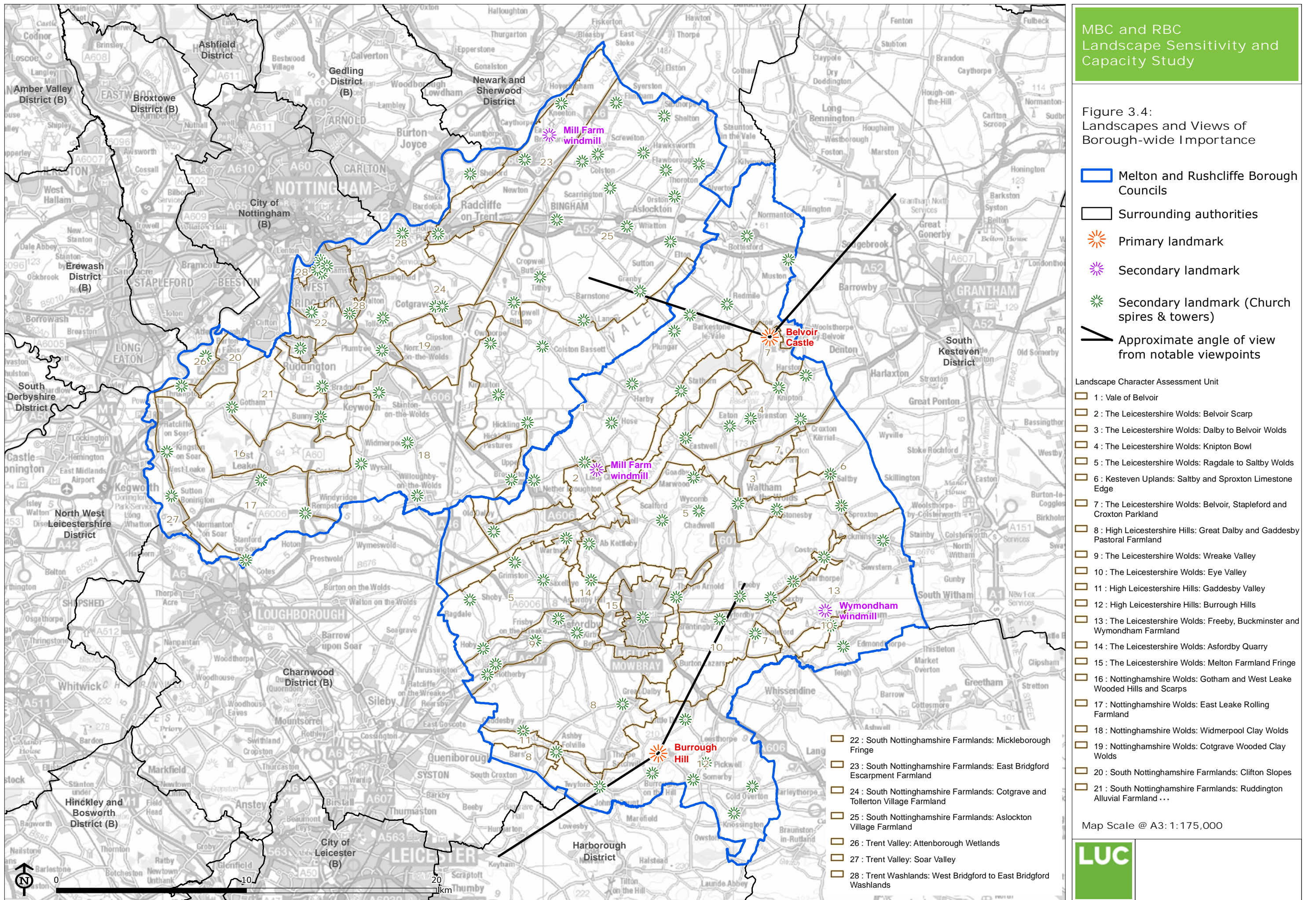


MBC and RBC
Landscape Sensitivity and
Capacity Study

Figure 3.4:
Landscapes and Views of
Borough-wide Importance



4 Method for undertaking the landscape sensitivity study

Information sources

- 4.1 In addition to the landscape character assessments described in Chapter 3, the following key sources of information have been used to inform the assessment:
- The Nottinghamshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment and Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Character Assessments (HLCs).
 - National Character Area Profiles for the Nottinghamshire Wolds (NCA 74), Trent and Belvoir Vales (NCA 48), High Leicestershire Hills (NCA 93) and Kesteven Uplands (NCA75).
 - Ordnance survey base maps (1:250K, 1:50K and 1:25K).
 - Aerial photography (Google Earth).

Development types considered

- 4.2 This assessment applies to all forms of turbines, although it has been based on the most common horizontal axis three-bladed turbine. The assessment considers landscape sensitivity to different turbine heights and provides further comments about cluster sizes, based on bandings that reflect those that are most likely to be put forward by developers (now and in the future) assuming that the existing trends discussed in **Section 2** above continue: these are set out in **Table 4.1 - 4.2**:

Table 4.1: Development sizes used in this assessment

Height to blade tip
<25 ⁶
25 to 50 m
51 to 75 m
76 to 110 m
111 to 150 m

Table 4.2: Cluster sizes used in this assessment

Cluster size
Single turbine
Cluster of two or three turbines
Wind farm of four or five turbines
Wind farm of six or seven turbines
Wind farm of eight to ten turbines

⁶ Note that structures of less than 15 m fall under permitted development rights.

- 4.3 It should be noted that the divisions between turbine and cluster sizes have been created for the purposes of the assessment – if a turbine lies on the edge of a group guidance for both group sizes should be taken into account.

Features as size comparators

- 4.4 In order to visualise how the different turbine heights set out above relate to features found in the study area, a list of comparable features is provided in **Table 4.3**.

Table 4.3 : Features as size comparators

Feature	Size
Domestic buildings	6-10 metres
Very Small Turbines	15-25m
Mature deciduous trees (dependent on species)	10-25m
Small Turbines	26-50m
Wind turbine at Stygate Lane	34.2m
St Michael's Church spire, Sutton Bonington	41m
Trent Bridge Cricket Ground flood lighting columns	44m
Common pylon lattice tower	Between approximately 45m and 49m
Medium Turbine	51-75m
East Midland Airport Air Traffic Control Tower	52m ⁷
St Mary's Church spire, Bottesford	64m (210 ft ⁸)
Large Turbine	76-110m
Eastcroft incinerator chimney (outside the Boroughs)	90m
Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station Cooling Tower	115m
Very Large Turbine	110-150m
Wind Turbine at Severn Trent sewage works in Wanlip (outside the Boroughs)	132m to tip
Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station chimney	199m
Waltham Mast	315m

⁷ <http://www.eastmidlandsairport.com/emaweb.nsf/Content/FactsAndFigures>

⁸ <http://www.stmarysbottesford.co.uk/church-building-and-history/history/>

Image 3: Waltham Mast, 315m



Image 4: Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station (cooling towers 115m, chimney 199m)



Evaluating Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.5 There is currently no published method for evaluating sensitivity of different types of landscape to renewable energy developments. However, the approach taken in this study builds on current guidance published by the former Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage including the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance⁹ and Topic Paper 6 that accompanies the Guidance¹⁰, as well as LUC's considerable experience from previous and ongoing studies of a similar nature (see **Section 1** above).
- 4.6 As stated earlier, *"Judging landscape character sensitivity requires professional judgement about the degree to which the landscape in question is robust, in that it is able to accommodate change without adverse impacts on character. This involves making decisions about whether or not significant characteristic elements of the landscape will be liable to loss... and whether important aesthetic aspects of character will be liable to change."* (Paragraph 4.2, Topic Paper 6¹¹).
- 4.7 In this study the following definition of sensitivity has been used, which is based on the principles set out in Topic Paper 6. It is also compliant with the third edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3, 2013) as well as definitions used in other landscape sensitivity studies of this type:

Landscape sensitivity is the extent to which the character of the landscape is susceptible to change as a result of wind energy development.

Assessment Criteria

- 4.8 In line with the recommendations in Topic Paper 6, this landscape sensitivity assessment is based on an assessment of landscape character using carefully defined criteria. Criteria for determining landscape sensitivity to wind energy development are based on attributes of the landscape most likely to be affected. **Table 4.4** sets out the criteria that will be used for the assessment of landscape sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development. The key characteristics of each Landscape Character Unit are assessed against each of the criteria to arrive at a judgement as to their potential sensitivity.

⁹ Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland CAX 84

¹⁰ The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2004) Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland. Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity

¹¹ The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2004) Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland. Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity

Table 4.4 : Criteria and guidance for assessing landscape sensitivity to wind energy

Landform and scale				
<p>A smooth gently sloping or flat landform is likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than a landscape with a dramatic rugged landform, distinct landform features (including prominent hills and scarps) or pronounced undulations. Larger scale landforms are likely to be less sensitive than smaller scale landforms - because turbines may appear out of scale, detract from visually important landforms or appear visually confusing (due to turbines being at varying heights) in the latter types of landscapes.</p> <p>Information sources: Landscape Character Assessments; Ordnance Survey mapping; topography data (Ordnance Survey Panorama); fieldwork.</p>				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity	↔			Higher sensitivity
e.g. an extensive lowland flat landscape or elevated plateau, often a larger scale landform	e.g. a simple gently rolling landscape, likely to be a medium-large scale landform	e.g. an undulating landscape, perhaps also incised by valleys or with topographical features, likely to be a medium scale landform	e.g. a landscape with distinct landform features, and/or irregular in topographic appearance (which may be large in scale), or a smaller scale landform	e.g. a landscape with a rugged landform or dramatic landform features (which may be large in scale), or a small scale or intimate landform
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features				
<p>Simple, regular landscapes with extensive areas of consistent ground cover are likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than landscapes with more complex or irregular land cover patterns, smaller and / or irregular field sizes and landscapes with frequent human scale features that are traditional of the landscape, such as stone farmsteads, walls and hedges¹². This is because large features such as wind turbines may dominate smaller scale traditional features within the landscape.</p> <p>Information sources: National, regional and local-level Landscape Character Assessment; Ordnance Survey mapping; Google Earth (aerial photography); fieldwork.</p>				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity	↔			Higher sensitivity
e.g. a very large-scale landscape with uniform groundcover and lacking in human scale features	e.g. a landscape with large-scale fields, little variety in land cover and occasional human scale features such as trees and domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with medium sized fields, some variations in land cover and presence of human scale features such as trees, domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with irregular small-scale fields, variety in land cover and presence of human scale features such as trees, domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with a strong variety in land cover and small-scale / irregular in appearance containing numerous human scale features

¹² Human scale features are aspects of land cover such as stone walls, hedges, buildings which give a 'human scale' to the landscape

Skylines

Prominent and distinctive undeveloped skylines, or skylines with important landmark features, are likely to be more sensitive to wind energy development because turbines may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape, or draw attention away from existing landform or landmark features on skylines. Important landmark features on the skyline might include historic features, such as castles, monuments, or church spires. This criterion is judged based on how the skylines are viewed within the LCU. Where the LCU skylines being considered influences the character/forms part of an important skyline for another LCU this is assessed under 'inter-visibility' (see below).

Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment; fieldwork.

Examples of sensitivity ratings

Lower sensitivity		↔		Higher sensitivity	
e.g. a large-scale flat or plateau landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are no important landmark features on the skyline	e.g. a large-scale landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are very few landmark features on the skyline – other skylines in adjacent LCTs are more prominent	e.g. a landscape with some prominent skylines, but these are not particularly distinctive. There may be some landmark features on the skyline.	e.g. a landscape where are prominent and where they may form an important backdrop to views from settlements or important viewpoints, and/or with important landmark features	e.g. a landscape where skylines are prominent or distinctive and undeveloped or where skylines have particularly important landmark features	

Perceptual qualities

Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil (due to freedom from human activity and disturbance and having a perceived naturalness or a strong feel of traditional rurality with few modern human influences) tend to increase levels of sensitivity to wind energy development compared to landscapes that contain signs of modern development (as the development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness/ naturalness).

Information sources: Landscape Character Assessments; Ordnance Survey basemaps (presence / absence of development, modern settlement, modern structures).

Examples of sensitivity ratings

Lower sensitivity		↔		Higher sensitivity	
e.g. a landscape with much human activity and development such as industrial areas or a port	e.g. a rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development	e.g. a rural landscape with some modern development and human activity	e.g. a more naturalistic landscape and / or one with little modern human influence and development	e.g. a remote or 'wild' landscape with little or no signs of current human activity and development	

Scenic qualities

Landscapes that have a high scenic quality will be more sensitive than landscapes of low scenic quality. Scenic qualities can include contrasts and combinations of landform and landcover which together contribute to attractive views. Scenic qualities may be recorded in the Landscape Character Assessment, or may be referenced in tourist material. Scenic viewpoints may be marked on Ordnance Survey maps. Scenic quality is also considered in the field.

Information sources: Landscape Character Assessments; OS maps; tourist literature; fieldwork.

Examples of sensitivity ratings

Lower sensitivity		↔			Higher sensitivity
e.g. A landscape without attractive character, with no pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements, such as an industrial area or derelict land	e.g. A landscape of limited attractive character, with few pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements	e.g. A landscape of intermittently attractive character, with occasional pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements	e.g. A landscape of attractive character, with pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements	e.g. A landscape of outstandingly attractive character, with pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements, likely to be recognised by national designation	

Intervisibility

Landscapes which have important visual relationships with other areas, for example where one area provides a scenic backdrop to a neighbouring area or an area is overlooked by another which contributes to the visual experience of that adjacent landscape, are considered more sensitive than those with little or less important visual relationships.

Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment; intervisibility mapping; fieldwork.

