areas. The overriding character is that of a broad, expansive flat or very gently sloping agrarian landscape with limited settlement and a generally quiet rural character except in the vicinity of the principal urban areas that lie beyond the county.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

New development, change and land management practices should be controlled or encouraged to retain the quiet and simple open rural character of the Broad Unwooded Vale, and the limited palette of characteristics. Areas of extensive development would be inappropriate in this open agricultural landscape. However, potential new built development may arise in association with farming practices or in association with new infrastructure requirements, such as roads. It is important that should development be considered, reference is made to the locality for appropriate building styles including local vernacular, materials, layout and arrangement of features in the landscape. Although woodland cover across the landscape type is low, the pattern of tree lines along the watercourses, canals and roads are important local features. This pattern of tree cover should be conserved, and where possible enhanced. The hedgerow network is also an important characteristic of the landscape and the retention and enhancement of hedgerows to strengthen their visual contribution to the landscape as well as their biodiversity value should be encouraged.
### Key Landscape Character Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landform and Views</th>
<th>Landscape Guidelines</th>
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</table>
| Extensive landscape defining the western boundary of the county merging seamlessly with the wider vale areas to the west and northwest of Northamptonshire. **Expansive long distance, panoramic views across the open vale landscape.** The broad scale and simple palette of elements can be exhilarating in contrast to the smaller scale and more intimate landscapes to the east. | • **Conserve** the broad scale and simple palette of landscape characteristics across the Broad Unwooded Vale.  
• **Conserve** opportunities to experience the open vistas across the adjacent vale landscapes by sensitive management of tree belts and hedges. |
| Landscape drained by numerous small watercourses that flow within shallow undulations into the rivers and streams on the county boundary. The subtle valley forms and other minor undulations gain prominence in an otherwise broad, flat landscape, and provide diversity and interest at a local scale within the otherwise simple, open and unified vale. | • **Conserve** and **Enhance** the appearance and quality of the watercourses that flow within vale area, and into the wider catchment of a series of main rivers.  
• **Conserve** and **Enhance** local variations in the prevailing simple and unified character of the vale, particularly associated with minor undulations and valley forms. Here, a more diverse land use pattern and landscape patterning can occur, with pastoral fields more prevalent within the valleys. |

### Land Management

| Productive arable and pastoral farmland in generally equal proportions in fields of varying size contributes to a changing mosaic of patterns and textures and a generally well managed and productive agrarian character. | • **Conserve** field patterns to reflect various episodes of enclosure and subsequent land management.  
• Discourage hedgerow removal and field amalgamation that lead to broader areas of monoculture, and a consequent reduction in the visual interest associated with the mosaic of fields and cropping patterns. |
| Hedgerows generally low and well clipped, although limited sections show evidence of decline with reinforcing post and wire fences. These more neglected sections detract from an otherwise generally well managed hedgerow network and character. | • **Conserve** hedgerows through appropriate long-term management that encourages diversity. Where declining, seek opportunities to gap up hedgerows where previous management has removed them or prevented natural regeneration.  
• **Enhance** hedgerow biodiversity by encouraging natural regeneration and appropriate long-term management. |
### Key Landscape Character Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Woodland and Trees</th>
<th>Settlement and Infrastructure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Woodland cover extremely limited, with tree cover confined mainly to hedgerow trees and overgrown hedgerows.</strong> The general absence of woodland contributes to the open and sometimes exposed character of the vale.</td>
<td><strong>Sparsely settled with small villages and isolated farms and dwellings prevalent,</strong> contributing to the character of this simple agrarian landscape. <strong>Large urban areas are evident in distant views,</strong> notably Rugby and Market Harborough, which distract from the otherwise generally rural character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> the predominantly open and unwooded character of the Vale by limiting extensive woodland planting. <strong>Conserve</strong> and <strong>Enhance</strong> the woodlands that are present by appropriate management, encouraging natural regeneration and replanting with broadleaved native species. <strong>Conserve</strong> mature hedgerow trees and encourage their replacement and continuity as features in the landscape through natural regeneration within hedgerows, or by new planting.</td>
<td><strong>Conserve</strong> the quiet and sparsely settled character of the rural landscape and absence of settlement. <strong>Conserve</strong> the rural character of the road network by avoiding schemes that urbanise stretches of rural roads by the introduction of kerbing, roundabouts and other features such as lighting. <strong>Seek to limit the effects of infrastructure and urban influences on the wider rural landscape through sensitive siting of any necessary developments and through creative mitigation that is in keeping with local landscape character.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Settlement and Infrastructure</strong></td>
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FIGURES

PLEASE REFER TO THE DOCUMENT ‘CLCA - FIGURES 1-7’.
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