



Rainsbrook Valley

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

December 2025

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Introduction

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1 Introduction

Context

Node was commissioned by Rugby Borough Council to undertake an assessment of the landscape sensitivity of the Rainsbrook Valley, located to the south of the Rugby settlement edge. This document reports on the technical analysis undertaken, and positions reached in this regard, to support policy- and decision-making by the local planning authority.

A previous Landscape Sensitivity Assessment was undertaken for a proportion of the valley in 2017. This report provides an up to date appraisal, using a methodology aligned to revised technical guidance published in the intervening period.

Positions are taken as to landscape value and susceptibility relative to the Rainsbrook Valley as a whole, and sensitivity relative to elements within the Rugby Borough Council authority boundary.

The Team

Node is an accredited practice with the Landscape Institute, together with Institute for Historic Building Conservation and the Urban Design Group. The assessment was undertaken by Nigel Wakefield (CMLI, MRTPI), Jack Hanson, and Holly Williams (MRTPI).

Document Structure

- **Method (Section 2):** Defining the methodology, prepared in line with established good practice and other complimentary guidance and resources.
- **Landscape baseline (Section 3):** Summarising the existing evidence base and existing analysis pertaining to landscape within the local and regional context.
- **Assessment (Section 4):** Identifying the value, susceptibility and sensitivity of the Rainsbrook Valley landscape.
- **Summary (Section 5):** A summary of the assessment findings.

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Method

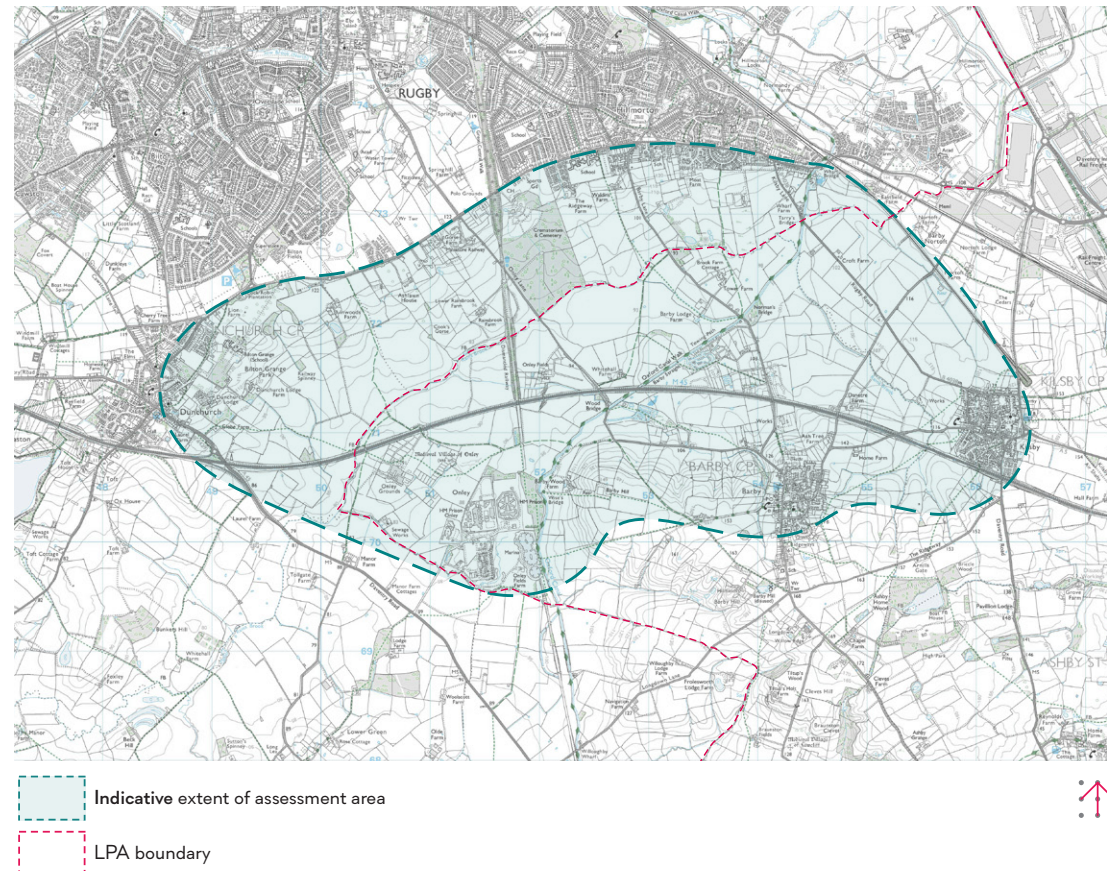
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2 Method

2.1 Assessment area

Landscape Institute Technical Note 02/21 states (page 12, para.2.4.5): "When assessing landscape value of a site as part of a planning application or appeal it is important to consider not only the site itself and its features/elements/characteristics/qualities, but also their relationship with, and the role they play within, the site's context. Value is best appreciated at the scale at which a landscape is perceived – rarely is this on a field-by-field basis."

Following this principle, the assessment considers the Rainsbrook Valley as a whole, including the full length of a distinctive east/west aligned geomorphological area with the Rains Brook at the base, and slopes rising to Rugby in the north, and Barby and Kilsby to the south and southeast. The indicative extent of this area is mapped, adjacent.



2.2 Approach

The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with 'An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment' (Natural England, 2019), and 'Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations Technical Note 02/2021' (Landscape Institute, 2021). It also takes account of supplementary guidance, including:

- 'Landscape Character Assessment' Technical Note 08/2015 (Landscape Institute, 2016);
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals Technical Note 06/2019 (Landscape Institute, 2019);
- Reviewing Landscape Visual Impact Assessment Technical Note 01/2020 (Landscape Institute, 2020);
- 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (Natural England, 2014);
- 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013).

The assessment of landscape sensitivity considers landscape's influence on 'receptors'. Receptors are people, meaning those individuals or groups likely to experience landscapes, and might be affected by the change within it.

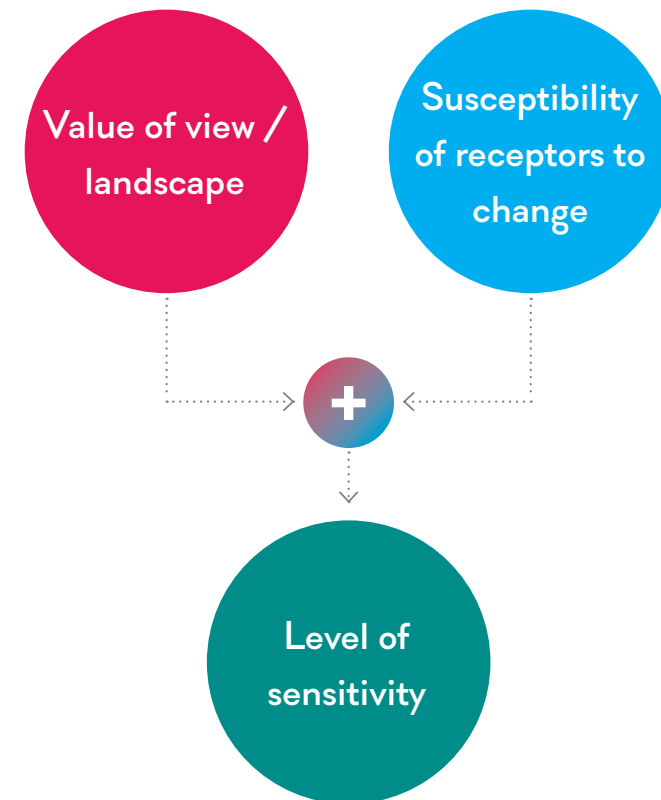
Determining these positions is primarily guided by professional judgement and qualitative assessment; however, a guiding framework or "workflow" on matters including landscape 'value', 'susceptibility', and 'sensitivity' may be adopted to ensure consistency across assessments, and in line with criterion defined with the Natural England Guidance (2019), the LI Technical Note (2021), and GLVIA3.

The general workflow is as follows:

- Defining the **value** of a landscape;
- Defining the **susceptibility** to change by those who experience it;
- This then allows us to understand the level of **sensitivity**.

This workflow, and quantitative framework does not supersede the application of landscape specialists' expertise and experience. On occasion, it may be judged that factors specific to the identified receptors make a conclusion contrary to a particular table or matrix more appropriate. Such deviations will be clearly highlighted and justified within the assessment text.

Illustrative workflow for landscape sensitivity assessment



Defining the baseline

A baseline appraisal is the foundation of assessment, providing the necessary understanding of factors including the composition, character, and qualities of the existing landscape.

The baseline assessment includes a combination of desk-based study and site survey. The exact method, and scope, is determined by the site, and landscape in question.

Review

The baseline will generally include, as a minimum, review of:

- Published landscape character assessments at national, regional and local level, including NCA and LCA;
- Landscape designations at both national (e.g. National Parks, National Landscapes etc.) and local level (e.g. 'Special Landscape Areas' etc.), and associated evidence and assessments;
- Relevant local planning policy, documents and datasets that address matters of landscape use, character, and quality, including within both Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans;
- Other resources and reports that address specific components of landscape (e.g. conservation area appraisals, tree preservation orders, ecological surveys etc.);
- Relevant literature and art work, local guides (e.g. walking trails), and other sources that may have denoted particular areas or locations of landscape value.

Analysis

Concurrently, specialist landscape analysis is undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced professionals.

This may include (but is not limited to):

- Desk-based analysis of:
 - Cartographic resources, including modern and historical Ordnance Survey mapping;
 - Aerial photographs and remote sensing datasets (e.g. LiDAR);
 - Zones of Visual Influence modelling.
- Field survey, to gain first hand experience of the landscape, and assess the accuracy and relevance of the previously identified resources relative to the site and its surroundings.

Landscape value

Landscape **value** means the value attached to different places by society, or different elements of it. Landscapes may be valued for some or all of their component parts. This might include natural, cultural, visual, sensory, recreational, geological, or functional (etc.) elements.

The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' provides guidance. Table 2.1 sets out the nine factors identified within the guidance that need to be considered in establishing assessing value.

This forms the basis of our overall assessment, whereby landscape is assessed on a scale from exceptional to very poor (see table 2.2). That selection is a matter of professional judgement, but is guided by criteria outlined in the Landscape Institute Technical Note 02/21 Table 1 and GLVIA3 Box 5.1.

Landscape designations are a useful indicator of value. Generally, the established significance of internationally, nationally, and locally designated landscapes will correlate with judgements as to their value; however, this is not absolute. Elements of designated landscapes may make no, or negative contributions to their character and quality.

Conversely, non-designated landscapes may contain localised areas of high value, that warrant a commensurately elevated judgement.

Many landscapes, or areas of landscape, contain both positive and negative characteristics. In these circumstances professional judgement is required to strike an appropriate balance, weighing the relative influence, importance, and permanence of each element.

The relative importance to be attached to each indicator is also likely to vary across different landscapes, and the overall 'weight of evidence' should be judged when coming to an overall judgement on landscape value.

As outlined in the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21, it is also important to consider not only an area and its characteristics, but also their relationship with, and the role they play within, that area's wider context. Positions as to landscape value therefore rely primarily on evidence, analysis, and professional judgement, on a case-by-case basis.

In reaching a final position, Five categories are defined, on a sliding scale from 'Exceptional' to 'Very Poor', in table 2.2 (overleaf). Indicative criteria are provided for reference purposes; however value will be determined relative to each, individual scenario.

table 2.1 | Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note criteria

Factor	Definition	Examples of indicators of landscape value	Examples of evidence
Natural heritage	Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological, or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape	Presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscape character assessment - Ecological and geological designations - SSSI citations and condition assessments - Geological Conservation Review - Habitat surveys - Priority habitats - Nature recovery networks/ nature pathways - Habitat network opportunity mapping/ green infrastructure mapping - Catchment management plans - Ecosystem services assessment/ schemes - Specialist ecological studies
		Extent and survival of semi-natural habitat that is characteristic of the landscape type.	
		Presence of distinctive geological, geomorphological, or pedological features.	
		Landscape which contains valued natural capital assets that contribute to ecosystem services, for example distinctive ecological communities and habitats that form the basis of ecological networks.	
		Landscape which makes an identified contribution to a nature recovery/ green infrastructure network.	
Cultural heritage	Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape	Presence of historic landmark structures or designed landscape elements (e.g. follies, monuments, avenues, tree roundels).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscape character assessment - Historic environment and archaeological designations - Conservation Area appraisals, Village Design Statements - Historic maps - Historic landscape character assessments - Historic Land Use Assessment - Historic Area Assessments - Place names - Specialist heritage studies
		Presence of historic parks and gardens, and designed landscapes.	
		Landscape which contributes to the significance of heritage assets, for example forming the setting of heritage assets (especially if identified in specialist studies).	
		Landscape which offers a dimension of time depth. This includes natural time depth e.g. presence of features such as glaciers and peat bogs and cultural time depth e.g. presence of relic farmsteads, ruins, historic field patterns, historic rights of way (e.g. drove roads, salt ways, tracks associated with past industrial activity).	
Landscape condition	Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure	Good physical condition/ intactness of individual landscape elements (e.g. walls, parkland, trees).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscape character assessment - Hedgerow/ tree surveys - Observations about intactness/ condition made in the field by the assessor - SSSI condition assessments - Historic landscape character assessments/ map regression analysis
		Good health of elements such as good water quality, good soil health.	
		Strong landscape structure (e.g. intact historic field patterns).	
		Absence of detracting/ incongruous features (or features are present but have little influence).	

