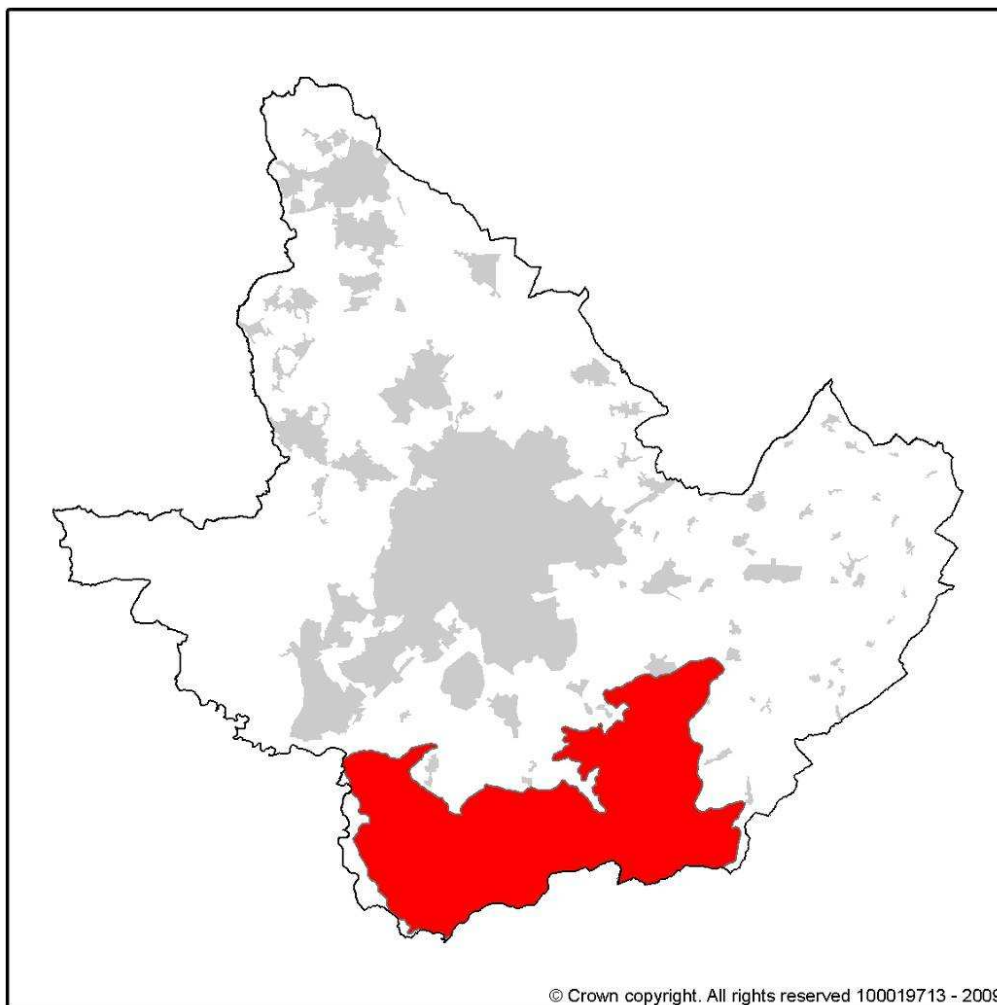


# NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WOLDS

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## DPZ within this Regional Character Area:

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|-------------|--|
| <b>NW01</b> | <b>Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps</b> |
| <b>NW02</b> | <b>East Leake Rolling Farmland</b>                   |
| <b>NW03</b> | <b>Widmerpool Clay Wolds</b>                         |
| <b>NW04</b> | <b>Cotgrave Wooded Clay Wolds</b>                    |