Examples of sensitivity ratings

Lower sensitivity		↔			Higher sensitivity
An enclosed, self-contained landscape, or one with weak visual connections to neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of lower sensitivity	A landscape with limited visual relationship with another area(s), and/or where related landscapes are of low or medium sensitivity	A landscape which has some visual relationship with another area(s), and/or where related landscapes are of medium sensitivity	A landscape which is has a strong visual relationship with another area(s), and these are likely to be of medium or higher sensitivity	A landscape which has an important visual relationship with another area(s) one or more neighbouring areas, and these are likely to be of high sensitivity	

Discussion on Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.9 Once the criteria have been assessed individually, the results are drawn together into a summary discussion on sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development.
- 4.10 If one criterion has a particularly strong influence on landscape character this is drawn out in the discussion (an example might be skylines in a landscape character area with prominent/ dominant skylines, or perceptual qualities in a particularly remote landscape character area).
- 4.11 In any given Landscape Character Unit there may be conflicts between criteria. For example a settled landscape, while containing greater human influence (indicating a lower sensitivity), will also include more human scale features that could be affected by large-scale wind turbines (indicating a higher sensitivity – particularly to larger turbines). Conversely, a more remote landscape will lack the human scale features but may have a higher sensitivity from a perceptual point of view. These issues are brought out in the discussion on landscape sensitivity.
- 4.12 The sensitivity assessment is not influenced by existing renewable energy developments which predate this study.

Judging Landscape Sensitivity to Different Sizes of Development

- 4.13 The next stage of the assessment is to come to a judgement on landscape sensitivity to different heights of wind turbine. Notes are also provided in relation to sensitivity to different turbine cluster sizes as set out in **Table 4.2**. The relationship between the evaluations against the individual criteria and the judgements of landscape sensitivity is not a linear one. The process is based on professional judgement, using the individual criteria as indicators of sensitivity only. The relative importance of each criterion will vary between different landscapes; key characteristics may identify where a particular criterion is more important, and should therefore be given greater weight in the judgement of sensitivity.
- 4.14 Sensitivity is judged on a five-point scale as shown in **Table 4.5** below.

Table 4.5 : Sensitivity levels and definitions

Sensitivity Level	Definition
High (H)	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly sensitive to change from the type and scale of renewable energy being assessed.
Moderate-High (M-H)	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change from the type and scale of renewable energy being assessed.
Moderate (M)	Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change from the type and scale of renewable energy being assessed.
Low-Moderate (L-M)	Few of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change from the type and scale of renewable energy being assessed.
Low (L)	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are robust and are less likely to be adversely affected by the type and scale of renewable energy development being assessed.

Presentation of Results

- 4.15 The full landscape sensitivity assessments for each of the Landscape Character Units are presented in **Chapter 7**. The tables provide:
- a summary description of the Landscape Character Unit;
 - an assessment against each of the assessment criteria, giving a landscape sensitivity assessment 'score' for each (on the coloured five-point scale as set out in **Table 4.5** above);

- an overall discussion on landscape sensitivity for the Landscape Character Unit;
- an overall landscape sensitivity rating for each turbine height category;
- a commentary on landscape sensitivity to different cluster sizes; and
- a list of key sensitive features/characteristics.

4.16 A summary of the results of the landscape sensitivity assessment is presented in **Chapter 8**.

Guidance on Development

- 4.17 Siting and design guidelines were developed for application across the two boroughs, and for each Landscape Character Unit. The 'generic' guidelines (presented in **Section 6**) can apply to any proposal in the boroughs, while the Landscape Character Unit-specific guidelines provide more detail at a level specific to the relevant assessment unit.
- 4.18 The Landscape Character Unit-specific guidelines draw on a series of key issues identified from the sensitivity assessment. The siting and design guidelines also include consideration of potential cumulative effects that may arise from operational and consented development.

Limitations of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 4.19 While this Landscape Sensitivity Assessment provides an initial indication of the relative landscape sensitivities of different areas to wind energy development, it should not be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of a certain location for a particular development. It is not a replacement for detailed studies for specific siting and design and all developments will need to be assessed on their individual merits. It is also unrelated to any targets for renewable energy development or studies of technical potential.
- 4.20 This Landscape Sensitivity Assessment is based on an assessment of landscape character using carefully defined criteria. As with all analyses based upon data and information which is to a greater or lesser extent subjective, some caution is required in its interpretation. This is particularly to avoid the suggestion that certain landscape features or qualities can be absolutely associated with certain sensitivities – the reality is that landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interplay of often unequally weighted variables (or 'criteria'). We have sought to address this issue in our summary of overall landscape sensitivity given for each Landscape Character Unit – which considers how the criteria-based assessments combine to give an overall sensitivity result for different scales of development within a Landscape Character Unit. Because of the complexity of the criteria, and their subtle interrelationships with each other, we have purposefully not used a numeric scoring system in expressing sensitivity. The assessments are based on professional judgement, taking account of the interplay between criteria, as well as those which might be more important [to landscape character] in a particular Landscape Character Unit.
- 4.21 It should also be noted that the boundaries between Landscape Character Units are transitions on the ground and if a proposal is on or near a boundary, assessments for both areas need to be considered.
- 4.22 It is also worth noting that the assessment does not cover specific ecological issues associated with nature conservation designations or bird flight paths; specific cultural heritage/archaeological issues associated with individual designated heritage assets and their settings; other planning designations that restrict development such as Green Belt; visual amenity issues; or technical issues (such as the fact that trees and woodland can create turbulence making siting of turbines more difficult, or that an area is within an Airport Safeguarding Zone where turbines may have an effect on Radar systems). These are all issues that will need to be taken into account in site selection and impacts will need to be reported at the time when individual proposals are being put forward – e.g. through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.

5 User Guide

- 5.1 This brief User Guide is designed for both developers and decision-makers to help them consider landscape character and sensitivity in relation to proposals for wind energy developments. It is arranged under three key stages, and sets out a series of questions as prompts to assist in using available information to shape proposals / assist in planning decisions.

Stage 1 – Landscape sensitivity

- What size development is proposed (number/height of turbines)?
- Which Landscape Character Unit (LCU) is the proposed development in?
- Is the site characteristic of the wider LCU (as summarised in the key characteristics)?
- What is the sensitivity rating for the LCU and scale of development being proposed? (NB if a development size lies on the edge of a category guidance from more than one category may need to be considered)
- What are the key sensitivities of this LCU and are these affected by the development?

Stage 2 – Detailed siting and design considerations

- Is the number/height of turbines consistent with the guidance for development provided for the relevant LCU?
- Does the development accord with the generic guidance set out in Chapter 6? If not, what aspects of the proposed development conflict with which parts of the guidance?
- Does the development accord with the additional specific guidance set out for the relevant LCU? If not, what aspects of the proposed development conflict with which parts of the guidance?
- If the development conflicts with any guidance for development, can the impacts be mitigated?
- If the development does not adversely affect key landscape characteristics, and is in line with guidance, it is likely to be able to be accommodated in the landscape (from a landscape character point of view – note other issues will also need to be assessed including impacts on cultural heritage, ecology, visual amenity and residential amenity).

Stage 3 – Cumulative impact

- Does the development, in the context of other existing and consented developments, maintain landscape character so that wind energy developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape (i.e. developments do not result in a change in landscape character of a Landscape Character Unit)?
- Is the development in line with the guidance on 'designing for multiple developments' set out in Chapter 6 and the guidance for multiple developments set out in the relevant LCU? If not, which guidance does it conflict with?
- If the development conflicts with any guidance for development, can the impacts be mitigated?

6 Generic Guidance on Siting and Designing Wind Energy Developments

Siting

- 6.1 The following provides some generic guidance on siting wind energy development in Melton and Rushcliffe, focussing on minimising landscape and visual effects. It is recognised that technologies need to be sited and designed to ensure a reasonable output.
- 6.2 In all cases the relevant guidance set out within the landscape character assessments should be considered when choosing potential sites for wind energy development where appropriate (i.e. the landscape actions within the relevant draft policy zones of the Greater Nottingham Landscape Character Assessment (2009) for Rushcliffe borough). The following guidance should be followed for siting any wind energy development, whether it comprises one small turbine or multiple large turbines:
- i. Because of intrinsic historic landscape character significance, or potential for preserved archaeological evidence, avoid siting wind energy development on land recorded as the following within Historic Landscape Character Types: fossilised open fields, river valley meadows, woodland, and parks and gardens (in Rushcliffe) and heathland and common, ridge and furrow, broadleaved woodland, mixed woodland, parkland, village greens, parks and gardens, country houses, marsh and floodplain fields (most traditionally used as meadows) in Melton.
 - ii. Seek to avoid areas where ground level disturbance affects landscapes that are difficult to restore or are historically significant (e.g. land where medieval ploughing system of ridge and furrow is evident).
 - iii. Ensure siting of turbines does not damage the special characteristics of the landscape as recorded in the Landscape Character descriptions within the relevant draft policy zones of the Greater Nottingham Landscape Character Assessment (2009) for Rushcliffe Borough and the Melton Landscape Character Assessment (2006) for Melton Borough.
 - iv. It is generally preferable to see a substantial part of a turbine rather than partial blades so that the object can be understood in its landscape context – this may be a particular consideration for views from sensitive viewpoints or those frequented by a larger number of viewers.
 - v. Significant adverse effects on views from important viewpoints (including views which are integral to the character of conservation areas as set out in **Appendix 3** and recognised /iconic views as listed in **Section 3**), popular tourist and scenic routes, and settlements should be avoided where possible or minimised through careful siting and design.
 - vi. Consider locations in association with business parks and reclaimed, industrial and man-made landscapes where other landscape sensitivities are not compromised.
 - vii. Consider the landscape effects of transmission infrastructure when siting development, aiming for sites that will minimise the need for above ground transmission infrastructure.
 - viii. Make use of existing vegetation to screen ground-level features of wind energy developments (such as fencing, tracks and transformers).
 - ix. The visibility of turbines from valleys and lower ground may be reduced if they are located on plateaux with concave or steep wooded slopes, and set back from the edge of valley crests (avoidance of visibility of partial blades will also be a consideration, see point iv).
 - x. It is preferable to site turbines where they do not diminish the understanding and appreciation of historic landmarks features such as hilltop monuments or church towers.

- xi. Protect the character of conservation areas including views or features of the surrounding landscape which contribute to their setting (as mentioned in Conservation Area Appraisals).
 - xii. Protect the the setting to listed buildings (particularly where the character of the landscape is an important part of a listed building’s special interest), and protect the character of Registered Historic Parks and Gardens including views to and from, particularly designed views and historic visual connections¹³.
 - xiii. When siting multiple turbines over 50m tip height, select sites in simple, regular landscapes over landscapes with more complex or irregular land cover patterns, smaller field sizes and landscapes with frequent human scale features (subject to satisfying other sensitivities).
 - xiv. When selecting sites consider potential effects of transporting turbines to site, and the possible limitations presented by narrow lanes or historic bridges and the potential landscape impacts of road widening.
- 6.3 When siting single turbines the following guidance should be considered:
- xv. Consider siting turbines so they are perceived as part of other built development /in association with a building group where effects on amenity allow. For example, there may be some opportunity to site smaller single turbines in relation to farm buildings with larger scale single turbines sited in relation to larger businesses or community buildings - development should be commensurate with (or reflect) the scale of the associated buildings.
- 6.4 When siting multiple turbines the following guidance should be considered:
- xvi. Locate turbines on the most level part of a site or following contours to avoid a discordant variation of turbine heights.
 - xvii. Ensure the size and grouping of turbines responds to landscape character, reinforcing the difference between distinct landscape character types.
 - xviii. Seek to keep a turbine group within one landscape character type (particularly as perceived in sensitive views) so that turbines do not span across marked changes in character on the ground, such as changes in topography.

Detailed Layout and Design

- 6.5 The next stage in planning a wind energy scheme is the detailed layout and design. Alternative options should be investigated to find the optimum layout and design of a wind energy development. The NPPF (para. 66) expects applicants to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community¹⁴. The landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) may aid this process. The following should be considered:
- Layout and number of turbines;
 - Size, design and proportion of turbines;
 - Requirement for, and location of, transformers;
 - Site access including potential need for road upgrades, design of access tracks and onsite cables;
 - Requirement for, and location of, borrow pits;
 - Location and restoration of construction compounds and any fencing;
 - Location of monitoring masts;

¹³ The relevant Historic Environment Service should be approached directly to obtain advice on development that could affect these assets.

¹⁴ A Public Engagement Protocol for the South West [<http://www.cse.org.uk/pdf/pub1036.pdf>] outlines a series of responsibilities aimed at local planning authorities and wind energy developers for promoting more effective public engagement within the development of wind energy projects.

- Design of lighting (if required);
- Location and design of substation building(s);
- Land management changes including opportunities for habitat creation/ enhancement appropriate for the character area, set out in a landscape management strategy.

6.6 The following provides some generic guidance for the detailed layout and design of wind energy developments:

Site Layout

- When developing multiple turbines, ensure that turbines read as a coherent group in all the main views – aim for a composition that is visually balanced, simple and consistent in image as it is viewed from various directions, minimising views of blade tips only in views (which can be distracting).
- When developing multiple turbines, seek to avoid 'stacking' of turbines when seen from one direction as far as possible (such as is experienced when looking along a row).
- When developing multiple turbines, seek to avoid siting turbines which are remote from the rest of the group – maintain a clear balanced cluster.
- Ensure turbine size does not overwhelm the scale of distinct hills and ridges.
- When developing multiple turbines, ensure cluster size is in proportion with the scale of the landscape, including landform features and landscape elements such as woodlands and fields.
- Ensure wind turbines respect the hierarchy of elements in the landscape and do not compete with, or create clutter when seen together with, other man-made landscape elements such as pylons.
- In urban fringe or industrial contexts, developments should respond to the scale of the built form and sit comfortably alongside buildings or structures.
- Use information on landscape scale contained within published landscape character assessments to inform choice of turbine size and cluster size.
- Ensure the layout and design of the development responds to other wind energy developments in the same type of landscape to minimise cumulative effects – this is more important the closer sites are together.

Turbine Design

- Ensure the height of turbines are in scale with the landform in which they are located and do not overwhelm the scale of hills, ridges, or historic landmarks and monuments.
- Ensure that the proportion of rotor diameter to tower height is balanced - short blades on a tall tower or long blades on a short tower may look unbalanced. Aim for a ratio of approximately 1:1 for tower height: blade diameter for medium and large turbines.
- Three bladed turbines tend to look more balanced than two bladed turbines.
- Tubular steel towers tend to look simpler and less 'industrial' than lattice towers.
- Hubs are more aesthetically pleasing when oval shaped with flowing lines, rather than 'boxy' shapes.
- Simple, pale grey coloured turbines will be most suitable for most turbines over 25m to tip (to reduce contrast with the sky and match existing turbines in Melton and Rushcliffe). However, in some cases darker colours may be suitable for very small turbines to help them blend into their setting.