Factor	Definition	Examples of indicators of landscape value	Examples of evidence
Associations	Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts	Associations with well-known literature, poetry, art, TV/film and music that contribute to perceptions of the landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information about arts and science relating to a place - Historical accounts, cultural traditions and folklore - Guidebooks/ published cultural trails
		Associations with science or other technical achievements.	
		Links to a notable historical event.	
		Associations with a famous person or people.	
Distinctiveness	Landscape that has a strong sense of identity	Landscape character that has a strong sense of place (showing strength of expression of landscape characteristics),	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscape character assessment - Guidebooks - Observations about identity/ distinctiveness made in the field by the assessor
		Presence of distinctive features which are identified as being characteristic of a particular place.	
		Presence of rare or unusual features, especially those that help to confer a strong sense of place or identity	
		Landscape which makes an important contribution to the character or identity of a settlement	
		Settlement gateways/approaches which provides a clear sense of arrival and contribute to the character of the settlement (may be ancient/historic)	
Recreational	Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important	Presence of open access land, common land and public rights of way (particularly National Trails, long distance trails, Coastal Paths and Core Paths) where appreciation of landscape is a feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definitive public rights of way mapping/ OS map data - National Trails, long distance trails, Coastal Paths, Core Paths - Open access land (including registered common land) - Database of registered town or village greens - Visitor surveys/ studies - Observations about recreational use/ enjoyment made in the field by the assessor
		Areas with good accessibility that provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and spiritual experience/ inspiration	
		Presence of town and village greens	
		Other physical evidence of recreational use where experience of landscape is important	
		Landscape that forms part of a view that is important to the enjoyment of a recreational activity	

Factor	Definition	Examples of indicators of landscape value	Examples of evidence
Perceptual (scenic)	Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense	Distinctive features, or distinctive combinations of features, such as dramatic or striking landform or harmonious combinations of land cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscape character assessment - Protected views, views studies - Areas frequently photographed or used in images used for tourism/ visitor/ promotional purposes, or views described or praised in literature - Observations about scenic qualities made in the field by the assessor - Conservation Area Appraisals - Village Design Statements, or similar
		Strong aesthetic qualities such as scale, form, colour and texture	
		Presence of natural lines in the landscape (e.g. natural ridgelines, woodland edges, river corridors, coastal edges)	
		Visual diversity or contrasts which contributes to the appreciation of the landscape	
		Memorable/ distinctive views and landmarks, or landscape which contributes to distinctive views and landmarks	
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies	High levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tranquillity mapping and factors which contribute to and detract from tranquillity - Dark Skies mapping - Wildness mapping, and Wild Land Areas in Scotland - Land cover mapping - Field survey
		Presence of wild land and perceptions of relative wildness (resulting from a high degree of perceived naturalness, rugged or otherwise challenging terrain, remoteness from public mechanised access and lack of modern artefacts)	
		Sense of particular remoteness, seclusion or openness	
		Dark night skies	
		A general absence of intrusive or inharmonious development, land uses, transport and lighting	
Functional	Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape	Landscapes and landscape elements that contribute to the healthy functioning of the landscape, e.g. natural hydrological systems/ floodplains, areas of undisturbed and healthy soils, areas that form carbon sinks such as peat bogs, woodlands and oceans, areas of diverse landcover (benefits pest regulation), pollinator-rich habitats such as wildflower meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land cover and habitat maps - Ecosystem services assessments and mapping (particularly supporting and regulating services) - Green infrastructure studies/strategies - Development and management plans for nationally-designated landscapes, Local Plans and SPDs - Landscape character assessments
		Areas that form an important part of a multifunctional Green Infrastructure network	
		Landscapes and landscape elements that have strong physical or functional links with an adjacent national landscape designation, or are important to the appreciation of the designated landscape and its special qualities	

table 2.2 | Indicative criteria for landscape value

Value	Indicative criteria*
Exceptional	This category is reserved for landscapes, or areas of landscape, of the highest quality and significance. Their quality is likely of national renown. Most will be formed of a combination of many high-level qualities (e.g. an historic landscape of great reputation for its scenic value, heritage interest, and regularly enjoyed from celebrated recreational routes). The landscape will be in excellent condition, with few detracting factors. The category may also include particularly rare or unique landscapes of a character and quality repeated in no, or few other localities. The category will include areas that contribute strongly to the defining qualities and characteristics of designated landscapes, including National Parks, National Landscapes, high-grade Registered Parks and Gardens, and World Heritage Sites. Locally designated/valued landscapes may qualify, but only in rare circumstances where they (or areas within them) are found to be of particularly elevated value, and are considered candidates for such a status.
Good	Landscapes, or areas of landscape, that have a recognisable landscape value, likely including multiple positive factors, and potentially creating a distinctive sense of place. This includes (but is not exclusive to) landscapes that, to a lay person, can be recognising as having: elevated natural and/or cultural heritage interest; scenic and/or perceptual qualities; and/or a good condition that may feature some detracting factors, but none sufficient to fundamentally undermine its quality (etc.). In some instances, the category may be used for landscapes which feature just one, or a small collection of particularly strong landscape elements while otherwise being of relatively ordinary character (e.g. an area that well illustrates a specific historical land use). The category will include most locally designated or locally valued landscapes where their constituent characteristics and elements are of sufficient quality, and areas within national designations that contribute to, but may not be exemplar of the characteristics and qualities for which they are celebrated.
Ordinary	Landscapes, or areas of landscapes, that may feature one or more elements of interest or quality, but are generally of a common typology, and a character not warranting particular celebration. This will include the majority of landscapes, including many rural and peri-urban environments. In some scenarios, the category may be used where a landscape features both positive and negative elements which balance to a broadly net neutral position. The ordinary category will may be applied to specific areas of both nationally designated or locally designated/valued landscapes, when those localities' character is not deemed to make meaningful contributions to the wider value and significance of these landscapes, or where character may markedly differ from the qualities for which they are primarily protected.
Poor	Landscapes that have few features of notable interest or quality. Or, landscapes where character has been significantly degraded by past change, development, and intervention. Such areas will generally lack: any natural or cultural heritage interest; scenic qualities; recreational opportunities involving open space and landscape; and/or any use or function beyond the typical. These landscapes would likely go largely unnoticed by the lay person, and/or may be readily recognised as being of a generally poor, and may feature some elements that would be considered a 'hostile'. The category is unlikely to feature the large majority of nationally designated or locally designated/valued landscapes, but there will be exceptions where particular areas of such localities markedly detract from their quality and condition, and are of a form and/or function incongruous to the wider character of the area.
Very poor	Landscapes, or areas of landscape, that lack any positive characteristics or qualities, and/or have been seriously adversely affected by past change and development. This may include areas that would be considered actively 'hostile' to the lay person, through their aesthetic, function, or environmental conditions. The category is reserved for locations of particular negative quality. It is therefore very unlikely to feature any nationally designated or locally designated/valued landscapes, but there will be exceptions where particular areas of such localities are of complete incongruity to their character, and/or detract substantially from their quality and condition.

* Nb. Criteria are presented as an illustrative guide only. Landscape value will be determined on a case by case basis, relative to the specific characteristics and qualities of the locality in question, and using professional judgement

Susceptibility of landscape receptors

Defining the sensitivity of a particular landscape to change, combines consideration of its value (previous page), with its **susceptibility to change**.

GLVIA3's definition of susceptibility (page 89) is: *'the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall landscape quality or condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and or feature, or a perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and or the achievement of landscape policies and strategies.'*

Susceptibility is closely linked to both the baseline context and, as importantly, the type of development proposed. The relationship between value and susceptibility can be complex:

More valuable, uniform, or individually distinctive landscapes usually have higher susceptibility to change, but each scenario is unique. For instance, an internationally, nationally, or locally valued landscape is not automatically of high susceptibility, should the nature of a proposed development not compromise the characteristics for which they are celebrated.

Concurrently, an ordinary or lower value landscape may be of high susceptibility to change, should the proposal represent a significant departure from the baseline.

Similarly, while nationally designated or locally designated/valued landscapes are more likely to be afforded higher value, their status does not alone warrant high levels of susceptibility. Again, the nature, location, and extent of a proposed development are the defining variables. For instance, a development might be proposed in a peripheral, and lesser contributing locality within the designated area, and/ or again may be of a form not deemed immediately incongruous to local characteristics.

Positions as to landscape susceptibility therefore primarily rely on evidence, analysis, and professional judgement. Three categories are defined, on a sliding scale from 'High' to 'Low'.

Indicative criteria are provided for reference purposes in table 2.3 (overleaf); however susceptibility will be determined relative to each, individual scenario.

table 2.3 | landscape susceptibility

Susceptibility	Indicative criteria*
High	The landscape, or area of landscape has limited capacity to accommodate the proposed form of development without a meaningful, and tangible changes to its baseline character. For instance, development that would be in contrast to the established context, and/or that would impact one or more existing landscape elements that make positive contributions to local character.
Medium	The proposed form of development could constitute a change to the baseline landscape character, but not one substantially deviating from the baseline. For instance, where there are multiple existing precedents for this form of development that have a clear, and widely tangible influence on character.
Low	The proposed form of development closely conforms to the existing built and/or natural environment, and would likely represent limited change to baseline character. For instance, development that is of a type already common within an area, makes a clear contribution to local character, and where development may largely duplicate existing elements of landscape.

* Nb. Criteria are presented as an illustrative guide only. Landscape susceptibility will be determined relative to the specific locality and proposed development in question.

Sensitivity of landscape receptors

A position as to the **sensitivity** of landscape receptors to the proposed development can be reached by considering the assessed **value** and **susceptibility** together.

This is primarily a matter of professional judgement, but a cross-referencing matrix is used to guide decision making, within a scale from high to low (table 2.4).

In some circumstances, where the position falls between two scales (e.g. "Medium/Low"), one may be chosen as most appropriate, and an explanation provided within the report.

On occasion, it may be judged that factors specific to the identified landscape receptors make a conclusion contrary to the matrix most appropriate. Such positions will be clearly highlighted and justified within the report.

table 2.4 | landscape receptor sensitivity

Sensitivity		Susceptibility		
		High	Medium	Low
Value	Exceptional	High	High/ Medium	Medium
	Good	High/ Medium	Medium	Medium/ Low
	Ordinary	Medium	Medium/ Low	Low
	Poor	Medium/ Low	Low	Low/ None
	Very poor	Low	Low/ None	None

3

Landscape baseline

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3 Landscape baseline

3.1 Introduction

A robust understanding of the existing ("baseline") landscape and its character will help to inform an assessment of whether a landscape could be considered valued.

This section provides:

- Record of previous, relevant landscape character assessments and landscape sensitivity studies, and identification of how the study area sits within these.
- A summary of the relevant planning policy context, pertaining to landscape character and designations.
- A summary of relevant planning appeal decisions pertinent to the assessment area.

3.2 Landscape character assessments

Most of the country has undergone some degree of previous landscape character assessment. These exercises have identified distinct and recognisable character areas at national, regional, and/or local scales. Their boundaries often follow natural lines in the landscape, not county or district boundaries, and makes them useful baseline frameworks for assessment purposes.

Resources relevant to the study area include:

- Natural England's National Character Areas
- Rugby Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment, 2025
- Daventry Landscape Character Assessment, 2017
- Rainsbrook Valley Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2017

The following section provides a summary of those character and sensitivity assessments, and the matters relevant to the study area.

National Character Areas (NCAs):

The assessment area spans across two NCAs: NCA 95: Northamptonshire Uplands and NCA 96: Dunsmore and Feldon. The majority of the assessment area lies within the latter, and this is described first, accordingly.

NCA 96: Dunsmore and Feldon

The north-western part of the assessment area is located within the 'Dunsmore and Feldon' National Character Area (NCA 96).

Each NCA has a dedicated statement, providing information on matters including their key characteristics, attributes, opportunities, and drivers for change. A summary is provided, below, with link to the NCA website and detailed information.

NCA Profile: <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/Dunsmore-and-Feldon/>

Profile summary

Transcribed verbatim from NCA profile

Dunsmore and Feldon is predominantly a rural, agricultural landscape, crossed by numerous small rivers and tributaries and varying between a more open character in the Feldon area and a wooded character in Dunsmore.

The name Feldon refers to the old English term *feld* meaning 'open cleared land' and expresses the contrast, in medieval times, with the more wooded Arden area to the north-west. The area is mainly within Warwickshire, with the southern boundary delineated by the steep limestone escarpment of the Cotswolds, and the northern boundary by the Leicestershire Vales. To the west lie the well-wooded pastures of Arden, together with the Severn and Avon Vales, while the undulating pastures and low hills of the Northamptonshire Uplands form the eastern border.

It is an important food producing area and the agricultural expanse of large arable fields, improved pasture and small villages forms a transitional landscape between the surrounding National Character Areas (NCAs). The land to the north comprises the wedge-shaped area of low ridges and valleys lying between Leamington Spa, Coventry and Rugby, and is known as Dunsmore. This still retains a character of historic heathland and woodlands such as the Princethorpe Woodlands which are the most important cluster of ancient woodlands in Warwickshire and an outstanding example of a large area of semi-natural habitat. The woods sometimes create a sense of confinement in the generally open landscape. The fringes of the plateaux are all similar in character but have open views framed by low hills and settlements.

In the south the landform becomes more undulating with low hill tops, clay vales, sparse woodland and hedgerows, now largely denuded of the large elm trees that once grew in abundance. This area is known as the Feldon and comprises most of the south-eastern part of Warwickshire.

It is a rural landscape strongly influenced by post-medieval enclosures of former strip fields, heavy clay soil and frequent small, compact villages. This NCA is drained by the rivers Avon and Leam flowing in a south-westerly direction. Flood meadows, characterised by great burnet and meadow foxtail, occur on the regularly flooded alluvial soils. There is an important water resource at Draycote Reservoir which has the capacity to provide drinking water and recreation for the local area.

Coventry, which sits on the border of Dunsmore and Feldon and Arden, exerts a huge influence, especially in the north of the area. The other main settlements in Dunsmore and Feldon are Rugby and Leamington Spa. Seven per cent of this area is classed as urban. To the south, the area becomes more rural and undulating as it merges into the Cotswolds in the neighbouring NCA. One per cent of this area falls within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The historic character of this area is very important, in particular its ancient woodlands, enclosed fields, veteran trees, landscaped parklands and areas of archaeological interest, including deserted villages and numerous sites of remnant ridge and furrow. The Fosse Way Roman military road passes through the area and has influenced patterns of settlement in this NCA. Earthwork remains of medieval settlements and associated field systems at Radwell, Tysoe and Napton on the Hill are three of the most coherent medieval township landscapes in existence in England.





The area is facing key challenges around how to protect and enhance its assets and recreational resource while accommodating the pressure for sustainable modern growth and development and the needs of the communities who live there.

Key characteristics

Transcribed verbatim from NCA profile

- The sense of a predominantly quiet, rural landscape is heightened by its close proximity to several urban areas, with a gently undulating landscape of low hills, heathland plateaux and clay vales separated by the occasional upstanding escarpment.
- The underlying lower Lias clays and Mercia mudstones are similar throughout Dunsmore and Feldon but the Quaternary 'superficial' deposits are what mark the change in character between Dunsmore and Feldon.
- Light sandy soils associated with the west (Dunsmore) supporting mixed farming and some intensive arable with fertile alkaline soils to the east (Feldon) supporting grazed pasture.
- Generally low woodland cover across the area, although there are areas of well-wooded character and ancient woodlands, especially in the north, providing habitats for bluebells, molluscs and fritillary butterflies; these woodlands are linked with landscaped parklands and hedgerow trees.
- Remnants of the formerly extensive Dunsmore Heath, preserving characteristic heathland archaeology, can still be found in woodland clearings. Natural regeneration on sand and gravel soils also occurs along roadside verges, although bracken is often abundant.
- Narrow, meandering river valleys with pollarded willows, streamside alders and patches of scrub supporting dipper, kingfisher, otter and Atlantic stream crayfish.
- Canals, including the Grand Union Canal, and Draycote Reservoir provide important riparian habitats and a well-used recreational resource.
- Mainly large fields, with regular or rectilinear shapes, although some smaller fields also feature. Numerous areas of remnant ridge-and-furrow and earthwork remains of medieval settlements as found at Lower Tysoe, Radwell and Napton on the Hill.
- Predominantly nucleated settlement pattern with a low density of isolated farmsteads and some field barns sitting within a landscape of piecemeal and planned enclosure of the open fields which extended from the villages over large parts of this area. Many villages have recently expanded but the traditional buildings, constructed of red brick or Lias limestone, still retain their blue brick or ironstone details.
- The busy roads and large industrial units on the outskirts of the main settlements of Leamington Spa, Coventry and Rugby exert an urban influence on the surrounding area.
- Limestone quarrying for the cement industry was formerly a feature in the centre and south of the area, and disused quarries are now prominent elements in the landscape. The rock exposures and spoil heaps are of geological importance, as well as having interesting limestone grassland communities.

