

**GREATER NOTTINGHAM
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study has looked at the landscape of Greater Nottingham and will provide part of the evidence base for the local authorities Local Development Frameworks (LDF). It will be used by the planning authorities to aid development control decisions on planning applications and to guide landscape enhancement where funding and opportunities allow.

The physical landscape varies considerably and includes land which has been influenced greatly by coal mining operations in the north which are largely characterised by restored spoil mounding and smaller areas of more rural character. To the west of Nottingham the land is often influenced by urban development comprising large settlements and smaller villages. To the east the land is a series of distinctive rolling hills and narrow incised river valleys (known as Dumbles) and larger wooded plantations which mark the start of the historic and distinctive Sherwood region. To the south the land is strongly associated with arable farmland with large areas of uniform farmland with few trees or woodlands. Hills known as 'The Wolds' are distinctive prominent features in the south; they often form a backdrop to more gently undulating farmland.

The document provides a way of assessing the varied landscape within Greater Nottingham and contains information about the character and condition of the landscape to provide a greater understanding of what makes the landscape within Greater Nottingham special. Landscape varies subtly across the whole county and this is the case within Greater Nottingham, The study has recognised this through the identification of 79 Draft Policy Zones (called Landscape Character Types within Erewash Borough).

A Draft Policy Zone (DPZ) is an individual area which has a unique sense of place although it shares similar characteristics to other areas within broader regional areas identified as part of the East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment.

The study has identified how well the landscape character areas could adapt to change without severe detrimental effect on their character and integrity. Particular emphasis has been placed on the transition between the settlements to the wider countryside. Future changes which threaten the landscape were identified during stakeholder engagement and whilst surveying on site and guidelines to ensure the preservation of local distinctiveness are provided.

This information will be used to help inform the aligned Core Strategy across the local authorities and will help to protect special landscapes and provides guidance on how to improve less special landscapes.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Distinction in landscape is created through the interplay between people and place and encompasses all land, not just land designated for its natural beauty. It arises from unique patterns and combinations of different components and elements.

1.2 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into effect in the UK in March 2007. The ELC was the first international convention on landscape and is dedicated exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. It provides an international context for landscape and emphasises its importance alongside biodiversity and cultural heritage. The ELC definition of landscape is:

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

1.3 Landscape character assessment is an important tool for implementing the ELC within the UK. Landscape character assessment is a decision-making tool which systematically classifies the landscape into distinctive areas based on the interaction between topography, geology, land use, vegetation pattern, and human influence. Its role is to ensure that future change does not undermine the characteristics or features of value within a landscape. Landscape character assessment is an approach that can make a significant contribution to the sustainable objectives of environmental protection; prudent use of natural resources; and maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for present and future generations.

1.4 This report is a landscape character assessment of Greater Nottingham illustrated on Figure 1. It has focused on countryside around Nottingham covering the authorities of Ashfield District Council, Broxtowe Borough Council, Nottingham City Council, Gedling Borough Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council and Erewash Borough Council (the latter being within Derbyshire).

1.5 Greater Nottingham is made up of the administrative boundaries of all the local authorities stated above, except Ashfield, where only the Hucknall part is included. However, for the purpose of this study the whole of Ashfield is included.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 In 1997 Nottinghamshire County Council published the 'Countryside Appraisal: Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines' which divided the county into 10 regional landscape character areas, further sub-divided into landscape types. The project advanced the method of landscape protection and focused attention on the whole countryside. It recognised all landscapes as having their own character, and whether emphasis should be placed on conservation or enhancement. The aspiration of the project was to enrich the quality of the whole countryside. As part of this process Mature Landscape Areas were identified. These were defined as areas 'least affected by adverse change.'
- 2.2 Recent changes in government legislation (PPS7) place greater emphasis on the use of landscape character assessments in informing criteria-based policy within Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). Therefore there is a need to review and update the Countryside Appraisal.
- 2.3 Nottinghamshire County Council's landscape team commenced the update of the assessment in 2003 and have undertaken the assessment of part of the study area. Erewash Borough Council is covered by the landscape character assessment carried out by Derbyshire County Council which was undertaken using the same method as that used within Nottinghamshire.
- 2.4 In February 2009, TEP was commissioned by Nottinghamshire County Council to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment of Greater Nottingham to address the areas not yet covered by Nottinghamshire County Council's Landscape and Reclamation Team or Derbyshire County Council. Figure 2 indicates the areas surveyed by each team.
- 2.5 The councils are aligning their Core Strategies in terms of timing and strategic content, and this document will provide an important part of the evidence base to support that process and to inform the Local Development Frameworks in Greater Nottingham and Ashfield more generally. It is also intended that the document will be used to aid development control decisions on planning applications and to guide actions on landscape enhancement, where resources allow.
- 2.6 This document researches and categorises features and characteristics of the landscape and has divided the study area into broad landscape types and more detailed landscape character areas. The study also focuses on the setting of built form within the landscape and on the transition from settlements to the wider countryside. Pressures which threaten the landscape character have been identified based on perceived pressures provided by the Greater Nottingham Partnership, regional and local planning policy and from consultation with local communities. Guidelines have been produced for positive change to ensure the preservation of local landscape distinctiveness.

3.0 APPLICATION OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Who is this document for?

3.1 This document is relevant to anyone who has an interest in landscape. The main applications for the document are considered to be:

- A technical document and evidence base to help inform landscape policies within local authorities' core strategies and local development documents;
- Providing key information to development control officers in helping to assess whether proposals are likely to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness or whether they are likely to be detrimental in terms of scale, style and design. It will also help them to provide targeted ,landscape-related mitigation and conditions to accompany planning decisions;
- Providing key information for use by developers to help to develop designs and proposals which make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness of an area;
- Providing broad guidelines which may help land managers to identify area-specific landscape management operations such as small-scale tree and woodland planting and boundary replacement;
- A comprehensive document that is easy to use by the general public who may have a personal interest in the landscape around where they live.
- Helping to promote what is special within the landscape of Greater Nottingham; and
- Providing a framework to assist local communities and parish councils who may wish to develop detailed parish level character assessments or detailed village design statements.

3.2 The landscape character assessment has been undertaken at a local level (1:25,000) and provides character based information at this scale. It is important to note that it is a strategic assessment rather than a field-by-field assessment and detailed decisions and assessments will still be required to consider specific local circumstances. For example new development proposed for a site will still require a landscape and visual assessment which includes an assessment of landscape character on a field-by-field basis.

3.3 The assessment has focused on the rural landscape and areas bordering urban areas; it has not assessed the character of towns or villages. The document makes reference to how settlements integrate with the surrounding landscape and any key elements or distinctive characteristics of these settlements where they are particularly evident within the landscape.

How to use this document

3.4 This document provides a detailed technical report of the landscape character of Greater Nottingham. It has been structured to enable users not to have to read the whole document to access information on a specific area or site.

- 3.5 The main report looks at the study area as a whole and highlights important planning designations, national and local designations and broad characteristics such as geology, soils, landform, hydrology, ecology and cultural heritage to build a picture of the character of the overall Greater Nottingham area.
- 3.6 Appendix 9 provides summary descriptions of the Regional Character Areas and detailed descriptions and profiles for the Draft Policy Zones (DPZs). It is this appendix which should be used when looking at the local character of a specific area or site. For clarity and ease of orientation the DPZs have been grouped under the relevant Regional Character Area. Use Appendix 10 if a site lies within Erewash Borough.
- 3.7 For example, for somebody wishing to know more about a parcel of land within Rushcliffe on the northern fringes of Aslockton, the first step would be to identify the sites location on a map. Referring to Figure 17 identify the Regional Character Area which it falls and review the key characteristics. This parcel of land would belong to the Regional Character Area: South Nottinghamshire Farmlands. Then look at Figure 18 to identify which DPZ the field falls within.
- 3.8 From this use Appendix 9 to identify the characteristics of the South Nottinghamshire Farmlands and the more detailed key characteristics of the DPZ: Aslockton Village Farmlands. The key characteristics set out what features give this area a sense of place. The landscape value judgements then explain how and why this landscape is distinct from others. This has informed the character guidelines. These guidelines in combination with the key characteristics can be used to understand what types of change could occur on the field which would retain or enhance the landscape character and what is likely to alter or be detrimental to the landscape character.
- 3.9 If a particular parcel of land lies on the boundary of DPZs the following should be noted. DPZ boundaries represent 'transitional areas' where key characteristics from the two adjacent areas may be present within the landscape. In considering character for a particular field/site on a DPZ boundary it will be important to review the descriptions and key characteristics for both areas and to consider the relative landscape values and guidelines when formulating or responding to proposals.
- 3.10 The landscape guidelines for each DPZ form a useful aid for assessing proposals. For example a proposal for infill housing could be assessed on whether it conserves the prominent village skylines or if it makes a positive contribution to local distinctiveness through the use of red brick or red pantile roofs.

4.0 STUDY OBJECTIVES

4.1 The main objectives of this study are:

- To review and update the Countryside Appraisal: Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines published in 1997;
- To promote awareness of Greater Nottingham's landscape;
- To carry out the work in accordance with the method developed by Nottinghamshire County Council and be consistent with the Derbyshire County Council approach at Erewash;
- To identify discrete areas of character and describe their main landscape characteristics;
- To assess the landscape condition, quality and significance of the areas;
- To consult with key stakeholders;
- To provide a series of recommendations and future strategies for the protection, conservation, enhancement and restoration of each landscape area;
- To identify a range of key issues and provide a knowledge base to enable informed and justified landscape related decisions; and
- To provide potential indicators that could form part of the LDF monitoring framework.

4.2 Landscape character is one of many issues which need to be taken into account in shaping the future of the area.

4.3 The identification of landscape character or its identified landscape value does not determine whether development will or will not be allowed in an area or on a site. Where development is needed to meet economic or sustainability objectives, this document will help to guide the form of development to ensure local distinctiveness and landscape quality are conserved and where possible enhanced.

5.0 METHOD

5.1 The framework GIS exercise on which this assessment has been based was undertaken by Steven Warnock of the Department of Geography at the University of Reading in 2004, using the 'Living Landscapes' Method that he developed. The key stages of the process are described as follows:

- Identification of regional character areas;
- Desk study;
- Interpolation of data and initial mapping of character areas;
- Field study;
- Classification and description; and
- Recommendations.

5.2 This section summarises the main approach taken to the landscape character assessment.

Desk study

5.3 Desk based research included a review of available relevant published documentation. This included national, regional and local planning policy, and relevant landscape and heritage documents including the Countryside Appraisal of Nottinghamshire.

5.4 Desk based research also included an assessment of relevant Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, aerial photography and the contributing Council's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data sets including landform, floodzones, ecological, landscape and heritage information.

Initial mapping

(Carried out by Stephen Warnock on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council)

5.5 The assessment has been carried out at two levels. The first level was a broad-level identification of Regional Areas (A list of these is provided within Appendix 1, these areas were sub-divided into smaller landscape character types also presented in Appendix 1). These are sub-divisions of the national Joint Character Areas and contain broadly similar characteristics. Undertaken to identify patterns in physiography, ground type, settlement pattern and land cover. This has been used within the East Midlands Regional Character Assessment. The second level is the identification of distinct units of character at a local level (typically using 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey base maps). These are called Landscape Description Units (LDU).

5.6 LDUs are homogenous units of land defined by a number of attributes which are derived from a series of GIS overlays. These identify areas of common characteristics. The LDUs were defined using various key components of the landscape including:

- Physiography – expression of the shape and structure of the landscape as influenced by both nature of the underlying geology and geological processes.

- Ground Type – soil forming environment which determines the surface pattern of vegetation and land use.
- Settlement Pattern – is the structural component of the cultural landscape reflected in the distribution of settlements; historic enclosure; and size of tenure of agricultural holdings.
- Land Cover – type of vegetation (natural and man-made) covering the land surface.

5.7 These are sub-divided into the following categories: landform; geology; soils; settlement pattern; farm type and tree cover. Through the use of GIS these patterns can be overlaid to identify areas of similar character. Each LDU has a 6 figure reference code which relates to each overlay, identified followed by a short written description.