- vii. Opinion is divided about how effective graduated bases (usually from green to grey) are at integrating turbine towers into the landscape [ref photo below] and may be appropriate in certain situations.
- viii. All turbines on a site should rotate at the same speed and direction.
- ix. Speed of blade rotations should be kept as low as possible (particularly on smaller turbines) to reduce visual impact.
- x. Avoid use of advertising on turbines, particularly in rural areas.

Ancillary Features

- i. Minimise the width and length of new tracks introduced into the landscape, using existing routes wherever possible.
- ii. Any new tracks should follow contours, avoiding steep slopes or wet ground where possible, and following field boundaries or woodland edges where possible – in some cases this may result in slightly longer lengths of track being required.
- iii. Ensure the surface of tracks blend into the surrounding landscape and aim to re-vegetate tracks (in full or in part) following construction.
- iv. Minimise works to offsite roads, particularly rural roads, and prevent damage and alterations to stone walls, hedges, flower rich verges, trees, historic bridges and gateposts - repair and replace any features affected ensuring materials and planting are in keeping with local context and character.
- v. Where possible, house transformers within the turbine towers to reduce their visual effects.
- vi. Substation and control buildings should be carefully sited and should generally avoid high or exposed locations – use existing buildings where possible, or existing and locally occurring vegetation to screen new buildings.
- vii. Ancillary features should match the local vernacular where they are visible (e.g. using locally occurring materials on substations, control buildings, and transformer cabins if not housed within the turbines).
- viii. Avoid use of urbanising elements in rural situations, such as kerbs, and minimise areas of hard surfacing, fencing and lighting.
- ix. Ensure on-site cables are buried underground (minimising damage to existing hedges or archaeology) to minimise effects on landscape character and visual amenity – on-site grid connections should be underground wherever possible and crane hard standings re-vegetated during operation of the turbines.
- x. If lighting is required on turbines for aviation purposes, use infra-red lighting to minimise visual effects at night, particularly in more rural and darker areas (NPPF encourages limiting the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity and intrinsically dark landscapes).

Land Use/ Landscape Enhancement

- xi. Continue the existing land use underneath the turbines so that the landscape flows underneath and around the turbines, or link land use to adjoining land uses especially if this can create more robust semi natural habitats and reduce habitat fragmentation.
- xii. Provide enhanced management of landscape features, habitats and historic assets as part of a development, including contributing to wider landscape scale targets and projects in relevant local authority Biodiversity Action Plans and other landscape related plans as well as management objectives within landscape character assessments.
- xiii. Encourage traditional management of farmland including maintaining small fields and hedgerows.

- xiv. Developers should provide a design statement to set out how the design has evolved, how the design responds to landscape character, how visual issues have been addressed and how this guidance has been taken on board.
- xv. Developers should provide a land management plan for land surrounding/under installations to demonstrate proposed land use and management through the operational phase and restoration/aftercare after decommissioning.

Designing for Multiple Developments

- 6.7 As larger numbers of wind energy developments are built, it is increasingly necessary to consider their cumulative effects. For Melton and Rushcliffe, the aim is to maintain landscape character, ensuring that wind energy developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape (i.e. developments are occasional features within the landscape and would not result in a significant cumulative impact on a Landscape Character Unit, or result in a change in landscape character of an Landscape Character Unit). The guidance below can assist in minimising cumulative effects.
- i. When designing a wind energy development it is important to consider how the scheme fits with other existing, consented and proposed schemes (including within neighbouring planning authorities) to minimise cumulative effects¹⁵.
 - ii. If wind energy development already exists in a particular type of landscape, further wind energy development should continue this pattern of development (e.g. small cluster on hill tops, or single turbines associated with buildings), as long as the existing development is considered appropriate in the context of landscape character.
 - iii. Ensure multiple developments do not obscure distinctive landforms and are in scale with ridges and hills.
 - iv. If two or more wind energy developments are clearly visible in the same view and appear in the same type of landscape they should appear of similar scale and design (including the number of blades and proportion of rotor diameter to tower height), unless the existing design is considered inappropriate – the closer they are to each other the more important this is.
 - v. Ensure any wind energy scheme, or extension to an existing scheme, takes account of landscape sensitivity as well as any landscape strategies for wind energy development that may be available.
 - vi. It will be important to ensure that wind energy developments do not have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape and that some open views devoid of turbines are maintained.
 - vii. As multiple wind energy developments are built they may 'compete' with the landscape's original focal features/ landmarks – it is important to maintain a hierarchy of landmarks and ensure they can still be appreciated in the landscape.
 - viii. Consider views from settlements when designing multiple wind energy developments – avoid 'surrounding' a settlement with wind turbines.
 - ix. Individual wind energy developments should generally appear visually separate from each other unless specifically designed to create the appearance of a single combined wind farm.
 - x. When designing wind farm extensions it will be important that scale of turbines (including the proportion of rotor diameter to tower height) and rotation speeds are compatible.

¹⁵ use of a common protocol allowing neighbouring local authorities to record and map renewable energy developments in a consistent way may be a useful tool.

7 Detailed assessments and guidance by Landscape Character Unit

7.1 This Chapter contains the Landscape Sensitivity Assessments and Guidance tailored to each of the Landscape Character Units found within Melton and Rushcliffe. Each document includes the following:

- A location map of the Landscape Character Unit;
- Key landscape characteristics taken from published Landscape Character Assessments;
- Landscape sensitivity assessment results for wind energy development;
- Key sensitivities and guidance for development for wind energy development.

Vale of Belvoir

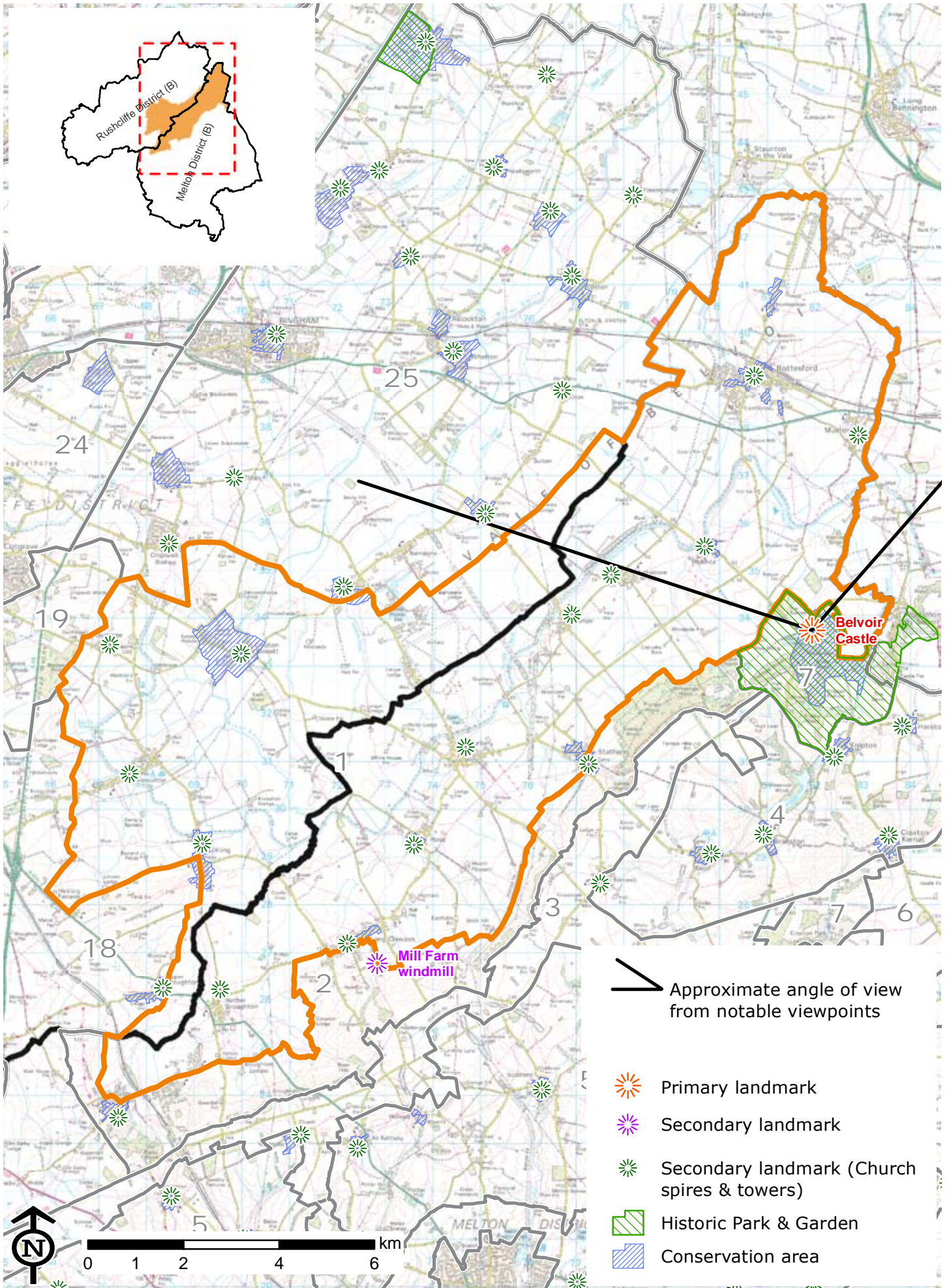


Figure 5.1

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LCU1 Vale of Belvoir

7.2 This Landscape Character Unit comprises the VB1 policy zone within Rushcliffe Borough and LCA1 Vale of Belvoir and LCA2 Bottesford within Melton Borough. The extent of the Vale of Belvoir and these Landscape Character Units within it are shown in **Figure 5.1**.

Key Landscape Characteristics¹⁶

7.3 Key characteristics of the Vale of Belvoir are as follows:

- Predominantly flat low lying landform with very gentle undulations, enclosed by rolling hills such as Belvoir Ridge in Leicestershire to the south;
- River Smite flows through the area; it is in set lower than the surrounding land, and is only identifiable by riparian vegetation on its steep banks;
- The disused Grantham Canal is a local feature; an ongoing restoration project it is a popular recreational feature;
- A remote rural character across the whole area, with occasional views to scattered villages and individual farms although mostly a remote, tranquil and undeveloped character;
- The majority of land use is arable farmland although closer to the village fringes smaller pasture fields become more apparent, usually used as horse paddocks. A more continuous tract of permanent pasture is found between Colston Bassett, Kinoulton and Hickling;
- Large scale regular patterned fields are common to the west of the area, although medium sized fields are present in the east. Pasture fields closer to the villages are smaller, although elsewhere integrate with the pattern and scale of arable fields. There are more trees around the pastoral fields which give a slightly stronger sense of enclosure to that of the arable fields. Closer to the Grantham Canal as the land gently slopes the field pattern becomes more irregular;
- Field boundaries are predominantly maturing hawthorn hedgerows, up to 1.5m in height, especially around Colston Bassett. Field ditches are present at some boundaries usually along roads
- In the south there are very few hedgerow trees, these become more frequent towards the north of the area in the transition between the vales and the South Nottinghamshire Farmlands;
- Woodland is dispersed and includes occasional blocks, clumps and linear belts. The main woodland component is formed by frequent clumps along field margins and around farms. Locally prominent woodland is found in parkland around Colston Bassett Hall;
- Clumps of woodland associated with water courses, along the Grantham Canal and maturing hedgerows are prominent linear wooded features · The medieval ploughing system of ridge and furrow is evident close to the village of Kinoulton and along the low escarpment at Hickling and is locally distinctive;
- Small scattered villages throughout the area include the linear settlements of Kinoulton, and Hickling and the smaller nucleated settlements of Colston Bassett and Owthorpe. Larger settlements of Langar and Cropwell Bishop are situated on the fringes of the DPZ;
- Distinctive vernacular settlements such as Hickling. Urban form is generally uniform and has mainly red brick properties with some larger individual rendered properties. Settlements are dispersed and tend to have rooflines visible within wooded edges Villages

¹⁶ Taken from Greater Nottingham Landscape Character Assessment (2009) and the Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment (2006).

often contain one main street or a couple with a small junction including a small grassed area and trees;

- A linear dispersion of farms and larger farm buildings mostly situated close to roads;
- Churches at Langar and Granby are prominent skyline features on high ground. Hickling church tower is prominent above a dispersed village edge;
- Extensive views beyond the vale towards the Belvoir Ridgeline in Leicestershire with Belvoir Castle prominent on the wooded ridgeline
- Winding narrow lanes thread across the area linking the scattered villages. They have medium to wide grass verges with frequent ditches, some have very steep sides;
- Overhead lines are visible over the area due to the low-lying landform; and
- Langar airfield, with its industrial buildings and runways has a localised urbanising effect on the rural mostly undeveloped appearance of the landscape.

Landscape-related designations

- 7.4 The vale includes a number of Conservation Areas covering the villages (or parts of the villages) of Colston Bassett, Hickling, Long Clawson, Bottesford, Hose and Normanton.

Important Landmarks and Views

- 7.5 No primary landmarks are located within this unit, although there are a number of church spires and towers across the vale that form secondary landmarks.
- 7.6 Views from the Borough-wide primary landmark of Belvoir Castle (and the surrounding estate) are available over this area, as described in **Table 3.4**
- 7.7 Extensive views over the Vale are also available from the more local features of Beacon Hill and Standard Hill, to the west of Hickling, in which churches form important landmarks.
- 7.8 In addition, there are a number of other locally valued views, including those identified by the Parish Councils as of value (see **Appendix 4**).

Landscape sensitivity assessment

- 7.9 The following table sets out the landscape sensitivity assessment to wind energy development. Refer to **Table 4.4** for full details of the evaluation criteria.