LEGEND

-  Approximate assessment area
-  94 - Leicestershire Vales
-  95 - Northamptonshire Uplands
-  96 - Dunsmore and Feldon

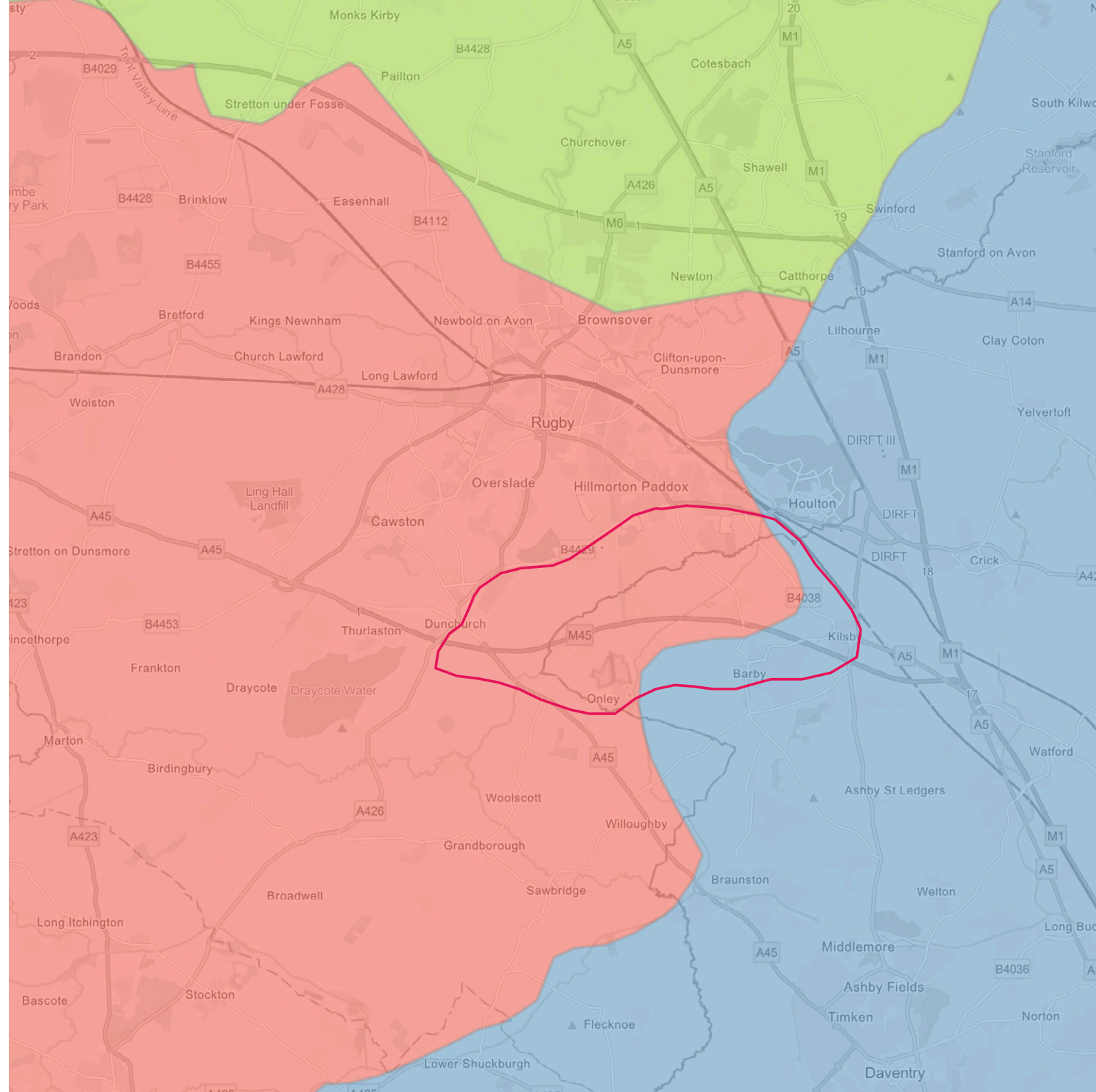


figure 3.1 | nts / national character areas

Source: www.gov.uk

NCA 95: Northamptonshire Uplands

The south-eastern part of the assessment area is located within the 'Northamptonshire Uplands' National Character Area (NCA 95).

Each NCA has a dedicated statement, providing information on matters including their key characteristics, attributes, opportunities, and drivers for change. A summary is provided, below, with link to the NCA website and detailed information.

NCA Profile: <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/Northamptonshire-Uplands/>

Profile summary

Transcribed verbatim from NCA profile

The Northamptonshire Uplands National Character Area (NCA) is an area of gently rolling, limestone hills and valleys capped by ironstone-bearing sandstone and clay Lias, with many long, low ridgelines. Rivers flow out from the NCA in all directions, including several major rivers – the Cherwell, Avon, Welland, Tove, Ouse, Nene and Ise.

While there are areas of differing character, there are strong unifying landscape features across the Northamptonshire Uplands, most importantly the extensive areas of open field systems with ridge and furrow and the earthworks of deserted and shrunken settlements which occur throughout.

Other features include the strong, mostly Parliamentary enclosure pattern with high, wide, A-shaped hedgerows bounding

the largely rectilinear fields with their frequent mature ash and oak trees; the many country houses and their associated extensive areas of historic and nationally important designed parkland landscapes; the distinctive ironstone, cob and brick nucleated settlements with their large stone churches, often with prominent steeples; the narrow lanes with very wide grassy verges; and the small, scattered but prominent broadleaved woods and coverts. There are also wide, long-distance views from the edges and across the ridgetops throughout the area.

Land is in mixed agricultural use, mostly pasture and arable, and reservoirs are a significant feature. Woodland is sparse, with many scattered, small, broadleaved coverts and copses, some in prominent hill-top positions, dotted across the landscape. The few ancient woodlands, such as Badby, take on a special value and interest in an NCA with few other areas of seminatural vegetation and relatively limited wildlife interest. Flood plain grazing marsh

occurs around Banbury and there are small, scattered pockets of mire, lowland meadow, calcareous grassland and lowland dry acid grassland throughout the NCA, some designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest for their biodiversity interest. The area is also important for farmland birds.

Around the fringes and two main towns, the area has seen extensive development and construction of major strategic road and rail infrastructure, with associated reductions in levels of tranquillity and loss of rural character, though overall the area retains a strong sense of rural tranquillity. The area is particularly important for delivery of sense of history, sense of place, recreation and water availability and some ecosystem services are under pressure from development and agricultural practice, particularly water availability and water quality, soil erosion, soil quality and tranquillity.

Key characteristics

Transcribed verbatim from NCA profile

- Gently rolling rounded hills and valleys with many long, low ridgelines and great variety of landform. Wide, far-reaching views from the edges and across the ridgetops.
- Dominant Jurassic scarp slope of limestone and Lias clay hills capped locally with ironstone-bearing Marlstone and Northampton Sands. Glacial boulder clay covers the northern and eastern areas, with sands and gravels along river valleys.
- The Upper Nene Valley divides the gently undulating Northamptonshire Heights to the north from the hillier Cherwell/Ouse plateau (the 'Ironstone Wolds') to the south and has been exploited for sand and gravel.
- Rivers rise and flow outwards in all directions, including the rivers Cherwell, Avon, Welland, Tove, Ouse, Nene and Ise, and the area forms the main watershed of Middle England.
- Sparse woodland cover, but with scattered, visually prominent, small, broadleaved woods, copses and coverts, particularly on higher ground.
- Mixed farming dominates with open arable contrasting with permanent pasture.
- Typical 'planned countryside' with largely rectangular, enclosed field patterns surrounded by distinctive, high, often A-shaped hedgerows of predominantly hawthorn and blackthorn, with many mature hedgerow trees, mostly ash and oak. Some ironstone and limestone walls in places and some localised areas of early irregular enclosure.
- Small pockets of semi-natural vegetation with many small scattered broadleaved woodlands, some ancient and often on hill tops, with mires, areas of lowland meadow, calcareous grassland and lowland dry acid grassland in the river valleys. Bluebell woods occur in places.
- Nationally rare, locally abundant and prominent ridge and furrow, with frequent deserted and shrunken settlements. Several large historic country estates such as Cottesbrooke Hall and Althorp and many small country estates, with extensive parkland containing a great many mature, veteran and ancient trees.
- Nucleated villages often on hill tops or at valley heads with low densities of dispersed settlement. Cob, ironstone and limestone in older buildings with some remaining thatch, but mostly pantile and slate roofs. Brick buildings in some villages. Extensive new developments in villages along main transport corridors and in the two main towns.
- A dense network of narrow lanes with wide grassy verges, often following ridges, crossed by many strategic road and rail corridors, including the M1, M40, A14, West Coast Main Line railway, Great Western Railway line and the Oxford and Grand Union canals.
- The many historic houses, parks and gardens open to the public, the reservoirs, long-distance paths (such as the Knightley Way, Jurassic Way and Brampton Valley Way) and the Grand Union and Oxford canals provide well-used recreation assets.

Representative photographs chosen by Natural England to reflect NCA 95's character, in the National Character Area Statement.



Regional Landscape Character Areas

Regional Landscape Character Assessments (LCA) have been undertaken for both Rugby Borough Council (2025) and Daventry District Council (2017). Both identify Landscape Character Types (LCTs) specific to the region.

A summary of the character areas relevant to the assessment area are provided below.

Rugby Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment (2025)

Dunsmore: Plateau Fringe LCT

Summary

Transcribed verbatim from LCA.

Plateau Fringe is a variable, farmed landscape with a gently undulating topography of low rounded hills and narrow meandering river valleys of the Avon and Leam.

The Plateau Fringe is characterised by its large arable fields and poorly defined field patterns, interspersed with pockets of permanent pasture, river meadowland and small hedged fields.

Small, nucleated villages are a characteristic feature, comprising of loose clusters of dwellings and isolated, brick built farmsteads.

Feldon: Vale Farmlands LCT

Summary

Transcribed verbatim from LCA.

Vale Farmlands is the most typical landscape within Feldon, characterised by a flat, open hedged landscape with few roads or settlements. It comprises a largely intact pattern of medium to large-sized geometric fields bounded by hawthorn hedges and little tree cover, offering wide views of the rising ground and a strong impression of sky and space.

Villages are typically few and far between and often consist of small 'open' clusters of farmsteads and dwellings. Deserted medieval villages remain in some areas.

The roads in these areas are typically single track bound by thick hedge. Therefore, the pastoral and hedged character of the landscape should be conserved and restored.

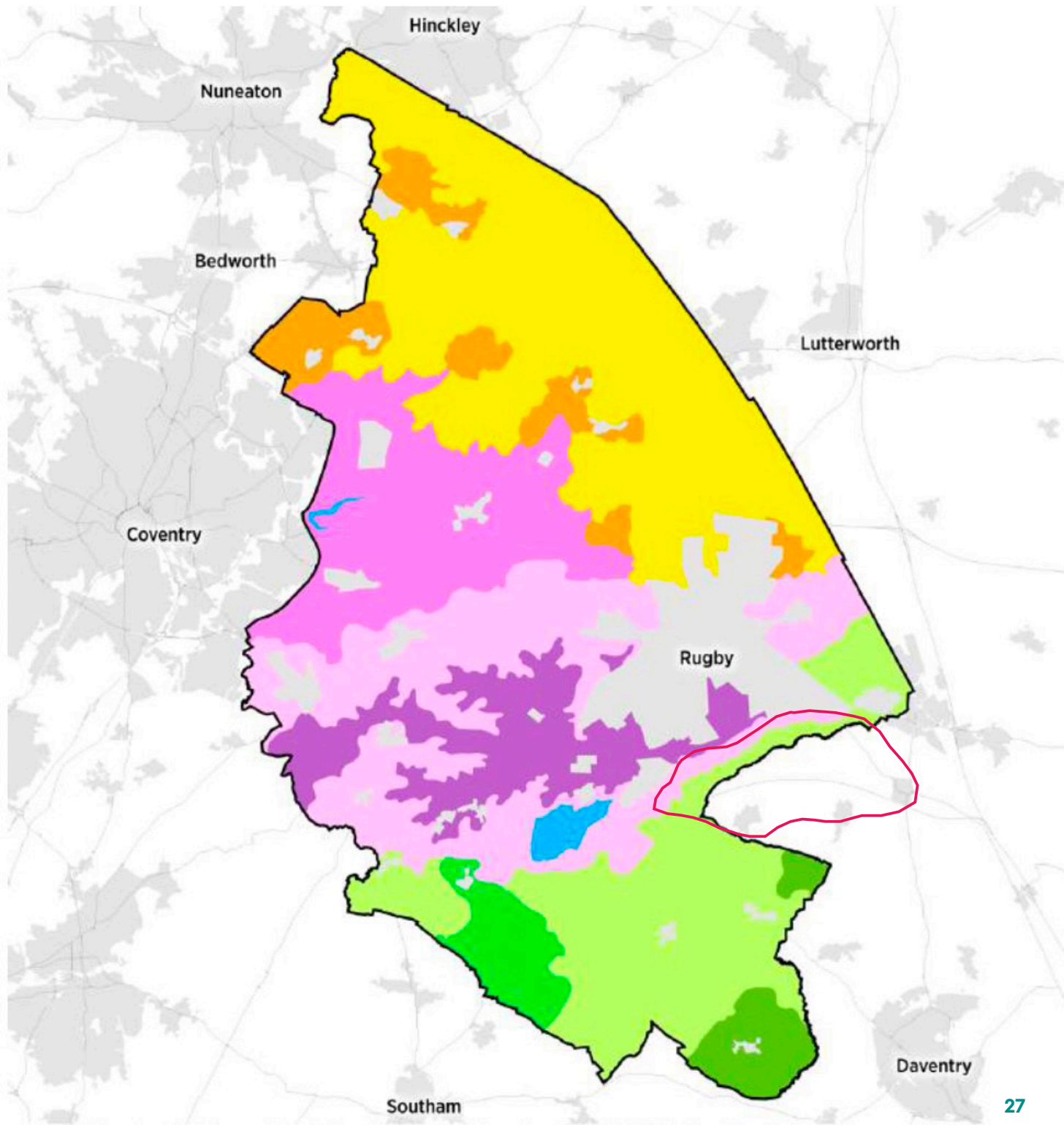


figure 3.2 | Rugby Borough Council LCTs
 Source: Lepus Consulting

Daventry Landscape Character Assessment (2017)

Broad Unwooded Vale LCT

Part of the assessment area is located within the Broad Unwooded Vale LCT, which is split into further Landscape Character Areas. Part of the assessment area is located within the 'Vale of Rugby' area.

Summary

Transcribed verbatim from LCA.