Example	LDU 382
Written Description	6 figure reference: SSD PSS Sloping undulating, soft sandstone / sandy drift, impoverished soils, low dispersal with farms, small farms, secondary woodland
Example	LDU 389
Written Description	6 figure reference: LFB MEP Vales and valley bottoms, other fluvial drift, deep sandy loamy soils, unsettled (meadow and marsh), large estates, estate plantations

Interpolation of GIS data
(Carried out by TEP)

- 5.8 The GIS interpolation identified detailed and often small units of character across the study area. After a brief familiarisation visit to site, it was clear that many of the LDUs only displayed subtle differences in character such as the top, side and base of a hill.
- 5.9 To rationalise and identify broader areas of similar character, LDUs were analysed to establish units which had four or more attributes the same. In these cases it is likely that at a local level the character within each LDU would be similar and guidelines and descriptions closely correlated. This was verified as part of the field survey.
- 5.10 This analysis enabled draft Draft Policy Zones (DPZs) to be formulated along with specific notes of any areas of uncertainty. These areas formed the basis for the field study which verified, reviewed and refined the draft DPZs.

Field study

- 5.11 The detailed field study was carried out by Chartered Landscape Architects, both by car and on foot from publicly accessible locations. During this assessment consideration was given to individual elements such as built form, land use, landform, vegetation, hydrology, views and aesthetic factors and the interaction between them which cannot be determined by desk study alone. This allowed distinctions to be made between recognisable patterns in the landscape.
- 5.12 Key distinguishing characteristics were recorded on site using a standardised survey sheet, an example of which is included in Appendix 2. Representative photos were also taken for each DPZ and have been used to illustrate the character area descriptions. Survey locations were chosen to cover many of the LDUs which lie within each DPZ.

Classification and description

- 5.13 Following the field survey, the identified draft DPZs were refined. The information was collated to provide a factual description for each of the DPZs. The text describes the key elements which create a sense of place, the landscape's intactness from a visual and functional perspective, landform, land use and field pattern, and makes reference to ecology, archaeology and cultural heritage, built form and vegetation composition where appropriate.

Making recommendations

- 5.14 The first part of making recommendations for each DPZ was the assessment of landscape quality. This is a judgement regarding the condition of landscape features combined with the strength of landscape character. This is based on the combination of strength of character and landscape condition.
- 5.15 The method used by Nottinghamshire County Council for assessing landscape quality differed slightly, however the output of both methods produced similar landscape actions for each DPZ. The NCC method is summarised at Appendix 3.

Strength of Character:

- 5.16 This is determined by a range of criteria:
- An assessment of how characteristic features and elements combine to form a sense of place;
 - How distinctive and recognisable are the pattern of elements that make up the character, including both positive and negative elements;
 - Presence and quantity of distinctive features; and
 - Identification of landscapes containing historic patterns and features which may have declined or become fragmented thereby weakening character but which could be reinstated.
- 5.17 A three point scale has been used to make judgements as to strength of character: **Strong; Moderate; and Weak.**

- *Strong Character*
Strong character is defined as a consistent distribution of distinctive characteristics such as rock outcrops, hills, river floodplain, and woodland. These characteristics combine to create a strongly distinctive sense of place. Minor changes in land use or land cover would not necessarily detrimentally influence character. An example would be Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps where the hills (Wolds) and mature woodland on them are distinctive repetitive features which are consistent and exert a strong influence on the surrounding landscape. This creates a strong and distinctive sense of place.
- *Moderate Character*
Distinctive characteristics are consistent though the area although their distribution is less obvious or less frequent. The landscape still has a recognisable and distinctive character although it could be altered or weakened through minor changes in land use or land cover. An example would be Selston and Eastwood Urban Fringe Farmland where the agricultural land has few distinctive features and the sprawled settlement pattern does not contribute to the sense of place. However, the landscape history is still evident in the mining influences and relics contribute to the sense of place.
- *Weak Character*
A landscape where features and patterns are present which help to define character, however, there are often numerous influences none of which are overriding and many features show signs of alteration or decline. Even minor changes in land use or land cover could have a marked influence on the character of the area. An example would be at Fulwood Disused Workings where the landscape features are mixed and where elements are unified they are typically heavily influenced by man such as restored landform and plantation woodland.

Landscape Condition

- 5.18 A judgement is made by consideration of state or intactness of landscape features, elements and characteristics and how these combine to inform a positive visual impression. This includes elements such as hedgerows, woodlands, field pattern, urban influences, infrastructure and restored landscapes. Judgements of condition are made as to how identified characteristics positively influence the appearance of the landscape.
- 5.19 A three point scale was used to make judgements: **Good, Moderate and Poor**
- *Good Condition*
Features are well managed and are almost always intact and of consistent quality. There is little evidence of loss or decline in the condition of features. At Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps hedgerows and woodland are well managed, although there is some evidence of minor field boundary fragmentation in places. Where hedgerows have been replaced, the timber fencing is usually in good

condition. The agricultural land is well managed and features are intact with little sign of decline.

- *Moderate Condition*

Features are mostly well managed although in places there is evidence of decline in management and loss of features such as some fragmented hedgerows or dilapidated walls. At Selston and Eastwood Urban Fringe there is some evidence of hedgerow fragmentation and the use of wire fencing instead of hedgerows. The restoration of the coal mining landscapes has improved the condition of the landscape and this will improve further as the planting matures.

- *Poor Condition*

Few features are intact or well managed. Loss or decline of features is frequent. Boundaries such as hedgerows are rarely intact and other boundaries are often of variable style and condition. Such elements combine to give an untidy or disjointed appearance to the landscape. At Fulwood Disused Workings where hedgerows and woodland lack management in places, and due to industrial/mining intervention, field pattern is largely absent. Where field pattern remains it is often fragmented.

5.20 A landscape strategy matrix, shown in Table 5.1 is used as a basis for guiding landscape judgements and forming management recommendations for the character areas. This is a useful tool as it provides a consistent basis upon which judgements can be made. From both condition and strength of character judgements, the table can be used to identify an appropriate management strategy.

5.21 The strategic categories used in this assessment for landscape quality are:

- **Conserve**
- **Enhance**
- **Restore**
- **Create**

5.22 **Conserve:** where the landscape quality is considered to be good (due to good condition and strong character) and there should be an emphasis on protecting or safeguarding the key features and characteristics of the landscape in their present form.

5.23 **Enhance:** emphasis should be to improve existing features which may not be currently well-managed or where existing features are of good quality but could be of greater benefit if improved. This may include improvements to landscape management practices or the introduction or removal of elements or features in order to strengthen character and/or improve perceived condition.

5.24 **Restore:** emphasis should be on repairing or re-establishing features that have been lost or are in a state of severe decline.

5.25 **Create:** where the landscape quality is poor (due to poor condition and weak character) and the original landscape pattern is no longer evident. In such places there is a need to form new and different landscapes. An example of this is a landscape which has been heavily influenced by quarrying and industry, field pattern and features are no longer evident and the restored land has altered the land form.

Table 5.1 - Landscape quality and associated landscape strategy matrix.

Landscape Condition	Good	Moderate <i>Enhance</i>	Moderate – Good <i>Conserve and Enhance</i>	Good <i>Conserve</i>
	Moderate	Poor – Moderate <i>Enhance and Restore</i>	Moderate <i>Enhance</i>	Moderate – Good <i>Conserve and Enhance</i>
	Poor	Poor <i>Restore/Create</i>	Poor – Moderate <i>Enhance and Restore</i>	Moderate <i>Enhance</i>
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Landscape Character		

5.26 Using the information gathered in the desk and field studies and taking into account the overall management strategy from Table 4.1, landscape guidelines and management strategies were suggested for each DPZ. These are based on guidelines to conserve and protect the positive characteristics of the area and recommendations on how to enhance and restore aspects of the landscape to strengthen landscape character and reduce the influences of features which detract from landscape quality and condition.

6.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

6.1 This section identifies the planning policies that are of relevance to landscape and landscape character. These are important in identifying what aspects of landscape are currently considered to be of importance within policy and which may have an influence on the character of the landscape.

National Policy

6.2 Planning Policy Statement (PPS)1: *Delivering Sustainable Development* (2005) requires local planning authorities to adopt sustainable principles when writing Local Development Framework policies. It specifically states that high levels of protection should be afforded to the most valued townscapes, wildlife habitats, landscapes and natural resources. It emphasises the importance of good quality design which responds to local context and the protection of the character of the wider countryside within sustainable development proposals.

6.3 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 2: *Green Belts* (1995) outlines the history and extent of Green Belts and explains their purpose. It describes how Green Belts are designated and their land safeguarded. It also sets out Green Belt land-use objectives and the presumption against inappropriate development.

6.4 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7: *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas* (2004) sets out the Government's objectives to ensure that good quality sustainable development respects and enhances the local distinctiveness and intrinsic qualities of the countryside. It confirms the need to protect the open countryside for the benefit of all and to raise the quality of the environment in rural areas.

6.5 PPS 7 recognises the importance of landscapes outside designations in providing valuable landscapes at the local level. It also stresses that landscape character assessment should be used as a tool for robust criteria-based policies rather than continuing with rigid often unduly restrictive local designations.

Regional Policy

The East Midlands Regional Plan 2009

6.6 The current Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands was published in March 2009 as the East Midlands Regional Plan. It provides a broad development strategy for the East Midlands up to 2026. It identifies the scale and distribution of new housing and priorities for the environment, transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, energy, minerals, and waste treatment and disposal.

- 6.7 Policies of relevance to landscape character are set out below:
- 6.8 *Policy 1 Regional Core Objectives:* This policy states that to secure the delivery of sustainable development within the East Midlands, all strategies, plans and programmes having a spatial impact should meet certain core objectives. Those of relevance to this assessment are Policy c) to protect and enhance the environmental quality of urban and rural settlements and Policy g) to protect and enhance the environment.
- 6.9 *Policy 12 Development in the Three Cities sub-area:* Development should support the continued growth and regeneration of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham, and maintain and strengthen the economic, commercial and cultural roles of all three cities.
- 6.10 *Policy 26 Protecting and enhancing the Region's Natural and Cultural Heritage:* Sustainable development should ensure the protection, appropriate management and enhancement of the Region's natural and cultural heritage.
- 6.11 *Policy 28 Regional Priorities for Environmental and Green Infrastructure:* Local Authorities, statutory environmental bodies and developers should work with the voluntary sector, landowners and local communities to ensure the delivery, protection and enhancement of Environmental Infrastructure across the Region. Such infrastructure should contribute to a high quality natural and built environment and to the delivery of sustainable communities.
- 6.12 *Policy 31 Priorities for the Management and Enhancement of the Region's Landscape:* The Region's natural and heritage landscapes should be protected and enhanced by the establishment of criteria-based policies in Local Development Frameworks to ensure that development proposals respect intrinsic landscape character in rural and urban fringe areas. Local Development Frameworks should develop principles for landscape and biodiversity protection and enhancement objectives through the integration of Landscape Character Assessments with historic and ecological assessments. Local planning authorities should prepare Landscape character assessments to inform the preparation of Local Development Frameworks. These can also be used to develop Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 6.13 There are specific policies relating to the Three Cities Sub-Regional Strategy (SRS) to provide additional direction and guidance to Local Development Frameworks on issues that cross strategic planning boundaries and other Sub-Regional matters of importance in the Three Cities Sub-area. The area covered by the SRS within the Nottingham area includes Broxtowe Borough Council, Erewash Borough Council, Gedling Borough Council, Nottingham City Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council. In addition the SRS covers four Hucknall wards in Ashfield District which lie within the travel to work area and form part of the Greater Nottingham Partnership. The rest of Ashfield is included in the Northern SRS.

- 6.14 *Policy Three Cities SRS 2 Sub-Regional Priorities for Green Belt Areas:* The principle of the Nottingham-Derby and Burton-Swadincote Green Belt will be retained. However, as Nottingham has been identified as a Principal Urban Area the policy also states that Local Development documents will have to urgently review the policy to consider how to accommodate future growth requirements over at least the next 25 years.
- 6.15 *Policy Three Cities SRS 3 Housing Provision:* This policy states that provision for new housing levels over the 2006-2026 period for the Nottingham area will be 3,030 dwellings per annum, of which at least 2,040 should be within or adjoining the Nottingham principal urban area.
- 6.16 *Policy Three Cities SRS 5 Green Infrastructure and National Forest:* In considering major development proposals, especially those associated with the New Growth Point proposals, Local planning authorities and implementing agencies will coordinate the provision of enhanced and new green infrastructure. The proposed River Trent Park is highlighted as a strategic priority.
- 6.17 *Policy Northern SRS 4 Enhancing Green Infrastructure Through Development:* Local Planning Authorities in their LDFs and other strategies need to ensure that consideration is given to where the greatest public benefit would be gained through the enhancement of Green Infrastructure. The multiple benefits identified in the East Midlands Public Benefit Analysis project and other key strategic environmental opportunities set out in the Northern Coalfields Environmental Study and other relevant work should be used. The use of Green Infrastructure Plans will be used to achieve this.
- 6.18 *Policy Northern SRS 5 Sherwood Regional Park:* Local authorities should work together to promote the creation of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park, which may extend into the Three Cities Sub-area, by protecting and enhancing the distinctive landscape, natural and cultural and historic assets and other wider environmental, economic and social benefits.

Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan (adopted 2005)

- 6.19 The Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan was adopted in 2005 and is the primary guidance for the assessment and determination of mineral development proposals within the Greater Nottingham Study. Policies in the Local Plan seek to protect the Nottinghamshire landscape by only granting permission for mineral developments where visual impact can be kept to an acceptable level. These policies also allow the Council to impose appropriate screening and landscaping measures to protect visual amenity. Under policies M3.18-20 proposals for mineral developments that would destroy national or locally important nature conservation sites will not be allowed unless a need case is successfully demonstrated.

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Waste Local Plan (adopted 2002)

- 6.20 The Nottinghamshire Waste Local Plan was adopted in 2002. Policies in this Local Plan highlight the need to consider the impact of the development of waste management facilities on landscape character. Development proposals for waste facilities that would destroy landscape features such as woodland or important nature conservation sites will not be allowed unless a need case is successfully demonstrated. Policies in the Local Plan also seek to ensure that the design and layout of waste facilities are such that they minimise visual impact and appropriate screening measures are imposed.

Local Policy

- 6.21 There are 6 local planning authorities within the Greater Nottingham study area: Nottingham City Council; Broxtowe Borough Council; Gedling Borough Council; Rushcliffe Borough Council; Ashfield District Council and Erewash Borough Council. Each Council's development plans have numerous policies of relevance to this document, particularly in relation to the protection of local landscape areas and Green Belt urban expansion within the countryside.

Local Development Framework

- 6.22 In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 current Local Plans are to be replaced by Local Development Frameworks (LDF). All the local planning authorities within the study area have commenced preparation of their LDFs which will comprise a portfolio of documents covering issues such as housing, employment and retail as well as environment and landscape protection

Local Development Plans

- 6.23 No Development Plan Documents have yet been formally adopted. Several local authorities have prepared Supplementary Planning Documents. At present the statutory plans for the local authorities within the study area are listed below:

- Ashfield Local Plan Review, adopted November 2002
- Broxtowe Local Plan, adopted September 2004
- Gedling Borough Replacement Local Plan, adopted July 2005
- Nottingham Local Plan, adopted November 2005
- Rushcliffe Borough Non-statutory Replacement Plan, adopted December 2006
- Six saved policies from the Rushcliffe Borough Local Plan adopted 1996
- Erewash Borough Saved Policies Document, July 2008

- 6.24 Rushcliffe Borough Council started the process of producing a Statutory Replacement Local Plan, however following advice from the Government Office for the East of Midlands, withdrew the document and adopted it as non-statutory guidance on 14 December 2006. It forms the basis for

determining planning applications alongside the 6 saved policies from the Rushcliffe 1996 Local Plan.

- 6.25 There are no national landscape designations in the study area, such as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The area's landscape is valued and protected by various development plan policies. There is general resistance to developments in the countryside or protected landscapes which would have an adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape. Policies of relevance to the landscape are listed in three sections below; the first section groups together the policies of different individual local authorities which have a similar purpose. The second section discusses policies specific to local authorities within the study area. The third addresses policies specific to Erewash Borough.

Policies Consistent Across the 5 Local Authorities

Green Belt

- 6.26 The Nottingham-Derby Green Belt was established to prevent the coalescence of the two cities and the towns in the Erewash valley. It surrounds the Nottingham built-up area and extends to over 60,000 hectares in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. The East Midlands Regional Plan (RSS*, March 2008) reaffirm the principle of the Green Belt, but indicate that a strategic review of the Green Belt will need to be undertaken in the preparation of local development plan documents.
- 6.27 The countryside surrounding Nottingham was defined as the Nottingham-Derby Green Belt within the Green Belt Local Plan as adopted in 1989. All authorities have similar policies in their statutory development plans which seek to safeguard the Nottingham-Derby Green Belt against inappropriate development to maintain its openness.
- 6.28 It is important to note that Green Belt is a development control designation rather than related to landscape quality although a high quality landscape is an aspiration of such designation.

Protection of the Countryside

- 6.29 The majority of open countryside in the study area is designated as Green Belt. For open land not included within the Green Belt respective policies in Ashfield, Gedling and Rushcliffe's Local Plans seek to safeguard the open countryside against inappropriate forms of development to maintain its character and in particular its openness.

Mature Landscape Areas

- 6.30 Nottinghamshire County Council undertook a Countryside Appraisal to provide a strategic overview of the landscape of Nottinghamshire. One part of this appraisal has been the identification of Mature Landscape Areas (MLAs) first completed in 1992 and reviewed in 1997. MLAs comprise a local countryside designation which seeks to identify and protect those parts of Nottinghamshire's landscape which have been least affected by adverse change. They are considered to be amongst the most precious landscapes within Nottinghamshire which have remained relatively unchanged since the mid 19th century.

- 6.31 Out of the five local planning authorities within the Nottinghamshire part of the study area it is only Rushcliffe Borough Council that does not have a Mature Landscape Areas Policy in their Local Plan. Of the four planning local authorities that recognise Mature Landscape Areas the relevant development plan policies seek to restrict development that would have an adverse effect on the visual, historic or nature conservation importance of these landscape designations. MLAs have been designated throughout the study area and are illustrated on Figure 12.

Greenwood Community Forest

- 6.32 Greenwood Community Forest was established in 1991 by the Countryside Agency, Forestry Commission, and seven of Nottinghamshire's local authorities. Within the Greater Nottingham study area only Rushcliffe Borough Council is not part of the Greenwood Community Forest Partnership. Community Forests are intended to provide well-wooded landscapes for wildlife, living and working, recreation and education within urban fringe areas.

- 6.33 Nottingham City Council, Broxtowe Borough Council and Gedling Borough Councils each have specific policies that seek to support the provision of planted areas that will contribute to the Greenwood Community Forest. Ashfield Local Plan does not contain a specific policy but has a general note which explains the importance of the Greenwood Community Forest and how private developers could contribute to the scheme

Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

- 6.34 Aside from Rushcliffe Borough Council the other local planning authorities within the study area have policies in their development plans which seek the preservation of important trees, hedgerows and woodland when making development control decisions. These wildlife habitats are recognised in the local plans as making a valuable contribution to the landscape character of the Local authorities.

- 6.35 The Rushcliffe Borough Council Non-Statutory Replacement Local Plan does not have a specific policy relating to tree or hedgerow preservation. Rather the Local Plan discusses the importance of tree, hedgerow and woodland preservation to the Borough under a general 'Natural Environment' section.

Conservation Areas

- 6.36 All local planning authorities have policies within their local plans which seek to ensure the preservation of conservation areas. The policies emphasise the importance of the distinctive character of conservation areas, many of which retain examples of traditional and locally distinctive built form and use of materials.

Historic Parks and Gardens

- 6.37 Nottingham City Council, Ashfield District Council and Gedling Borough Council all have policies for the protection of Historic Parks and Gardens. Historic Parks and Gardens are included within the Register of Parks and Gardens which is maintained by English Heritage. The policies state that

the each council will consult with English Heritage regarding any proposals which might affect an Historic Park and Garden.

Other Policies specific to individual Local Planning Authorities

Gedling Borough Council

Sherwood Forest

- 6.38 Areas to the north and east of the Borough between the villages of Calverton and Ravenshead are within the Sherwood Forest boundary. The Plan for Sherwood Forest published by Nottinghamshire County Council in July 1988 sets out policies and proposals for the area to conserve the natural environment and to encourage and accommodate tourism and leisure uses where appropriate. Policy R7 of the Gedling Borough Local Plan seeks to support the policies of the County Council by granting permission for appropriate leisure uses within the Sherwood Forest Plan Area.

Ravenshead Special Character Area

- 6.39 The Ravenshead Special Character Area lies to the west of Ravenshead to the east of the predominantly rural area of Newstead Abbey Park. This character area comprises detached dwellings, set within large plots and is said to provide '*an appropriate visual transition from the rural character of Newstead Abbey Park to the more typical and established urban form of Ravenshead*'. Policy ENV17 seeks to maintain the characteristics of the Ravenshead Special Character Area and prevent subdivision and development of large, mature gardens and the protection of landscape features.

Protection of the Ridgelines/Urban Fringe

- 6.40 The ridgelines which surround much of the urban area in Gedling are recognised as an important local landscape feature. Policy ENV32 seeks to protect the open character and visual quality of these ridgelines from inappropriate development.

Rivers

- 6.41 The Rivers Trent, Leen, Dover Beck, Ouse Beck, Lambley Dumble and Day Brook are important features in the Greater Nottingham landscape. Policy ENV40 places emphasis on ensuring that development does not adversely effect water quality or compromise the value of associated wildlife habitats.

Broxtowe Borough Council

Prominent Areas for Special Protection

- 6.42 Prominent Areas for Special Protection are hills and ridges recognised as attractive landscape features near the edge of the Greater Nottingham conurbation. Policy E13 seeks to protect the open character of the following areas;

- Catstone Hill ridge, Strelley;
- Stapleford Hill, Stapleford;

- Bramcote Hills and Bramcote Ridge;
- Burnt Hill, Bramcote; and
- Windmill Hill, Stapleford

Erewash Borough Council

- 6.43 The borough of Erewash, which is within Derbyshire, forms western part of the Greater Nottingham area.
- 6.44 The Erewash Local Plan was adopted in July 2005. Erewash Borough Council is currently working on LDF documents but the policies of the Local Plan, following application to the Secretary of State, have been saved and still form the statutory planning policies for the Borough as part of the Erewash Borough Saved Policies Document. The policies which are of relevance to the landscape are summarised below.
- 6.45 With specific reference to landscape character, Policy ENV16: *Landscape Character* states that development should recognise and accord with the landscape character area within which it is located, having regard to materials for construction, height of buildings, roof design, landscaping, means of access, density of development, sustainable patterns of development and traffic generation being appropriate for the location of the development.
- 6.46 Policy EV14: *Protection of Trees and Hedgerows* states that planning permission will not be given for development which would destroy hedgerows, areas of woodland, ancient woodland, trees protected by a TPO or trees in a conservation area.
- 6.47 Policy GB1: *Green Belt* states that within the Green Belt there will be a presumption against inappropriate development, except in very special circumstances where inappropriate development can be justified.

7.0 EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER STUDIES

- 7.1 This section provides a summary of existing information relating to the landscape character of Greater Nottingham. This includes broad scale, national and regional information. Where relevant, more localised studies, have been consulted and reviewed. This information provides a broad introduction to the landscape character of Greater Nottingham and highlights the main features of importance.
- 7.2 A national assessment provides broad character areas such as The Humber Levels or The Lincolnshire Wolds etc which provide a very broad indicator of where character changes. Regional or county level assessments are at a slightly finer grain than the national level but still provide a broad indicator of where character varies within a region or a county. These are useful for planning landscape planning and providing guidance at these scales. Local district or borough level assessments provide a more detailed context and are useful for borough wide planning projects and providing information on what the landscape is like within a local planning authority area. Character assessments can be undertaken at a finer level again such as on a field-by-field basis although these tend to be undertaken for proposals at specific sites and are at a very fine grain.
- 7.3 National and regional landscape assessments provide a broad context to the overall landscape character of the area. These studies include Natural England's (former Countryside Agency) Joint Character Areas as well as more detailed regional and county character assessments. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the key characteristics of the landscape character areas described in published assessments which cover the Greater Nottingham study area.

National

Countryside Agency Countryside Character Volume 4: East Midlands

- 7.4 This document was published in 1999 and divides the whole of England into broad landscape character areas. It recognises key overriding characteristics and identifies key pressures and forces for change within the landscape. There are seven national character areas within the study area. The areas are summarised as follows and illustrated on Figure 3.