Table 7.1: Landscape sensitivity assessment for Landscape Character Unit 1 Vale of Belvoir

	Lower sensitivity		↔	Higher sensitivity	
Landform and Scale		L-M			
	<p>A simple, gently undulating landscape, of a medium scale with few pronounced undulations, although some more strongly sloping areas occur to the south of the area at the edge of the vale where the escarpment of the Leicestershire Wolds rises steeply. Smaller hills within the vale, such as Toston Hill (51m) and Beacon Hill (61m) to the south and north of Bottesford respectively, to southwest of Long Clawson and Pen Hill (56m) are subtle but locally important. Given the scale and subtle nature of the landform, landscape sensitivity is judged to be medium to low.</p>				
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features				M-H	
	<p>This is an agricultural landscape with a mixture of regular and irregular field patterns at a range of scales, with medium to small fields predominating, particularly around the scattered villages and larger fields generally concentrated in the northwest. Fields are a mixture of pasture and arable farmland, with the pastoral areas more strongly enclosed by trees. Numerous linear features, such as the watercourses and dykes, the Grantham Canal and former railway lines, cross the area but are not visually prominent.</p> <p>Parts of the area are very open in character where there are larger arable fields. Although overall there is little woodland cover, generally the numerous human scale features, including field trees, small historic villages with distinctive church spires, hamlets with wooded edges and small blocks of woodland increase the sensitivity of this area. The areas of ridge and furrow close to the village of Kinoulton and along the low escarpment at Hickling are locally distinctive.</p>				
Skylines			M		
	<p>This area has a simple and gentle landform which results in a low lying skyline which is generally not prominent. However, there are a number of landmark features including church spires. Lines of pylons run through this area and are seen on the skyline in views. Although the skyline is low lying, the incidence of church spires increases sensitivity. Overall skyline sensitivity is considered to be medium.</p>				
Perceptual qualities			M		
	<p>Although there is a presence of human activity and disturbance, in the form of pylons, roads, settlements and intensively managed farmland in localised areas, the area retains a perceived naturalness and a rurality, particularly in relation to the traditional villages and hamlets.</p>				
Scenic				M-H	

Lower sensitivity ← → Higher sensitivity					
qualities	The south of the area is visually diverse, where the wooded escarpment to the south of the vale forms a distinctive and attractive feature. Areas which are more intensively farmed have less visual interest, but views along the winding narrow lanes and towards the small villages and church spires set within fringes of trees and small pastoral fields are attractive. Long views over the area are particularly scenic (for example those from Beacon Hill) composed of undulating rural farmland within which small villages, church spires and woodlands are regularly scattered.				
Intervisibility	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; background-color: red; color: white; text-align: center;">M-H</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> </table> <p>The area has strong visual connections to the escarpment of the Leicestershire Wolds (adjacent unit 2 Belvoir Scarp) and Belvoir ridgeline which forms a distinctive skyline to the south. Conversely there are views from the scarp across the vale. There are also views from adjacent LCU 25 South Nottinghamshire Farmlands: Aslockton Village Farmland and outside the borough to the north east within Newark and Sherwood.</p>			M-H	
		M-H			
Discussion on landscape sensitivity to the principle of wind energy	The gently undulating landform and large, wide skylines reduce sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development while the many human scale elements, church spires, attractive rural landscape with traditional vernacular villages and hamlets, and intervisibility with surrounding landscapes including the scarp increase sensitivity (particularly to larger turbines). The area exhibits local variation between the centre of the vale and the more strongly undulating edges to the west and south which affects sensitivity to wind energy of different heights.				

Landscape sensitivity to different turbine heights

<25m	L-M
25 to 50 m	M
51 to 75 m	M-H
76 to 110 m	H
111 to 150 m	H

- 7.10 Due to the generally medium scale of the landscape pattern, the presence of human scale features and church spires, and the proximity to the escarpment to the south, the landscape would be particularly sensitive to turbines greater than 50m in height and highly sensitive to turbines over 75m. Areas closer to the escarpment are of higher sensitivity.

Discussion on different cluster sizes

- 7.11 The medium to small scale of the landscape pattern and the regular human scale features means this landscape is likely to be particularly sensitive to clusters of turbines of more than two to three turbines. The scale of cluster should relate to the scale of the landscape within the local area. The number of turbines which could be successfully integrated in any location depends upon the local scale of the landscape, which varies across the area.

Summary of Key Sensitive Features and Views

- The predominantly small, human scale of the features across the vale, in particular small historic villages with distinctive church spires, and hamlets with wooded edges.
- The tranquil and strongly rural nature of the area.
- Attractive views along the winding narrow lanes and towards the small villages and church spires set within fringes of trees and small pastoral fields.
- Pastoral areas which are strongly enclosed by trees, particularly areas associated with villages.
- Views towards Belvoir Castle and the Belvoir scarp where the Castle forms an important landmark feature (including the good views from Beacon Hill).
- The rural patchwork character of views from Belvoir Castle across the vale.
- The character of Conservation Areas within the vale, including views identified in the Conservation Area appraisals as well as views identified as being important in this context (for example views from Standard Hill to the west of Hickling and the Church of St Luke).

Guidance

Existing and permitted development within the Landscape Character Unit

- 7.12 A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind development is presented in **Figure 2.1a**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. At the time of writing there were no operational or consented wind energy schemes within the LCU.

Guidance for development

- 7.13 The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this landscape would be particularly sensitive to turbines over 50m to tip and highly sensitive to turbines over 75m in height. It also notes that the landscape is likely to be highly sensitive to clusters of turbines over 3 in size.
- 7.14 When siting and designing wind energy developments in this landscape, the generic guidance provided within **Section 6** should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this area particular care will need to be taken to ensure:
- The historic villages with distinctive church spires remain as landmark features of the Vale and that turbines do not compete with these in key views.
 - The tranquil and strongly rural nature of the area is maintained overall.
 - The attractive views along the winding narrow lanes and towards the small villages and church spires are retained.
 - The small scale of the pastoral areas, particularly areas associated with villages, is maintained and not dominated by large scale turbines.
 - Development does not detract from the quality and character of views of the vale as seen from Belvoir Castle.
 - Development does not adversely affect the special character of conservation areas as recorded in the conservation area appraisals, including the views identified as being important to the special architectural and historic interest of the villages.
 - Choice of location and size/scale of development does not diminish the perceived scale of Belvoir Castle and the escarpment on which it sits.

- 7.15 Developments within the unit should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the Landscape Character Unit. This could include very small or small scale turbines associated with farm buildings (aiming for consistent scale and design of on-farm turbines) and occasional small groups of turbines in larger scale areas (aiming for a consistent scale and design of these larger schemes), and maintaining a distinct hierarchy between these two scales of wind energy development.
- 7.16 In addition, schemes should be well designed and balanced and avoid visual clutter with existing development, including pylon lines – this is particularly important in the context of the open landscape and extensive views.
- 7.17 The overall aim should be to make sure that wind energy developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of the Vale of Belvoir (i.e. developments be occasional features within the landscape and would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the landscape unit or result in a change in landscape character of the unit).

The Leicestershire Wolds: Belvoir Scarp

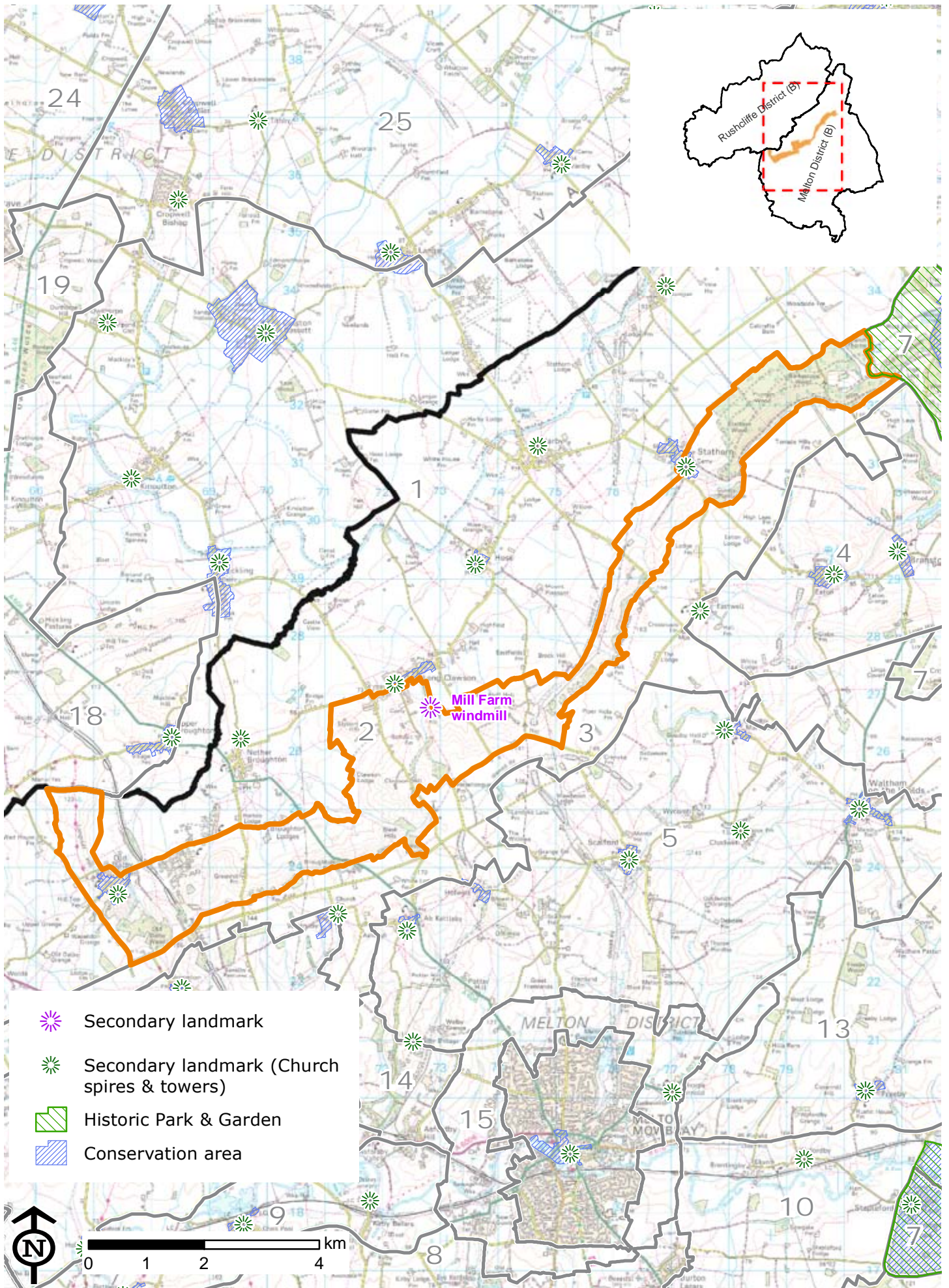


Figure 5.2

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LCU2 Leicestershire Wolds: Belvoir Scarp

7.19 This area comprises the LCA3 Wolds Scarp within Melton Borough. The extent of the Belvoir Scarp Landscape Character Unit is shown in **Figure 5.2**.

Key Landscape Characteristics

7.20 The Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment (2006) describes the areas as “*a pronounced locally dramatic northwest facing escarpment landscape, with a distinct pattern of traditional small scale regular & irregular shaped pastures, woodland and historic features*”.

7.21 The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy (2003) also provides a characterisation of the area, and describes it as “*a long narrow character area formed by a steep escarpment running south-east to north-west*” which is “*dominated by permanent grazing due to the steepness of the scarp, although arable farming does occur towards the bottom of the scarp where the land is less steep*”.

7.22 Key characteristics of the Leicestershire Wolds: Belvoir Scarp¹⁷ are as follows:

- Prominent scarp landform.
- Pattern of small traditional pastures.
- Woodland.
- Ridge & Furrow.
- The field pattern is generally medium to large scale in both permanent grassland and arable areas.
- Views from the top of the scarp are extensive, predominantly over the Vale of Belvoir.
- Several minor roads cut north-west to south-east through the scarp, linking the Wolds and the Vale of Belvoir.
- Limited settlement due to the steepness, narrowness and relatively small size of the character area.

Landscape-related designations

7.23 The scarp includes two villages, both of which are Conservation Areas: Old Dalby and Stathern.

Important Landmarks and Views

7.24 No primary landmarks are located within this unit, although church spires and towers within the west of the area form secondary landmarks.

7.25 The scarp forms a widely visible and distinctive ridgeline from the Vale of Belvoir.

7.26 Extensive views are available from the scarp over the Vale of Belvoir and to the Gotham Hills to the northwest. In particular, a layby on the road leading to Stathern provides a good view over the Vale of Belvoir, a rural patchwork of fields, bordered by hedgerows and punctuated by woodlands and historic villages.

¹⁷ As set out in the Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment (2006) and the Leicestershire, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy (2003)

7.27 In addition, there are a number of other locally valued views, including those identified by the Parish Councils (see **Appendix 4**).

Landscape sensitivity assessment

7.28 The following table sets out the landscape sensitivity assessment to wind energy development. Refer to **Table 4.4** for full details of the evaluation criteria.

Table 7.2: Landscape sensitivity assessment for Landscape Character Unit 2 Belvoir Scarp

	Lower sensitivity				↔	Higher sensitivity				
Landform and Scale										H
	The steep scarp which rises abruptly from the Vale of Belvoir forms a relatively small scale but distinctive and prominent landform feature. Most parts of the escarpment are steeply sloping, although some more gentle slopes occur within the unit, such as to the south of Long Clawson.									
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features										H
	The scarp is generally well treed, either with woodlands or with scattered trees, scrub and hedgerow trees. Particularly sensitive areas include the area of parkland at Old Dalby in the south-west and the adjoining substantial block of woodland formed by Old Dalby Wood. Old Dalby Woods and Stonepit Spinney are both areas of ancient woodland. Settlement is very limited within the area, with only the villages of Stathern and Old Dalby lying within it, both of which are conservation areas. Small farms, usually of vernacular materials, are along the escarpment and form human-scale focal points where they are located on the crest of the ridge (e.g. on Clawson Hill)									
Skylines									M-H	
	The scarp forms an expensive and prominent skyline from a wide area across the lower lying vale to the north. Whilst it is mostly undeveloped, pylons lines do form locally prominent features on it and some sections of the skyline are simple in form, indicating that overall the area is of medium to high sensitivity overall.									
Perceptual qualities									M-H	
	The area is tranquil, with only small areas of settlement and roads mostly limited to small narrow lanes.									
Scenic qualities									M-H	
	This is an area which has retained an unfragmented character which is distinct and appealing as well as being of historic importance which would be sensitive to the introduction of wind energy development. There are attractive contrasts between the areas of former parkland, woodland, scattered trees and small pastures. The area is characterised by visual diversity with a mix of wide extensive views and enclosed areas with areas of attractive woodland, steeper slopes and former parkland.									