The vale is distinguished by its generally flat and open character, with wide panoramas across an expansive landscape. In the southern part of this character area the vale is formed by the shallow valley of Rains Brook between higher ground at Barby and Kilsby to the south and Rugby to the north. The main rivers in the Vale of Rugby, the River Avon and Rains Brook, form the county boundary. In addition to these watercourses, the Grand Union Canal forms the eastern boundary to the character area and the Oxford Canal is through the south western part of the character area; both are designated as Conservation Areas and form an important visual component of the landscape particularly east of Yelvertoft and where crossed by roads.

The vale is generally intensively managed with a mix of arable and pasture that create a patchwork effect across the landscape. The size of fields and heights of hedgerows plays an important role in determining the openness of the landscape, with localised enclosure generally where fields are smaller.

Woodland cover is very limited with the exception of hedgerows and hedgerow trees to field boundaries and tree-lined watercourses, canals, railway lines and major roads. Where present these trees provide localised enclosure. The general lack of woodland allows open views towards the higher often wooded ground in the adjacent character areas (13c and 15a).

Rural lanes are typically lined by hedgerows and hedgerow trees, in places the trees are set a few metres behind the hedgerows.

Settlement within this vale is generally sparse, limited to the former prison housing in the south; west of Barby. There is no overriding character to built form but the centre of villages include properties from a range of periods creating a varied streetscene.

Smaller scale pastoral fields are often present around the fringes of the settlements and often contain more mature hedgerows and trees which

provides enclosure and helps to limit the prominence of the villages in the wider and more open landscape beyond. Ridge and furrow is a feature around villages such as the northern fringes of Kilsby (village in neighbouring Landscape Character Type) and on higher ground forming a backdrop to Yelvertoft.

The remainder of the character area includes intermittent and often isolated farms with many areas accessed via long tracks. In the vicinity of Rugby, the DIRFT development including prominent large warehouses has an urbanising effect on the local landscape which will increase as the area of the former radio masts are developed as a sustainable urban extension extending east of the A5 towards Lilbourne. These buildings are typically large and on high ground so form large structures on the skyline which are difficult to screen. However the combination of undulating landform and linear woodlands along the West Coast Mainline railway and major roads means their influence is relatively localised.

The southern urban edge of Rugby (outside the character area forming the northern valley side of Rains Brook) is relatively well screened by a combination of small pastoral and recreational fields and mature trees creating a skyline of mature trees with intermittent views of properties.

In addition to the areas of built development, a number of roads leading into these large settlements also affect the peaceful quality, notably the M45, M1 and A14 in the vicinity of Rugby, where a busier character and diverse land uses contrasts with more remote areas. Their influence is localised, the M1 and A14 are in cutting which limits their visual prominence but they are audible features of the landscape.

Other features of the landscape include a wind farm east of the M1 and two high voltage overhead lines which cross the character area in a roughly north to south direction.

The generally flat landform and lack of woodland means these structures are prominent features in views.

Views are typically open across the vale, although local variations occur where fields are smaller in size and hedgerows are taller.

The overriding character is that of a broad, expansive flat or very gently sloping agrarian landscape with limited settlement and a generally quiet rural character except in close vicinity to warehouse development (DIRFT) and the main road network.

LEGEND

 Approximate assessment area

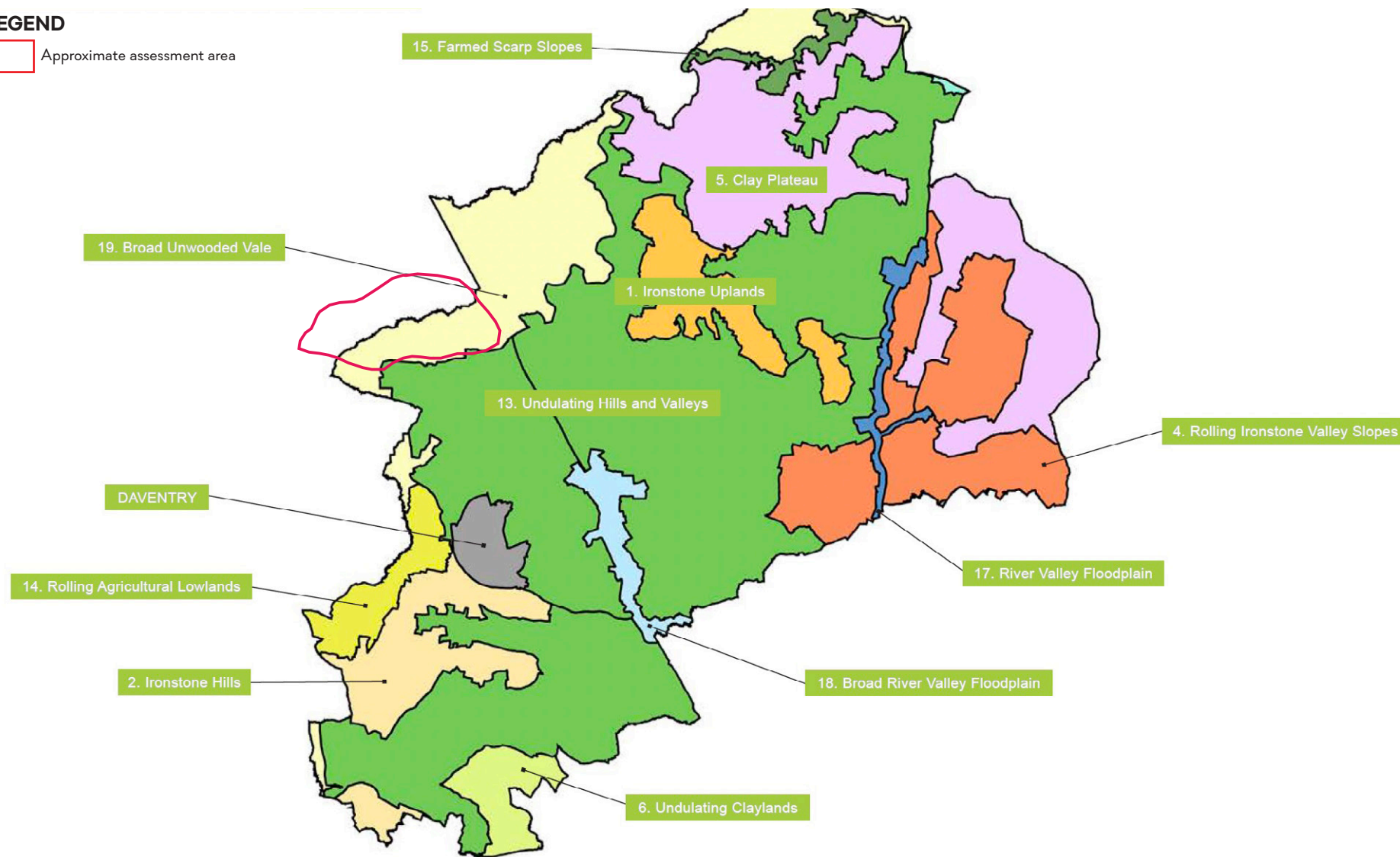


figure 3.3 | Daventry District Council LCTs

Source: The Environment Partnership

3.3 Landscape sensitivity studies

A landscape sensitivity study was undertaken for the Rainsbrook Valley by Warwickshire County Council on behalf of Rugby Borough Council in 2017.

The study provided an analysis of landscape character for the areas surrounding Hillmorton and Dunchurch, identifying areas of low, medium and high quality.

This exercise identified Land Cover Parcels (LCPs), and informed an evaluation of the potential development opportunities for housing.

Summary of conclusions

Transcribed verbatim from LSS.

The southern-most zones surveyed lie on the plateau escarpment, where landform slopes down towards the Rains Brook valley. These zones are generally very open, with extensive views across the valley and any development within these areas would be highly visible. On more steeply sloping ground there are smaller pockets of pasture, which is a key characteristic of this landscape type. This southern fringe, with its distinctive landform, is highly sensitive and must be safeguarded. Therefore these zones are inappropriate for development.

Around Dunchurch there are some historically important landscapes associated with Dunchurch Lodge, Bilton Grange and listed buildings such as the church. Again, these areas are inappropriate for development. The zones between Bilton and Dunchurch should also be safeguarded from development to avoid coalescence between the two settlements. Further east, Ashlawn Cutting is a designated Local Nature Reserve. This should be respected and links with the surrounding area through green corridors should be enhanced.

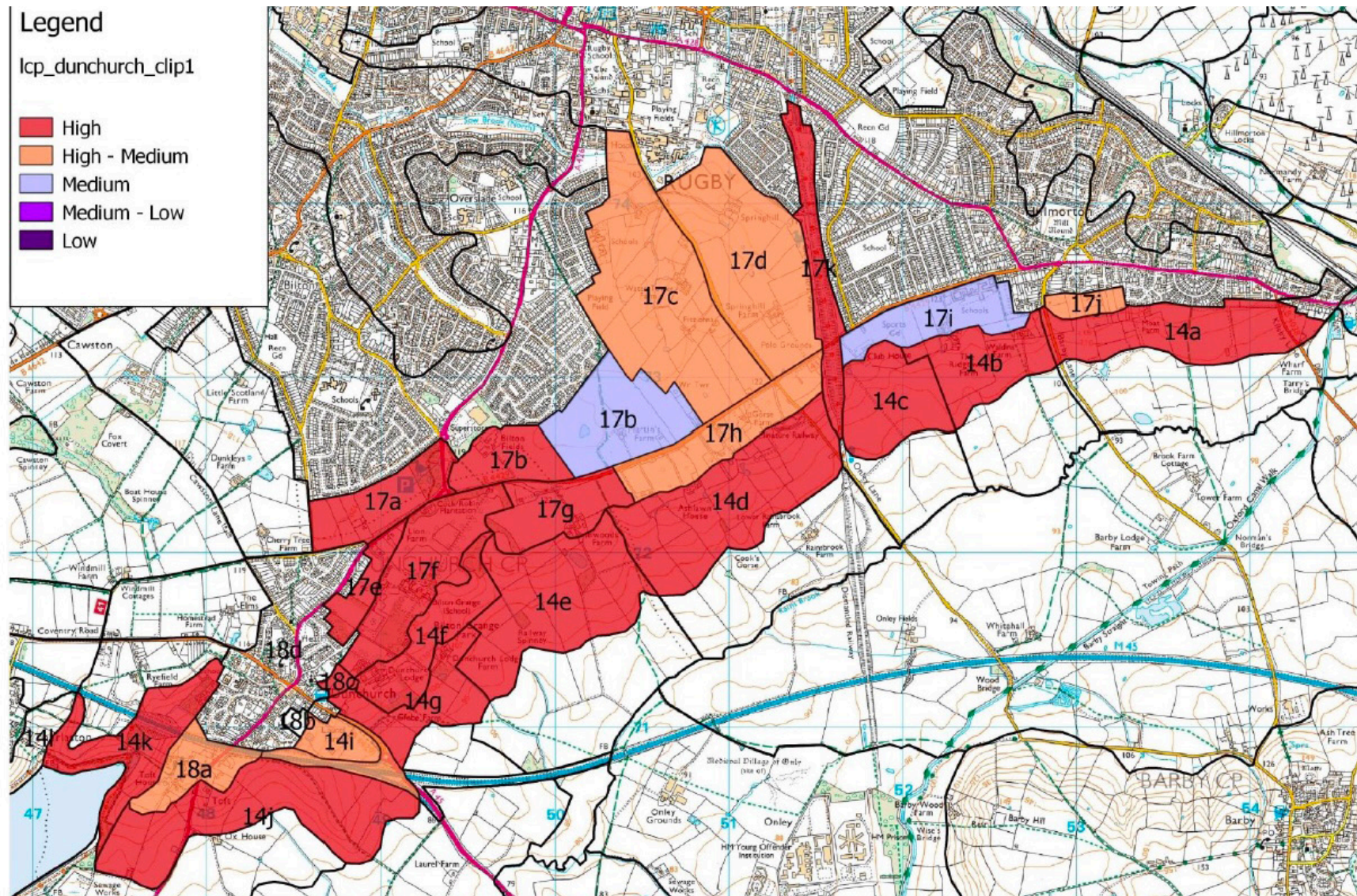


figure 3.4 | Rainsbrook Valley Sensitivity Study conclusions

Source: WCC

3.4 Planning policy and guidance

National policy

National Planning Policy Framework

The national planning frameworks and guidance are anchored on the ambition to achieve sustainable development. This is to be achieved through three objectives for economic, social, and environmental outcomes. Each, directly or indirectly, engages with the benefits of positive management of landscapes and landscape character, and the benefits they bring to wider society.

Specific policy is provided with relevant chapters of NPPF, including 12: Achieving well-designed places; 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; and 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.

Guidance

Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note

Whilst the NPPF does not provide a definition of a valued landscape, the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' provides guidance.

A 'valued landscape' is defined in the Landscape Institute guidance as "*an area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes*".

Local policy

Rugby Borough Council Local Plan 2011-2031

Rugby Borough Council's Local Plan contains a number of policies relating to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

Policy NE1: Protecting designated biodiversity and geodiversity assets, outlines the aim to assist in maintaining the current high quality of the natural environment, particularly sensitive habitats and areas of landscape value. This includes the protection of designated areas of international, national and local importance.

Policy NE2: Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure outlines the aspiration to protect, restore and enhance existing and potential Green and Blue Infrastructure assets, and introduce appropriate multi-functional corridors between existing and potential assets.

Policy NE3: Landscape Protection and Enhancement sets out the expectations for new development to demonstrate that it contributes positively to landscape character.

Rugby Borough Council Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation 2025

The Preferred Options Consultation document for the incoming Rugby Borough Local Plan also identifies a number of policies relevant to the protection of the natural environment and landscape. These include Policies EN1: Biodiversity and geodiversity protection, and EN2: Landscape Protection.

The document also identifies the Ironstone Fringe as a designated high-quality landscape under Policy EN3: Ironstone Fringe Area of High Landscape Value. The policy sets out the expectation that development proposals should protect and where possible enhance the character and quality of the landscape, and maintain its tranquillity.

3.5 Planning appeal decisions

Land at Barby Lane

*Appeal ref: APP/
E3715/W/16/3158785*

An appeal made for outline planning permission for up to 107 residential dwellings on land at Barby Lane was dismissed in 2017.

The key matters taken into consideration were the effect on the character and appearance of the area. The Council suggested that the appeal site lies within a valued landscape which should be protected and enhanced under the relevant paragraph of the NPPF.

The Inspector concluded that, whilst part of the site formed a component of a wider landscape (the escarpment) which has high sensitivity to change, demonstrable physical attributes, and is clearly of value for local people (particularly due to the PRoW), such factors do not necessarily equate to a 'valued landscape'.

However, despite the Inspector's conclusion that the area does not constitute a valued landscape, they did note that the escarpment is part of the intrinsic character of the countryside surrounding Rugby, having a significant role in the wider landscape and being of high sensitivity.

4

Assessment

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Method
- 3 Landscape baseline
- 4 Assessment**
- 5 Summary



4 Assessment

4.1 Introduction

This section provides a four-part, phased assessment of the Rainbrook Valley landscape's:

- General character and context (Section 4.2)
- Value (Section 4.3), including:
 - Analysis of value 'factors', as defined by the Landscape Institute's technical guidance note.
 - A position as to the level of landscape value, relative to Node's categorisation framework.
- Landscape susceptibility (Section 4.4)
- Landscape sensitivity (Section 4.5)

4.2 Character and context

The Rainsbrook Valley lies south of Rugby, and beyond the Ashlawn Road (B4429).