## Key Characteristics

- Defined by a low boulder clay plateau traditionally known as 'wolds' (elevated tracts of open land);
  - Closely associated with a dissected glacial plateau comprising variable thicknesses of boulder clay overlying Lower Lias and Rhaetic Beds;
  - Broad area of low hills which extend to the Soar Valley thinning out to a series of hills in the north. Gotham and West Leake are the most prominent;
  - Rhaetic beds provide a low steeply inclined escarpment which forms a continuous boundary above Cropwell Bishop broken only by the valleys of Fairham Brook and other minor streams;
  - Soils are predominantly strong clayey matrix containing chalk stones and lenses of fine loamy material which are difficult to cultivate although loamy coarse soils are present to the west of the region;
  - Erosion by streams has stripped away covering glacial drift to create a series of deep valleys separated by ridges of higher ground. The most prominent is Kingston Brook, a narrow corridor flanked by steeply rising hills;
  - Most streams flow west towards the River Soar except Fairham Brook which flows north to the River Trent;
  - Distinctive rural character and feeling of seclusion from urban centres;
  - Small red brick and pantile roofed villages interconnected by narrow winding country lanes;
  - Larger commuter settlements with residential estates on their fringes and small older centres within the northern and western parts of the region;
  - Red brick and pantile roof farmsteads are common within the area although many farms contain larger modern buildings constructed in metal or timber;
  - Industrial influences have a localised effect on the area such as Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station, and gypsum works at East Leake and Gotham;
  - Narrow lanes bordered by hedgerows and frequent hedgerow trees (mostly ash with some oak);
  - Extensive areas of continuous pasture and arable farming;
  - Well defined and recognisable pattern of hedged fields and woodland;
  - Medium to large scale regular and semi-irregular field pattern, this is less distinctive in arable fields; older smaller field patterns are present in pastoral fields close to village fringes;
  - Ridge and furrow present within pastoral fields;
  - Hedgerows are mostly hawthorn, most are well maintained and intact although around arable fields their condition is more variable;
  - Broad-leaved woodland is variable across the area and ranges in size creating areas of high and low enclosure; the most prominent and mature is on high ground covering the hills to the north at Gotham and West Leake and around Cotgrave;
  - Smaller woodland copses and coverts are common and exert a localised influence particularly where present on high ground;
  - Hills characterised by large regular blocks of mature broad-leaved woodland, scarp grasslands and pasture and long arable fields which extend down the slopes;
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- Pockets of wooded parkland provide an element of formality and enclosure within the landscape such as Stanford Hall and Kingston Hall;
- Small streams notable through the presence of willows and riparian shrubs; and
- Willow pollards are common within this area.

## **Guidelines and Recommendations**

- Enhance the broad-leaved character of existing woodlands;
  - Identify opportunities for new woodland planting on suitable sites;
  - Conserve the sparsely settled rural character of the landscape;
  - Conserve the traditional built form character and pattern of rural settlements;
  - Conserve all areas of permanent pasture particularly where present close to villages and along streams;
  - Promote measures for conserving and enhancing the historic features such as ridge and furrow;
  - Conserve the historic pattern of hedgerows along rural lanes;
  - Conserve the semi-irregular small to medium scale field pattern around villages and medium to large scale field pattern throughout remainder of the area;
  - Restore the traditional pastoral character and diversity of scarp grasslands;
  - Promote measures to enhance the semi-natural appearance of scarp woodland;
  - Conserve the balance of woodland and farmland on scarp hills;
  - Conserve the riparian character of stream corridors through retention and replanting of streamside trees and scrub;
  - Conserve willow pollards where present along stream corridors;
  - Conserve the character of village side pastoral landscapes; and
  - Promote measures for achieving a better integration of new and existing development in the countryside.
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## NW01 Gotham And West Leake Hills And Scarps



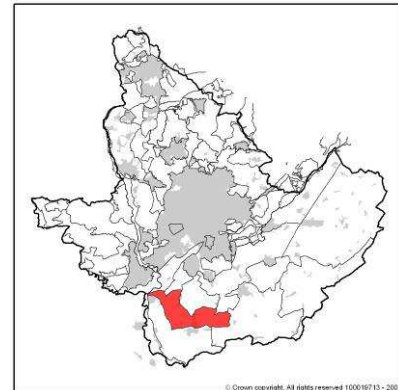
### CONTEXT

Regional Character Area:

**Nottinghamshire Wolds**

LDU Reference: 113, 128, 66, 425, 251, 252, 187, 258

DPZ Reference: NW01



### CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

- Series of prominent individual hills with steep sometimes scarp slopes and broad plateaus
- Hills are the dissected northern extent of a low boulder clay plateau extending from Leicestershire traditionally known as 'The Wolds'
- Rural character although urban elements such as villages, power station, industry and quarrying are frequent in the landscape
- Kingston Brook is a localised feature on low ground between hills characterised by riparian woodland and some grazing pasture at its margins
- Land use is a mixture of woodland, arable and pasture. Arable is on the lower and more gentle slopes, pasture close to rivers, settlements and scarp grassland where the land is steeply sloping precluding machinery from working the land
- Field pattern is mostly modern although pockets of older field systems such as irregular geometric and geometric and those reflecting open fields are present
- Field pattern in places sweeps down the slopes and is a distinctive feature
- Field boundaries are mostly hedgerows on the slopes with fences often present on higher ground
- Woodland is generally on high ground across the hills although there are smaller pockets of woodland on lower ground as establishing scrub and along village fringes/areas of former quarry
- Prominent extensive woodland plantation covers the slopes and high ground, often on steep scarps
- Rides and areas of open land are interspersed between plantation woodland
- Wooded tracks with spring flowering understorey planting along tracks up hills
- Large commuter settlements such as Gotham and East Leake and smaller settlements such as West Leake are nestled at the base of the hills on the fringes of the DPZ
- Infrequent individual farms within the character area often on the slopes or high ground. A row of individual modern houses is present along Ash Lane. One distinctive red brick and pantile roof farmstead on Bunny Hill is set within gardens with a small orchard
- Buildings are mostly red brick with older properties having red pantile roofs
- Church towers and spires are prominent within a uniform village skyline
- Overhead lines are prominent on low ground between hills
- Small former spring (Wheldon Spring) on Gotham Hill is a localised feature characterised by a depression in the ground and establishing scrub
- Enclosed channelled views on low ground between hills with extensive panoramic views across towards Nottingham City and beyond from high ground



**LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS**

**Condition**

A series of distinctive wooded hills with arable fields on lower and gentler slopes and pasture and pockets of grassland on the steeper slopes. Views are extensive and often over long distances from the high ground although become more enclosed from lower ground. Urban elements are frequent with views of Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station and the gypsum works. Some villages such as Gotham village are characterised by modern edges and a small older core with a distinctive church spire. Others such as West Leake are small and distinctive focused along a single street with small working farms and lack of modern development.



Land use is a mix of plantation woodland, arable farming and pasture. Fields are mostly medium to large in size with the majority of arable farming being a modern field pattern; although at Gotham there is evidence of older irregular geometric patterns. Pockets of fields reflecting open field system and regular geometric patterns are present on lower slopes or pockets of high ground. Older field patterns are generally used for pasture.



Woodland comprises large geometric field sized blocks of both broadleaved and conifer woodland. On West Leake Hill a large woodland is used for commercial forestry with rides and various belts of different species within woodlands. Other vegetation includes smaller frequent copses at the base of slopes and around settlements. Frequent hedgerow trees and intact hedgerows are present across the area. Pockets of regenerating scrub are often around village fringes or on the base of slopes.

The landscape condition is **GOOD**. Hedgerows and woodland are well managed, although there is some evidence of 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.

**Landscape Strength**

This DPZ is a distinctive series of hills which are prominent within the surrounding area. They often form a backdrop to views from the southern edges of Nottingham. From high ground within the DPZ there are open expansive views to the centre of Nottingham and lower-lying farmland at Ruddington and Bunny.

Landscape Condition	Good	MODERATE <i>Enhance</i>	MODERATE GOOD <i>Conserve and Enhance</i>	<b>GOOD</b> <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

Landscape strength

The overall landscape strategy is **CONSERVE**.

**LANDSCAPE ACTIONS**

- Landscape features*
- Conserve the distinctive pattern of hills with large blocks of woodland on high ground
  - Conserve the older field patterns within the character area such as those reflecting open systems and the irregular and regular geometric patterns
  - Conserve the balance of arable farming on lower slopes and pasture on steeper and higher slopes
  - Conserve field patterns which sweep down the hills
  - Conserve the landform of the former Wheldon Spring
  - Conserve the diversity of broadleaf and large-scale woodland plantations on hills
  - Ensure new conifer planting includes belts of broadleaf woodland and woodland edge along its fringes
  - Any new woodland planting should be small in scale along the base of slopes becoming larger and of field size on higher slopes
  - Conserve the small rides and various ages of woodland within the character area
  - Conserve the wooded tracks along the ridgelines
  - Conserve hedgerows and encourage infill planting within gaps rather than erection of timber fencing
  - Conserve areas of rough grassland where present on steeper scarp slopes
- Built form*
- Conserve the frequency of small farmsteads and outbuildings throughout the landscape; any new barn developments should be small scale and fit within the existing pattern and vernacular styles
  - Conserve the small linear and vernacular character of West Leake
  - Conserve the uniform roofline of villages with prominent church spires

- Encourage the use of red brick and red pantile roofs for new buildings and extensions
  - Conserve the nucleated character of larger villages
  - Minimise the influence of larger settlements such as East Leake through small-scale woodland planting to reduce the scale and frequency of urban edges within views
- Other development/ structures in the landscape*
- Conserve the winding character of rural lanes with expansive channelled views between hills
  - Ensure any new industrial development is nestled on low ground and has well wooded boundaries which integrate with woodland on higher ground to reduce its visibility