		Lower sensitivity			↔	Higher sensitivity		
Intervisibility						M-H		
	The area is widely visible from the Vale of Belvoir and forms an important feature in views from this adjacent area and other lower-lying areas to the north.							
Discussion on landscape sensitivity to the principle of wind energy	Due to the distinctive and pronounced but small scale topography and the small scale and intricate landscape pattern, the landscape would be highly sensitive to wind energy development. The area forms an important and mostly undeveloped skyline from a wide area to the north which is currently mostly undeveloped. The introduction of turbines within the area could diminish the scale of the scarp (which rises to approximately 170m at its highest point) and could adversely affect the distinctive setting to Belvoir Castle (which is a key landmark feature of the scarp, although located in an adjacent LCU).							

Landscape sensitivity to different turbine heights

<25m	M-H
25 to 50 m	H
51 to 75 m	H
76 to 110 m	H
111 to 150 m	H

7.29 Due to the distinctive and pronounced but small scale topography, the small scale and intricate landscape pattern and its scenic qualities, the landscape would be highly sensitive to most scales of turbines.

Discussion on different cluster sizes

7.30 Due to the distinctive profile of the landform and visibility of this escarpment, the scarp is highly sensitive to anything more than single small turbines.

Summary of Key Sensitive Features and Views

- The distinctive profile of the escarpment.
- The panoramic views from the upper slopes.
- The deciduous woodland including ancient woodland around Old Dalby.
- Historic field pattern and remaining areas of ridge and furrow.
- Rural character of vernacular settlements/ dispersed houses and minor roads.
- Areas of historic parkland.
- The largely undeveloped skyline which is characterised by small scale features.

Guidance for Development

Existing and permitted development within the Landscape Character Unit

7.31 At the time of writing there were no existing or proposed schemes within the area.

Guidance for development

7.32 The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this landscape would be highly sensitive to anything other than single turbines of less than the 25m in height.

7.33 When siting any very small single turbines in this landscape, the generic guidance provided within **Section 6** should be followed. In addition, within this area particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- The undeveloped nature of the prominent escarpment is conserved, and particularly the wooded eastern extent on which Belvoir Castle forms a prominent landmark.
- The rural setting of the small historic villages within and adjacent to the escarpment are maintained and development does not adversely affect the special character of conservation areas as recorded in the conservation area appraisals, including the views identified as being important to the special architectural and historic interest of the villages.
- Turbines do not diminish the perceived scale of the escarpment.
- The quiet and rural characteristics of the landscape are conserved.
- The narrow winding lanes are preserved (avoid widening associated with turbine delivery).
- Areas of ancient woodland and unimproved grassland are maintained.
- The pleasing combination of steeply sloping and irregular landforms, small pastoral fields, woodland and historic villages remains and modern built development forms very occasional features within this, rather than becoming defining elements of landscape character.
- The rural patchwork character of the wide views from the top of the escarpment is preserved so that this remains a place to appreciate views of the Vale of Belvoir and the wider landscape to the north.

7.34 In addition, multiple developments should be of a similar design (in terms of siting, scale, and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the Landscape Character Unit.

7.35 The overall aim should be to make sure that wind energy developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape.

The Leicestershire Wolds: Dalby to Belvoir Wolds

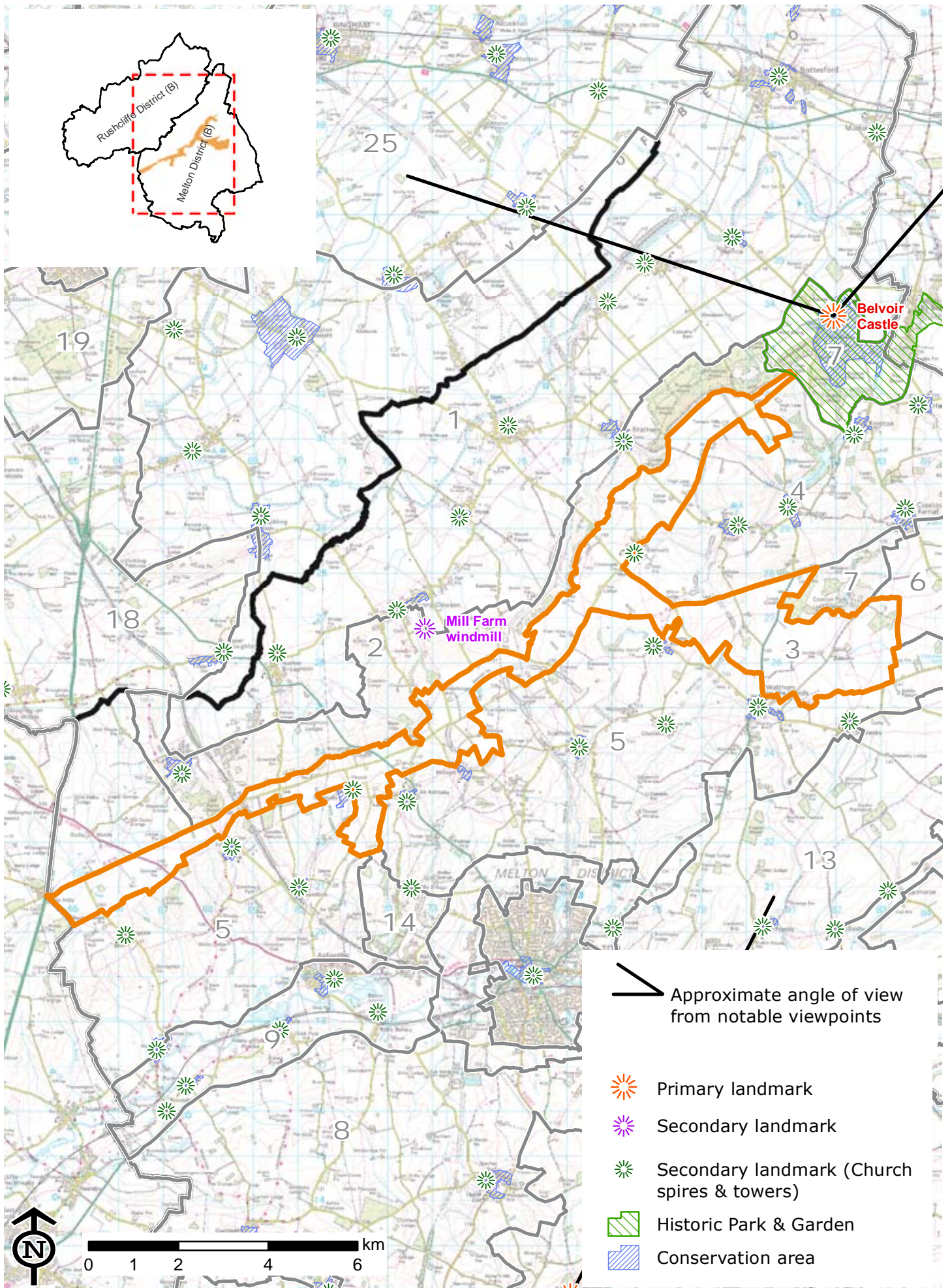


Figure 5.3

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LCU3 Leicestershire Wolds: Dalby to Belvoir Wolds

7.36 This area comprises the LCA4 Wolds Top within Melton Borough. The extent of the Landscape Character Unit is shown in **Figure 5.3**.

Key Landscape Characteristics

7.37 The Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment (2006) describes the areas as “*An even elevated wold top landscape with medium to large scale predominantly arable fields, homogenous and open with scattered ash trees but generally lacking distinctive qualities*”.

7.38 Key characteristics of the Leicestershire Wolds: Dalby to Belvoir Wolds ¹⁸ are as follows:

- Narrow strip of elevated land
- Open and homogenous
- Large scale regular arable fields.

Landscape-related designations

7.39 The area does not include any Historic Parks/ Gardens or Conservation Areas.

Important Landmarks and Views

7.40 No primary or secondary landmarks are located within this unit.

7.41 Where trees and woodland do not contain views, long views are available from the northern edge of the unit across the Vale of Belvoir.

7.42 Within the northeast of the area views occasionally open out across the rural rolling farmland of the wolds and Knipton Bowl to the south.

7.43 In addition, there are a number of other locally valued views, including those identified by the Parish Councils (see **Appendix 4**).

Landscape sensitivity assessment

7.44 The following table sets out the landscape sensitivity assessment to wind energy development. Refer to **Table 4.4** for full details of the evaluation criteria.

Table 7.3: Landscape sensitivity assessment for Landscape Character Unit 3 Dalby and Belvoir Wolds

	Lower sensitivity		↔	Higher sensitivity	
Landform and Scale		L-M			
	A simple, elevated and flat to gently undulating landform, of elevations between approximately 130m and 170m AOD (approximately 100m above the Vale of Belvoir) indicates that the area is generally of lower sensitivity to wind energy development, although the small extent of the area increases its sensitivity.				

¹⁸ As set out in the Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment (2006)

	Lower sensitivity Higher sensitivity			
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	L-M			
	The predominance of large scale arable fields and blocks of commercial forest indicates a lower sensitivity, although features are generally small in scale (scattered farmsteads, small broadleaf woodlands, hedgerows and hedgerow trees). Large farm buildings and pylons influence localised parts and indicate a reduced sensitivity.			
Skylines	L-M			
	As a broad and elevated ridge top, the skylines within the area are generally wide, flat, mostly open and not very distinctive. Views to the north are often enclosed by woodland and are short, particularly in the north-eastern part of the unit where Barkstone Wood abuts it. From some areas at the northern edge however, where the adjacent scarp drops away abruptly, long views across the Vale of Belvoir towards distant receding skylines are available.			
Perceptual qualities	M			
	The area contains a number of small roads, but is generally tranquil, with no areas of settlement.			
Scenic qualities	L-M			
	The area is generally indistinct, due to the predominance of large scale arable farming. Although scenic views are available from the edges of the area, these are over adjacent areas and the area itself contributes limited visual interest.			
Intervisibility	M-H			
	Located along the top of a prominent ridge, the area forms part of the skyline of the Vale of Belvoir as well as small, lower lying and enclosed vales to the south and Knitpon Bowl.			
Discussion on landscape sensitivity to the principle of wind energy	The open, simple landform, and flat skylines suggest lower sensitivity, but the land cover pattern is more varied, with some human-scale features occurring in the form of small farm building and tree belts. The northern edge of this LCU lies immediately adjacent to the steep escarpment at the southern edge of the Vale of Belvoir. Although low in height (it is only elevated approximately 100m above the vale), the escarpment is a key feature when seen from within the Vale of Belvoir, and wind turbine development visible from the vale could affect the perception of the scale of it. There is wide intervisibility between this landscape and the Vale of Belvoir, from where turbines in this area could be widely visible, as well as lower lying smaller vales to the south within the Leicestershire Wolds and this increases sensitivity particularly at the northern edge and in the areas that border the Knitpon Bowl.			

Landscape sensitivity to different turbine heights

<25m	L-M
25 to 50 m	M
51 to 75 m	M-H

76 to 110 m	M-H
111 to 150 m	H

7.45 This LCU is likely to have a slightly lower sensitivity to the smallest turbines because they will relate in scale more closely to existing features such as farm buildings and trees and have less prominence on the sensitive skyline.

Discussion on different cluster sizes

7.46 Due to the small extent of the area, it's relationship with the Vale of Belvoir to the north and the human scale features within it, it is considered that this landscape will be particularly sensitive to more than single turbines or groups of two to three turbines in larger scale areas, subject to careful siting and layout.

Summary of Key Sensitive Features and Views

- The tranquil, rural nature of the landscape.
- The skyline which provides a backdrop to the Vale of Belvoir and the Knipton Bowl.

Guidance for Development

Existing and permitted development within the Landscape Character Unit

7.47 A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind development is presented in **Figure 2.1a**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. At the time of writing there were two operational wind energy schemes within the LCU. These are two turbines of 15m height tip at Crosswell Farm to the southwest of Eastwell, and a single turbine of 29.5m height tip at Lodge Farm, Stratern Lane, Eastwell. There was also a single consented turbine at Wolds Farm.

Guidance for development

- 7.48 The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this landscape would be of particular sensitivity to turbines over 50m in height, and highly sensitive to turbines over 110m. It also notes that the area highly sensitive to anything other than single turbines or two to three turbines in larger scale areas.
- 7.49 When siting and designing wind energy developments in this landscape, the generic guidance provided within **Section 6** should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this area particular care will need to be taken to ensure:
- Development does not adversely affect the special character of conservation areas in adjacent LCUs as recorded in the conservation area appraisals, including the views identified as being important to the special architectural and historic interest of the villages.
 - Choice of location and size/scale of development does not diminish the perceived scale of the escarpment as viewed from within the Vale of Belvoir.
 - Development is set back from the edges of the unit so that the predominantly undeveloped and distinctive skyline is maintained as viewed from the Vale of Belvoir and the Knipton Bowl (in particular avoid views of partial blades above horizons which can be distracting).
- 7.50 Multiple developments should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the Landscape Character Unit. In addition, schemes should be well designed and balanced and avoid visual clutter with existing development, including pylon lines.

- 7.51 The overall aim should be to make sure that wind energy developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of the wolds or the Vale of Belvoir (i.e. developments be occasional features within the landscape and would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the landscape unit or result in a change in landscape character of the unit).