The valley is aligned broadly ENE/WSW, with slopes rolling down from a long, linear northern ridge and plateau, and a promontory range of hills (including Barby Hill) to the south. The Rains Brook watercourse flows along the valley bottom from east to west, before the valley opens out, and into to the low-lying plains of the River Leam.

Land is in mixed agricultural use, creating a patchwork of pastoral and arable fields. Woodland is relatively sparse, but there are sufficient pockets of small, broadleaved coverts and copses, hedgerow trees, and localised parkland (both historic and modern) to break up the landscape.

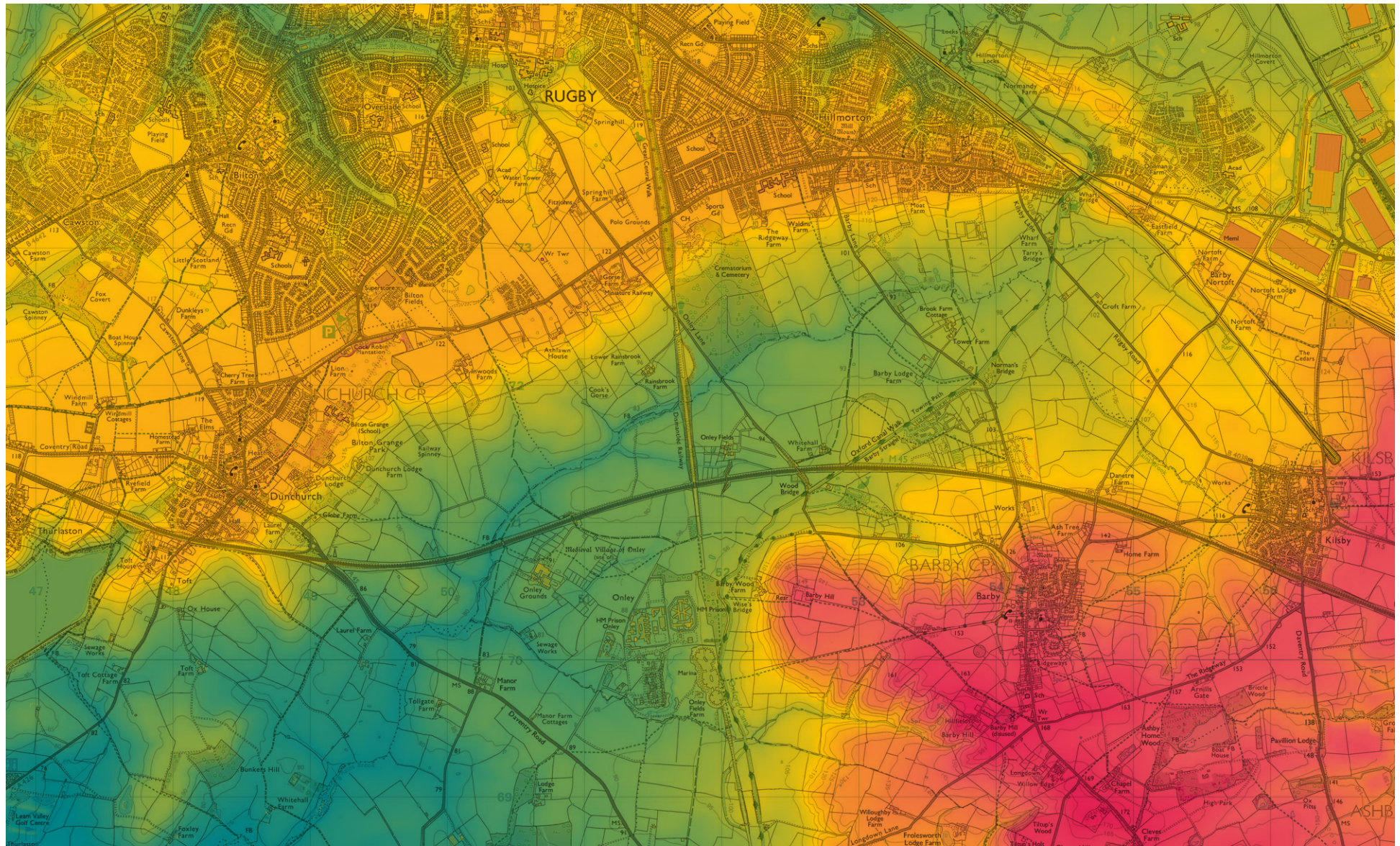
The area's topography and vegetation character make it a generally open landscape, with panoramic views common.

A network of roads run through the landscape. The most prominent is the M45 which cuts through the valley floor. Barby Lane connects Rugby to the nearby village of Barby, and Kilsby Lane/ Rugby Road to the east of the valley connects Rugby to the village of Kilsby.

Notable landscape features include (**but are not limited to**, and in no particular order):

- Two Registered Parks and Gardens, associated with Dunchuch Lodge and Bilton Grange (and its landmark house), in the northwest of the valley, and southeast of Dunchurch;
- The Oxford Canal, cutting south to the northeast;
- The Ashlawn Cutting Local Nature Reserve, a partly repurposed embankment of the dismantled Great Central Railway, bisecting the central valley from north to south;
- Rugby Diamond Wood Country Park, adjacent the Ashlawn Cutting on the northern slopes;
- The M45 Motorway, broadly following the valley floor from east to west;
- Barby Hill, a prominent and promontory landform defining the valley's south-western extent;
- HMP Onley, below and west of Barby Hill;
- And, earthworks associated to the medieval landscape at Onley medieval village and Barby Castle, both Scheduled Monuments.

figure 4.1 | 1:40,000 | local topography



0 1km
metres

Lower Higher



figure 4.2 | western side of the valley | site oblique aerial (google maps)



figure 4.3 | eastern side of the valley | site oblique aerial (google maps)



Illustrative photographs of the Rainsbrook Valley.





Illustrative photographs of the Rainsbrook Valley.



Illustrative photographs of the Rainsbrook Valley.



Illustrative photographs of the Rainsbrook Valley.



Illustrative photographs of the Rainsbrook Valley.



Legend

- Indicative extent of assessment area
- LPA boundary

Landscape

- Local nature reserve
- Ancient and semi-natural woodland
- Wood pasture and Parkland
- Country Park
- Local Wildlife Site (Warwickshire county council)
- EA flood zone 2
- EA flood zone 3

Heritage assets

- Listed building
- Scheduled monument
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Conservation area

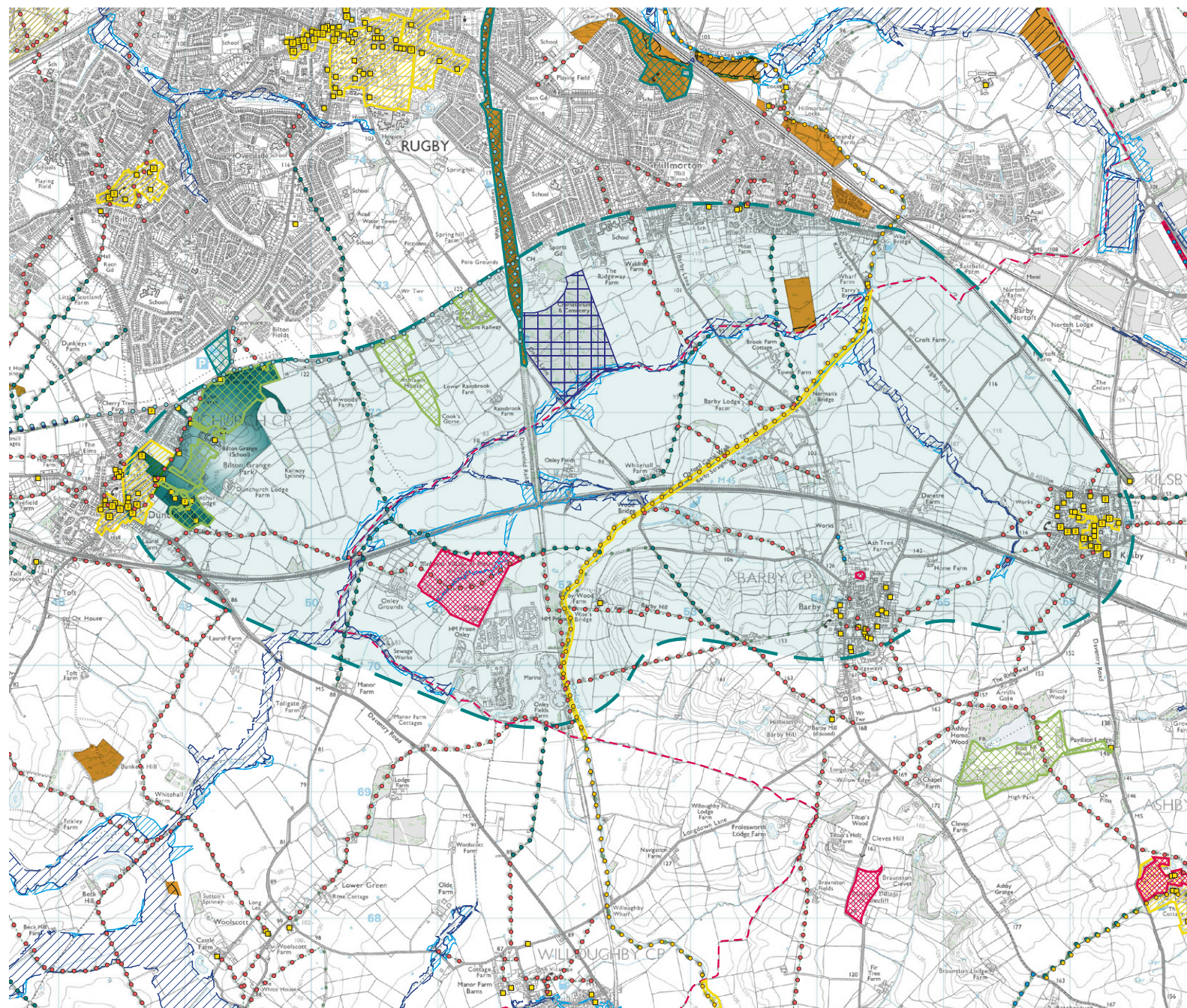
Public rights of way

- Public footpath (Ordnance Survey)
- Bridleway (Ordnance Survey)
- Byway open to all traffic (Ordnance Survey)
- Restricted byway (Ordnance Survey)
- Recreational path (Ordnance Survey)
- National cycle route 41/50



0 1km
metres

figure 4.4 | 1:40,000 | Local context plan



This plan provides a general overview of national and local designations that are referenced within this report, but may not be exhaustive.

4.3 Landscape value

Landscape **value** means the value attached to different places by society, or different elements of it. Landscapes may be valued for some or all of their components parts. This might include natural, cultural, visual, sensory, recreational, geological, or functional (etc.) elements.

This assessment presents analysis relative to the nine adopted 'factors' of Technical Note 02-21, as follows:

- Natural heritage
- Cultural heritage
- Landscape condition
- Distinctiveness
- Recreational
- Perceptual (scenic)
- Perceptual (wildness & tranquillity)

- Functional
- Associations

Please note, the presented order should not be taken as a reflection of their significance nor level of contribution to landscape value.

For each factor a written analysis is provided, and a position as to where on a spectrum of a "weak", "moderate", or "strong" contribution these elements make to overall landscape value.

A position is then provided on an overall landscape value, on a scale from 'Exceptional' to 'Very Poor' (see methodology), balancing all factors, evidence, and following professional judgement, and guided by the principles outlined in GLVIA3 and Technical Note 02/21.

Natural heritage

Analysis

The Rainsbrook Valley contains a small number of local habitats of elevated environmental value. There are no SSSIs.

Part of the disused, and dismantled Great Central Railway is locally designated as Local Nature Reserve ('Ashlawn Cutting'), reflecting the value of the long, linear, embankment of deciduous woodland. The embankment extends further south, across the study area, but the designated area is limited to where public access is currently permitted.

Towards the east of the study area is a Local Wildlife Site, 'Kilsby Lane Meadow'. This small parcel of land has been partitioned from the wider, agricultural landscape to create a wildlife refuge of managed scrubland. It is recognised as having an elevated biodiversity value than its surroundings, and the wider valley (Local Wildlife Site Resurvey 2024).

Elsewhere natural heritage and biodiversity value draws from the individual contributions of landscape features. This includes: pockets of deciduous woodland; a hedgerow network of varying integrity and condition, but with areas of well-preserved hedges and trees; former agricultural ponds; areas of improved grasslands; and the riparian habitats and wildlife corridors provided by both the Rains Brook and the Oxford Canal. Each provide habitat and value, albeit to a level broadly typical of such agricultural landscapes.

The recently created Rugby Diamond Wood Country Park is another environmental focal point, of which the biodiversity and habitat value should develop as its new woodlands and meadows mature.

The geology and geomorphology of the valley itself adds value, with clearly defined slopes, ridges, and plateaus. Barby Hill, in particular, forms a point of interest demarcating the western end of the southern ridge.



Detracting features include the motorway, areas of large-footprint modern development (e.g. HMP Onley), both of which have displaced former agricultural habitat. It is also anticipated that light pollution from the motorway, and due to proximity to Rugby, will be tangible at night.

Position

As a whole we consider Natural Heritage to make a moderate contribution to the Rainsbrook Valley landscape value: a place of habitat and biodiversity fairly typical for its agricultural landscape type, but with localised areas of elevated quality, including local nature reserves, wildlife sites, and country parks.