Character Area 30-Southern Magnesian Limestone

- 7.5 This character area covers an area stretching north from Nottingham into Derbyshire. This area is described as a landscape formed by the two escarpments of the Upper and Lower Magnesian Limestone. The escarpments form quite a narrow ridge feature which acts as a distinct barrier between the industrial coalfields to the west and the lowland vales to the east. Throughout the length of the limestone belt are large fields and well wooded estates. River valleys and gorges cut through the ridge exposing the underlying rock. Nearer to Nottingham industrial influences are more prominent due to the availability of coal and other materials.

Character Area 38- Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire & Yorkshire Coalfield

- 7.6 This character area covers an area stretching along the western edge of the Greater Nottingham study area. It is described as an area which is heavily influenced by industrial activity with landscape features such as mine buildings, former spoil tips and iron and steel plants. The area comprises a complex mix of built up areas, industrial land, dereliction and farmed open countryside. There are substantial areas of intact agricultural land, many areas of woodland and semi-natural vegetation. The landscape is generally low, with variable hills, escarpments and broad valleys.

Character Area 48-Trent and Belvoir Vales

- 7.7 This character area covers a large swathe of land to the east of the study area. It is described as an open, arable and mixed farmed landscape. The area of farmland is centred on the River Trent. The Vales are defined in the west by a scarp slope dropping down to the wooded land of Sherwood and to the south by a distinct scarp rising up to Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds. Trimmed hedgerows line the fields but there are very few field trees and woodlands. Settlement in the area centres around the large market towns of Newark, Grantham, Southwell and Lincoln.

Character Area 49- Sherwood

- 7.8 This character area covers an area stretching north from Nottingham to the east of the Magnesian Limestone Ridge. Sherwood is described as an area which contains a wide range of landscapes including the historic heartlands of Sherwood Forest. Large areas of woodland and enclosed fields divided by treeless hedgerows lie to the west, whilst more open fields lie to the east adjacent to the Trent and Belvoir Vales. The landscape is also characterised by extensive parklands and estates of the Dukeries. The area is well known for its historic and cultural associations, including Lord Byron at Newstead Abbey, the Pilgrim Fathers and the legend of Robin Hood.

Character Area 50 – Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent

- 7.9 This character area covers the western extent of the study area within Erewash Borough. It is described as a transitional zone between the Peak District National Park and the industrialised Coal Measures. It includes outlying ridges separated by impressive sometimes gorge-like, river valleys. The Derwent Valley is prominent and a strategic focus for communication routes. Stock rearing and rough grazing are common with arable concentrated on valley sides in the south of the area. Hedgerows are the form of enclosure on lower ground with stone walls present above 200m. Woodlands include deciduous woodland on valley slopes; isolated copses on high ground; and large conifer plantations. 18th and 19th century stone and brick industry is present on the valley bottoms; other industrial influences include large-scale gritstone and limestone quarries. Small market towns and villages tend to be nestled in valley bottoms; characterised by stone cottages, churches and dispersed farmsteads on outlying enclosed land.

Character Area 69-Trent Valley Washlands

- 7.10 This character area covers an area to the south of the study area. The Trent Washlands is described as a linear landscape with the River Trent flowing through the middle. The character area consists of flat broad valleys associated with two tributaries, the Tame and the Soar. The Washlands landscape comprises pastoral and arable land intermixed with urban development. In pastoral areas, fields are small with full hedgerows but few hedgerow trees. Other stretches within the Washlands are more open arable land with large fields divided by low trimmed hedges. Constrained by the risk of flooding, settlement is concentrated on the sand and gravel terraces where drainage is better.

Character Area 74- Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds

- 7.11 This character area is to the south of the River Trent and covers an area in the south east of the study area. The Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds are essentially a range of undulating hills, broken by vales and dominated by boulder clay. In the west a moderately steep escarpment rises above the Soar Valley becoming steeper and more irregular in the north. Settlements in this area comprise small villages and farmsteads scattered across the countryside.

RegionalEast Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment

- 7.12 LDA Design was commissioned to complete the Regional Character Assessment of East Midlands. The document is currently being prepared and is due for completion shortly (May 2009). This assessment sits between the National Character Assessment, which identifies broad national joint character areas, and the local level assessment, which examines landscape character at a finer grain. It is useful for projects which are based at a regional level such as strategic planning projects.
- 7.13 To ensure the tiers of character assessment dovetail together to form an effective information base, the Greater Nottingham assessment, which focuses on the local level, has taken into account the available information from the emerging Regional Landscape Character Assessment. The draft regional character areas tie in closely with the previously identified regional areas within the county level *Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines* document. The Greater Nottingham character assessment uses the regional character areas as a basis for wider landscape change and examines the more local level changes within these areas to form Draft Policy Zones.
- 7.14 Figure 5 shows the emerging Regional Character Assessment character types.

CountyCountryside Appraisal: Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines

- 7.15 This county level assessment was published in 1997. Closely linked with the Countryside Commission's Countryside Character Programme, the

guidelines were intended to provide a framework to conserve and enhance the character of the countryside.

7.16 The Guidelines used the National Character Map of England (as produced by the Countryside Commission) as a basis, and sub-divided some areas to give greater regional detail. Each of the character areas was then described in detail in the report, including information such as physical and human influences on the landscape, the visual character of the landscape, landscape evolution and forces for change, landscape strategies and key recommendations, and advice on landscape guidelines.

7.17 The regional character areas which cover the study area are summarised below; summaries of the more local landscape character types are presented at Appendix 4 and illustrated on Figure 4.

Nottinghamshire Coalfield

7.18 *'A densely settled, heavily industrialised regional characterised by closely spaced mining settlements, pit heaps and small pastoral farms.'*

7.19 The landscape types within this regional area are: Coalfields Farmlands and River Meadowlands.

Magnesian Limestone Ridge

7.20 *'A gently rolling, in places urbanised, agricultural landscape with a regular pattern of large fields and distinctive stone villages.'*

7.21 The Magnesian Limestone Ridge is sub-divided into three landscape character types: Limestone Farmlands, Limestone Fringe; and River Meadowlands.

Sherwood

7.22 *'A well-wooded, and in places industrialised region characterised by semi-natural woodlands and heaths, historic country estates, large pine plantations, mining settlements and a planned layout of roads and fields.'*

7.23 The Sherwood Region has been sub-divided into six landscape character types. Forest Sandlands is the only landscape type within the study area.

Mid-Nottinghamshire Farmlands

7.24 *'A rural agricultural region characterised by small nucleated red brick villages, narrow country lanes, ancient woodlands, wooded 'dumble' streams and a variable pattern of fields.'*

7.25 The landscape types within the study area are Dumble Farmlands and River Meadowlands.

Trent Washlands

7.26 *'A low-lying agricultural region associated with the broad valleys of the Trent and Soar, characterised by productive arable farming, meadowlands, small nucleated villages, market towns and cities, power stations and quarries.'*

- 7.27 Sub-areas within the Trent Washlands and within the study area include Terrace Farmlands, River Meadowlands, Alluvial Estatelands, Alluvial Washlands and River Valley Washlands. These are present as small reoccurring pockets throughout the wider Trent Washlands.

South Nottingham Farmlands

- 7.28 *'A prosperous lowland agricultural region with a simple rural character of large arable fields, village settlements and broad alluvial levels.'*

- 7.29 The South Nottinghamshire Farmlands have been sub-divided into two sub-areas: Village Farmlands; and Alluvial Levels.

Nottinghamshire Wolds

- 7.30 *'A sparsely settled and remote rural region characterised by rolling clay wolds, mixed farming, small red brick villages and narrow country lanes.'*

- 7.31 The Nottinghamshire Wolds is sub-divided into four distinct landscape types: Wooded Clay Wolds; Clay Wolds; Wooded Hills and Scarps; and Village Farmlands which all lie within the study area.

Vale of Belvoir

- 7.32 *'A low-lying clay vale with a strong tradition of dairying characterised by large hedged fields, small rural villages and wide views to rising ground.'*

- 7.33 One distinct landscape type has been identified within the Vale of Belvoir: Vale Farmlands.

The Character of Nottinghamshire's Historic Landscape

- 7.34 This document maps the local characteristics of the current landscape according to their known or likely functional origins. It demonstrates the influence of cultural behaviour and change in the structure and appearance of our landscape surroundings. The historic landscape character assessment under-pins the recognition and definition of landscape character and recommends guidelines for sustaining the historic environment now and in the future.

- 7.35 The Nottinghamshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLCA) was completed in September 1999 by Nottinghamshire County Council in partnership with English Heritage. The primary output was the production of the Nottinghamshire Historic Landscape Character Map. This breaks down the landscape into urban areas, woodland, military area, mineral site and distinguishes field patterns. There are six different field patterns in the report: unenclosed open fields; fossilised open fields; reflecting open fields; regular geometric fields; irregular geometric fields; semi-regular field and unenclosed river meadows. The accompanying report discusses method of assessment and the findings of the mapping. It also discusses the meanings and uses of the information gathered. The result of the HLCA was a quantifiable overview of the historic landscape of Nottinghamshire.

7.36 The information in this report has been taken into consideration in the assessment of the landscape character undertaken through this project. The historic landscape where evident was considered in the desk study and field assessment. The findings of the HLCA report contributed to the recommended management guidelines which were formulated to shape the future of the county's landscape. The HLCA is illustrated on Figure 11.

8.0 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

8.1 The Greater Nottingham study area lies north of Leicestershire and east of Derbyshire. It incorporates Erewash Borough which is within Derbyshire.

8.2 This section addresses the physical factors which have an important influence on the landscape.

Geology

8.3 Geology is illustrated on Figure 6. Geological SINCs/Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) are illustrated on Figure 9 in addition to Biological Sites of Nature Conservation. There are numerous geological SINCS within the study area designated because they demonstrate distinctive features. RIGS are sites which are regionally important and are designated for their educational value, aesthetic value and historical significance in terms of important advances in earth sciences. SINCS are usually sites which are of more local significance for geology and often also have an element of wildlife value (described within the ecology section of this report).

8.4 Along the western boundary of the study area between Stapleford and Stanley is a region identified as the Nottinghamshire Coalfields. The geology of this area includes Coal Measures Strata, comprising shales and layers of sandstone alternating with stems of coal outcrop along the south-western edge of Nottinghamshire.

8.5 The Magnesian Limestone Ridge is to the east of the Northern Coalfields. This regional character area forms the southern most part of a narrow limestone ridge that extends from Nottingham northwest through the study area and continues northwards through Yorkshire to a point beyond Ripon. The composition of the Magnesian Limestone is compact partially crystalline rock and it is the relative hardness of this formation that determines land form.

8.6 The Magnesian Limestone Ridge is closely associated with a narrow swathe of softer Permian Rocks which outcrop along the western edge of the study area. The Permian rocks consist predominantly of red clays that give rise to a more subdued relief in comparison to the Magnesian Limestone. Both these beds diminish in thickness towards the southern end of the outcrop, before thinning out completely to the west of Nottingham. The limestone gives rise to a low escarpment which dips eastwards towards the overlying sandstone. The scarp is irregular in outline where many small streams have cut deep valleys into the underlying coal measures.

8.7 The Sherwood region is to the east of the Magnesian Limestone Ridge and extends from Nottingham northwards through the Borough of Gedling beyond the study area to the lowlands of the River Idle. This region comprises Permo-Triassic sandstones which rise as low hills along the eastern edge of the ridge. An outcrop of Permo-Triassic sandstones cover nearly a quarter of the Nottinghamshire County. This sandstone

formation is visible throughout the Sherwood region at points where it is exposed in cuttings, sites of mineral extraction and natural breaks in the landform such as rivers.