The Leicestershire Wolds: Knipton Bowl

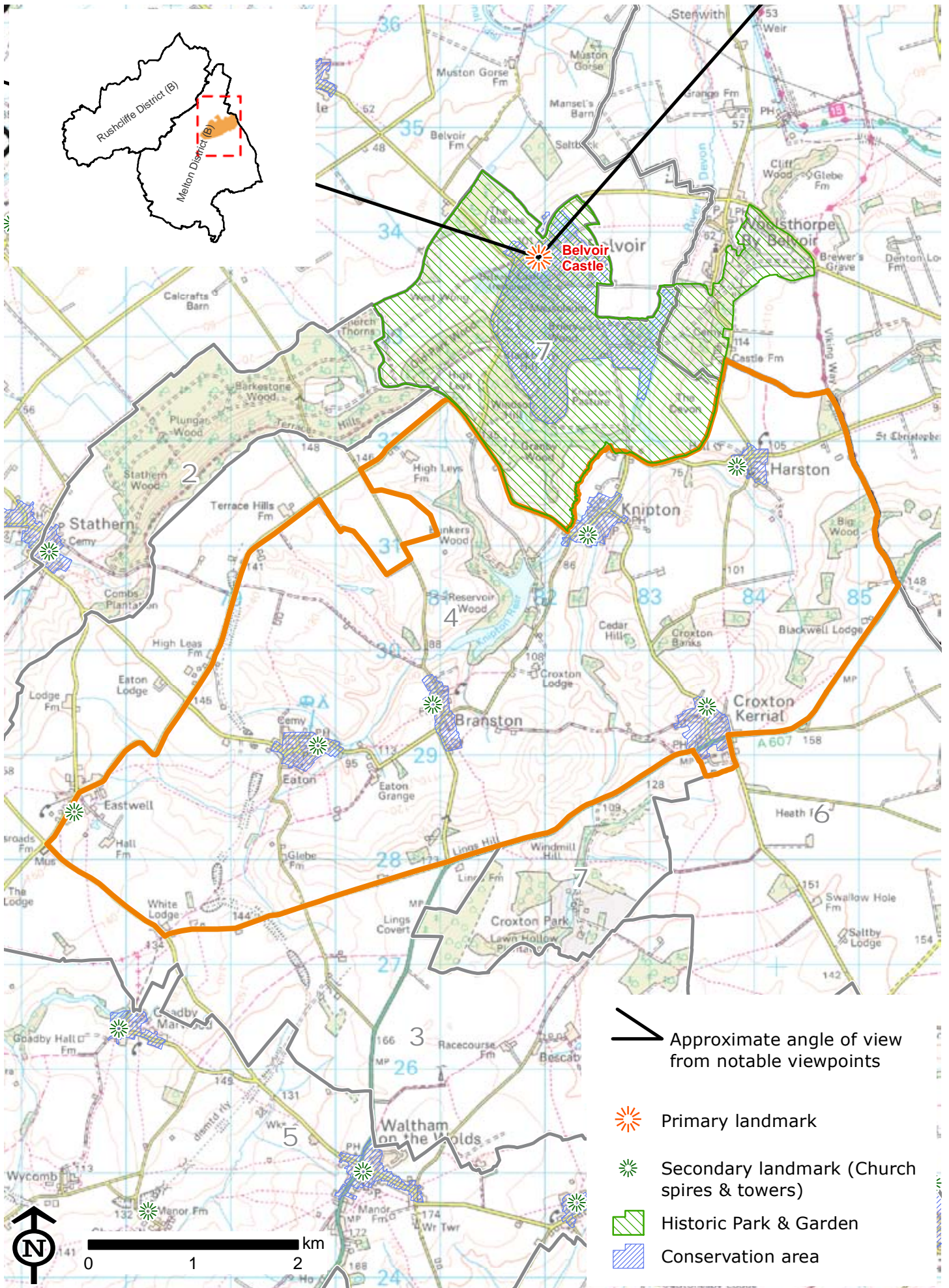


Figure 5.4

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LCU4 Leicestershire Wolds: Knipton Bowl

7.52 This area comprises LCA5 Knipton Bowl within Melton Borough. The extent of the Landscape Character Unit is shown in **Figure 5.4**.

Key Landscape Characteristics

7.53 The Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment (2006) describes the area as containing an *"outstanding, beautiful well managed bowl landscape with limestone rim and a diverse mosaic of historic features, traditional pastures, arable land, parkland, woodland, wetland, water & nucleated villages, and a strong pattern of small to medium regular and irregular shaped fields, fine trees and woodland."*

7.54 Key characteristics of the Leicestershire Wolds: Knipton Bowl ¹⁹ are as follows:

- Diverse land cover;
- Mosaic of old unimproved pastures;
- Preserved Medieval field systems;
- Local stone buildings;
- Deeply rural;
- Landform which slopes, steeply in places, down into the basin which consists of a rolling landscape with a number of deep valleys;
- Well wooded with mature, mainly deciduous woodland in the north east of the area;
- Strongly influenced by the Belvoir Estate in the northeast;
- Small area of parkland, including Croxton Park at the southern edge which represents the remains of medieval parkland;
- Comparatively dense distribution of settlements which consist of compact villages;
- Glimpses of Knipton Reservoir, Belvoir Castle, and the village churches provide important visual contributions to the character of the area and the Waltham transmitter mast on the Wolds is a prominent landmark in many views.

Landscape-related designations

7.55 The area includes a number of Conservation Areas covering the villages (or parts of the villages) of Eaton, Branston, Croxton Kerrial, Harston and Knipton.

Important Landmarks and Views

7.56 Although not in this area, the primary landmark of Belvoir Castle is located just to the north and views of this landmark are available from the Knipton Bowl. Church spires and church towers in the villages of Knipton, Branston, Croxton Kerrial, Eaton and Harston form important local landmarks, drawing the eye.

7.57 There are good views to Belvoir Castle and the pronounced wooded hills to the northeast and the wooded skyline formed by High Leys, Blackbury Hill and Terrace Hills to the north. Cedar Hill forms a small but locally distinctive hill.

¹⁹ Based on those set out in the Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment (2006) and characteristics described in the Leicestershire, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy (2003)

7.58 In addition, there are a number of other locally valued views, including those identified by the Parish Councils (see **Appendix 4**).

Landscape sensitivity assessment

7.59 The following table sets out the landscape sensitivity assessment to wind energy development. Refer to **Table 4.4** for full details of the evaluation criteria.

Table 7.4: Landscape sensitivity assessment for Landscape Character Unit 4 Knipton Bowl

	Lower sensitivity		↔	Higher sensitivity	
Landform and Scale				M-H	
	The area contains small scale but distinctive topographic variety, with more steeply sloping landform at the edge of the bowl and a rolling landscape with narrow intimate valleys within the basin.				
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features				M-H	
	A complex and irregular land cover pattern predominates across the area, with small and irregular fields. Frequent human scale features include small villages, copses, walls and hedges.				
Skylines					H
	The skylines are prominent and are characterised by intricate layers of rounded and frequently wooded hills and ridges which are almost entirely undeveloped. The skylines include the church spires of villages.				
Perceptual qualities				M-H	
	The area is tranquil, with only small compact villages and roads mostly limited to small narrow lanes.				
Scenic qualities				M-H	
	This is a landscape with relatively high scenic qualities, including an attractive combination of rolling landform and the mosaic of pastoral fields and woodland cover, which together contribute to attractive rural views.				
Intervisibility				M-H	
	The area is overlooked by more elevated adjacent areas including the scarp top (LCU3) to the north and northwest and parts of the Belvoir estate to the north, as well as longer views from the east within South Kesteven.				

Lower sensitivity ↔ Higher sensitivity	
Discussion on landscape sensitivity to the principle of wind energy	The pronounced, small scale topography, the small scale and intricate landscape pattern, the undeveloped skyline with historic features and high scenic qualities all increase the sensitivity of the unit to wind energy development. The landscape would be sensitive to most scales of wind energy development. The introduction of turbines within the area could also adversely affect the distinctive setting of Belvoir Castle (which is a key landmark feature).

Landscape sensitivity to different turbine heights

<25m	M
25 to 50 m	M-H
51 to 75 m	H
76 to 110 m	H
111 to 150 m	H

- 7.60 Due to the small scale topography, intimate valleys, the small scale and intricate landscape pattern and strongly rural and historic character of the area, the landscape would be particularly sensitive to turbines over 25m in height and highly sensitive to turbines greater than 50m.

Discussion on different cluster sizes

- 7.61 Due to the scale of the LCU, the area would be highly sensitive to anything other than single turbines.

Summary of Key Sensitive Features and Views

- Small scale, rolling topography with intimate valleys and steeper slopes at the edge of the basin
- Intricate and historic pattern of land cover
- Views to Belvoir Castle.
- Areas of ancient woodland, former parkland and medieval field systems.
- The undeveloped and wooded skylines enclosing the bowl.
- Historic landmark features such as church spires and the rural setting of villages.

Guidance for Development

Existing and permitted development within the Landscape Character Unit

7.62 At the time of writing there were no existing or proposed schemes within the area.

Guidance for development

7.63 The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this landscape would be particularly sensitive to turbines over 25m in height and highly sensitive to turbines greater than 50m. It also notes that the landscape is likely to be highly sensitive to anything other than single small turbines.

7.64 When siting and designing wind energy developments in this landscape, the generic guidance provided within **Section 6** should be followed. In addition, within this area particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- The undeveloped nature of the prominent hills and ridges surrounding the bowl is conserved.
- Choice of location and size/scale of development does not diminish the perceived scale of Belvoir Castle and the wooded hills on which it sits.
- The village churches remain as focal points and local landmarks.
- The quiet, remote and rural characteristics of the landscape are conserved.
- The narrow character of the rural gated lanes is preserved (avoid widening associated with turbine delivery).
- Areas of ancient woodland, unimproved grassland and medieval field systems are maintained.
- The attractive combination of hills, valleys, fields, woodland and historic villages remains and modern built development forms occasional features within this, rather than becoming defining elements of landscape character.
- Development does not adversely affect the special character of conservation areas as recorded in the conservation area appraisals, including the views identified as being important to the special architectural and historic interest of the villages.

7.65 Developments within the unit should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the Landscape Character Unit. This could include occasional small scale turbines associated with farm buildings (aiming for consistent scale and design of on-farm turbines).

7.66 The overall aim should be to make sure that small turbines are no more than occasional features within the landscape.

The Leicestershire Wolds: Ragdale to Saltby Wolds

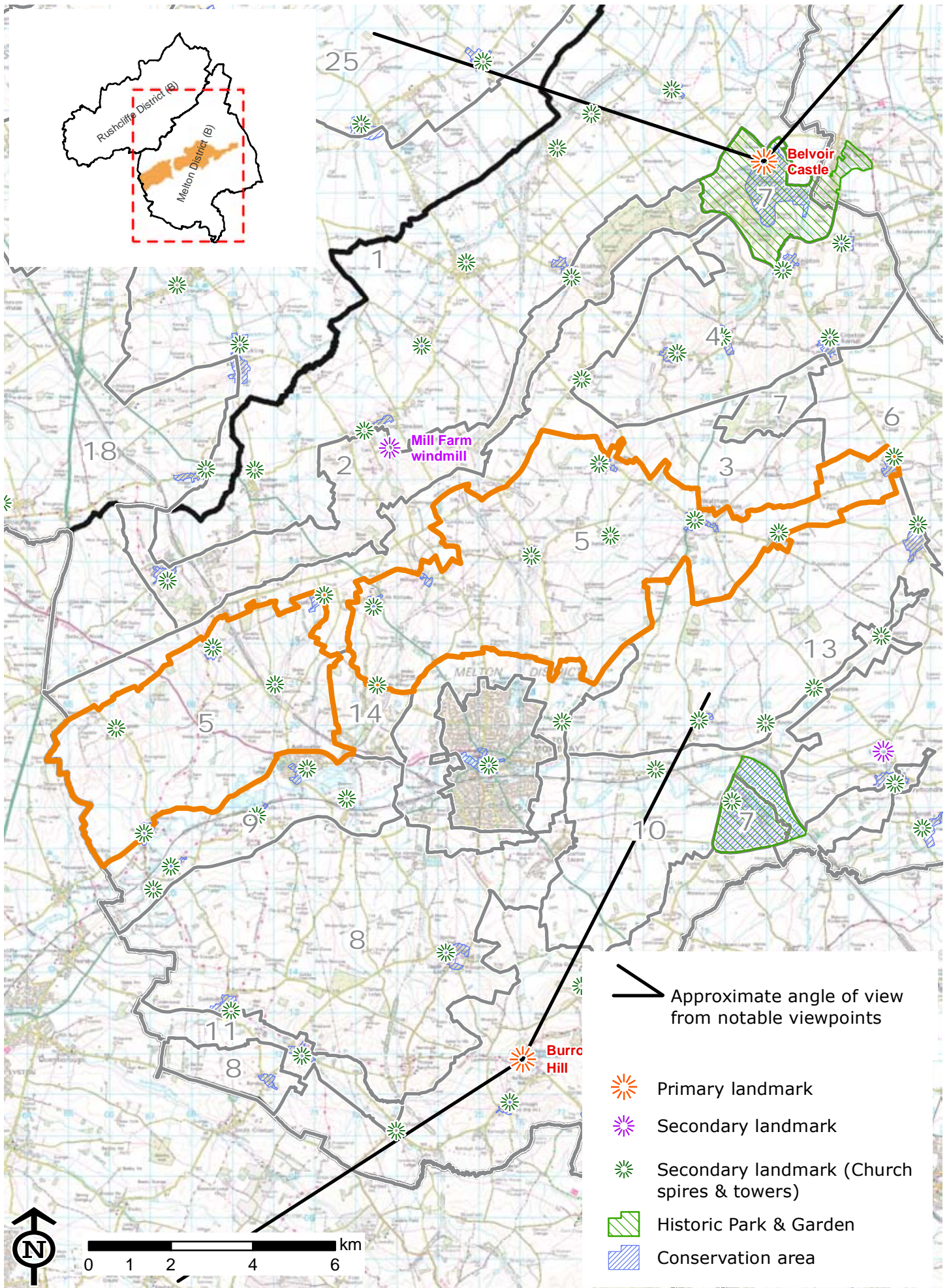


Figure 5.5

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LCU5 Leicestershire Wolds: Ragdale to Saltby Wolds

7.68 This area comprises LCA6 Ridge and Valley and part of LCA7 Village Pastures within Melton Borough. The extent of the Landscape Character Unit is shown in **Figure 5.5**.