Legend

-  Indicative extent of assessment area
-  LPA boundary

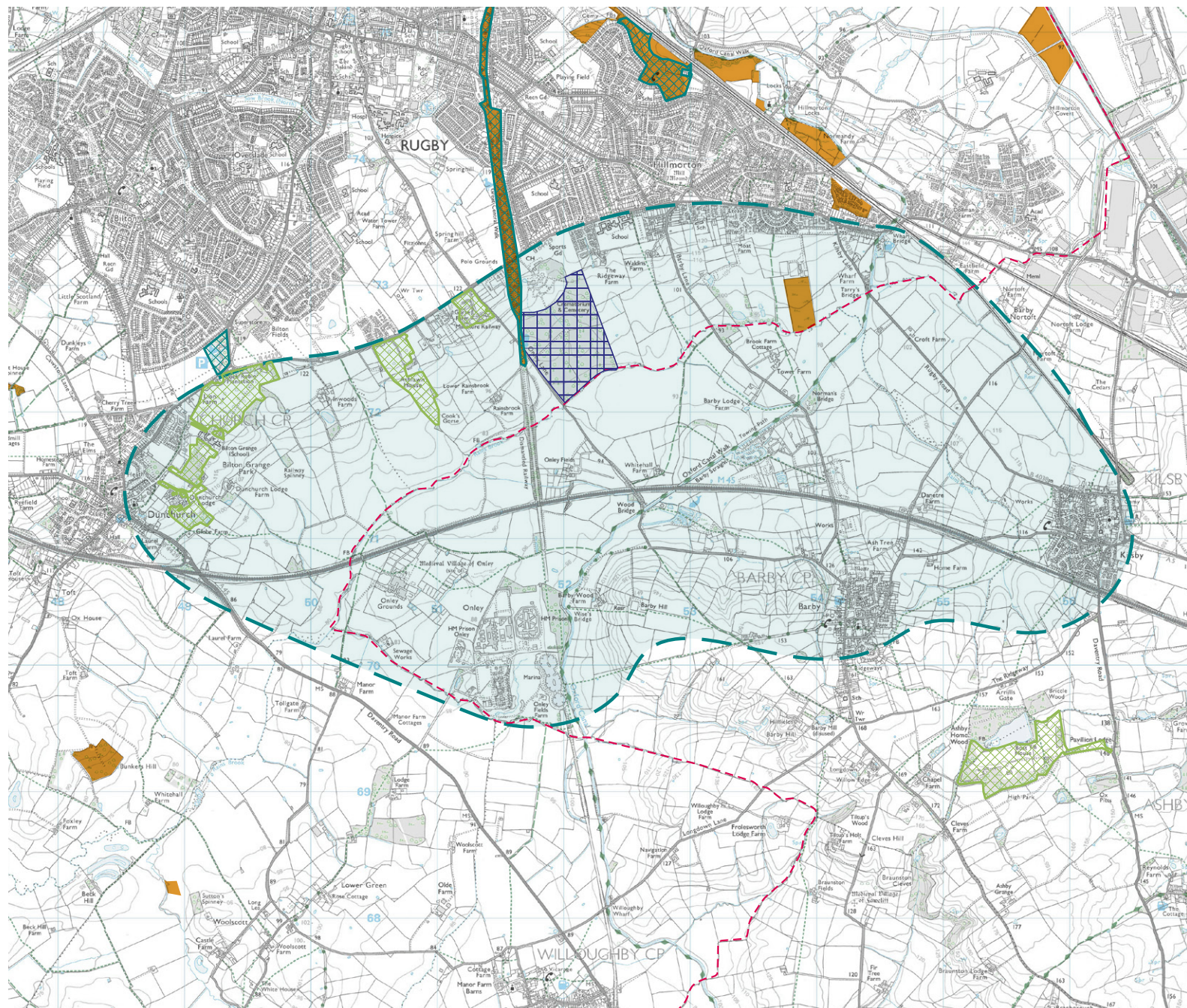
Natural heritage

-  Local nature reserve
-  Ancient and semi-natural woodland
-  Wood pasture and Parkland
-  Country Park
-  Local Wildlife Site (Warwickshire county council)



0 1km
metres

figure 4.5 | 1:40,000 | Natural heritage plan



Cultural heritage

Analysis

The study area contains a collection of buildings, places, and features of heritage interest. Those of greatest significance include registered parks and gardens (RPGs), scheduled monuments, conservation areas, listed buildings.

Three historic designed landscapes are located within the assessment area. Two are of high significance, and designated as RPGs: 'Bilton Grange' and 'Dunchurch Lodge', both located in the northwest of the study area. Bilton Grange is a 19th century pleasure grounds and small park enveloping an AWG Pugin designed manor house (itself grade II* listed). The neighbouring Dunchurch Lodge is an early 20th century house and garden.

The layout, structures, and planting of both survive well, and considerably elevate this locality's design quality and scenic value, while the unusual proximity of two RPGs creates a focal point for landscape heritage.

The landscape design is mostly experienced from within their boundaries, but their woodlands still have some influence on the western valley's character. In particular, the (relatively) large wooded areas have some distinctiveness within a valley of generally low-levels of woodland coverage. The Tudor Gothic tower of

Bilton Grange is also a key local landmark, rising prominently from north ridge line, seen across the eastern valley, and forming the most eye-catching architecture within the study area.

The other historic designed landscape is associated to Ashlawn House, off Ashlawn Road, and south of the Ashlawn Water tower. The grandiose 19th century house and parkland garden remain, albeit with the latter's character somewhat eroded through incremental parkland tree loss.

The nearby Ashlawn Water Tower is another local landmark - an eye-catching 1930s structure distinctive quasi-Classical form, and a point of local interest glimpsed above the northern ridge. Glimpses of distant local churches are afforded in places (e.g. atop Barby Hill where visibility of Rugby is greatest), but are not generally prominent features within the valley.

The historic villages of Kilsby, Barby, and Dunchurch are nucleated ridge-top settlements and focal points of heritage buildings, spaces and features. As with the RPGs, the finer details of their cultural heritage is experienced from within, and not from the wider valley landscape.

Legacies of a medieval landscape are evident in archaeological earthworks. This includes those of highest significance:

scheduled monuments designating both an abandoned medieval village complex at Onley, and 'Barby Castle', a well-preserved motte mound atop the south ridge. Ridge and furrow earthworks illustrate past agricultural practices across the valley, but are rarely found in sufficient concentration to form a legible, wider field system.

The canal forms a corridor of industrial heritage interest. The elements within West Northamptonshire are designated as a conservation area, whereas the Rugby extents are not. However, these areas' character and qualities are consistent.

A scattering of historic farmsteads are of character symptomatic of the wider Dunsmore and Feldon landscape: generally medium sized, of 19th century origin, arranged in courtyards, and with modern alteration. Barby Wood Farm is perhaps most significant, an 18th century grade II listed farmhouse, with commanding position at Barby Hill, and featuring in most southerly views in the western valley.

Historic landscape character draws primarily from 19th and 20th century agriculture. Post-medieval piecemeal enclosure patterns survive, but there are also substantial areas of modern field amalgamation. This creates a consistently open, rural setting to heritage assets, but an inconsistent legibility of original context.

Modern infrastructure, and particularly the motorway and prison, can intrude upon those settings, creating localised distraction from the aforementioned heritage assets. For instance, prominent visibility of the prison in views of Barby Wood Farm, from the hilltop.

Position

The study area contains a collection of nationally and locally significant assets. Most directly add to local landscape value, draw significance from the rural landscape character of their setting and/or are of significance due to their landscape design, including two Registered Parks and Gardens.

Some of the assets are, however, experienced in specific areas of the valley, and/or have a visual or physical presence that somewhat reduces their influence upon the landscape when taken as a whole.

As such, we consider the Rainsbrook Valley to have just sufficient cultural heritage value to be categorised as a **'strong'** contribution.



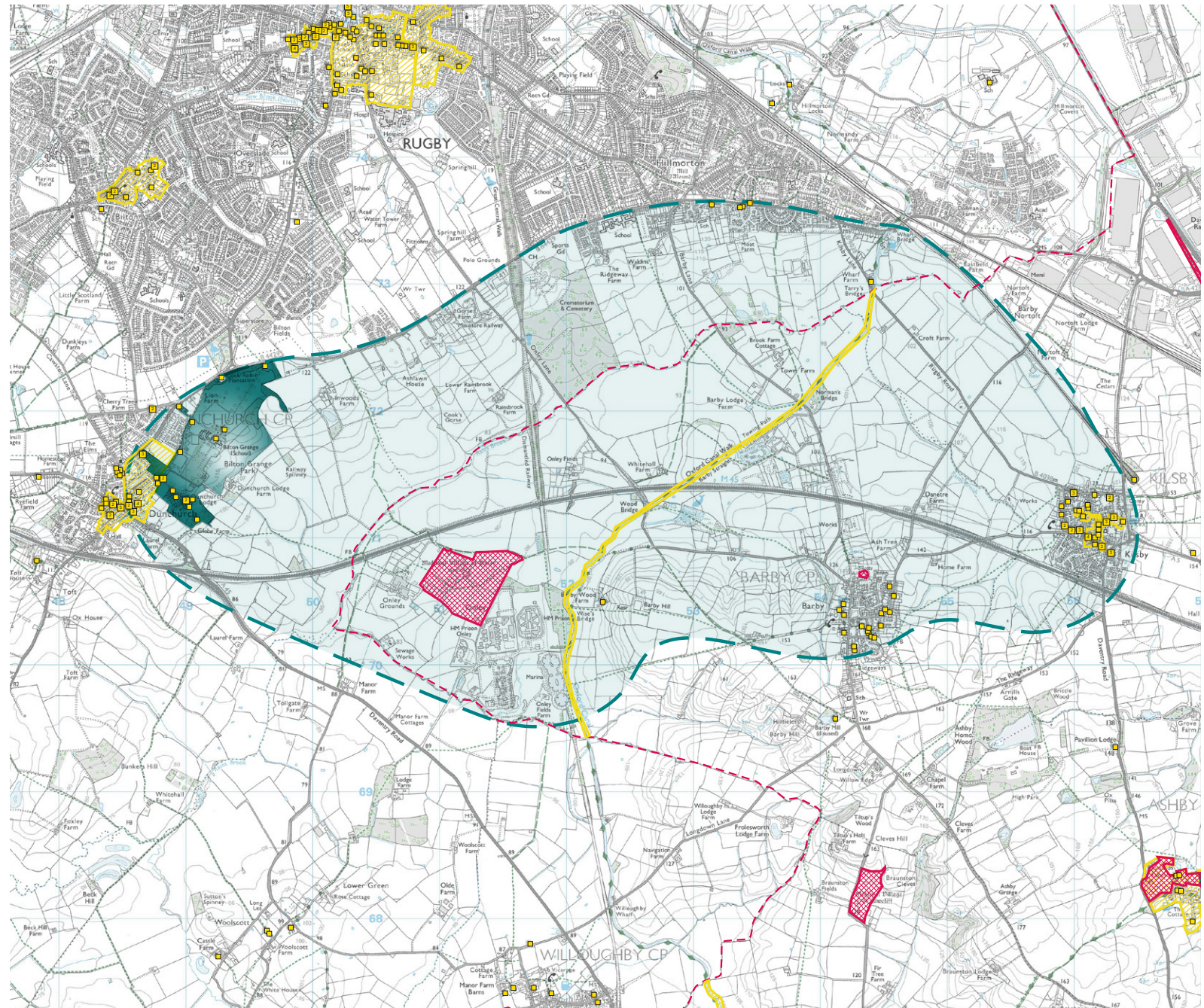
Legend

- Indicative extent of assessment area
- LPA boundary
- Listed building
- Scheduled monument
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Conservation area



0 1km
metres

figure 4.6 | 1:40,000 | Cultural heritage plan



Landscape condition

Analysis

Landscape condition varies across the assessment area. There are localised areas and individual elements encountered in strong condition but, equally, significant elements in a much impacted state.

The general landscape structure is inherited primarily from pre-20th century agriculture, and a pattern of mid-sized, regular-shaped, and hedgerow-bound fields has generally been sustained. There are, however, notable areas of extensive, modern field amalgamation. This includes an area southeast of Bilton Grange, and northwest of Barby Moorings on the canal. These are not entirely lacking in landscape value, retaining an agricultural, open character, but are nonetheless of a morphology inconsistent with the tighter-grain of the local historic landscape character.

Key landscape elements are generally in good condition. For instance: the two Registered Parks and Gardens retain much of their original layout, design, and features; and the large majority of the canal corridor, which retains many original features (e.g. canal bridges) and characteristics.

There are significant detracting features. Most notably the M45, which carves through the valley from east to west, and HMP Onley, which can present as a large industrial-esque mass incongruous to the surrounding landscape. The visual and physical presence of these features is, however, highly variable (discussed further in the 'Perceptual (Scenic)' section).

Position

Balancing all factors landscape condition is considered to be net moderate.

There are wide areas of intact historic landscape, and key individual elements are generally well preserved; however, significant detracting factors exist with meaningful (albeit localised) effects.



Distinctiveness

Analysis

The Rainsbrook Valley broadly embodies the typical characteristics identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment and National Character Area descriptions.

There are few rare or unusual features, relative to this wider context, aside from the unique contributions of specific, local landmarks, such as Bilton Grange, the Water Tower, and Barby Hill.

When considered in the regional context the Rainsbrook Valley does not, therefore, have a singular character nor sense of place.

The valley is, however, highly distinctive in its local context. Specifically, in the abrupt change in character experienced when entering the valley, travelling south from Rugby along Barby Lane or Kilsby Lane. There is a sudden transition from suburban townscapes to wide, open valley countryside, drawing immediate attention to the valley's distinctive qualities, and establishing a stark cognitive divide between townscape and landscape.

The exception is travelling Barby Road through to Onley Road, where the 'wedge' of undeveloped countryside extends much further north across the plateau towards, and into Rugby town centre.

Position

On balance we consider distinctiveness to make a moderate contribution to landscape value. The Rainsbrook Valley is of a character typical to the regional context, but its distinctiveness from the neighbouring town results in a well defined local sense of place.



Recreational

Analysis

The primary recreational use of the landscape is via footpaths and bridleways, most of which are public rights of way (PRoWs). These generally lead from, and connect to, the valley's plateau-top settlements, creating a 'cross valley' network. Those connecting to Rugby, in the north, often continue deep into the town, and significantly extend that network's catchment area. The valley's public footpaths therefore offer opportunities for landscape-focussed recreation to a large number of local people.

Generally the PRoWs descend directly down the valley slopes, cross the valley floor, and rise up to the opposite ridge. These orientations focus views across the valley (as opposed to along it), and draw attention to focal points atop the opposite ridge. For instance, from the north this can include views focussed on Barby Hill, and from the south this can draw attention to landmark buildings of Bilton Grange and the Ashlawn Water Tower.

Historic industrial infrastructure have become key recreational corridors. The

Oxford Canal cuts from south to northeast, with active waterway, adjacent towpath, moorings at both Hilmorton Wharf and Barby Moorings, and occasional canalside amenities. The fledgling 'Great Central Walk', runs part way along the dismantled Great Central Railway, along a prominent embankment entering the valley from Rugby, and continuing for many miles further south, beyond the assessment area.

While there are multiple, and extensive walking routes, the PRoWs are not, however, generally well-connected from one to the next. The dominance of a north-to-south, cross-valley orientation creates very limited opportunity to: travel along the valley bottom, from east to west; connect from one of the long, linear routes to another; or follow clearly defined circular routes. Many of the PRoWs also abruptly meet A or B Roads, requiring navigation of hostile (to pedestrians) rural roads to reach onward footpaths. Elsewhere, footpaths may terminate abruptly, or can be impeded by barriers (e.g. overgrown vegetation), that seemingly stem from a lack of active use and management. Recreational

accessibility and amenity could, therefore, be improved significantly with targeted enhancement schemes (e.g. extending the Great Central Walk to the Onley PRoWs).

There are other, localised opportunities for recreation within the valley, where landscape plays some role in the activity, or enjoyment of it:

Most substantial, and perhaps significant, is the Rugby Diamond Wood Country Park. The modern (2010s) planted woodland, glades and meadows are designed for walking and equestrian activity, and includes intentionally framed views of the valley landscape.

Other focal points are atop the northern-side ridge, serving the Rugby suburbs. This includes sports fields, a private golf range, a riding club, and a model railway. While activity is not focussed on the landscape, the valley forms a pleasant setting within which it occurs, elevating amenity value.

There is no open access land nor common land within the study area.