- 8.8 The Mid-Nottinghamshire Farmlands lie to the east of the Sherwood regions and extend northeast in a broad band through the Borough of Gedling. This region comprises a belt of Triassic rocks which consist of two formations: Waterstones and Mercia Mudstone. These rock formations form a low rolling escarpment that slopes eastwards. A prominent scarp slope along the western edge of the region overlooks the Sherwood Sandstone. The steeper part of this slope is composed of Mercia Mudstone with the gentler lower slopes being Waterstones. The combination accounts for the distinctively rolling nature of the land surface around Arnold and Gedling known locally as 'The Dumbles'.
- 8.9 Along the River Trent the area is characterised by a succession of river-borne materials reflecting the development of the river system. It mostly comprises flood gravels and more recent alluvial deposits. The gravels are notably coarse and mostly Bunter Pebble Bed debris whilst the alluvium is finer in texture and ranges from silty loam to light clay. The gravels include both outwash material and more recent riverine material. In combination they form a series of low terraces along the valley and include small 'islands' which are generally raised above the floodplain and are areas of more naturally dry land.
- 8.10 Within the southern part of the study area a belt of Triassic rocks are to the south of the River Trent between Gotham and Newark. These are the largest single geological formation within Nottinghamshire. The main rock type is Mercia Mudstone with a mix of reddish mudstone and hard sandstone 'skerries'. These are less pronounced than other places and result in a more uniform landform. The point where the Mercia Mudstone pass into shaley Rhaetic beds (a term for sediments laid down at the end of the Triassic period) is discernible by a low escarpment around Bunny and Keyworth.
- 8.11 Along the southern edges of Rushcliffe around Hickling, Colston Bassett and Langar is a low-lying clay vale. It is underlain by bluish grey mudstones and clays which alternate with layers of flaggy limestone. The softer Lower Lias beds have formed a subdued, gently rolling landform interspersed with small hillocks where thin bands of limestone exist. Rhaetic beds form a low escarpment to the south of the study area which although only between 5-10m in height is notable adjacent to the lower clay vale.
- 8.12 An area known as the Wolds lies either side of the Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire boundary and is closely associated with a dissected glacial plateau. The underlying Lias and Rhaetic beds are a series of mudstones and clays which outcrop along valley bottoms. The plateau thins out from Six Hills in Leicestershire and becomes gradually more dissected resulting in individual hills around West Leake and Gotham. These hills separate the Soar Valley from the low-lying basin of Ruddington Moor. Around Cropwell Bishop and Old Dalby is a steep scarp slope formed from an

outcrop of lower Lias clay beneath the mantle of glacial drift and provides a sharp contrast between the 'wolds' and the clay vales to the east.

Soils

8.13 The wide variety of landform and geology in Nottinghamshire contributes to a wide variety of different soils types. In Rushcliffe alluvial soils, with significant sand and gravel deposits characterise the areas of floodplain, whilst sand and gravel deposited by glaciers lie around East Leake. Much of the soils are the slightly calcareous clays of the Mercia Mudstones, but a thin band of hydraulic limestone outcrops along the escarpment from Gotham to Bunny, with heavy boulder clay in the south-west of the Borough. In Ashfield the coal measures produce acid soil types. They consist of grey shales alternating with bands of sandstone, limestone and seams of coal. The soil type in Gedling is mainly stoney clay loam or clay soils in the east, with sandy soils are dominant over much of the rest of the borough. Dark brown clay loam and silty clay loam soils are found on gentler slopes where the mudstone is overlain by thin fine loamy or fine silty drift. In Broxtowe the alluvial deposits in the Trent Valley comprise terraces of clay, silt, sands, fine and coarse gravels laid down in river floods. Much of the original Trent flood plain at Chilwell and Beeston has been built upon or been quarried for gravel at Attenborough. The underlying sandstone geology in parts of the borough produces low nutrient dry soils supporting acid grasslands, heath or oak-birch woodland.

8.14 The quality of the soils across the Greater Nottingham area is variable and ranges from grade 1, excellent quality to grade 4, poor quality. Rushcliffe is a large agricultural district and is predominantly covered by grade 2 farmland, which is considered very good. There are also large patches of grade 1 farmland in the north of the area and to the south west. There are only slim belts of grade 4. The borough of Gedling is predominantly grade 2 farmland although it has pockets of non-agricultural land and grade 1 farmland. Ashfield and Broxtowe are predominantly grade 4 farmland which is of poor quality. Both are covered by large areas of urban development and have some pockets of grade 1 and grade 2 farmland, but these are only small. Nottingham is predominantly urban land and contains only small pockets of non-agricultural land and grade 2 farmland. This is illustrated on Figure 7. Whilst the agricultural grade of land has not been used as a key attribute in defining character it is useful in providing possible indicators of what may be present on such land.

Landform

8.15 Landform within the Greater Nottingham area is varied and distinctive as highlighted within the geology and soils sections above. It encompasses areas of low-lying flat and open land, ridge lines, river corridors, gently undulating farmland, steeper rolling hills interspersed with small, fast flowing streams and artificial slopes of reclaimed mining spoil heaps.

Hydrology

- 8.16 The study area has a wide range of rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, streams and ditches through the landscape. This is illustrated on Figure 8.
- 8.17 The River Trent forms a significant feature meandering through Nottingham. The low lying land in the river valley has been quarried for the sands and gravels and flooding the area in the restoration process has led to the formation of large pools and lakes. These include Attenborough Nature Reserve (which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest SSSI) and Colwick Country Park. The National Water Sports Centre is an important feature adjacent to the Trent and Colwick Country Park on the edge of Nottingham.
- 8.18 The River Erewash forms the boundary between Broxtowe and Erewash and forms a shallow river valley, often through urban and urban fringe landscapes. The River Soar forms the eastern boundary of Rushcliffe and the River Smite and River Devon flow in the west of the study area.
- 8.19 The Grantham, Erewash and Nottingham Canals meander through the area, although the Grantham and Nottingham Canals are now disused. There are a number of lakes through the area, often associated with stately homes or formal parks. These include Garden Lake and Upper Lake at Newstead Abbey and Wollaton Park Lake. Moorgreen Reservoir is a significant hydrological feature in the landscape in northern Broxtowe.
- 8.20 Many streams and brooks flow through the area draining the land into the larger rivers. The streams in Gedling have formed steeply incised valleys in the soft geology and contribute to the distinctive area called the Dumbles. There is a myriad of ditches and dykes through the low-lying land of Rushcliffe draining the high grade, flat farmland.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 8.21 The distribution of habitats and natural features across Greater Nottingham is influenced by the landform, geology, land uses both current and past and hydrology across the area. The range of habitats including lowland farmland, woodland, river valleys and restored land gives the Greater Nottingham area a wide diversity of wildlife. Ecological designations are illustrated on Figure 9.

Natural Areas

- 8.22 Natural England has identified Natural Areas covering the whole of England at a broad scale. These provide summaries of landscape character and broad flora and fauna variations across the country. The characteristics of these areas may manifest in distinctive landscapes although landscape is not the basis of their identification. Each Natural Area is unique and created through the interaction between natural and human influences. The following areas are of relevance to the Greater Nottinghamshire study area:

Natural Area 23- Southern Magnesian Limestone

- 8.23 This Natural Area is a narrow band of Magnesian Limestone that stretches north from Nottingham through the Greater Nottingham study area but is never more than five miles wide. The Magnesian Limestone is described as a soft rock which has weathered easily to form:

'rounded. It is an open landscape marked by historic limestone monuments and symbolised by ancient woodland and limestone grassland'

- 8.24 The soils are described as ideal for cultivation because they are light and dry; for this reason much of this area has been ploughed leaving only small remnants of the original vegetation. The unimproved grasslands and ancient woodlands provide valuable habitats for birds and insects such as the Brimstone Butterfly. Base-rich flushes, rivers and streams form important wetland features. Quarries, cuttings and natural outcrops expose important geological sections in the Permian Magnesian Limestone whilst limestone gorges and caves contain important Pleistocene sediments.

Natural Area 24- Coal Measures

- 8.25 The Coal Measures Natural Area is to the west of Nottingham and the Magnesian Limestone Ridge. The area is characterised by a number of towns and cities that developed largely as a result of the underlying coal fields. Between this network of towns and cities the landscape comprises ancient woodlands, valley wetlands and large arable fields.
- 8.26 The nature conservation interest of this Natural Area is described as lying in its *'range of habitats including the unique blend of urban plants and animals'*. Wildlife is dependent on land use and the area contains habitats which have been produced as a by-product of the industries which have historically dominated the area. Man-made features such as disused railway lines and canals are now used as wildlife corridors and form valuable refuges for nature.
- 8.27 These more urban habitats blend with the semi-natural habitats of the wider countryside which have been shaped by centuries of agriculture. The mixture of crops and livestock provides a range of habitats which are particularly important to birds including species such as Skylarks, Lapwings and Barn Owls.
- 8.28 This Natural Area comprises the lower catchments of the Rivers Derwent and Amber and the entire catchment of the River Ecclesbourne. The river valleys exert a strong influence on the landscape. *'The rivers and reservoirs provide important habitats for pondweeds, Great Crested Newts, migrating waders and breeding and wintering wildfowl. Mires and swamps are found along the river valleys.'* Woodland is infrequent although often concentrated on narrow steep-sided valleys with scattered isolated copses on higher ground.
- 8.29 *'Mixed stock rearing with rough grazing and permanent pasture is the main land cover in the area. The lower, undulating foothills have variable*

quality grassland while the steeper slopes are characterised by scrub and woodland. The pockets of unimproved neutral and marshy grassland areas attract a range of butterflies such as the Rare Brown Argus and the Green Hairstreak, and birds including Grey Partridge.

Natural Area 32- Sherwood

8.30 This Natural Area lies on a band of Sandstone stretching from Nottingham northwards through the Greater Nottingham study area. This area encompasses the remnant heartlands of Sherwood, historically managed as heath and wood pasture. Land use in this area is dominated by agriculture and conifer plantations although there are a number of important habitats remaining. These include heathlands, ancient broadleaved woodlands, wet woodlands and wood pasture.

8.31 Wetlands are scarce in Sherwood, but a few rivers flow across this area's incised valleys and there are several ornamental lakes associated with the landscaped Dukeries Estates. Some of these contain important features such as reedbeds and marsh which provide habitats for wildlife, particularly breeding and wintering wildfowl.

Natural Area 33- Trent Valley and Rises

8.32 This Natural Area lies to the south of the study area. Its underlying geology gives rise to a fertile soil ideal for agriculture. Although a large part of the area is described as being under intensive agriculture there are a number of important habitats remaining. These include neutral grassland, which is the most common type of unimproved grassland, and a number of acidic and calcareous grassland sites associated with local differences of geology.

8.33 Wet floodplain grasslands along the Soar and Trent rivers are said to *'support some of the richest wildlife and are important for many breeding birds such as the Redshank'*. This area is poorly wooded but significant concentrations of important sites are scattered throughout. Important woodlands present include ancient semi-natural stands, wet woodland and parkland. Standing water habitats of particular wildlife interest are restored gravel pits, reservoirs and canals; but there are no natural large standing waters. In this area there are also:

'numerous gravel pits along the River Trent and its main tributaries of which some have been restored to provide habitat for breeding and wintering birds such as Reed Warblers. Many of these gravel pits and reservoirs have a diversity of associated habitats such as marsh, swamp and reedbeds. Rivers, streams and their associated habitats are also a significant feature of the Natural Area, and are dominated by the Rivers Trent and Soar'.

Nature Conservation

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

8.34 In the study area there are a number of sites designated for their national importance for nature conservation. The majority of these include former quarries, railway cuttings, clay pits and gravel pits around the industrial

districts of Ashfield and Broxtowe to the west. To the south around Rushcliffe there are important nature conservation sites relating to former industrial works such as plaster pits and clay pits but also significant marshland and pastures associated with either the network of rivers and tributaries or clay-loam soils.

- 8.35 There are a number of sites within the study area that are of interest for their scientific and natural features. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are designated under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. In Greater Nottingham there are 28 SSSIs.
- 8.36 Greater Nottingham has 657 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and 108 Derbyshire Wildlife Sites designated for their local contribution to ecology. This places a degree of protection on such areas and ensures that development where necessary on such sites must make necessary accommodation of wildlife interest and minimise direct damage or disturbance.

Local Nature Reserves

- 8.37 There are 36 Local Nature Reserves (LNR) across the study area. These are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to preserve features of interest and to provide opportunities for further research and to encourage public to appreciate nature. These sites represent easily accessible natural areas and are particularly beneficial for education.