Key Landscape Characteristics

7.69 The Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment (2006) describes the Ridge and Valley LCA as “*typical of a broad swathe of land along the dip slopes to the south of Wold Tops, to the northwest of Melton Mowbray*” where “*the landform is distinctly rolling with a northwest to southeast grain, and the large-scale open arable fields along the ridgeline contrast with the smaller scale enclosed pastures on the valley sides and floors*”.

7.70 Key characteristics of the Leicestershire Wolds: Ragdale to Saltby Wolds²⁰ are as follows:

- Rolling landscape drained by numerous stream valleys.
- Large scale open arable fields along ridgelines.
- Small scale enclosed pastures on valley sides and floors.
- Deeply rural with remote qualities²¹.
- Urban influences include overhead lines and A606 and development at the fringes of Melton Mowbray, although these do not weaken the rural character.
- Small-nucleated villages located on the lower slopes of the valleys or at the valley heads.
- Low woodland cover and such woodlands as do occur are small in size.
- Broad grass verges to minor roads.

Landscape-related designations

7.71 The area includes a large number of Conservation Areas covering the villages (or parts of the villages) of Saltby, Waltham-on-the-Wolds, Goadby Marwood, Scalford, Holwell, Ab Kettleby, Wartnaby, Saxelbye, Grimston, and Hoby.

Important Landmarks and Views

7.72 No primary landmarks are located within this unit, although there are a number of church spires and towers, including those of Ragdale, Shoby, Saxelby, Ab Kettleby and Scalford, that form secondary landmarks.

7.73 The area falls within the view cone of the view from Burrough Hill, albeit at a distance (see **Figure 3.4**).

7.74 Long views to the south across the Wreake Valley to the rolling Leicestershire hills beyond are characteristic of the more elevated parts of the area.

7.75 In addition, there are a number of other locally valued views, including those identified by the Parish Councils (see **Appendix 4**).

²⁰ Based on those set out in the Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment (2006)

²¹ Characteristic identified in the NCA Profile for the wider Leicestershire Wolds, but specifically applicable in this area

Landscape sensitivity assessment

7.76 The following table sets out the landscape sensitivity assessment to wind energy development. Refer to **Table 4.4** for full details of the evaluation criteria.

**Table 7.5: Landscape sensitivity assessment for Landscape Character Unit 5
Leicestershire Wolds: Ragdale to Saltby Wolds**

	Lower sensitivity ↔ Higher sensitivity			
Landform and Scale	M-H			
	Medium to small scale landscape with a strongly pronounced rolling topography, which varies from the broader elevated areas on the top of the hills, to the smaller scale convex slopes and narrow vales formed by streams.			
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	M			
	Field patterns are irregular with small scale pastoral fields on the lower hills slopes, and large arable fields on the hilltops. On the more elevated areas larger farm buildings and fields are present. Regularly dispersed villages (most of which are conservation areas) and farmsteads. These form important, human scale features and focal points within the LCU. Churches in particular are important focal points.			
Skylines	M-H			
	Skylines are varied across the area, changing with elevation. The hills can form prominent skylines from within the vales, with wide skylines on the hilltops. Views are available to prominent but distant skylines across the Wreak Valley formed by the pronounced wooded High Leicestershire Hills. Landmarks on the skyline include villages (which act as local landmarks within the vales e.g. Ragdale) and church spires. Pylons of occur in this area, and offer scale references against which turbines could be read, and could lead to skyline 'clutter'.			
Perceptual qualities	M-H			
	This LCU has a very rural character with some remote qualities despite its settled agricultural character. Larger farm buildings and the pylons lines which cross the area between Potter Hill, Melton and Scalford and locally reduce the undeveloped character and level of remoteness.			
Scenic qualities	M-H			
	The area contains visual diversity derived from the long views across a field patterned landscape overlaying a strongly rolling and complex topography and contrasting enclosed areas, areas of attractive pastoral fields, villages nestled within small vales and rounded hill slopes.			

Intervisibility			M		
	<p>The area forms part of the long, gently undulating skyline from the lower areas of the Wreak and Eye Valley to the south as well as the distant skyline in views north from Burrough Hill.</p> <p>Middle to long-distant views are available to neighbouring LCUs to the south (LCU8 High Leicestershire Hills) and occasional long views along the vales to the south into the Wreak Valley (LCU9) or to outside the district to the west. The rounded topography locally encloses views within the vales.</p>				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity to the principle of wind energy	<p>This area has distinctive, strongly rolling landform with open elevated land and smaller, intimate vales. The strongly undulating and steeply sloping intimate vales which contain small villages and churches are of higher sensitivity. Exposed crests and ridges which form skylines will also be of higher sensitivity. The more elevated areas which are broader and larger in scale and are mostly intensively managed agricultural land are of lower sensitivity.</p> <p>There is continuity of character across the district boundary to Charnwood to the west where the wolds extend towards Seagrave.</p>				

Landscape sensitivity to different turbine heights

<25m	L
25 to 50 m	M
51 to 75 m	M-H
76 to 110 m	M-H
111 to 150 m	H

7.77 Due to the medium scale and pronounced topography, intimate valleys, the varied scale and landscape pattern and strongly rural and historic character of the area, the landscape would be particularly sensitive to turbines of more than 50m to tip height and highly sensitive to turbines of over 110m. The smaller scale, more intimate valleys would be of higher sensitivity.

Discussion on different cluster sizes

7.78 The rolling topography and scale of land cover across the more elevated areas means these areas would be particularly sensitive to clusters of more than two to three turbines, whilst the smaller vales would be highly sensitive to anything other than single turbines.

Summary of Key Sensitive Features and Views

- Varied topography with areas of strongly rolling land and small scale, intimate valleys.
- Small villages (with a high concentration of conservation areas) with strong historical character and churches which form landmark features.
- Strong rural landscape with perceived qualities of tranquillity.
- Scenic qualities due to a combination of openness and enclosure, varied land cover and visual diversity
- Long views from ridges across an attractive rolling and rural landscape.

Guidance for Development

Existing and permitted development within the Landscape Character Unit

- 7.79 At the time of writing there was one operational scheme within the area, a single operational turbine at Saxelby Road (<25m in height to tip) (see **Figure 2.1a**).
- 7.80 In addition there were two consented schemes: a single turbine at Ostlers Lodge Old Dalby (<25m in height to tip) and two turbines of 54m to tip at Welby Grange.
- 7.81 These developments are on the more open hilltops where the landscape is of a relatively larger scale and generally visually associated with roads or agricultural buildings.

Guidance for development

- 7.82 The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this landscape would be particularly sensitive to turbines of more than 50m in height and highly sensitive to turbines over 110m. It also notes that the landscape is particularly sensitive to groups of more than two to three turbines, with areas within the smaller vales being highly sensitive to anything other than single turbines.
- 7.83 When siting and designing wind energy developments in this landscape, the generic guidance provided within **Section 6** should be followed. In addition, within this area particular care will need to be taken to ensure:
- Development does not adversely affect the special character of conservation areas as recorded in the conservation area appraisals, including the views identified as being important to the special architectural and historic interest of the villages.
 - The presence of pylons on the skyline are considered in order to avoid 'clutter' on the horizon.
 - The village churches remain as local landmarks.
 - The strongly rural setting and high scenic quality of the small villages and vales are maintained.
 - Development is located within the more open arable farmland landscapes where there is greater human influence.
- 7.84 In addition, to minimise visibility of turbines from sensitive lower-lying areas which lie adjacent to the LCU, areas of strongly sloping land towards the Wreake and Eye valleys should be avoided (this particularly applies to larger turbines). Development should be located in the more open, broader and flatter areas.
- 7.85 Schemes should also be well designed and balanced and avoid visual clutter with existing development, including the Waltham Mast and pylon lines.
- 7.86 Multiple developments should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the Landscape Character Unit.
- 7.87 The overall aim should be to make sure that wind energy developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape (i.e. developments be occasional features within the landscape and would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the landscape unit or result in a change in landscape character of the unit).

Kesteven Uplands: Saltby and Sproxton Limestone Edge

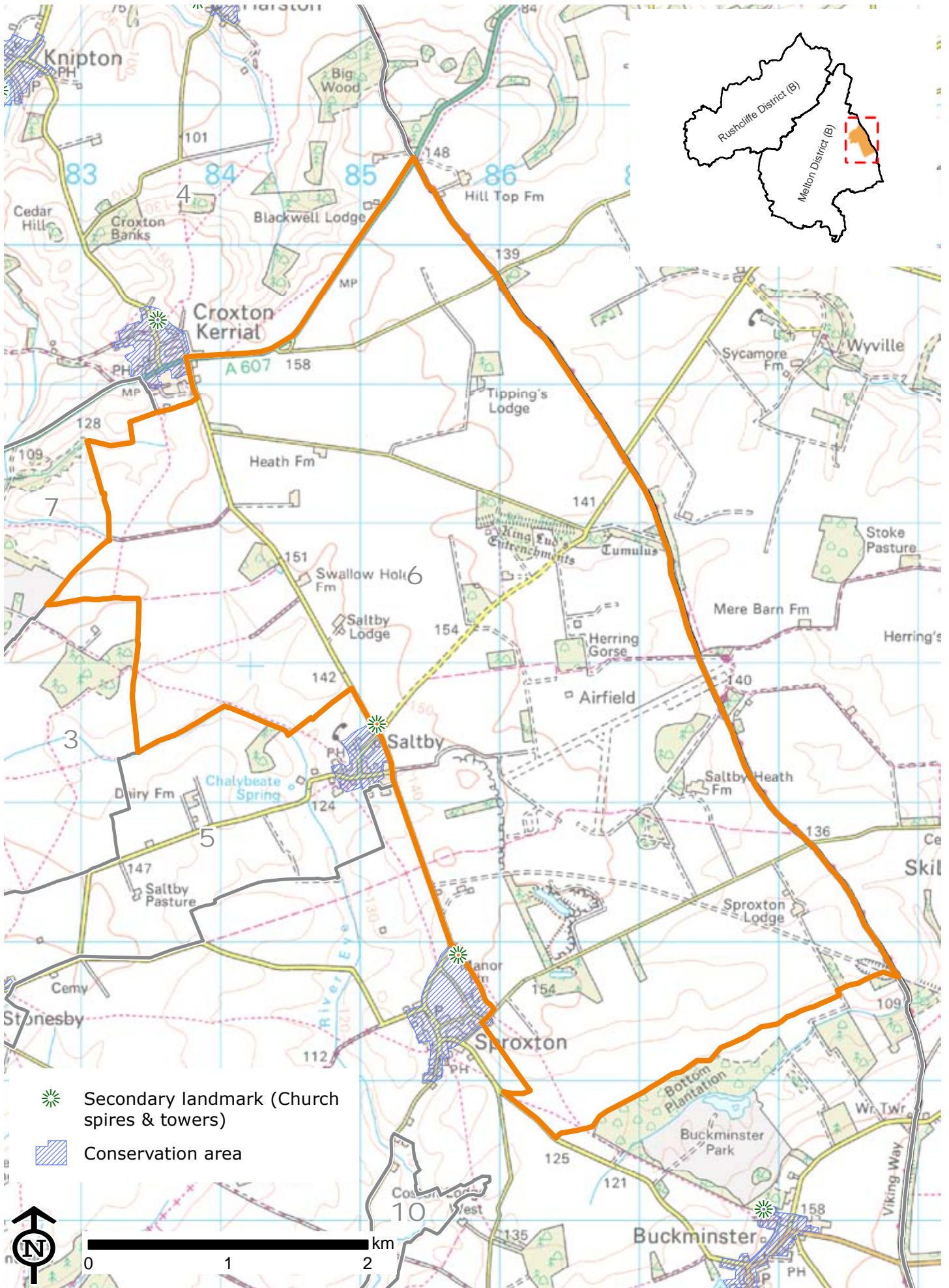


Figure 5.6

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LCU6 Kesteven Uplands: Saltby and Sproxton Limestone Edge

7.89 This area comprises LCA8 Limestone Edge within Melton Borough. The extent of the Landscape Character Unit is shown in **Figure 5.6**.

Key Landscape Characteristics

7.90 The Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment (2006) describes the Ridge and Valley LCA as “A gently rolling and homogenous low limestone plateau edge with a strongly rectangular pattern of large scale arable fields and blocks of conifer plantations, generally lacking naturalness and diversity”.

7.91 Key characteristics of the Kesteven Uplands: Saltby and Sproxton Limestone Edge are as follows²²:

- Elevated area on limestone edge
- Homogenous arable landscape
- Large scale open field pattern
- Blocks of conifer woodland

Landscape-related designations

7.92 There are no Conservation Areas within this landscape although the area lies immediately adjacent to Conservation Areas covering the villages (or parts of the villages) of Sproxton, Saltby and Croxton Kerral.

Important Landmarks and Views

7.93 No primary or secondary landmarks are located within this unit.

7.94 There are very few distinctive views within this area. In views from the western edge the villages and the churches of Sproxton and Saltby are local landmarks. The southern edge of the area forms a low, generally even skyline in views from Buckminster Park to the south.


7.95 In addition, there are a number of other locally valued views, including those identified by the Parish Councils (see **Appendix 4**).

²² Based on those set out in the Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment (2006)

Landscape sensitivity assessment

7.96 The following table sets out the landscape sensitivity assessment to wind energy development. Refer to **Table 4.4** for full details of the evaluation criteria.