Position

There is an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways, offering long-distance routes across the valley, and ample opportunity to indirectly enjoy the local landscape setting through sporting activities. All are readily accessible to a large proportion of Rugby's population. However, recreational access is currently constrained by poor footpath connectivity, a general lack of east-to-west links, and various barriers (e.g. hostile rural lanes).

On balance, we consider that the Rainsbrook Valley currently holds a moderate recreational value, but with targeted enhancement could readily move into the 'strong' category.



Legend


 Indicative extent of assessment area


 LPA boundary

Public rights of way


 Public footpath
(Ordnance Survey)

 Bridleway
(Ordnance Survey)

 Byway open to all traffic
(Ordnance Survey)

 Restricted byway
(Ordnance Survey)

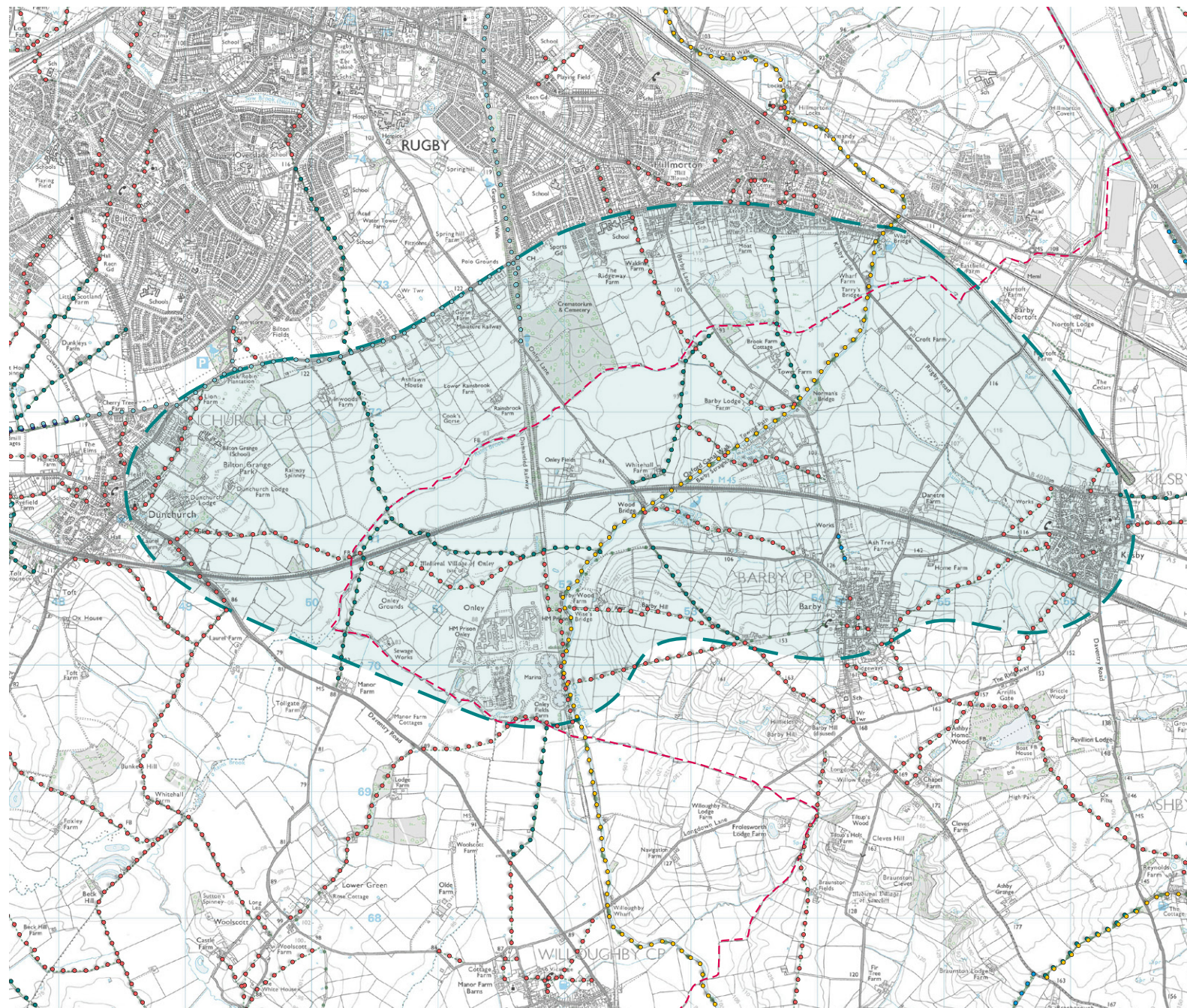
 Recreational path
(Ordnance Survey)

 National cycle route 41/50



0 1km
metres

figure 4.7 | 1:40,000 | Pubic rights of way plan



Perceptual (scenic)

Analysis

The valley forms a distinctive scenic feature in itself, rolling down towards the valley floor. Views are predominantly characterised by a visually harmonious 'patchwork' of open farmland, with glimpses of settlement atop the ridges and plateaus.

There are relatively few specific, designed or "set piece" views accessible to the public. Instead the local land form and sparse woodland cover creates many open, and sometimes expansive panoramic views that encompass swathes of the valley. Key exceptions include those framed from within the Rainsbrook Cemetery landscape, and neighbouring Country Park.

Where present, the pockets of vegetation cover create localised aesthetic differences in colour and texture. In particular: the Diamond Wood Country Park, Ashlawn Cutting Local Nature Reserve (LNR);

woodlands associated to the historic parks and gardens in the northwest; and areas of well-preserved hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees. These add some sense of seasonal diversity within an otherwise uniform landscape of agricultural and pastoral land.

Views rarely spill out into the wider landscape, being visually contained by the valley topography. The significant exception is at the south-western extent, where views are afforded into the wider Northamptonshire countryside, with comparable visual qualities and character to the Rainsbrook Valley.

The orientation of the PRoW network often focusses visitor's attention across the valley (as opposed to along it), and draws attention to scenic focal points atop the ridges. From the northern side, Barby Hill is recognisable for those traversing across the valley using the public right

of way network, marked by its distinctive topography, and grade II listed farmhouse halfway down the slope. From the southern side, focal points include landmark heritage assets (e.g. Bilton Grange), adding further visual interest. These visual landmarks are focussed in the western half of the valley, with fewer points of interest further east.

Distinct lines through the landscape contribute both positively and negatively.

The Ashlawn Cutting LNR occupies a disused, and prominent railway embankment that bisects the valley from the north, while the Oxford Canal cuts south to northeast. These also add distinctive experiences of landscape scenery, being mostly enclosed by dense vegetation, with infrequent glimpses out to the surrounding valley - in contrast to the wide open vistas of the valley sides and bottom.

Negatively, the M45 motorway cuts through the valley. The motorway has less of visual impact on the valley than might be anticipated. This includes when looking down from the upper slopes, where the long, linear infrastructure is most visible. It can be prominent, but the maturity of adjacent screening (particularly when "in leaf") ensure it does not form a highly distinctive "scar" across the valley bottom. Its presence can, however, be felt more acutely when topographic and climactic conditions elevate road noise.

The other, significant visually incongruous feature is HMP Onley. The prison is visible to varying degrees in western areas, when either looking across the valley from the northern slopes, or facing northwest from Barby Hill. In these, specific locations it can detract from scenic quality. Elsewhere, and in the majority of the valley, it is wholly concealed by the topography.

Position

The study area contains a patchwork agricultural landscape with multiple features that collectively contribute to an elevated sense of scenic quality.

However, the incongruity of the M45 and HMS Onely can have significant, albeit localised, effects.

As such, we consider perceptual (scenic) factors to make an overall moderate contribution to landscape value.



Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)

Analysis

The study area is not located within a 'tranquil' area as identified by the Campaign to Protect Rural England's tranquillity mapping, nor is it located within a Dark Skies area.

The study area is formed of an open expanse of rural landscape, which provides direct connection to nature and wildlife. This is not, however, a remote nor wild area, nor one of wilderness. It is a landscape that is clearly the product of past, and ongoing, human activity, primarily shaped by centuries of agricultural practices.

The local topography significantly curtails visibility of Rugby's built up areas (mostly located atop the plateau beyond the northern ridge). There is, therefore, stark shift in the sense of tranquillity when transitioning from suburban Rugby to rural Rainsbrook Valley. However, sufficient built form is visible atop the northern ridge to illustrate the landscape's proximity to, and close relationship with a large urban area.

The presence of large modern infrastructure has a significant effect. The M45 motorway imposes both visually and with tangible road noise across much of the valley. HMS Onley Prison can also be prominent in specific locations, introducing a further, overtly modern form of development.

There are some, specific areas of increased tranquillity. In particular, the neighbouring Ashlawn Cutting LNR, the Diamond Woods Country Park, and Rainsbrook Cemetery. These landscapes offer a sense of remoteness from the suburban areas, and while visually linked to the wider valley (through framed views) are consciously designed as a "place apart".

Position

While there are localised areas of tranquillity, the landscape is neither wild nor wilderness, and has tangible connections to the suburbs of Rugby. The presence of substantial modern forms of infrastructure and development further lessens a sense of remoteness or seclusion.

On balance we consider the perceptual (wildness and tranquillity) factor to make a weak contribution to landscape value.



Associations

Analysis

To the best of our understanding there are no specific associations to the Rainsbrook Valley, when considered as a whole and as a distinctive entity, across: well-known literature, poetry, artwork, TV/film nor music that contribute to perceptions of the landscape; science or other technical achievements; links to notable historical events; or famous persons or people.

However, there are highly localised, but still significant associations relating to specific historic areas and buildings at its north-western fringe. In particular, Dunchurch's links to the 17th century 'Gunpowder Plot'; and Bilton Grange's links to architect AWG Pugin (1812-1852), among the most pioneering and celebrated practitioners of the Gothic Revival style. The ability to understand and appreciate these associations are generally limited to these places and buildings, and their immediate surroundings.

Position

When considered as a whole, associations are considered to make a weak-to-moderate contribution to the Rainsbrook Valley's *overall* landscape value. There are significant historical associations, but these: are generally linked to specific buildings and locations (as opposed to the valley as a whole); and are not readily appreciable from, nor have any meaningful influence on the landscape character of the majority of the study area.



Functional

Analysis

The landscape's function is primarily agriculture, mapped within 2015 Land Cover mapping as a mix of arable, horticulture, and improved pasture. Natural England agricultural land classifies certain elements at 'Grade 2 Good' and most at 'Grade 3 Good to Moderate'.

The valley bottom does not form a significant floodplain, with only localised areas within the higher tiers of the Environment Agency Flood Zones.

Other functionality is highly localised, and largely relates to aforementioned natural environment features. For instance, the habitat rich meadows at the Kilsby Lane Meadow local wildlife site, or recently planted woodlands of the Rugby Diamond Wood Country Park.

There are no national landscape designations nearby (e.g. National

Landscapes), but the western Rainsbrook Valley forms the setting of two designated *heritage* landscapes: the registered parks and gardens at Bilton Grange and Dunchurch Lodge. Dunchurch Lodge has a limited relationship to the wider valley, but (as outlined in the Cultural Heritage section) Bilton Grange has a direct visual relationship with, and can be, in part, appreciated from the slopes immediately east and south of Dunchurch.

Position

Functionality is considered to make a weak-to-moderate contribution to the Rainsbrook Valley's landscape value, with that value largely drawn from areas of elevated agricultural classification.



Legend

Agricultural land classification



Non-agricultural land classification

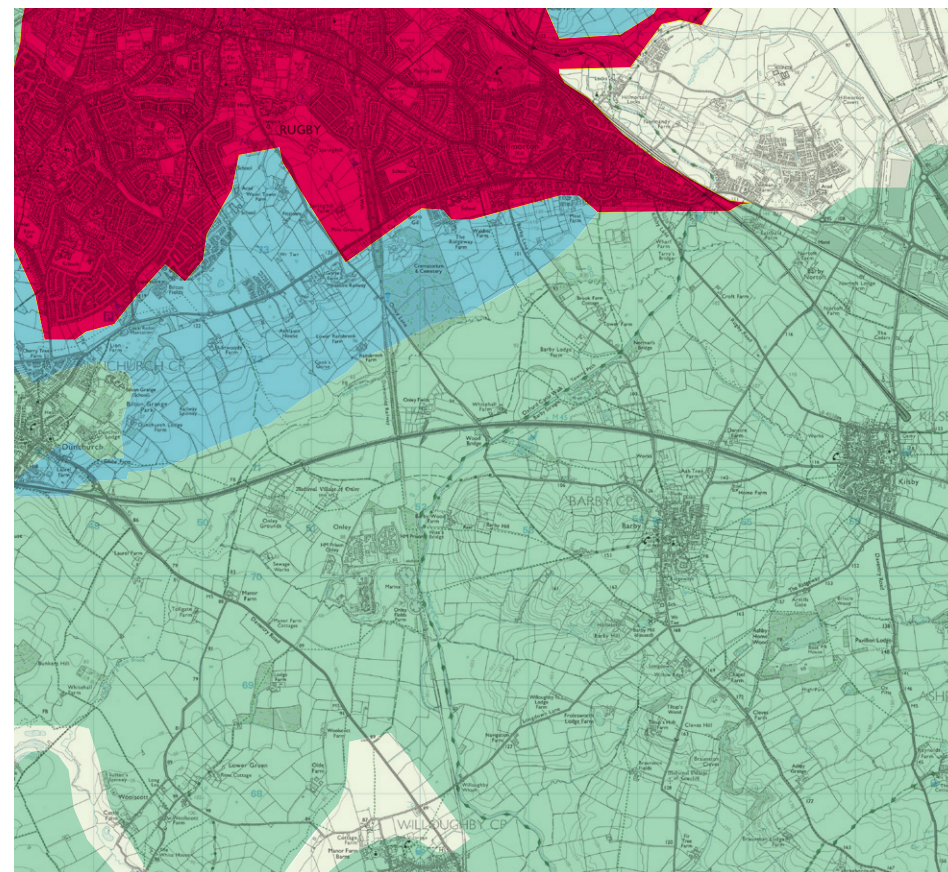
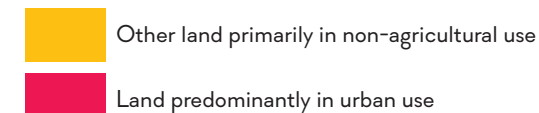


figure 4.8 | Agricultural land classification

Position: Landscape Value

Reaching a judgement as to the overall value of the Rainsbrook Valley requires balanced judgement of the value factors: weighing the individual contributions, *and* the relative importance of each to the landscape in question.

Determining a final position on value is not, therefore, a straightforward matter of aggregating a landscape score. It is instead important to "... *step back and judge the overall 'weight of evidence' in coming to an overall judgement on landscape value*" (LI Technical Note 02/21 p.2.4.5). A final position as to landscape value therefore relies primarily on evidence, analysis, and professional judgement, on a case-by-case basis.

Node's assessment methodology identifies five categories of value, on a sliding scale from 'Exceptional' to 'Very Poor' (see table A.1, of the appendix. Indicative criteria are provided for reference purposes; however value is determined relative to each, individual scenario.

For the Rainsbrook Valley, our analysis has identified a range of contributing factors, both adding to, and diluting its landscape value.