Local biodiversity targets

- 8.38 The Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan identifies a number of habitats which are important within Greater Nottingham. These reflect the varied natural conditions present within the borough and range from heathland, grassland, woodland, rivers, streams and industrial habitats. Table 7.1 presented at Appendix 5 highlights all the habitats in the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan which are of importance within the study area.
- 8.39 Many of the areas of high nature conservation value have distinctive landscapes. However it is not necessarily the case that high nature conservation value equates to high landscape value or distinctive views. The presence of nature conservation interest or potential has not been considered as a landscape characteristic within this assessment.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

Heritage

Scheduled Monuments

- 8.40 Scheduled Monuments are nationally designated under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the site and its immediate landscape setting are included within this designation and must be preserved, where possible in-situ and in good condition. There are over 74 Scheduled Monuments within the study area. Some of the areas of high archaeological or cultural value have distinctive landscapes. However it is not necessarily the case that high heritage value equates to high landscape value or distinctive views. The presence of cultural

heritage interest has only been described with character descriptions where it is a distinctive component of the landscape character of a particular area.

Listed Buildings

- 8.41 Greater Nottingham has over 3,657 buildings of architectural, historical, or landscape interest which provide social, cultural and aesthetic history, including entries that are Grade 1 or outstanding interest, Grade II* and Grade II. Where present they contribute to the character of settlements within or adjoining the countryside. Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Historic Parks and Gardens are designated under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

Conservation Areas

- 8.42 Areas with high concentrations of listed buildings or where the collective built form contributes strongly to the character and heritage of a place are often designated as Conservation Areas. The designation of a Conservation Area is based upon the contribution of buildings, historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries; characteristic building and paving materials; a particular combination or style of building uses; public and private spaces, such as gardens, parks and greens; and trees and street furniture, which contribute to particular views to give a distinctive character or street scene. Conservation Areas give broader protection than listing individual buildings: all the features within the area are recognised as integral parts of its character and are therefore protected.
- 8.43 The districts within Greater Nottingham have 99 designated Conservation Areas, designated for architectural merit and special character.
- 8.44 Heritage features are vulnerable to change. It is important that the most valuable sites and structures are protected and local planning policies seek to preserve sites of historical importance and ensure that the case for preservation is fully considered when assessing all proposals for new development. Archaeological designations are illustrated on Figure 10.

Historic Parks and Gardens

- 8.45 There are 18 registered historic parks with the Greater Nottingham area. Policies within Local Plans seek to ensure that the special character of historic parks and gardens, together with their setting, are protected from inappropriate development.
- 8.46 Historic Parks and Gardens within Greater Nottingham are often large and associated with large halls and deer parks or estates. Their presence can exert an influence on the surrounding landscape character.

Landscape Evolution

- 8.47 The Nottingham Landscape Guidelines published in 1997 provided detailed summaries of the landscape evolution of each regional character area. These are presented at Appendix 6.

9.0 FORCES FOR CHANGE WITHIN GREATER NOTTINGHAM

9.1 Greater Nottingham's landscape is constantly changing through human activity and natural processes. These include natural colonisation of grassland and heathland to woodland; urban expansion; infill development; restoration of former mines and quarries; and rural diversification. The cumulative effects of these processes can considerably alter the character of the landscape.

9.2 The descriptions of character at each survey point within the GIS dataset include reference to key pressures derived from a review of relevant planning policies and consultation with key stakeholders at a consultation event. In addition, individual discussions with Council Officers were held to identify the main pressures within each authority. The pressures relate to land use, agricultural trends and development pressures. This section provides a summary of the main pressures identified through these interviews. A detailed summary of the interviews is provided at Appendix 7.

9.3 The main pressures that were identified that have potential to influence the landscape character of Greater Nottingham are:

- Climate Change;
- Agriculture;
- Housing development;
- Employment;
- Tourism;
- Infrastructure;
- Minerals and Waste Management; and
- Renewable Energy.

Climate Change

9.4 Research has identified trends and emerging patterns of climate change across the world. Within the UK the implications for climate change include¹:

- Global temperature rises of between 1.8 to 4 degrees centigrade above 1990's levels by end of 21st century, with UK rises anticipated at 2 to 3.5 degrees by 2080;
- Greater warming in the south and east of the UK than the west and north;
- Increasing temperatures resulting in milder winters and high summer temperatures;
- An increase in sea levels by 26-86cm by 2080 with extreme high water level incidences 10 to 20 times more frequent increasing coastal flood risk;
- Changes in rainfall patterns with wetter winters and drier summers with the greatest changes anticipated for the south and east of the UK where summer rainfall could reduce by 50%; and
- Reduction in snowfall by 60-80% by 2080.

¹ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/about/ukeffect

9.5 These changes may manifest themselves in changes within the natural environment. These may include changes in habitats and a decline of flora and fauna which are unable to adapt quickly enough to the changing habitat conditions. Some of the changes that may affect landscape character² include:

- Alterations to wetland habitat as a result of more extreme and increased high water events leading to a greater emphasis on new wetlands as part of sustainable urban drainage systems;
- Decreased summer rainfall may increase pressure for retaining winter rainfall encouraging investments in new reservoirs;
- River defences and engineering to rivers to reduce flooding during wetter winters;
- Damage to natural wetland ecosystems which may dry out during drier summers;
- Shifts in agriculture as a result of longer drier summers resulting in growth of more drought tolerant planting and increased focus on biomass fuel planting to increase renewable forms of energy production;
- Concentration of developments near to public transport to reduce fuel use;
- Competition with native species from invasive species which are able to expand their habitat ranges with increasing temperatures;
- Alterations to migrant bird habitats of mudflats and salt marshes through rising water levels and changes in bird migration patterns as a result of rising temperatures;
- Increases in extreme weather events may damage woodlands and trees through stress from waterlogging in winter and drought conditions in summer;
- Pressures and conflict between coastal defences and wildlife value along coastlines as sea level rises threaten coastal towns and villages;
- Increased incidents of pests and diseases able to migrate further north as temperatures increase, such as the possible increasing incidence of Bleeding Canker on Horse Chestnuts;
- Potential increases in the risk of fire during longer drier summers affecting heathland and coastal habitats; and
- Increases in housing adaptations for improved energy efficiency and changes in building design to improve energy efficiency such as photovoltaic cells.

Agriculture

9.6 Agriculture is of considerable significance in terms of its effect on the local landscape. There is a general trend across the Greater Nottingham authorities for diversification of farm-based activities that could lead to a change in traditional field patterns and farming methods. A change in focus within farming may result in future changes in land management including amalgamation of farms and field expansion which will have a continued influence over the countryside.

² www.jncc.gov.uk

- 9.7 National guidance seeks to encourage farm-based diversification to provide both economic benefits and enhance the rural environment.
- 9.8 Equestrian activities are an increasingly popular form of countryside recreation and, coupled with commercial livery services, are often considered acceptable within an agricultural setting. These uses can introduce new opportunities for employment and for diversification of the rural economy, providing an acceptable conversion of formerly agricultural premises. However, the cumulative effect of equestrian activities and farm diversification can redefine the agricultural landscape, particularly through the division of existing fields into individual paddocks defined by post and wire or more substantial fencing and provision of stables and liveries. This is evident along urban fringes across the study area.

Agricultural land management

- 9.9 The Environmental Stewardship Scheme is a key component of the EU funded Rural Development Programme for England 2007-2013. The scheme is administered by Natural England on behalf of DEFRA. Its primary objectives are to support sustainable agriculture in the countryside.³ The scheme helps landowners to: conserve wildlife; maintain and enhance landscape quality and character; protect the historic environment and natural resources; and to promote public access and understanding of the countryside. The scheme is split into three elements: Entry Level Stewardship (ELS), Organic Level Stewardship (OLS) and Higher Level Stewardship (HLS). ELS is based on straightforward land management; OLS is focused on organic farming systems; and HLS involves more complex and time-intensive management where farmers may need additional advice and support.
- 9.10 On entering one of the schemes, farmers are able to choose from a range of options. DEFRA has developed additional information based on the Joint Character Areas (published by Natural England formerly the Countryside Agency). Guidance notes are provided for each character area to help farmers identify the projects they should target within their area to protect landscape character.
- 9.11 The key forces for change in agriculture and agricultural land management, particularly where farmers are not part of Environment Stewardship Schemes are likely to be:
- Developments associated with farm diversification;
 - The loss of traditional buildings and the re-use of existing buildings;
 - Increased levels of road traffic;
 - Change to patterns of land ownership with a move towards larger land holdings;
 - Conversion of former farmhouses and agricultural buildings into private residences;
 - Decline in the maintenance and condition of hedgerows;
 - Increasing use of fencing, particularly post and wire;
 - Pressure for new uses related to livery and equestrian activities;

³ www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/default.aspx

- Increase in the cultivation of bio-fuel crops;
- Decline in traditional land management practices;
- Loss of ponds through drainage or lack of management; and
- Continued pressures on urban fringe farmland from recreational activities, trespass, vandalism and fly tipping.

Housing development

- 9.12 The study area is part of the Greater Nottingham Growth Point which places an emphasis on sustainable development and growth. All authorities have been given figures for new housing through the East Midlands Regional Plan. The area likely to see the greatest change from new housing is Rushcliffe, where a large proportion of new housing will be on 'greenfield' land. The borough also has to potentially accommodate an Eco-town within the wider countryside.
- 9.13 A joint Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) has been prepared for Greater Nottingham which has reviewed all the sites brought forward for consideration as part of the LDF process. Whilst approximately two thirds of the housing can be achieved within the existing built up areas there is a need for development on greenfield land and redevelopment of 'brownfield' sites (mostly former collieries and quarries) within the wider countryside. Larger villages and those closest to the main urban areas are likely to have considerable pressure for expansion. In some authorities where villages and towns are tightly constrained by Green Belt a review of the boundaries will be undertaken as part of the LDF process.
- 9.14 Larger regeneration schemes are mostly focused on brownfield colliery and former industrial sites such as Calverton Colliery; Cotgrave Colliery; Stanton Tip; Gedling Colliery; and Annesley Colliery. These schemes would include new roads; open space; housing and employment.
- 9.15 A sustainable urban extension study was undertaken for Greater Nottingham which identified 12 possible locations for a sustainable urban extension. The report concluded that the following locations should be considered: Top Wighay Farm; north of Papplewick Lane, Hucknall; North of Stapleford; Whyburn House Farm, Hucknall; North of Redhill; Edwalton, Rushcliffe; Clifton Pastures, Rushcliffe; between Toton and Stapleford; Toton Sidings; near Stapleford, Broxtowe; west of Ilkeston; and Stanton Ironworks, Ilkeston.
- 9.16 The key forces for change on the landscape related to built development are likely to be:
- Infill development around villages;
 - Loss of areas of greenfield land around largest urban areas;
 - Expansion of settlements within or immediately adjacent to the Green Belt; and
 - Regeneration schemes on brownfield land such as Gedling and Stanton Colliery, altering townscape and views.

Employment

- 9.17 An employment land study has been completed with a limited update in 2009 to bring it up to date with the recently issued RSS; at present authorities do not know their required allocation for this type of land. Whilst most anticipate that employment uses will be accommodated within brownfield sites and in the urban areas, there may be a requirement for new greenfield sites. Other changes may be through expansion of existing employment sites; those on urban fringes or existing as larger developments within the countryside are likely to have the greatest effect on landscape character.
- 9.18 The key forces for change in the provision for employment likely to affect the rural landscape are:
- The requirement to provide land for the expansion of existing businesses;
 - The redevelopment of agricultural buildings for new employment uses;
 - Continued employment development close to the motorway;
 - The need for continued development at major developed sites in the Green Belt; and
 - The need to provide additional employment land at appropriate sites to meet the future employment needs in the study area.

Tourism

- 9.19 Most of the study area is likely to experience minor changes and initiatives to improve tourism within their areas which will have localised effects on landscape character.
- 9.20 The key project which is likely to effect the greatest change is the Trent River Park which focuses on the establishment of the river as a key destination for tourism and improving access. There are a number of proposals for improvements to existing canals. The Erewash Canal improvements focus on improving access and tourist facilities; the Grantham Canal is at feasibility stage to look at re-establishing it as a navigable canal. Other potential changes include minor interventions and initiatives within the area known as Greenwood Community Forest which will provide areas of publicly accessible open space.
- 9.21 The key forces for change on the landscape related to tourism are likely to be:
- Demand for additional recreational facilities at popular locations;
 - New open spaces associated with reclamation of brownfield sites;
 - The visual intrusion associated with carparks and visitor centres e.g signage;
 - Increased recreational activity leading to erosion and disturbance to sensitive habitats and species;
 - Increased levels of traffic and the 'honey-pot' effect;
 - Increased demand for visitor accommodation such as caravan parks, hotels and leisure complexes; and
 - Increased pressure for tourist facilities associated with the River Trent Park.