Table 7.6: Landscape sensitivity assessment for Landscape Character Unit 6 Saltby and Sproxtton Limestone Edge

	Lower sensitivity  Higher sensitivity			
Landform and Scale	L			
	The landform within this area is largely flat to very gently undulating, with little or no variation in elevation across the landscape apart from at the southern edge where it slopes down towards Buckminster Park. The landform is simple and medium to large scale.			
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features		L-M		
	The area predominantly comprises intensively managed arable fields which are large in scale and regular in shape, with large tracts of the area identified as Planned Enclosure as part of the HLC. The area is sparsely settled and crossed by straight narrow roads, which are often unbounded. Woodland cover is sparse, although blocks and strips of plantations occur regularly within the west. There are few historic features within this agricultural landscape with the exception of King Lud's Entrenchments, ancient woodland and Saltby Airfield.			
Skylines		L-M		
	Skylines within this LCT are not prominent with few landmark features. The flat horizon is generally open, with hedgerows, trees and plantations appearing on the skyline, although views are more contained where there is greater woodland cover around Cooper's Plantations.			
Perceptual qualities			M	
	This is an intensively managed agricultural landscape and although there are few man-made features the area does not have a very strong rural character. It does however retain a sense of remoteness due to the lack of settlement.			
Scenic qualities		L-M		
	The open flat topography and intensively farmed agricultural fields provide limited visual interest.			
Intervisibility			M	
	<p>The southern and south western edges have some intervisibility with the adjacent and slightly lower-lying rolling Freeby, Buckminster and Wymondham Farmland (LCU13). The southern edge also forms a skyline from within Bckminster Park, although the skyline is simple and not very distinctive in form.</p> <p>The northern edge of the unit forms part of a prominent and undeveloped skyline from Knipton Bowl.</p>			

Lower sensitivity ↔ Higher sensitivity	
Discussion on landscape sensitivity to the principle of wind energy	The medium to large-scale of the landscape, limited variation in landform and open arable farmland land cover reduce sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development while the sense of remoteness and inter-visibility with adjacent areas increase sensitivity.

Landscape sensitivity to different turbine heights

<25m	L
25 to 50 m	L
51 to 75 m	L-M
76 to 110 m	M
111 to 150 m	M-H

7.97 Due to the flat landform and large scale of the landscape compared to other areas, together with a limited number of human scale features which could provide a scale reference in the landscape, the area is less sensitive to larger turbines than some other areas. However, it still remains particularly sensitive to turbines over 110m in height as nowhere in these Boroughs is truly large scale. The more sloping area at the southern edge of the LCU is more sensitive and intervisibility with the adjacent character unit to the south is a key consideration here.

7.98 There is a greater concentration of trees, woodlands and plantations within the eastern part of this unit. In these areas mature and shelterbelts could serve to screen views of turbines, particularly in the small and small-medium size ranges. Larger turbines, however, are more likely to appear out of scale within these areas, since the mature trees will serve as 'scale features', so that the height of turbines become apparent. Larger turbines are more likely to be appropriately integrated where sited within lower sensitivity areas of open intensive farmland, subject to other constraints.

Discussion on different cluster sizes

7.99 The open arable parts of the area would be particularly sensitive to groups of more than four to five turbines. The more wooded areas of the landscape would be particularly sensitive to groups of more than 2-3 turbines.

Summary of Key Sensitive Features and Views

- The King Lud's Entrenchments which are a Scheduled Monument.
- Areas of ancient woodland.
- The sense of rurality and relative remoteness.
- Views from the western edges of the area towards Sproxtton, where the church spire forms a landmark feature.
- The simple, undeveloped skylines formed by the southern and northern edges of the area in views from Buckminster Park and Knipton Bowl respectively.

Guidance for Development

Existing and permitted development within the Landscape Character Unit

7.100 At the time of writing there were no existing or proposed wind energy developments located within this LCU.

Guidance for development

7.101 The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this landscape would be particularly sensitive to turbines greater than 110m and to groups of more than four to five turbines (in large scale areas) or 2-3 turbines (in smaller scale parts of the LCU).

7.102 When siting and designing wind energy developments in this landscape, the generic guidance provided within **Section 6** should be followed. In addition, within this area particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Development does not adversely affect the special character of Conservation Areas in adjacent LCUs, as recorded in the conservation area appraisals, including the views identified as being important to the special architectural and historic interest of the villages.
- Areas of woodland, copses and spinneys are conserved as features of the rural landscape.
- The heritage significance of the King Lud's Entrenchments Scheduled Monument is not affected.
- The simple and undeveloped skylines as seen from Knipton Bowl to the north and Buckminster Park from the south are maintained.

7.103 In addition, should multiple developments come forward in future, these should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the Landscape Character Unit. This could include very small or small scale turbines associated with farm buildings (aiming for consistent scale and design of on-farm turbines) and occasional groups of larger turbines (aiming for a consistent scale and design of these larger schemes), although the extent of the area will limit the number of groups. A distinct hierarchy between these two scales of wind energy development should be maintained.

7.104 The overall aim should be to make sure that wind energy developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape (i.e. developments be occasional features within the landscape and would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the landscape unit or result in a change in landscape character of the unit).

The Leicestershire Wolds: Belvoir, Stapleford and Croxton Parkland

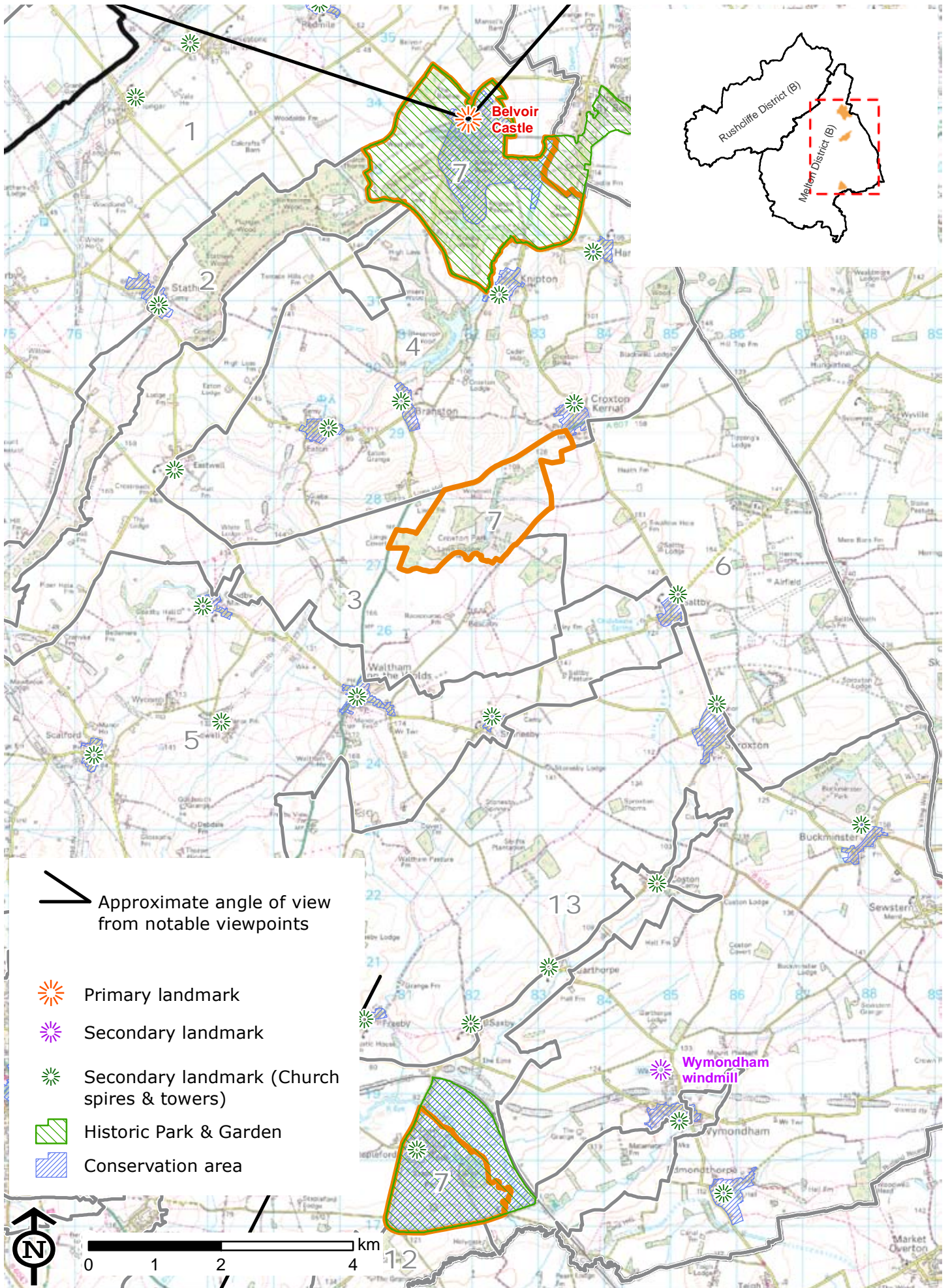


Figure 5.7

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LCU7 Leicestershire Wolds: Belvoir and Croxton Parkland

7.105 This area comprises LCA9 Parkland within Melton Borough. The extent of the Landscape Character Unit is shown in **Figure 5.7**.

Key Landscape Characteristics

7.106 The Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment (2006) describes the Parkland LCA as “*historic parkland landscapes with historic houses/castles and a diverse mosaic of ancient, traditional & contemporary agricultural and parkland features and patterns*”.

7.107 Key characteristics of the Leicestershire Wolds: Belvoir and Croxton Parkland are as follows²³:

- Historic buildings
- Parkland landscape or remnant parkland
- Plantation woodlands
- Ornamental tree groups & specimens
- Arable fields on former parkland

Landscape-related designations

7.108 Two of the areas which make up this LCU encompass areas designated as Registered Parks and Gardens: Belvoir Castle Registered Park and Garden and Stapleford Hall.

Important Landmarks and Views

7.109 Belvoir Castle, which falls within this LCU is a primary landmark which stands on the site of a Norman Castle that was rebuilt c16, demolished in 1649, rebuilt in 1655-68 and remodelled in 1801-30 by James Wyatt. It is a Grade I listed building that is prominent on the Belvoir Scarp and seen from across most of the study area, forming a focus of views.

7.110 Extensive, panoramic views are available from Belvoir Castle over the Vale of Belvoir. These are noted within the citation provided within the within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by English Heritage.

7.111 Views from within Croxton Park and Stapleford Hall are generally enclosed by woodland and the surrounding topography.

7.112 In addition, there are a number of other locally valued views, including those identified by the Parish Councils (see **Appendix 4**).

Landscape sensitivity assessment

7.113 The following table sets out the landscape sensitivity assessment to wind energy development. Refer to **Table 4.4** for full details of the evaluation criteria.

²³ Based on those set out in the Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment (2006)

**Table 7.7: Landscape sensitivity assessment for Landscape Character Unit 7
Leicestershire Wolds: Belvoir and Croxton Parkland**

	Lower sensitivity Higher sensitivity			
Landform and Scale	1	2	3	4
	M-H			
	The area contains small scale and distinctive topographic variety, with steeply sloping landform at the edge of the escarpment to the north and the incised valley within Croxton Park.			
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	1	2	3	4
	H			
	A distinctive land cover pattern predominates across the area, strongly influenced by the Belvoir Estate in the north and remnant medieval parkland. There is a high concentration of woodland present around and immediately to the south-west of Belvoir Castle at the north-eastern end of the scarp, where it is at its steepest. Croxton Park also contains significant areas of deciduous and ancient woodland. The areas of unimproved rough pasture, ancient woodland and managed parkland are highly sensitive. The landscape contains frequent human scale and historic buildings and features.			
Skylines	1	2	3	4
	M-H			
	The skylines are largely wooded but also include important landmark features, such as Belvoir Castle, which are highly sensitive to wind energy development because turbines may draw attention away from them as existing historic landmark features.			
Perceptual qualities	1	2	3	4
	M-H			
	The area is tranquil, with roads limited to small number of narrow lanes.			
Scenic qualities	1	2	3	4
	H			
	This is a landscape with high scenic qualities, including steep wooded slopes, rough pasture and parkland, which together contribute to attractive views. The historic estate influence of Belvoir on the surrounding landscape creates a well-managed and intact character with a relatively high proportion of woodland cover.			
Intervisibility	1	2	3	4
	H			
	Belvoir Castle, set within the wooded slopes of the scarp forms a landmark feature in views across the Vale of Belvoir as well as within Knipton Bowl and views from the east within South Kesteven.			
Discussion on landscape sensitivity to the principle of wind energy	Due to the varied and small scale topography, the intricate and historically significant landscape pattern, historic landmark features and high scenic qualities of these areas of parkland, the landscape would be highly sensitive to wind energy development.			

Landscape sensitivity to different turbine heights

<25m	M-H
25 to 50 m	H
51 to 75 m	H
76 to 110 m	H
111 to 150 m	H

7.114 Due to the steeply sloping topography, intimate valleys, and strongly rural and historic character of the area, the landscape would be highly sensitive to turbines over 25m.

Discussion on different cluster sizes

7.115 Due to the scale and high sensitivity of the LCU, the area would be highly sensitive to anything other than single very small sensitively sited turbines.

Summary of Key Sensitive Features and Views

- Belvoir Castle as a landmark feature.
- Small scale, rolling topography with intimate valleys and steeper slopes at the edge of the escarpment.
- Intricate and historic pattern of land cover.
- Views from designed parkland landscapes.
- Areas of deciduous and ancient woodland and former parkland.

Guidance for Development

Existing and permitted development within the Landscape Character Unit

7.116 At the time of writing there were no existing or proposed schemes within the area.

Guidance for development

7.117 The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this landscape would be highly sensitive to anything other than single very small sensitively sited turbines.

7.118 The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this landscape would be particularly sensitive to turbines over 25m in height and highly sensitive to turbines greater than 50m. It also notes that the landscape is likely to be highly sensitive to anything other than single small turbines.

7.119 When siting and designing any turbines in this landscape, the generic guidance provided within **Section 6** should be followed. In addition, within this area particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Belvoir Castle remains a primary landmark feature.
- The character of historic designed views and historic visual connections are conserved.
- Areas of deciduous and ancient woodland and former parkland and not adversely affected.
- Development does not adversely affect the special character of any conservation areas as recorded in the conservation area appraisals, including the views identified as being important to the special architectural and historic interest of the villages.