The strongest contributions are associated to: cultural heritage, with multiple designated heritage assets of direct contribution to landscape interest and quality; and good levels of recreational access, particularly through an extensive network of public footpaths and bridleways which draw significant amenity value from the local landscape character .

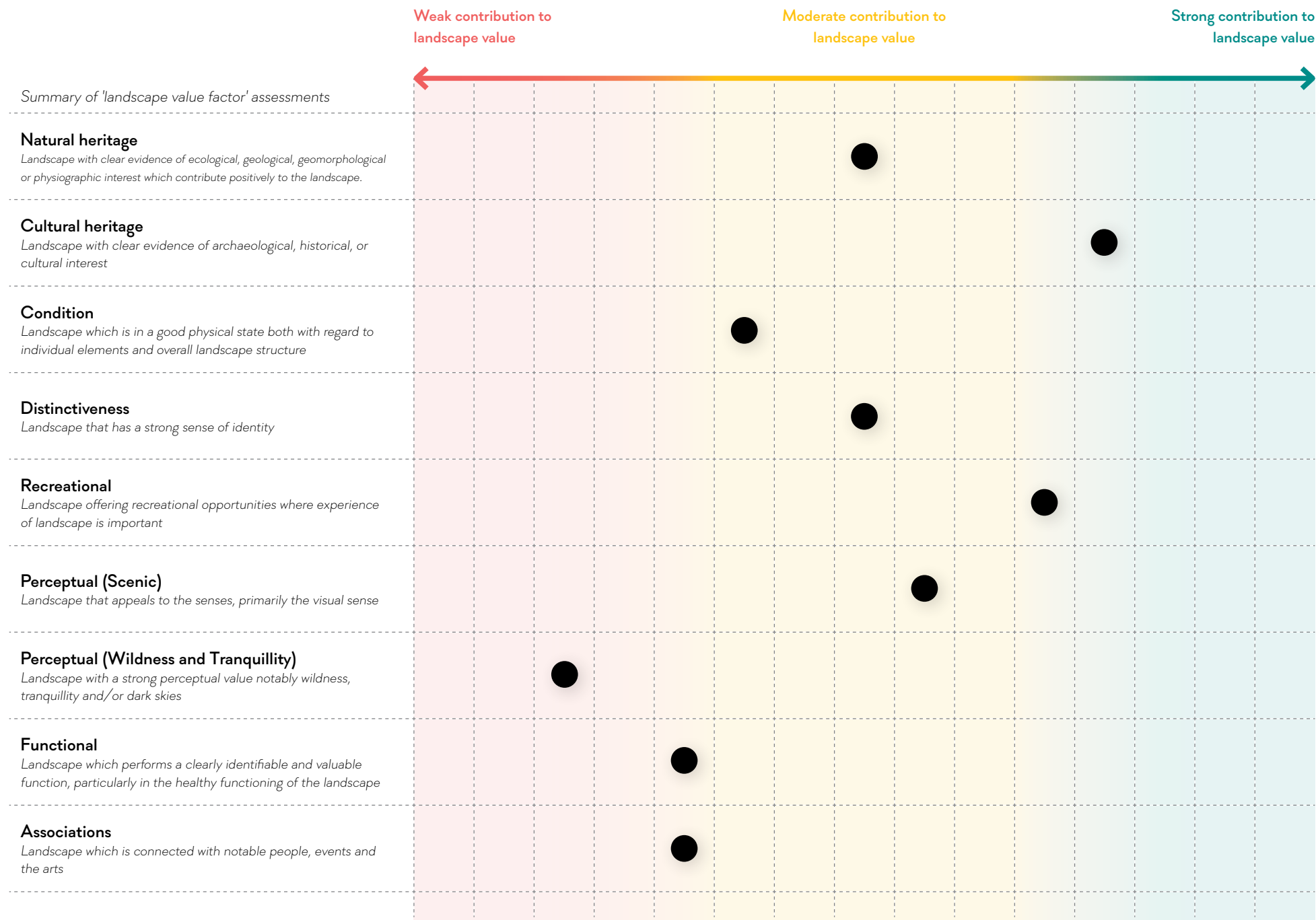
More moderate, but more meaningful contributions draw from natural heritage, the scenic qualities of the rural valley landscape, and the *local* distinctiveness of the valley relative to suburban Rugby, immediately to the north.

Some lesser and more localised contributions are made from the perceptual (wildness), functional, and associations factors.

It is not a pristine historic landscape, with notable detracting features in the M45 motorway and HMP Onley; however their impact is localised, and in places well-mitigated by associated landscape strategies.

Despite these adverse elements, the valley, as whole, is considered to be, in the main, a scenic rural landscape where the patchwork of agricultural land uses, historic settlements and farmsteads, and landscape-focussed recreational amenity remain the predominant characteristics.

Balancing all factors we therefore judge the Rainsbrook Valley to be of landscape value sufficient to be elevated above the "ordinary", and consider it to lie within the 'Good' classification, accordingly.



4.4 Susceptibility

Context

GLVIA3's definition of susceptibility (page 89) is: *'the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall landscape quality or condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and or feature, or a perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and or the achievement of landscape policies and strategies.'*

Susceptibility is therefore closely linked to both the baseline context and the type of development proposed (see methodology). For purposes of this assessment, a development typology was therefore agreed with the local planning authority as residential-led schemes of 50+ dwellings, aligned with the 'major residential development' category of the May 2025 'Reforming Site Thresholds' working paper from MHCLG.

Analysis

Understanding the Rainsbrook Valley's susceptibility to such change requires a careful appreciation of lived, 'ground-level' experiences of the local landscape.

From a birds' eyes perspective, one would anticipate ample capacity for the landscape to accommodate such development, on account of its proximity to substantial areas of Rugby's southern suburbs, and large industry and infrastructure further east and west. This includes for relatively large areas of housing directly abutting Ashlawn Road.

However, the local topography is such that the large majority of such development, and the settlement edge, is concealed within most of the valley, being sited over, and beyond the ridge lines, and screened by vegetation. The valley is, therefore, in the main experienced as a rural landscape, with clear physical and visual demarcation from the large, neighbouring conurbation.

As such, at-scale housing development would likely be experienced as an eye-catching, an incongruous form of development across much of the Rainsbrook Valley. Perhaps most obviously at the valley bottom and across southern slopes: being largely devoid of such forms of development, and with extensive visibility to/from the surroundings areas. Importantly however, we also consider the northern slopes, including areas in closer proximity to Rugby, to be similarly susceptible. Here, such development could have a marked urbanising effect: viewed as a long and highly prominent new settlement edge; and/or as a cascade of modern built form descending down the rural valley side within parcels of far greater visibility than those built-out to date.

We therefore conclude that the Rainsbrook Valley, when taken as a whole, has a high susceptibility to the identified scenarios of development.

There will be localised areas of lower or moderate susceptibility, including specific parcels where **both**: topography might reduce the visual profile across the wider valley; and where existing or enhanced vegetation might provide screening. Such areas are most likely located beyond the northern ridge line and abutting Ashlawn Road. Illustrative is the variable visibility of the Hilmorton-end housing developments. Such scenarios would require a case-by-case consideration, with testing of landscape and visual impact. Susceptibility may also be lower proximate to previously developed land, such as HMP Onley.

It is also noted that susceptibility may reduce proportionality to the scale of development, and particularly for those of 'minor' scale (under 10 dwellings or less than 0.5ha, per the MHCLG working paper). Again this would require site- and development-specific consideration.

4.5 Sensitivity

Position

A position as to the sensitivity of landscape receptors to the scenario forms of development can be reached by considering the assessed value and susceptibility together.

This is primarily a matter of professional judgement, but a cross-referencing matrix is used to guide decision making, within a scale from high to low (adjacent, reproduced from the methodology).

The assessed 'Good' value and 'High' susceptibility presents a threshold position of 'High / Medium' sensitivity. We consider this an accurate reflection of our assessment:

For the large majority of the valley, including the valley bottom and sides, the sensitivity is concluded to be **high**. Primarily on account of the good landscape value, and likelihood for a prominence of new, urbanising forms and settlement edge across a wide area.

For some, specific parcels sensitivity could be **high-to-medium or medium**, but will be dependent on the development scenario (e.g. quantum, siting, design) and, critically, the curtailment of the zone of visual influence by existing landforms and vegetation, and/or robust mitigation measures.

Review of 2017 Rainsbrook Valley Landscape Sensitivity Study

Our analysis, undertaken through an up-to-date methodology for landscape value and sensitivity assessment, has reached conclusions broadly aligned to the Warwickshire Country Council assessment of 2017. Notable in respect of:

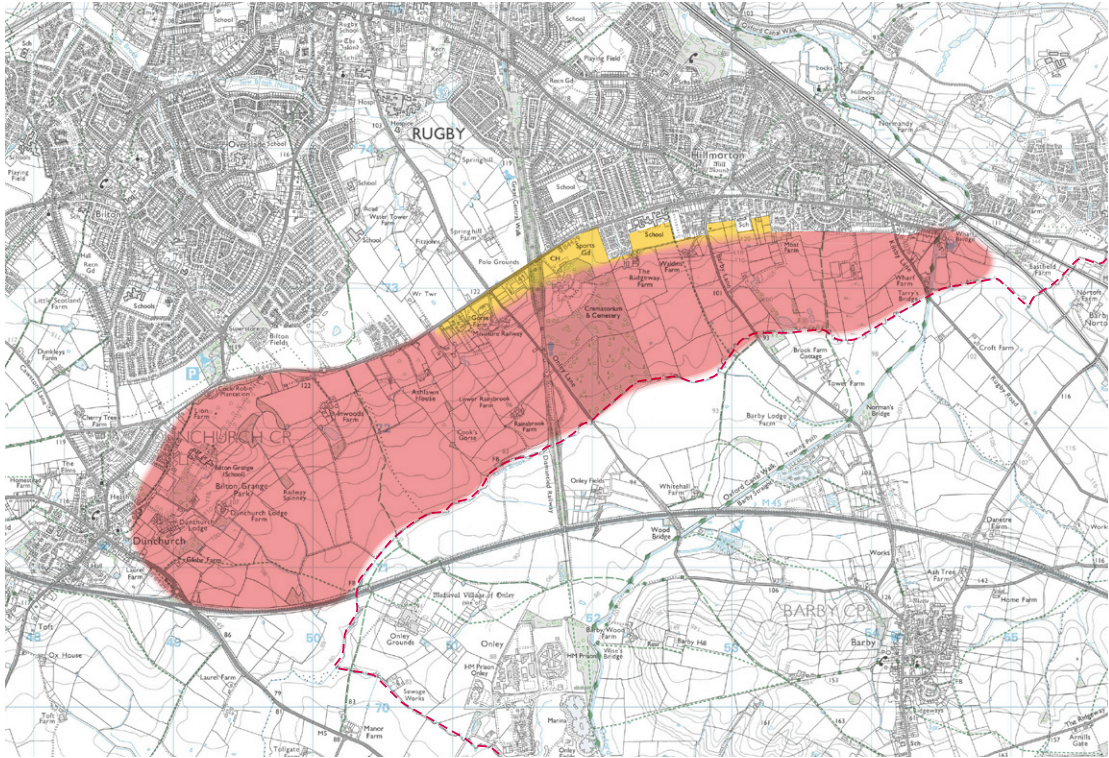
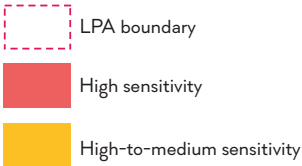
- High levels of sensitivity across the largely majority of the valley sides
- Potential for moderate or moderate/high sensitivity for specific areas along the northern ridge.

Our assessment area and brief was more expansive: incorporating a value and susceptibility assessment of the wider Rainsbrook Valley, and requiring positions relative to a different extent of land - broadly south of Ashlawn Road, and up to the southern RBC administrative boundary along the Rains Brook.

We have, therefore, provided up to date sensitivity mapping (overleaf) relative to the areas located within both the assessment area and Rugby Borough Council administrative control.

Landscape receptor sensitivity matrix

Sensitivity		Susceptibility		
		High	Medium	Low
Value	Exceptional	High	High / Medium	Medium
	Good	High / Medium	Medium	Medium / Low
	Ordinary	Medium	Medium / Low	Low
	Poor	Medium / Low	Low	Low / None
	Very poor	Low	Low / None	None



5

Summary

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Method
- 3 Landscape baseline
- 4 Assessment
- 5 Summary**



5 Summary

This document has provided a landscape sensitivity assessment of the Rainsbrook Valley, located to the south of the Rugby settlement edge.

Baseline

The Rainsbrook Valley spans across two National Character Areas (NCA): 95: Northamptonshire Uplands and 96: Dunsmore and Feldon.

Regional Landscape Character Assessments have also been undertaken for both Rugby Borough Council and Daventry District Council. Both assessments identify Landscape Character Types (LCTs) specific to the region, and those relevant to the valley include the Dunsmore: Plateau Fringe LCT, the Feldon: Vale Farmlands LCT, and the Broad Unwooded Vale LCT.

Value

Our analysis identified a range of contributing factors adding to the landscape value of the Rainsbrook Valley.

Of strongest contributions were those related to cultural heritage, with multiple designated heritage assets, including Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens. There are also notably good levels of recreational access, with an extensive network of public footpaths and bridleways drawing amenity value from the local landscape character.

Moderate, but still meaningful contributions draw from natural heritage, the scenic qualities of the rural valley landscape, and the local distinctiveness of the valley relative to the suburban character of Rugby to the north.

Some lesser and more localised contributions are made from the

perceptual (wildness), functional, and associations factors. Some notable detracting features are also present within the landscape, including the M45 motorway and the HMP Onley.

Despite these the Rainsbrook Valley, when taken as a whole, is considered to be a scenic rural landscape with sufficient amenity and qualities to be considered of 'good' value.

Susceptibility

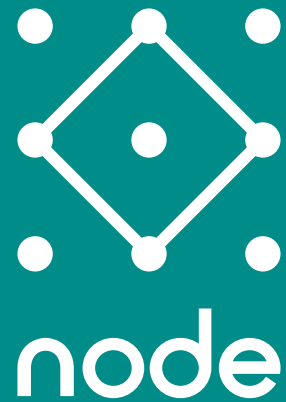
Major housing development is likely to be experienced as an eye-catching and incongruous form of development across much of the valley, particularly at the valley bottom, across southern slopes, and across northern slopes in close proximity to Rugby.

The Rainsbrook Valley, when taken as a whole, is therefore assessed to have

high susceptibility to this development scenario. Certain localised areas may have lower or moderate susceptibility, where both topography might reduce its visual profile across the wider valley, and where existing or enhanced vegetation might provide screening. Nb. Susceptibility would also reduce proportionally to the scale of development.

Sensitivity

The assessed 'Good' value and 'High' susceptibility presents a threshold position of 'High/Medium' sensitivity. For the majority of the valley, the sensitivity is concluded to be high, primarily on account of the good landscape value and likelihood for prominence of new, urbanising forms. For some specific parcels, sensitivity could reduce to medium, but will be dependent on the development scenario, and ability of existing landforms and vegetation to screen development.



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