Infrastructure

- 9.22 All authorities are likely to see at least minor changes to road networks to facilitate development. The main changes are concerned with the potential provision of new rail links at Gedling such as the new passenger rail line and stations from the former Gedling Colliery to the Nottingham-Grantham rail line and a new passenger rail line and station from the Robin Hood Line (near Bestwood) to Calverton; potential tram extensions to link settlements into Nottingham City Centre and new access roads such as Gedling Access Road; and the dualling of the A46 (Fosse Way) and A453.
- 9.23 The key forces for change related to infrastructure are likely to be:
- Demand for new infrastructure resulting in isolation and fragmentation of the landscape;
 - Loss of mature vegetation such as trees as part of road improvement works;
 - Alterations to the landscape through the provision of mitigation planting;
 - Higher noise levels and visual impact/loss of tranquillity in rural areas associated with the impact of infrastructure works;
 - Upgrading of existing infrastructure to greater vehicle load capacities;
 - Urbanisation of rural roads to accommodate increasing traffic; and
 - Upgrading of footpaths/cycleways in rural locations.

Minerals and waste management

- 9.24 The study area has a close historic association with the coal mining industry although much of the land has since been restored or is brownfield land in the process of being restored. Consultation reported that the likelihood of future coal extraction is low.
- 9.25 Sand and gravel extraction along the River Trent is common with evidence of both restored gravel pits now used for recreation and nature conservation and existing quarrying activities. This is likely to continue and parts of Erewash, Rushcliffe and Gedling may experience future pressure for new sand and gravel quarries.
- 9.26 The key forces for change related to minerals and waste are likely to be:
- Effects on the viability of agricultural holdings through the loss of land if minerals are worked;
 - Alterations to the landscape through restoration, such as increase in water through restoration of gravel pits;
 - The loss of best and most versatile agricultural land; and
 - Effects on locally valuable and high quality landscapes and sites in the Green Belt.

Renewable energy

- 9.27 National policy is placing a greater emphasis on the promotion of renewable energy sources such as wind farms. Regional policy emphasises that by 2020 at least 20% of electricity supplied in the East Midlands should be provided from renewable energy sources currently the

figure is just 2%.⁴ The East Midlands Regional Plan recognises that this is an ambitious target but states that it is achievable and that the figure is not static and will be kept under continuous review.

- 9.28 Regional policy encourages planning authorities to develop plans and strategies to promote and encourage, rather than restrict, the use of renewable energy resources. Criteria should be developed specifically relating to wind turbines to guide development to locations with anticipated acceptable effects on local amenity, views and the character of the surrounding landscape.
- 9.29 None of the authorities reported any noticeable trends in renewable energy development within their area. The majority stated that there have been applications for individual wind turbines for private and commercial properties. Within Rushcliffe there have been a number of applications and permissions for monitoring masts which may result in future pressure for wind farms.
- 9.30 Within the Three Cities Region (of which Nottingham is part) the main focus is on sustainable energy identified as local distribution of networks for electricity and heat using Combined Heat and Power (CHP). It states that whilst potential for large-scale wind development is limited, small-scale developments at a business park level should be encouraged. It also stated that energy generation from waste would be appropriate.
- 9.31 Key forces for change resulting from future renewable energy include:
- Changes in the nature of views towards facilities;
 - Changes to the appearance of buildings and new development through local energy sources on buildings;
 - Small-scale hydro-electric schemes on the Trent;
 - Biodigesters on the Trent Floodplain or similar where fields and agricultural land holdings are large in size;
 - Increase in monitoring masts; and
 - Possible local level industrial developments such as CHP.

⁴ The East Midlands Regional Plan to 2021

10.0 SUMMARY OF THE DESK STUDY FINDINGS

10.1 Following the collation of detailed baseline information and interpolation, the potential landscape characteristics of the borough are described as:

- Prominent low-lying floodplains of the Rivers Trent and Soar;
- Undulating plateau and series of distinctive hills around Gotham and West Leake;
- Broad-scale intensive arable farmland across much of Rushcliffe;
- Prominent vales and escarpments;
- Distinctive narrow valleys and wooded streams around the 'Dumbles';
- Large scale plantation and ancient woodlands to the north of the study area;
- Land heavily influenced by current and past mining operations;
- Prominent urban fringes around Nottingham;
- Concentrations of mature parkland with mature specimen trees and woodlands;
- Areas of newly establishing woodland and open space on former colliery sites;
- Small nucleated villages often with red brick and pantile roofs although stone is used within villages in the north of the study area;
- Expanded commuter settlements close to Nottingham;
- Frequent urban influences from roads, railways and industry including prominent power stations; and
- Areas of pasture often demonstrating an historic field pattern, particularly close to smaller rural settlements.

10.2 The summary characteristics arising from the desk study were tested during the field surveys and public consultation.

11.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 11.1 A stakeholder workshop was held at County Hall on 6th April 2009. The purpose of the workshop was to gain greater understanding of what aspects of Greater Nottingham's landscape stakeholders view as valuable, how they perceive landscape change over the past 20 years and how they expect it to change within the next 20 years.
- 11.2 To provide validity to the consultation process, stakeholders from a range of different specialisms were invited to the event including landscape architects, planners, heritage specialists, nature conservation specialists and regeneration officers (including the Growth Point manager). It was also considered important to include those individuals and organisations that may use and interpret the landscape character assessment to give them opportunities to input into its development and a clear understanding of its purpose.
- 11.3 The workshop was held as an interactive session where those attending were split into smaller break-out group to discuss various topics. A facilitator was present within each group to record what was discussed. Table 11.1 below sets out the agenda for each workshop.

Table 11.1: Agenda and Activities for Stakeholder Workshop

Theme	Questions asked
Valued views and landscapes	Which landscapes do you value within the study area? Which views do you consider to be the most distinctive?
Purpose: To allow stakeholders to identify areas and views that they particularly value ensuring that these are considered within surveys.	
Landscape change	What has changed within the landscape over the past 20 years? What do you think will change in the landscape over the next 20 years?
Purpose: To allow stakeholders to consider how the landscape today has been shaped and to consider the potential landscape adaptations that may be required to accommodate future change.	
Landscape character areas	Do you agree with the describing words for the character areas? Do you think that the boundary of each area is correct? Do you think the name used to describe the area is appropriate?
Purpose: To gain initial broad consensus on the areas proposed and to identify potential amendments to boundaries.	

- 11.4 The key findings from the consultation are summarised below. Where appropriate these findings have been incorporated into the character descriptions and key pressures section for each landscape character area.

Valued landscapes

- 11.5 When asked which landscapes were most valued, stakeholders talked in depth about the types and variety of landscapes within the study area. The significant impact of agriculture in shaping the landscape was recognised by stakeholders, with particular reference to areas such as Rushcliffe where gently rolling farmland is a key characteristic. In contrast to the agricultural landscape, the large areas of woodland to the north of the study area, of which a significant proportion is plantation were viewed as valuable particularly as a recreational resource.
- 11.6 Ridges were highly valued for the long views they afforded over the landscape and the sense of connectivity these views provided to other landscape areas. The change in landscape scale across the study area from enclosed to open was seen as important offering a variety of different experiences.
- 11.7 The river valleys and in particular the Trent were seen to be a key landscape asset however, some stakeholders felt that these river corridors were in many instances underutilised. This has been reflected in the proposal to develop a coherent River Park Plan for the Trent Valley allowing for a more coordinated approach to its development and management. These river corridors provide a significant recreational resource when considered in conjunction with the large open water landscapes (created from former mineral extraction) scattered along their length such as Attenborough Nature Reserve and Colwick Country Park. These rivers and streams are also responsible for the creation of the Dumbles in Gedling which is a steep sided rolling landscape felt to be particularly distinctive by the majority of stakeholders.
- 11.8 In addition to wetland habitats such as Attenborough, numerous Country Parks and public open spaces have also been created as a result of the areas' industrial legacy including sites such as Ruddington Country Park and Bestwood; such sites are now viewed as valuable landscape assets.
- 11.9 Other features which were considered of importance included the numerous historic parks and gardens and the large stately properties and abbeys associated with them; the network of canals; distinctive church spires; and the significant change in landscape character at the Vale of Belvoir which forms a clear marker to the edge of the Greater Nottingham area.

Valued views

- 11.10 The most valued views were identified as the vantage points from the many ridges within the area. Within Rushcliffe the ridges provide long views over the low lying farmland landscape. The many linear roads such as the A52 and A46 within Rushcliffe were also felt to provide long views over the landscape. Ridges at Burton Joyce and Porchester were also specifically noted.
- 11.11 The north of the study area was generally felt to be more enclosed with views typically being from hills and ridges looking down into valleys in

contrast to the longer views of the more open landscape in the south. Views to woodland were also more apparent in the north of the area.

- 11.12 In addition to views over open landscapes, views to the built heritage of the area in particular landmarks such as Nottingham and Belvoir Castle and Wollaton Hall were noted as important.

Landscape change over the past 20 years

- 11.13 Stakeholders reported a number of key positive changes that have occurred within the landscape. The restoration of former mining areas was seen as important and stakeholders acknowledged that these areas were now regenerating well, making a positive contribution to the landscape, particularly in the areas of Broxtowe and Gedling. Gravel and sand extraction along the river corridors were also seen as an opportunity for wildlife and recreation with sites such as Attenborough making a positive landscape change. General improvements to river corridor landscapes were noted although, conversely, some of the new flood defence works were seen to have had a negative impact on character.

- 11.14 Generally stakeholders felt that development within the area had, to date been well contained with the majority of new development on the urban fringe with limited expansion into new 'green field' locations. Development of tall buildings within the city was felt to be creating a wall round it cutting it off visually and physically from its surrounding landscape. The reported recent trend of infilling larger gardens with built development in areas such as Mapperley was also seen to be a negative change.

- 11.15 Recent road improvements along the M1 and recent work along the A46 where large scale clearance of trees and hedgerows has been undertaken were felt to have had a considerable negative impact on landscape perceptions.

- 11.16 Changes in agricultural practices were generally thought to have had a negative impact on the landscape. Loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees due to large-scale agriculture practices and subsequent creation of bigger fields was felt to have impacted on the perception of the area as a wooded landscape. Diversification of crops has also resulted in change; increased production of rapeseed forms a patchwork of yellow and green fields across the landscape. Farm buildings have also increased in size with large outbuildings now being dominant features in the landscape. Horse culture within the area was also felt to have expanded with numerous consecutive fields now grazed by horses.

Landscape change over the next 20 years

- 11.17 Housing allocations required through the designation of Nottingham as a Growth Point within the 6Cs Growth Point was seen as a key driver for change. The allocation requires large-scale expansion of new housing development around Nottingham's urban fringe coupled with the proposed creation of a possible Eco-town south of Nottingham in the borough of Rushcliffe. Although development was largely seen as negative, several stakeholders identified that this provided the opportunity

for the introduction of green infrastructure benefits. It was felt that the continued introduction of large buildings within the landscape including farm outbuildings and industrial/commercial units such as IKEA will all result in change.

- 11.18 Impacts of climate change were acknowledged by stakeholders in relation to the type and range of species that are able to grow in the area. Climatic changes may result in a reduction of those species natural to the area with a change to species more suited to a warmer, wetter climate. Pressures to introduce wind turbines into the landscape to help mitigate against the effects of climate change may also result in landscape change.
- 11.19 Flooding along the River Trent has increased over the last 10 years and this has been addressed by the introduction of new flood defences which have resulted in a change to the natural river corridor landscape. Further engineered flood defences may be introduced in the future.
- 11.20 Further mineral extraction within the area has not been discounted; this may be through the reworking of existing/former extraction sites or through the creation of new ones to meet the desire to provide aggregates within the area.
- 11.21 The impact of agriculture was identified as being largely negative by stakeholders over the last 20 years. However, the introduction of the Environmental Stewardship scheme was highlighted as likely to have a positive impact on the landscape through more sensitive farming practices and the possible reinstatements of lost features such as hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The move towards local food growing and a greater understanding of food miles may affect the nature of local farming practices.
- 11.22 There are several park and ride schemes operating on the urban fringes of Nottingham on its key approaches. Potential creation of further park and ride sites may result in landscape change. The extension of the tram system will create new routes within the city but its creation will result in the loss of some habitats. Provisions to replace lost habitats and reduce road traffic will all have an effect on landscape character. The completion of current road improvement programmes and the potential for further improvements in the future were considered to have a negative effect on the landscape.
- 11.23 Large scale coniferous plantations can be found within the north of the study area of which a significant proportion are within Forestry Commission ownership. Changes within woodland management procedures within the organisation such as increased native planting and increased open space will change how these woodlands are viewed.

Landscape character areas

- 11.24 Broad areas derived from the Landscape Description Units (LDUs) interpolation mapping to form Draft Policy Zones (DPZ), which were presented at the consultation. Due to the scheduling of the consultation

event, prior to the completion of field survey, key words describing the potential character within each DPZ were not available. However, the interpolation mapping exercise identified that the DPZs broadly align with the sub-types of the regional character areas identified within the Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines Countryside Appraisal. Therefore, characteristic features identified within this study were used as a basis for discussion for stakeholder discussion.

- 11.25 Each group was asked to consider the characteristics of each DPZ and decide whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements. Stakeholders were also invited to comment on whether they felt the boundaries were appropriate, suggest DPZ names and provide any other comments that they felt were relevant to each area.
- 11.26 The boundaries discussed have been used to form the basis of field survey and along with comments put forward during consultation and changes identified on site used to form the DPZ. Table 11.2 lists the Character types/DPZs presented at the workshop.

Table 11.2: Character types/DPZs presented

Regional Character Area	Landscape Character Type
Nottinghamshire Coalfields	Coalfield Farmlands River Meadowlands
Magnesian Limestone Ridge	Limestone Farmlands Limestone Fringe River Meadowlands
Vale of Belvoir	Vale Farmlands
Nottinghamshire Wolds	Wooded Clay Wolds Clay Wolds Wooded Hills and Scarps Village Farmlands
South Nottinghamshire Farmlands	Alluvial Levels Village Farmlands
Mid-Nottinghamshire Farmlands	Dumble Farmlands River Meadowlands
Sherwood	Forest Sandlands
Trent Washlands	River Valley Wetlands Alluvial Estatelands Terrace Farmlands River Meadowlands

- 11.27 During consultation it was generally felt that the summaries provided were broadly accurate; amendments to names and also potential minor boundary changes to be considered during field survey were identified. This information will be used to inform the development of the DPZs. Table 10.3 presented at Appendix 8 summarises the responses and comments relating to the Landscape Character Types/DPZs presented at the workshop.

12.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

12.1 This section includes a commentary of the differences between the key features of the landscape character identified as part of the desk based research and those noted within the field study. It then goes on to provide a broad overview of the character of Greater Nottingham. A summary of the regional character Area and detailed descriptions and landscape guidelines for each DPZ are presented at Appendix 9 with the descriptions for Landscape Character Types within Erewash Borough presented at Appendix 10.

12.2 The field study confirmed the assumptions made following the desk study stage that many of the LDU boundaries were difficult to determine on site whilst broader areas following the amalgamation of LDUs into DPZs at the interpolation stage were more apparent in the landscape. In a few areas the character changes were more defined and required sub-division and refinement of the LDU boundaries.

Regional Character Areas

12.3 These are distinct geographically unique areas that share common physical associations which impart a strong sense of unity and place within an area. Summaries of this character have been based upon the descriptions provided within the Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines which have been reviewed and updated as part of this study. These summaries are presented at Appendix 9.

Landscape Description Units

12.4 Landscape description units are identified through the patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement form and farm type. At the local level these units represent more local patterns of character that contribute strongly to a 'sense of place'. A summary of character for each landscape description unit is provided within a mapped GIS dataset which describes the different components of character from which the unit was derived. LDUs are illustrated on Figure 13.

Draft Policy Zones

12.5 A Draft Policy Zone (DPZ) is an individual discrete area of character. It has a unique identity although it shares similar characteristics to other areas within the broader regional area. DPZs are usually an amalgamation of LDUs where 4 or more of the 6 topics used for their identification are similar and the changes in character are not evident during field study.

12.6 Within larger LDUs such as LDU421 which extends from Keyworth to Flintham, the DPZs are formed as a sub-division of the wider LDU based on characteristics and combinations of individual landscape characteristics identified within the field study. The interpolation of LDUs is illustrated on Figure 14 and DPZ's are illustrated on Figure 17. Field survey points are illustrated on Figure 15 and Photograph locations are illustrated on Figure 16.

13.0 MONITORING FRAMEWORK

- 13.1 Task MS4 within the brief requires key indicators for monitoring change within each landscape character area to be provided.
- 13.2 The Rural White Paper for England emphasised the need to have good information about the state of our countryside and how it is changing. The emphasis is on ensuring that criteria-based policies within local planning documents are effective in ensuring that the quality of the countryside is maintained or enhanced. The Rural White Paper set out ambitious aims which committed the government to publishing a measure of landscape change for the countryside.
- 13.3 Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning places emphasis on ensuring that core strategies have clear arrangements for monitoring and reporting.
- 13.4 The target of monitoring should be to demonstrate that any change within a landscape does not adversely affect the strength of character or condition of landscape features set out within each landscape character area. As described within Chapter 12, new sustainable development should make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness of an area and should conserve or enhance the quality of the rural environment.
- 13.5 Policies and development proposals could affect the landscape in two ways: through subtle cumulative effects of small-scale development which overtime changes or alters landscape character; or through changes in management or development which cause the loss or degradation of features which are of value or which define the local distinctiveness which leads to a reduction in landscape quality.⁵
- 13.6 To successfully monitor the effectiveness of criteria-based policies the key objective is to identify how the policies perform in conserving, enhancing and restoring landscape elements that contribute to the key characteristics of each landscape character area.
- 13.7 In May 2002, the former Countryside Agency (now Natural England) commissioned the Countryside Quality Counts project (CQC)⁶ which sought to produce guidance on the most appropriate way of monitoring change within the landscape.
- 13.8 The report recommended that a single indicator of change be devised which encompassed both landscape quality and landscape character. It was identified through extensive stakeholder research that the contribution landscape character makes to the countryside informs the overall quality of the land.

⁵ Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment. Chris Blandford Associates: September 2006

⁶ Countryside Quality Counts Tracking change in the English countryside, Nottingham University Consultants Ltd (June 2004)

13.9 The CQC report sets out the best practice approach to monitoring. It is this approach which should be used and adapted to suit local circumstances to monitor change within each landscape character area. The document identified the main attributes which contribute to landscape character and provided guidance on how change within these attributes could be assessed.

13.10 These themes were broadly used as the basis upon which analysis of change on landscape character areas could be assessed. The assessment incorporated these themes into judgements of character change.

13.11 The CQC report recommended that the analysis should be based on the key characteristics for each landscape character area. It highlighted that landscape character is an important part of the general framework for decision-making on environmental issues. It explained that the concept of character provides a robust foundation for the development of a more general indicator of change in countryside quality. The report identified seven themes which combine to define landscape character and are the most appropriate to use for identifying landscape change:

- Woodland;
- Boundary features;
- Agriculture;
- Settlement Pattern;
- Semi-natural habitats;
- Historical Features; and
- River and Coastal.

13.12 The Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment recommended an approach based on the CQC project. It also recommended that the key characteristics chosen should be:

- Central to the distinctive character of each landscape character area;
- Likely to experience change either in their coverage or condition; and
- Capable of being monitored against the recommendations and landscape descriptions within each character area.

13.13 This recognised that each landscape character area is likely to be different and not all of the seven themes listed within paragraph 12.11 above may be relevant in an individual character area.

13.14 To be able to usefully use characteristics as key indicators, they need to be expressed in terms of desired trends and the desired direction of the chosen indicator must be known. The report recommended seeking assistance from local stakeholders to play a role in choosing appropriate indicators and to potentially help to monitor change.

13.15 The key characteristics within each character area should be evaluated based on the following⁷:

- The extent or stock of characteristic elements;
- A measure of whether these are in good condition and appropriately managed;
- The extent and form of new elements within the countryside; and
- A measure of key factors affecting the 'countryside experience'.

13.16 The first two have been covered within each landscape character area's description and highlighted within the landscape capacity description. These should be evaluated during the monitoring process to determine whether they are still fundamental to the character of the area. The judgements on strength of character and condition for each landscape character area should also be reviewed. It is important to note how the features have changed and whether it has reinforced or weakened landscape character or quality. Baseline photographs provided within the character area sheets can be used to provide the baseline character. Judgements can then grouped into the following three categories:

- Category A: character areas which show that change has been consistent with conserving or enhancing landscape character. Some of the key features may show change which is inconsistent but which could be judged to have not affected the strength of character;
- Category B: Character areas which show some change which is inconsistent with character. More than one of the key features of change is inconsistent with the published character description. These are judged as having altered the existing character; and
- Category C: A character area which shows a marked change in the key characteristics which contribute to the character and that the change is different to what is recommended to conserve, enhance or restore landscape character. This may include areas which are currently in a degraded state which have been positively restored but that restoration has altered the nature and character of the land.

13.17 In addition process indicators which could be used to monitor change could include⁸:

- Identification and monitoring of change within uptake/coverage of landscape enhancement schemes;
- Quality and coverage of landscape in design and access statements. These should demonstrate how a proposal positively contributes to landscape character of an area;
- Change in the coverage/completion of landscape-scale management plans which make a positive contribution to achieving the recommendations provided within each character area.

⁷ Countryside Quality Counts Tracking change in the English countryside, Nottingham University Consultants Ltd (June 2004)

⁸ Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment. Chris Blandford Associates: September 2006

- 13.18 The CQC report identified that the national review of countryside change should be undertaken every 5 years. It is proposed that the review and monitoring at a local scale be undertaken after the publication of the national review of countryside change. However, to undertake the same level of monitoring at a local level is likely to be a resource intensive process. It is recommended that a brief field-based assessment be carried out to determine whether key characteristics and descriptions remain valid for each area, particularly along character area boundaries. This should be done in combination with the process indicators to assess the effectiveness of landscape character policies in maintaining local countryside character and distinctiveness within each character area.
- 13.19 There may also be scope to include some monitoring during determination of planning applications, for example during review of Design and Access Statements. A simple record of whether landscape issues were presented may be made by a short scoring system (such as zero for not relevant; 1 for acceptable; 2 for good; and 3 for excellent). Trends in coverage of landscape matters could then be reviewed over periods of time. This form of monitoring involves greater officer time but provided it is kept simple and as part of the overall determination process may be able to be accommodated relatively easily.

14.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 14.1 This study was undertaken to provide evidence to inform Greater Nottingham's aligned Local Development Framework (LDF). It is also intended to help development control decisions on planning applications; to inform negotiation of planning obligations; and to guide actions on landscape enhancement where resources allow.
- 14.2 The study has demonstrated that there is a wealth of distinctive landscapes in Greater Nottingham offering a diversity of experience to stakeholders who clearly express the value they place on landscapes. The study builds upon the long-standing excellence of landscape assessment in Nottinghamshire and the resulting character assessment provides a strong basis for planning and landscape management.
- 14.3 The desk-based aspect of this study analysed available GIS mapped data and published documents to establish the landscape context of the study area and identify elements considered of value. GIS interpolation of this information was carried out to identify any recognisable patterns of similar character across the study area under the themes of geology, landform, soils, settlement pattern and form and vegetation pattern. This identified Landscape Description Units which show detailed variations in character often not readily identifiable within field surveys. Where 4 or more attributes within landscape description units were similar they were amalgamated. Draft Policy Zones (DPZs) were produced from this.
- 14.4 Field surveys have been used to verify these findings and to enable minor adjustments to DPZ boundaries to be made based on aesthetic aspects and the visual interaction between landscape features which were not evident from the desk based study.
- 14.5 The assessment has identified 79 DPZs which all have a unique and distinctive character.
- 14.6 Each DPZ identifies and lists the key features which make it special and provides a judgement on the condition of the landscape and its strength of character. These enable judgements to be made regarding what landscape actions are required to conserve, enhance, restore or create distinctiveness within each DPZ.
- 14.7 A stakeholder engagement workshop was undertaken to gain wider views on landscape change within Greater Nottingham over the past and next 20 years. Comments regarding the character of the landscape have been incorporated into the DPZ descriptions.
- 14.8 A monitoring framework has been recommended to ensure that changes over time can be properly assessed against the DPZ descriptions included at Appendix 9 and 10 of this report.